

**DOES THE COACH HAVE TO BE
BLACK?
THE SPORTS FILM, SCREENWRITING AND DIVERSITY:
A PRACTICE-BASED ENQUIRY**

Lenny Henry

Royal Holloway, University of London

Acknowledgements

Projects such as this are rarely achieved in isolation. Often when I thought I was plodding a lonely path into a never-ending labyrinth and about to quit, my supervisors, Professor Susan Clayton and Professor John Hill, were there to steer me back towards the light. I owe them a great deal. Much gratitude to my daughter Billie for her everlasting patience. Thank you Bill.

Teachers and tutors from the past are important: special mentions go out to Jim Brookes, who taught science at Blue Coat Secondary Modern with a sense of fun (and added cartoons!); also to David Emery from W. R. Tuson College in Preston, who got me through my English GCSEs in no time at all. My Open University BA Hons tutors were excellent too; huge respect.

My academic writing tutor at Royal Holloway, John Miles, is to be thanked, along with my fellow classmates.

A huge help throughout the drafting process has been my personal tutor and researcher Paul Nutley; big respect and huge thanks to Ian Berthon too.

I must not forget John 'Figgins' Irwin, who also script-edited my earliest lectures, and fast typists Liz Evershed, Belinda Sherlock and Libby Law Ling Choy; copy-editors Rosamund Howe and Ele Craker; assistant researchers Andrew Gepp and Ollie Watts; and senior research assistants Steve Bergson, Simon Cherry and Kay Stonham.

Thanks also go to my manager, Peter Bennett Jones; my agent, Emily Rees Jones; Rebecca Ptasynski, Ellie Humphrey, Kirstie Macleod and Suzanne Milligan, for keeping the train juuuuust about on the tracks.

Kudos also to my colleagues at Douglas Road Productions, Barbara Emile and Jyoti Fernandes; David Roberts and Cliff Allen from Birmingham City University; and everyone who weighed in on *No Blood No Foul*: Mark Hurdle, Neil Gaiman, Hilary Bevan Jones, Sharon Henry, Hannah Robinson and Jan Pearson.

Also to the industry insiders who gave up their time to discuss diversity and inclusion: massive thanks to Nik Powell, Andy Harries, Graham Broadbent, David Heyman, Ed Vaizey, Christine Langan, Ollie Madden, David Garret, Bradley Quirke, Damien Jones, Henry Normal, Tim Bevan and David Heyman.

I also want to thank my comrades-in-arms in the fight for diversity: Marcus Ryder, Patrick Younge, Simon Albury, Anamik Saha and everyone else involved.

To all the Henrys and Parkers: big up yourselves! And, finally, much love and thanks to Lady Lisa of Bramhall. I could not have done this without her support.

Abstract

This PhD by practice is an enquiry into the nature of sports films, their status as a genre and how their conventions structure representations of class, gender and race. It also explores current issues related to diversity and inclusion in the film and television industry, and the degree to which the industry exercises constraints upon the widening of participation and representation.

The vehicle for the enquiry is a screenplay written by the author entitled *No Blood No Foul*, which centres on an ex-basketball player turned janitor and, in so doing, attempts to foreground a black male protagonist. The thesis reflects upon aspects of the writing process and, through a description of the stages of development that it underwent, explores the pressures placed upon the BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) screenwriter by producers, script editors and the industry at large. It then analyses the changes in plot character and setting that the screenplay went through and offers an assessment of the consequences of these for representations of class, gender, race and place.

This is then followed by a summary and assessment of interviews with key professionals in the UK film and television industry, designed to illuminate many of the issues of diversity and inclusivity raised by the earlier chapters. The thesis then concludes by bringing together the threads of the argument and offering some

recommendations for encouraging diversity in the UK
film and television industry.

DOES THE COACH HAVE TO BE BLACK?
THE SPORTS FILM, SCREENWRITING AND DIVERSITY: A
PRACTICE-BASED ENQUIRY

Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Chapter 1 Introduction and methodology

Chapter 2 Genre and the Sports Film

Chapter 3 Impossible Manhood

Chapter 4 The Black Male Protagonist

Chapter 5 Female Stereotypes in the Sports Film

Chapter 6 Reflections on Screenwriting:

Moonlight Marauders (Outline) and *No Blood No Foul*
(Selling Draft)

Chapter 7 Development from *Moonlight Marauders*
to *No Blood No Foul* (Initial) and Beyond

Chapter 8 Analysis of Changes

Chapter 9 Diversity and Inclusion in the UK
Film and Television Industry

Chapter 10 Conclusions and Recommendations

Bibliography

Filmography

TVography

Appendices

1. Boaretto's Draft Assembly
2. NBNF (Initial) Draft
3. Ideal Reader Notes
4. The Bill Murray Notes

5. NBNF (Director's) Draft
6. Kay Stonham Data and Graphs
7. The Long Questionnaire
8. Full-Length Interview Responses
9. The Vulture Screenwriters' Interview
10. 'The Road to Diversity Is Closed: Please Seek Alternate Routes'

Chapter 1
Introduction and methodology

INTRODUCTION

I come to this PhD by practice as a performer, writer and activist around issues of BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) representation. I will situate the work I have done within these contexts before laying out my practice work and the arguments that I make across the body of the thesis. I began this work by looking at sports films made for the cinema, many of which were from Hollywood. However, although my own screenplay was written as a feature film aimed directly at a cinematic audience, my work in the UK context drew me closer to television where the film and television industries are closer than in the US. Therefore, while I recognise the distinctions between the film and TV industries, many of the issues I discuss may be seen to be common to both.

The contexts of this thesis from my own background and history

1. History and context as a performer

My career began in 1975, as a comedy impressionist in the West Midlands, making appearances in discotheques and public houses. My performances were at the time an emulation of things I had seen on television via programmes such as *Morecambe and Wise* (1968–1977, BBC), *The Mike Yarwood Show*

(various: BBC 1968–1981) or *Who Do You Do* (1972–1976, LWT).¹

In 1975 the modes of comedic communication were very much post-music hall/post-variety; the humour was mainly predicated on stereotypical representations: comedians such as Bernard Manning, Charlie Williams and George Roper told jokes about lascivious travelling salesmen, oversexed girlfriends, grumpy mothers-in-law and stupid foreigners. This was some time before the alternative comedy revolution of the late 1970s and early 1980s; the beginnings of my career were steeped in the xenophobic and fearful hangover of post-war Britain. My debut television performance on the talent show *New Faces* (1973–1978, ATV) took place only ten years after the general election of 1964, of which Derek Brown wrote in the *Guardian* in 2001 that

¹ In the following PhD by practice there are many references to film and television production. For the purposes of my thesis, the two industries are conflated for convenience' sake. After all, developing a television script in many ways is similar to crafting a narrative for a film. However the two industries are notably different with different political economies. In British broadcasting, production is regulated, with two of the main broadcasters - namely the BBC and Channel 4 - driven by a public service remit that insists on facilitating audiences in the nations, regions and communities. Even commercial channels such as ITV and Channel 5 are regulated in terms of being obliged to produce different types of content like news and children's programming, or when allowed, adult-themed content (see Hesmondhalgh 2013). The feature film industry in contrast is in the most part driven by commercial intent; it is a profit making industry even though some directors will prioritise political/aesthetic criteria over commercial goals.

In terms of relevance to the race-based content of my thesis, it seems apposite to mention that the UK film industry at times has made a concerted effort to support black and minority film making; for instance, in the 1980s the GLC and Channel 4 subsidised black independent film and video workshops, enabling the work of John Akomfrah and Isaac Julien among others. Following the New Labour government, the new United Kingdom Film Council (UKFC), was much more neoliberal in character, in terms of trying to make the UK film industry more competitive, it nonetheless had a 'sociological' aspect, supporting initiatives that would encourage participation from previously marginalised groups including racial/ethnic minorities and women (all in the name of promoting competitiveness through diversity) (Nwonka, 2015). Overall though, the film industry is lightly regulated in contrast to the UK broadcasting industry. But as I said, at the screenwriting stage of production, in my experience there is overall little difference in either industry.

Patrick Gordon Walker was confidently expected to win the inner Birmingham seat of Smethwick and, in the event of a national Labour victory, go on to be Harold Wilson's foreign secretary. But Gordon Walker did not win. He was sensationally defeated by a Tory nonentity, Peter Griffiths, whose campaign featured the infamous 10-word slogan: 'If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour.' No candidate would dream of saying such a thing now. If they did, they'd be prosecuted.
(Brown, 2001)

My television performances consisted of material I had road-tested around local venues. I had learnt that audiences responded to references to television or music or radio. My act focused therefore on impressions of Frank Spencer from *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* (1973-1978, BBC), Hanna-Barbera cartoons, Tommy Cooper and Muhammad Ali. The latter was unique because he was one of the few positive BAME role models from television who people would recognise. The alternatives were the overly posh Philip from *Rising Damp* (1974-1978, Yorkshire Television), Rudy from *Love Thy Neighbour* (1972-1976, Thames Television) or John Bird's extraordinary impression of Idi Amin (*The Collected Broadcasts of Idi Amin*, 1975, Transatlantic Records), where he mangled the language in mock broadcasts called 'Gunboat Dipperlomacy' or 'Findin' de Lady'.

Charlie Williams (1927-2006) was a Yorkshire-born black man. His story was incredible: he was one of the first black players in British football, a centre-half for Doncaster Rovers, and he had been

a coal miner at Upton Colliery. He spoke with a broad Yorkshire accent. His humour was almost all about his otherness, however: 'If you don't laugh I'll come and move in next door to you – that'll bring your rent down' or 'It dun't matter if you're black down't pit – we're all the same colour down there'. The humour was self-deprecatory in the extreme, but it got big laughs. Because of his success, I was advised to emulate (or even steal) his most successful jokes; so I did. White club owners and comics pushed me to use material that made a point of my blackness, my otherness; so I would perspire, wipe my forehead, lick the sweat and say: 'I'm leaking – it's chocolate.' Or, with a more prescient sense of comedic bravery I would say: 'Enoch Powell wants to give all black people in Britain a thousand quid to go home – which is good for me, because it's only 50p on the bus from here to Dudley.'

Throughout the late seventies and early eighties I saw myself as a comedy impressionist; the industry, however, saw me as a *black* comedy impressionist. I'd been placed into a pigeonhole by a monocultural industry that knew better than me.

There was a deeper compulsion within me, however: an inner need to acquire knowledge about my craft and profession. I knew, particularly after I was fortunate enough to work with politically motivated actors such as Norman Beaton and Carmen Monroe, that I had to read books and see plays which offered more than my usual diet of televisual

light entertainment. It was beginning to dawn on me that how you view yourself is not necessarily how the world at large views you.

This was at a time when I would visit BBC Television Centre and never see a BAME producer, writer, director, assistant director or second assistant director, or even a secretary. This continued for thirty-five years; there were rarely people of colour, or women, or any other minorities in positions of power; a fug of complacency reigned throughout the industry.

I was never overtly racially abused or bullied but I was repeatedly subjected to comments and 'jokes' that would not be deemed acceptable today. The status quo was maintained; the Oxbridge, white, middle-class, male elite were in charge, and blacks, Asians, minorities, women and anyone else deemed to be different were excluded.

In the late seventies I was asked to play the role of Sonny Foster in an adaptation of an American sitcom called *Good Times* (1974-1979, CBS), a Norman Lear production about an African-American family living in a tough ghetto housing project in Chicago. John Amos, known for portraying the adult Kunta Kinte in the legendary TV mini-series *Roots* (US: ABC TV; UK: BBC 1977), and the goofy, rubber-limbed comedian Jimmie Walker starred as father and son. Our version was called *The Fosters* (1976-1977, LWT), starred Norman Beaton but ran for only two seasons.

One of the problems with setting the show in south London was the fact that the all-white production team had no idea how to cast a Caribbean London family and so procured black performers from all corners of the globe: Canadian Isabelle Lucas played the matriarch; Guyanese Norman Beaton was Samuel Foster; I - Dudley-born Lenny Henry - played Sonny Foster; my little sister, Sharon Rosita, was Italia Conti-trained and spoke like an English rose; and Laurie Mark, who played my little brother, was a cheeky Cockney and spoke that way. Rehearsals were akin to a meeting at the United Nations. But somehow the British public wanted to see a black British family on television, even if the series had been written, produced and directed by a white team. The first episode got 21 million viewers, and, strangely, it was incredibly popular in Scotland throughout its entire run. I gained a lot of experience during the filming process, but my family thought the show's lack of cultural veracity (inconsistent dialects, clothes, politics, etc.) preposterous.

During this time I was also signed up to perform in *The Black and White Minstrel Show* (1958-1978, BBC). Robert Luff was an old-school entrepreneur who owned the franchise for the shoe-polish-wearing George Mitchell Minstrels and the leggy and extravagantly attired TV Toppers. The main joke from everyone during this time was: 'Well, at least Lenny will save money on make-up.' I was miserable throughout the entire period of my

employment in this show, but I was contractually bound and so had to fulfil my obligation. I was tied to the show from 1975 to 1979, the years in which we saw alternative comedy come to fruition. As a result of punk rock's militant and groundbreaking attitude towards societal norms and performative expectations, alternative comedy sought another path into the industry: non-racist, non-sexist humour. As Ben Elton put it, 'I don't want to sound like a preacher ... but we can make people laugh without being racist or sexist. Bernard Manning's mother-in-law jokes and jokes implying that all Irish are stupid are out.'

(Turner 2014: 1)

This attitude threw the cat amongst the pigeons, as old-school comedians immediately derided the whole movement as childish and unfunny whereas the younger performers, myself included, imagined a whole new future where our comedy did not have to rely on stereotypes. It was a new day.

My career since then has been well documented elsewhere (Malik 2004: 1079). I was a stalwart of the Saturday morning juggernaut *Tiswas* (1974-1982, ATV) and a pivotal member of *Three of a Kind* (1981-1983, BBC) and *OTT* (1982, Central Television). In 1984 I got my own show, *The Lenny Henry Show* (1984-1988, 1995, 2003-2005, BBC). I co-created racially based archetypal characters, such as the old Jamaican pensioner, Deakus, the Brixton wide boy, Delbert Wilkins, and the sexist soul singer, Theophilus P. Wildebeeste. I starred in the feature

film *True Identity* (1991, Charles Lane). I then returned to the UK and created my own production company, called Crucial Films, which generated more Lenny Henry shows, including *Chef!* (1993–1996, BBC), and also provided opportunities for BAME writers, producers and directors in shows such as *Funky Black Shorts* (1994, BBC), *Crucial Tales* (1996, BBC2) and *Nowhere* (1996, BBC2). I also starred in TV films such as *Bernard and the Genie* (1991, Paul Weiland), *Coast to Coast* (1987, Sandy Johnson) *Alive and Kicking* (1991, Robert Young) and *White Goods* (1994, Robert Young). Once my own production company had gathered momentum I attempted to ensure that each production was ethnically diverse in front of the cameras as well as offscreen.

2. My screenwriting history and context

During my years as a performer I was frustrated at my lack of control over the kinds of roles that were being put forward to me. I was offered a plethora of muggers, thieves, pimps, drug dealers, inspirational teachers and genies. I yearned for something more challenging that reflected my burgeoning sense of political reality: roles that highlighted archetypal BAME characters rather than stereotypical ones. (Much of this thesis will reflect on whether such aims were realistic or viable; see particularly the findings of Chapters 7 and 8 for further analysis.)

My first experiences of scriptwriting were on

the TV comedy sketch show *Three of a Kind*. Over a hundred people attended the initial writers' meeting, most of them male and all of them white. But producer Paul Jackson encouraged a collaborative atmosphere between writers and performers (David Copperfield, Tracey Ullman and myself). We were allowed to select the kind of material that would be used on the show. By series three David, Tracey and I were improvising characters in the rehearsal room and contributing significantly to the content of the show.

My first screen credit was for a quickie about the Handy Bendy Gandhi, a rather transgressive TV commercial for a Stretch Armstrong-style child's toy that resembled the Indian civil rights leader. The cast of characters I co-created for *Three of a Kind* and *The Lenny Henry Show* meant also that I was credited regularly as one of the writers of the programme.

My experiences on these programmes whetted my appetite for writing. I had always had a passionate interest in film, and so in the late 1980s I embarked upon an initial foray into the easily accessible world of screenwriting.

In 2000 I decided I actually needed some assistance with the rather tricky task of writing screenplays, and so set off on a more rigorous journey of education – which has led me to this point.

I undertook an English literature degree with

the Open University and then signed up for an MA in screenwriting at Royal Holloway, University of London. This was a two-year course, which enabled me to write a screenplay and a TV series outline while learning about the business, production and editorial aspects of the TV and film industry. I graduated having written a screenplay called *Nine Nights* based on my mother, her sister and my daughter. This script was commissioned by the British Film Institute (BFI) and Hilary Bevan Jones at Endor Productions. The idea was to create a 'passion project', which I would write and direct, utilising a predominantly BAME cast and crew, in order to show that we could create a good, marketable project that would appeal to a non-niche, mainstream audience. Since then I have collaborated with Danny Robins on *Rudy's Rare Records* (2008-2012, BBC), a BAME-centred situation comedy about a record shop in Handsworth in Birmingham and the chaotic first-, second- and third-generation men who run it and inhabit its environment. I have also written three plays for BBC Radio 4: *Corinne Come Back* (2011), *Miss You Still* (2013), produced by Claire Grove, and *Amsterdam* (2016), produced by Mary Peate. In 2015 I was asked to write and create *Lenny Henry's Rogue's Gallery* (2016) for Radio 4, a character-led anthology series featuring sting-in-the-tail monologues from mostly BAME characters.

In my recent experience I have observed a predominantly monocultural tendency in the production/editorial/executive branches of the broadcasters; one rarely interfaces with BAME producers, writers or development executives, and, as this is the status quo, the habit is to ignore it and struggle on. My naïve assumption, while working on my MA script, was that *Nine Nights* (2008–present day) would change the world and I would become an important black British writer/director/actor, with access to a multi-ethnic production team and cast, making diverse film and television material for a new generation. But scripted drama and comedy take time to produce, and even more time to produce well. *Nine Nights* has yet to be made, and since then I have written several other scripts (including my PhD screenplay) that have yet to be produced. *Danny and the Human Zoo* (BBC1/Red productions: 2015, Destiny Ekaragha) which was actually transmitted and nominated for a Broadcast award, and the success I had in getting the *Nine Nights* screenplay commissioned, however, gave me the confidence I needed to take on further writing challenges to develop my skills.

3. No Blood No Foul

The reasons for writing *No Blood No Foul* are simple. The initial impetus was a meeting at Revolution Films where I was required to pitch film ideas and found myself on the receiving end of a reciprocal pitch which gave me a twinge of recognition but

also fear. Some of my favourite films have been sports films. Maybe some of my favourite films in the last 40 years have been sports films: the *Rocky* franchise (initially created by Sylvester Stallone), *The Longest Yard* (Robert Aldrich, 1974), *Yesterday's Hero* (Neil Leifer, 1979), *Kes* (Ken Loach, 1969), *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (Tony Richardson, 1962), *The Greatest* (Tom Gries and Monty Hellman, 1977), *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, 1980), *The Champ* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1979), *Breaking Away* (Peter Yates, 1979), *Coach Carter* (Thomas Carter, 2005) and many more.

These are all films after which I have departed the cinema complex in high spirits with every intention of embarking on a ridiculous training regime the next morning. These films inspire me. The basic tenets of the sports-based movie for me and many others represent the level playing field, the joy of participation, the roar of the crowd, team work and proving oneself through ability. Therefore, when I sat at Revolution Films listening to Andrew Eaton and David Boaretto discussing their intense desire for 'A film about basketball set in the UK', wheels began turning in my head.

This frenzied brain activity coincided with my considering a PhD, and it became clear that I would have to do what every PhD student has to do, i.e. *find a subject matter that might fuel one's*

enthusiasm for the next three years. (Make that six and a half.)

Having discussed it with my MA supervisor, Sue Clayton, I decided to embark on a research project concerning the sports film genre, using my screenplay (which was commissioned thereafter) as a 'practice model'. With this particular PhD by Practice I knew for certain (at the very beginning) that mine would consist of not only a screenplay in various incarnations, but also: a treatment, an outline, a logline etc.; and a development log which would allow a critical reflexivity mode for the writing.

My intention at this point was not only to write a screenplay, but also to reflect upon its relationship to the sports genre and also monitor its progress once the possibility of it going into production arose.

I knew that there would have to be an autoethnographic element too, and although I hadn't put a name to it, the opening of the PhD, which seeks to situate the author as an industry practitioner/writer/actor/producer, is written in an autoethnographic style, which acts as a summation of my life and career thus far. Once again there are precedents for this too - Sidney Lumet's *Making Movies* (Knopf, 1995), David Mamet's *On Directing Film* (Penguin, 1992), and of course *Adventures in the Screen Trade* by William Goldman (Warner Books, 1983). These are all informative yet

personal accounts of creativity as related by experts.

Autoethnography is also an increasingly recognised qualitative social scientific research method, particularly used in the fields of sociology and anthropology. I shall refer to some of the relevant literature later on.

Thus, sports films, which I had previously only enjoyed as a consumer, became my entire world. I watched dozens of sports films. I narrowed my field of focus to the American Film Institute, *Sight and Sound*, *Empire* and *Time Out* 'Best of' lists, and eventually created my own personal league table of must-see sports genre films.

My adventure was about to begin.

June Sarpong, in her book *Diversify*, says:

A black male child growing up in America or Europe will, by the time he reaches school, already have an understanding that he is different from the majority. Whether it's the images he sees in the media, or family members attempting to prepare him for the exclusion he's likely to experience outside the home, he will know that the rules are not the same for him and boys that look like him. (Sarpong 2017: 24)

I shall return to June later. But this aspect of growing up black in a predominantly white world resonates completely with me. In my career I had grown used to being the only person of colour in the room, whether it was an important pitch session

at ITV, or a meet and greet at Disney headquarters in the early '90s, or a writers' room at Tiger Aspect production company in Soho, London.

Up until very recently my experience of interfacing with the industry has been that of being the only black person in the room. Sarpong's mini assessment resonates because, in my initial research for this PhD, I found myself constantly questioning the directors, producers, writers and casting directors of these films due to their lack of minority ethnic representation. As I watched films like *The Natural* (Barry Levinson, 1984), *Bull Durham* (Ron Shelton, 1988), *The Blind Side* (John Lee Hancock, 2009), and *A League of Their Own* (Penny Marshall, 1992), I was struck continually by the fact that there was barely anyone that looked like me in these films. And if someone did look like me, they were presented as a problem that needed fixing, or as background, or as a seemingly unbeatable opponent, or as best friend to the white hero.

I will unpack these roles in Chapter 4, utilising the insightful and at times contentious work of Donald Bogle to decode stereotypic black roles in Hollywood mainstream film.

This led me to a major decision which had to be made with regard to this PhD by practice. Although I would seek to include ideas briefly about race and the politics of representation, intersectionality, women in the sports film, class and sexual orientation, the overriding motivation

of this work was a discussion about a lack of ethnic representation in the sports film, and indeed, the film and television industries on a wider scale. The truth of the matter is, there is a massive disconnect in the film and TV industry, both here in the UK and in the USA that is only just beginning to be addressed through activism, research and public debate. Reports like the Hollywood Diversity Report issued by the Ralph J. Bunche center for African-American Studies at UCLA are revelatory and indeed, informative.

The findings for 2015 (released in 2017) include these remarkable concluding comments on Hollywood's under-representation of minorities in front of the camera as well as behind, and how this lack could have a devastating effect on the bottom line.

Diversity sells, first and foremost, because today's audiences are themselves diverse and in search of stories and characters with whom they can identify. And these audiences are becoming more diverse with each passing day, meaning that the patterns identified in this report series linking diversity to the bottom line will only become more pronounced.

Indeed, the combined buying power of people of color in America approached \$3.5 trillion in 2015 [my italics], and these growing, diverse audience segments purchased more movie tickets and watched more television on a per capita basis than their white counterparts. For the Hollywood industry to continue to produce as many low-performing films and television shows as it does, which

are not very diverse, simply does not make good business sense in light of these facts.

The problem, as we have pointed out in earlier reports, is that the Hollywood industry is not currently structured to make the most of today's market realities.

The studios, networks, talent agencies, and academies are demographically and culturally out of step with the diverse audiences on which their collective future will increasingly depend.

Hollywood's diversity problems begin at the very top of the studios and networks, in the executive suites, where decisions are made about what gets made and with what size production and marketing budgets. Unfortunately, the individuals in these decision-making positions (typically white men) *are not motivated to share their power with diverse women and men whose reservoirs of experience equip them with the perspectives necessary to connect more effectively with today's audiences* [my italics].

Despite false claims to the contrary, there is no trade-off in Hollywood today between diversity and profitability. Diversity is clearly a plus factor for the bottom line. Nor is there a trade-off between diversity and quality. Quality storytelling plus rich, diverse performances equals box office and ratings success. Year after year, the evidence supporting this equation continues to mount.

(Hollywood Diversity Report 2017: 73-74)

Thus, whilst my PhD was initially focused on studying the representation of race in sports films, and developing a screenplay alongside this research,

it became clear that this project could (and should) contribute to wider discussions of diversity in the media. As such, Chapters 9 and 10, the final chapters of this thesis, are devoted to this issue.

Before I detail the methods I adopted for this project, I first outline my theoretical framework, which entails a discussion of the politics of representation and intersectional analysis.

Unpacking the politics of representation in film

Before Stuart Hall's seminal essay 'New Ethnicities' (1988, 1996) there was little academic interest in the representation of race in the media. There were some exceptions of course (Husband, 1975), but studies of race in the UK was mostly defined by the 'race relations' paradigm (Banton, 1967; Rex, 1970), which, sociological in nature, studied the comparative experiences between whites and different bounded racial and ethnic groups, economically, politically and socially. Whilst it was understood that race was a social construct, there was little interest in how these constructions were formed, how they were contested by different groups, and how they changed over time (see Back and Solomos, 2000). As mentioned, it was Stuart Hall in particular who drew attention to the *cultural* dimensions of racial and ethnic experience, and in particular, how the media shapes racial consciousness (ibid.). Stuart Hall's work opened up a unique field of textual study dealing with what

he calls 'the politics of representation' and the work of Black and Asian artists and cultural producers. These studies understood that the media and its representation of race – with intersections of gender, class, sexuality and so on – was hugely important for how the nation understood and subsequently treated these groups. Influenced by the work of Gramsci and Althusser in particular, Hall understood culture – and the media – as crucial to the operation of power; the sphere where the dominant class could reinforce its status, but also where it could be challenged.

Hall's writing is the stimulus for a huge body of work on the complexities of cultural representation, the best of which acknowledge that representations can be ambivalent, that different audiences read texts in different ways, that context can influence content, and that a reduction of texts to simple oppositions e.g. 'Good/Bad', 'Authentic/Stereotypical' can be overly simplistic. But as suggested, one thing that is certain for Hall (drawing from Gramsci), is that the landscape of popular culture is akin to a battlefield.

I think there is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganise and reorganise popular culture; to enclose and confine its definitions and forms within a more inclusive range of dominant forms. There are points of resistance; there are also moments of supersession. This is the dialectic of cultural struggle. In our times, it goes on continuously, in the complex lines of resistance and acceptance, refusal and capitulation, which make the field of culture

a sort of constant battlefield. A battlefield where no once-and-for-all victories are obtained but where there are always strategic positions to be won and lost.

(Hall 2010: 443)

Though there is a battle for cultural hegemony being fought, the lines upon which it is fought are not particularly clear, the ground is ever shifting and participants may not always be sure on which side they belong.

Modern people of all sorts and conditions, it seems to me, have had, as a condition of survival, to be members, simultaneously, of several, overlapping 'imagined communities'; and the negotiations between and across these complex borderlines are characteristic of modern identity itself.

(Hall 1992: 7)

It is this framing of culture in relation to race that I work with in this thesis. Drawing from Hall, and also other critical cultural theorists of race such as Cornel West (1990), bell hooks (1992) and Paul Gilroy (1993), I understand that representations of race are never a mirror of reality, but construct social understandings of race, either reaffirming or challenging them. Furthermore, I work with the idea that cultural production itself is a site of struggle, between minority groups and the dominant culture. Quite

simply, there is so much more at stake when making films that deal with the experience of race than just measuring their success in terms of the box office or reviews. Rather they have a greater cultural significance. As such the foundation of my theoretical framework is based on what Back and Solomos (2000) define as a 'critical cultural approach' to race, which in this context, entails analysing existing representations of race in sports films, the findings of which fed into the development of my screenplay for *No Blood No Foul*.

When I began my analysis of sports films it became clear that they did not just involve the question of race, but also articulations of gender and class and sexuality, and even at times, disability.

As a screenwriter working on this particular script, issues of intersectionality were a natural part of the process. When designing the character matrix and outlining the story, the characters were defined by a combination of social characteristics, including race, gender and class; and the process of writing and rewriting consisted of a balancing, rebalancing and in some cases re-conceptualising as I will reveal in the development and analysis sections of this thesis. One aspect of this is the way the female characters changed over time, because I became aware that I was in danger of misrepresenting certain sections of the community. When creating minority characters there can be a danger that the people who consume the cultural

product will regard whatever they are presented with as symbolic of all members of a minority rather than those particular characters alone. So writing from the margins, intersectionality is a major creative consideration, not just a theoretical and analytical tool.

Hill Collins and Bilge define intersectionality like this:

When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organisation of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves.

(Hill Collins, Bilge 2016: 2)

Though I only became aware of intersectionality at an academic level in the course of my studies, it had become clear to me that minority ethnic characters were not the only figures who were marginalised in the sports film genre. Once I had this epiphany, my attention was repeatedly drawn to the depictions of gender and class, sexuality, religion and their intersections, particularly in regards to the way that they were contrasted with the white male protagonist.

A further element of my theoretical framework regards cultural production. Production and how representations are physically made is a neglected issue within the study of representation from a critical cultural studies perspective (Hesmondhalgh

and Saha, 2013). Yet clearly, the structures of the cultural industries, and the rationales, logics and processes that (the predominantly white) creative managers and cultural intermediaries work with and employ within it will have an effect on the stories that black and Asian cultural producers are trying to tell themselves. The discourse of diversity that is used in the cultural industries has serious ramifications for the experience of minorities in the media. (Malik, 2013; Saha, 2017)

The value of this research is it makes us think more deeply and critically about the politics of diversity initiatives. In my experience as a diversity activist actions speak louder than words. The sheer bulk of articles, books, speeches and soundbites on diversity could denude a rainforest. And in Saha's book he nails what is wrong with diversity policies per se. 'Crucially what is lacking in the critiques and advocations of diversity policies is the question of the extent to which minorities are given the autonomy that would enable their creativity.' (Saha 2017: 95)

I find myself agreeing with this wholeheartedly. Until minorities are given access to the means of production the rate of progress will continue at its traditional snail-like pace.

Saha also highlights a process that I myself have undergone. This is a problem for all diaspora writers in that invariably when taking work to the industry, one will be faced by a monocultural group

of gatekeepers. This predominantly white group will not only shape your work, but decide whether it is fit for 'majority' public consumption. This is not a level playing field due to the fact that, if we are to accept the idea of multiculturalism, we must also accept that there are numerous ways of shaping a narrative, and one size does not fit all. Saha states,

One issue that is a problem for people of colour in the cultural industries as a whole, but is particularly felt in the arts, is negotiating western conceptions of taste and quality, and the tension in applying western universal aesthetic criteria to ethnic and cross-cultural art.

(Saha 2017: 97)

It would appear to me that this is a direct plea for a change in the demographic of the aforementioned gatekeepers. Studying how black and brown cultural producers are restrained, constrained and steered by the cultural industries and the dominant culture that runs it, can help us understand why representations of race are so consistently disappointing. Saha's work, alongside Sarita Malik's, shows the value of a 'production approach' to representation, which I, in turn, adopt for my research. As such the thesis has two aspects to it. Firstly, it will have a textual component where I will show how race is constructed in sports films following established genre and racial tropes. Secondly, it will focus on the production and development of my own script for No

Blood No Foul where I provide a first-hand account of the difficulties I encountered as a black creative in attempting to avoid these tropes. As I shall detail, because of my insider status, and the access I have to the core cultural industries, I believe this project can make a significant contribution to production studies of the representation of race, as well as to broader policy debates on cultural diversity in the media.

4. Methodology

There are two methodological components of this thesis. The first relates to the practice element of this thesis, and the actual writing of the screenplay, that is the screenwriting and the development process. It refers to four principal documents.

1. The first of these is my first extended outline, called *Moonlight Marauders* (MM outline), written without very much input from Revolution Films.
2. The second is the completed draft of the full feature screenplay, now named *No Blood No Foul* initial draft (NBNF initial), which can be found in Appendix 2.
3. After that there was an extensive period of work and revision under the supervision of Revolution Films' development executive; he had already nominated a director, which resulted in the third document, *No Blood*

No Foul director's draft (NBNF director's), which can be found in Appendix 5.

4. Finally, there is the selling draft; this is my rewrite of the director's draft but closely monitored on a regular basis by Luis Prieto, the director. This is entitled *No Blood No Foul* selling draft (NBNF selling).

A more detailed introduction to my reflections can be found in Chapter 6.

The second component relates to my reflections on the production process, the challenges I faced, and how this in turn fed into my diversity activism. In the remainder of the chapter, I reflect on this part of the research project.

This project contributes to the growing body of production studies within the broader field of race and media research (Hesmondhalgh and Saha, 2013; Saha, 2017). This is a relatively small but growing field of research, that directly informs my activism around the issue of diversity since it highlights how truly diversifying the range of representations of racial and ethnic minorities in the media takes more than just increasing their number in the workforce.

In his book *Race and the Cultural Industries*, Saha draws from a number of case studies that show how minorities are constrained by the rationalised and standardised forms of cultural production and

how these cultural constraints steer BAME producers into reproducing the usual tropes and stereotypes of race.

Yet, as Saha states, this important field of research has a major methodological challenge: the question of access. Whilst scholars appreciate the value of gaining an insight into the production process, gaining access into the cultural industries is actually a fraught business, either due to the risks of researchers being privy to sensitive commercial information, or executives being nervous about their reputations if racism/malpractice is discovered.

As such my position as an insider with access to the upper echelons of the industry gives me a unique perspective of the production process within the cultural industries, which many researchers outside the industry will never attain themselves.

For this project I used a range of qualitative methods. In what follows I will outline my methodological approach; basically planning out the screenplay by embarking on a series of interviews with black British basketball players; writing an outline and a beat sheet, character breakdowns and throughout, keeping a grid of progress (a kind of journal) which allowed me to analyse changes as I worked through the notes from the producers and my script editor.

From the outset my aim was to interview people in the industry to gain an insight into their

perspective on diversity, representation and inclusion throughout the film and TV industry.

I interviewed 14 executives, including decision-makers, key gatekeepers and people of influence, whose narratives I found shed much-needed light on the challenges facing BAME creatives. I provide more detail on my approach to these interviews in Chapter 9 which includes my analysis of what was said.

When writing about my upbringing and experiences in television and film I have found an autoethnographic approach apposite due to my unique story: a working-class Briton of Afro Caribbean descent, growing up in a small town in the Midlands and developing a taste for comedy and theatre and making a living from television.

My observations on television and film work fall naturally into a production/race studies milieu. The section on interviews with industry leaders of course is about qualitative analysis. However, the glue that holds my thesis together is that of autoethnography.

The purpose of autoethnography, at least from the social science perspective, is not only to tell personal stories. It intends to expand the understanding of social realities through the lens of the researcher's personal experiences.

(Chang 2016: 108)

In my case, autoethnography entailed reflecting on both my career trajectory as well as my current

experiences:

- permission to write in my own voice; and provide first-hand narrative
- using my experience (and my contacts) to bring first-hand insights into the production process
- allows me to apply the knowledge I gained to my own work – specifically the script of *No Blood No Foul* – and my future work.

Whilst my development log and the subsequent analysis (Chapters 7 and 8) reveal substantial shifts in screenplay (it got whiter), the interviews in Chapter 9 seek to explain why the industry is the way it is, both in TV and film, and how things might change in terms of diversity and representation. This sustained work on the UK film and TV industry's lack of BAME representation triggered a latent activism within me, enabling me to find a public voice for this once-suppressed indignation.

As a facet of autoethnography I used action research. Stringer (2008: 8) defines action research as 'a collaborative approach to "enquiry" or "investigation" that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems.'

Action research is often envisaged as a cycle of 'look, think, act' that calls for revision and retesting in order to formulate better solutions to the problem at hand (ibid 8-9). In terms of a PhD by practice, my practice element involved writing

and researching a screenplay, but also researching via books, articles and reviews.

I also read about the process of screenplay development, which enabled me to address the specific problems and find better solutions to the problems attendant in screenplay writing.

One of my approaches to this was to engage film and television insiders in my research process and I consider that the writing, responding, learning and modifying of my chosen vehicle, *No Blood No Foul* (Initial and Selling), demonstrates in many ways the classic features of action research methodology. The development of the screenplay involved months of self-reflexive activity and I believe that in the future my written experiences, screenplay drafts, development log and analysis of said development have potential to add to the pool of knowledge with regard to problem-solving for my fellow novice screenwriters. I imagine that this will enable film and television insiders to make informed decisions about script and revision especially in relation to diversity and representation. In that sense, the action research format was a relatively straightforward practical methodology, which allowed me to write, test, review and change in relation to the critical reaction to my screenwriting effort.

Regarding critical reflexivity

For this project I adopted a critically reflexive but also autoethnographic approach to developing my

screenplay. Critically reflexive writing 'embraces subjective understandings of reality as a basis for thinking more critically about the impact of our assumptions, values and actions on others' (Cunliffe 2004: 407). This kind of writing typically veers between the academic and the idiosyncratic in tone, and involves keeping a development journal about the process, which meant taking notes at every meeting throughout the entire period of research and development. However, not in as slavish a way as Georgina Born in her exhaustive and extensive account of John Birt's new managerialism policies at the BBC, which unfortunately holed the broadcaster under the waterline and (in some eyes) precipitated a slippery slope from which it is hard to regain one's footing. Because my practice research was the writing of the screenplay, every development session with the producers at Revolution Films and every feedback session with industry colleagues on the quality of my script constituted a series of tests through action and theoretical ideas with regard to screenplay improvement, concerning genre, script-writing and indeed racial representation which were the original stimulants for my research.

In developing a critical reflexive approach to screenwriting/film development I identified and drew from a number of works that tackle the topic of film production. These can be split into two different approaches, one from industry practitioners, the other from academic insiders.

Industry insider accounts consist of an autobiographic rather than autoethnographic approach. They often produce candid accounts of financing films as well as encounters with the big personalities involved in the film industry. They are not necessarily guides to how to get your film off the ground, but contained within are fascinating insights that would be of benefit to budding filmmakers. As we shall see, whilst they are generally not interested in the topic of minority experience in the film industry, when they do engage with these issues there are some fascinating insights into the challenges facing BAME filmmakers in particular.

A well-known example comes from producers' representative John Pierson who goes above and beyond requirements for this kind of industry information:

I did write Spike Lee a check for \$10,000 to finish *She's Gotta Have It*, close a \$3million deal with a major studio for Michael Moore's documentary *Roger & Me*, help make *Slacker* a household word, unleash Quick Stop clerks and fishy lesbians all over the world and take fifteen films to the almighty Sundance Film Festival.

(Pierson 1997: 2)

His insistence on revealing the art of the independent movie deal makes for riveting reading.

Pierson's ability to spot diverse talent whether they are black, LGBTQ, Hispanic or working class is seemingly unerring. However each

relationship is marked by difficulty. At first he advises Leslie Harris (*Just another Girl on the IRT* Leslie Harris, 1992) to co-produce her movie with himself and Spike Lee.

But Lee rejects the film with a number of criticisms, two of which are that it should be shot in colour, and the lead actress should be replaced.

Despite this disappointing reaction, Pierson is impressed by the young director's pluck and tenacity. She reshoots the entire film in just over two weeks, with a new cinematographer and a 'much improved new lead actress, Ariyan Johnson'.

The only thing now was to agree the deferments (temporarily postponed payment) upon which she and her crew had agreed to get the film made:

She handed me two pages. The first was quite ordinary, about \$27,000 for her essentially unpaid cast and crew. The second page was producer deferments – \$80,000 for Leslie and \$20,000 for Erwin.

(ibid: 99)

His comments on this particular document are telling:

Now Leslie had written, directed, produced and partially edited her own film, but this was not uncommon in our world. She was a driving creative force on a \$250,000 first feature, and in such cases you look for deferment in the \$30,000 range, maybe a bit higher or a lot lower but never \$100,000. When I pointed out this established precedent, I became 'White oppressor man'.

(ibid: 100)

Whilst Pierson eventually decides to pass on the film, he produces this insight into the plight of the black female director:

There's an ongoing debate about whether it's harder for a black filmmaker or a woman filmmaker to make a first feature. It might seem that a black woman would have the hardest time of all. I know two things. First, making an independent feature is torture for anyone. But once a black woman manages to make a passably good film, the media just run wild with that story.

(ibid)

He goes on to describe the media's sympathetic coverage of a BAME filmmaker with an imagined story headline: *The poor, oppressed, struggling black woman angle*, and comments that Leslie Harris rinsed this trope for all the publicity she could get, sounding as if she were 'on a tape loop' (p101). According to this account Harris's race and gender, rather than constrain her, actually gave the media a hook which gave her more publicity.

As another example of an insider account of the filmmaking process, Christine Vachon's *Shooting to Kill* is written from the perspective of the production company, the people who actually make the film. Once more, she pitches her credibility up front:

There's a joke about an art professor who begins his first lecture saying: 'You might not know much about art, but you know what you like. Well, after taking this course you

still won't know much about art – but you'll know what I like.'

(17)

This kind of accessible writing (she writes in a very readable manner) is invaluable for those of us wishing to understand filmmaking sans all the obfuscatory nonsense that some practitioners use to cloud their craft. There is a sense at times that filmmakers don't actually want anyone to know how they raise money, build props, coerce actors into giving a decent performance etc. The sense from some industry writers is that movie making is like a sausage machine and no one needs to see how sausages actually get made. Vachon however gives you the full run down of what to expect if you're in the business of making an independent film. She doesn't pull her punches either; this work is not for the faint of heart.

What I find valuable in Vachon's work is her candid description of the production process from a minority perspective. For instance she describes how gay film-makers can be bullied by outsiders wishing to marginalise them further:

After *Poison* (1991 dir Todd Haynes) and *Swoon* (1992, dir Tom Kalin) I was dubbed The Queen of Queer Cinema, an appellation I loathe. Then I was attacked by a lesbian writer for only making movies with gay men – this after I'd produced just two features! When I took on the lesbian love story *Go Fish*, some people suggested it was a strategy to prove that my tastes extended beyond boy movies. You can never win.

Her advice as a nuts and bolts producer, however, is golden:

I can't be more emphatic: Throw your resources behind a script with which you're proud to be associated – and associated for a long time. Then make sure that the director is someone you could tolerate being stuck with on a desert island for a year, because that's what it's going to feel like. Then ask yourself: is it possible to do this movie for the money I can raise? How much can I raise? Ten thousand? Fifty? A quarter of a million?

(ibid)

Both Vachon and Pierson make a point of working with voices from the margins: new directors and original writing but with the addition of a good script. But as I discovered whilst working on *No Blood No Foul*, it's not just about the script, it's also about vision and budget.

At this level, clearly, development and budgeting go hand in hand. When trying to decide if I'm going to make a film, I don't just think about what it's going to say, but who it's going to say it to, and then I try to budget accordingly.

(23-24)

She does allow that not all independent films lose money:

Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust*, a slow moving, turn-of-the-century poetic drama about descendents of slaves on a remote island struggling to maintain their West African heritage racked up two million dollars with no advertising budget whatsoever.

(23-24)

Interestingly, John Pierson mentions Julie Dash's landmark film too, but only to say that he didn't get it, but he was glad that the film found its audience eventually. The point is that sometimes, success is hard to forecast – each ultra-low budgeted entertainment must be judged on its own merits and then a decision must be taken: to gamble or not to gamble? This autobiographic behind-the-scenes look at making independent movies works on a variety of levels; she does not skip over the script development and sale entirely and even gives advice on how best to pitch her:

- Be concise
- Don't gush (sometimes people come off more like stalkers than writers)
- Don't be too cocky (i.e., 'This film must – will – get made. The only question is whether you will be a part of it.')
- Do include a synopsis. I'm much more likely to read a script if it has an interesting treatment with it.
- Spell check. Seems obvious, right? You'd be surprized [*sic*].
Etc.

(38–39)

My main bone of contention with insider accounts of film development and production is that they generally look at the process after acquisition /commissioning (rather than the development of the screenplay. Pierson speaks mostly about the art of the deal, Vachon covers a little more about script development but generally wants to talk about the personalities behind the movies and the infrastructure and culture of a movie set. Another

critique is that, apart from the brief examples given above, there is not much interest in the experience of minorities. Pierson talks about Black and Queer writing but doesn't go into much depth about racism or homophobia. The same applies to Vachon – the structural inequalities felt by filmmakers from marginal backgrounds are not central to her account.

One interesting exception comes from Erich Leon Harris who interviews African-American screenwriters about their process. Harris's tangential statements are heartening, here he is interviewing Dwayne Johnson-Cochrane, an African-American writer/producer/director:

HARRIS: I think that a good story will transcend all of the politics of race. How else can you explain why black people go to the movies twice as much per capita, yet the representation of people of colour on the screen is so poor?

JOHNSON-COCHRANE : The thing about films in general is that they attract everybody, and black folks love them. We go see those images, and we love to see ourselves in them. Filmmakers like Spike [Lee] and Carl [Franklin] want to do something that reflects how they were raised and have people connect, so I wrote a film that makes them connect – connect to the community in a story that's universal

(6)

Harris's relationship with each interviewee enables him to tease out elements about the Black experience within the walls of the Hollywood elite that perhaps we may not have heard before – this exchange between the interviewer and African-

American movie hyphenate, Charles Burnett (Dir. and wr. *To Sleep With Anger* 1990) is telling:

HARRIS: Someone once told me that the studios will only spend a certain amount of money, usually under ten million, on a black film because, if it does any business at all at the box office, it can go into profits with video and ancillary markets. What are your thoughts?

BURNETT: Well, the irony of it is that black people go to the movies at a greater rate per capita than any other group, except kids under a certain age. There is this notion that keeping the budgets down low will make a film more viable. But there's more to it.

This last quote in particular provides a deeper understanding of the rules (or indeed 'lore') around black film and its perceived inability to cross over to mainstream audiences. But frustratingly, Harris does not develop this further – his interest is only in the writing process rather than film production. As such he merely scratches the surface when discussing the structural inequalities felt by black folk and how this manifests at the script-writing stage of production. This is where this project represents an intervention. In drawing attention to script-development, which is a neglected issue in industry-insider accounts of film production. And to frame this explicitly in terms of the experience of racial minorities and the particular struggles we face in an industry that is perhaps not quite as 'woke' as its American counterpart. I do, however, admire the personal tone of these writers and that

is something I wish to adopt in my own insider account of being a BAME creative in a predominantly white world.

In terms of my approach to this project, I recognised that I needed an interdisciplinary approach that includes more critical questions that take into account the culture of film or television and how they shape the politics of production. This is the approach of insider accounts of production from an academic perspective. Whilst industry-insider accounts use autobiography, academic researchers use auto-ethnography as a formal social research method. This entails immersion in a particular culture and careful observation, and the production of comprehensive fieldwork notes. It is a holistic approach involving the personal and political response to the system from which one is reporting. This type of academic writing is immersive and longitudinal where select groups of interviewees over time are allowed to contribute to the author's data.

The most classic example of this approach comes from Georgina Born's in-depth study of the BBC, *Uncertain Visions* – a hugely immersive social anthropological study of a system in crisis, tackling the question of whether its inhabitants are able to structure an alternative route to escape trouble. Born herself describes an interdisciplinary set of methods.

Sometimes called 'participant observation' or 'ethnography', anthropological fieldwork is a

method that involves living among or hanging out with the people being studied. Born's constant presence behind the sacred closed doors of Auntie Beeb allowed her a previously forbidden access – she was able to ask questions that those before her had deemed impolitic or verboten. And while her study was not specifically interested in race, within her account she reveals the misguided and at times chaotic nature of the BBC's diversity management. Take the following account from a worker with a BAME background:

From the late eighties, there was a Black Worker's Group set up by black staff who wanted to share problems and strategies for dealing with them. One issue was that in the last few years it was the Afro-Caribbean members of the Black Workers Group that had some influence on programming strategy with Michael Jackson; the Asian members had less of a voice. There's always that tension. It's the age old problem with race relations: you want to drive equality issues forward together. But there are also specific cultural concerns you want to see happening in relation to particular communities, and sometimes you resent being put in the same bag.

(Born 2005: 206)

This type of research allows the author to listen and note and not interfere very much with proceedings. Often within an institution, the downtrodden staff members just want to talk:

GB: Has the equal ops policy been successful now, at least on the employment front?
RESPONDENT: There have been a variety of problems. A year ago, at the end of Sarinda Sharma's reign at Equal Ops, the targets that

had been set had been exceeded for ethnic minorities and women, but not yet for disabled people, and not necessarily at every level. But then the budgets were cut, you know: 'You've reached the targets; surely we don't need these expensive initiatives any more.' Whenever targeted adverts were run there were complaints from the Freedom Association, various conservative MPs and so on. They would write in and say, 'Why is the BBC favouring black people? Isn't this racism in reverse?'

(207)

The constant refrain throughout my PhD is 'Change the ethnic/gender demographic of the industry gatekeepers and change the output of that industry in the stroke of a pen'. What we learn from Born's analysis of diversity problems within the BBC is that even taking steps towards making representation within an enormous institution can be a stress-laden affair with many an obstacle in the way:

A couple of years ago, Sarinda noticed that black people weren't moving up to producer level; so he tried to arrange a trainee producer attachment for one of the assistant producers in TV. There was a legal challenge to it by the Freedom Association. Herman Ousely had just been imposed as head of the CRE (Commission for Racial Equality), and to show how fair he was he made this case a cause celebre and said he wasn't going to let the BBC flout the law, whatever the good intentions. It was a real political botch up around a genuine attempt to break the glass ceiling and get black people into senior levels that were still eluding them. That incident tainted other efforts because management got nervous.

Another example of a qualitative study of production comes from Harley Benedict Lyle. This is particularly apposite for my project as it contains an in-depth analysis of the script development process and an interest in the experiences of BAME creatives. Like me, Benedict Lyle has a unique access to his interviewees. He talks to them in an unguarded, intimate way which leads to very candid, honest and frank exchanges. Here's Lyle talking to filmmaker Ayub Khan Din about race and class and the development industry. Even Ayub Khan Din (writer of *East is East*) gets cross sometimes when he's in development meetings, as Benedict Lyle discovered:

We've already seen in two of the interviews excerpted above how getting on with people is a highly prized asset of executives, so the writers are perhaps correct to think that getting on with the executives and producers is an important part of their career. And how, conversely, it can become problematic if these relationships aren't as smooth as hoped for. Take this from writer Ayub Khan Din, one of the very few of my interviewees who didn't have a university education.

Khan Din: I'm not very good at trying to explain what I want in those kind of meetings. It usually comes out that they're trying to change things ... the right kind of language to use, I'm not very good at that. I find it hard when people start making the wrong choices.

Lyle: Is there a class profile of people in the film industry, producers execs etc.?

Khan Din: It's all very middle class. They're all called Ben. Or Emma. Miranda.

(160)

This approach appeals to me because an overly academic tone limits accessibility to the types of people one is trying to engage. It is almost necessary to create a 'Trojan horse' style methodology for interviewing industry gatekeepers in order to garner academic data. In my case, there are precious few academic insider accounts of race and minority productions, so Benedict Lyle's interview methodology is invaluable to a researcher such as myself. He interviews people like film producer and co-founder of Trademark films David Parfitt, and allows them to speak their truth. Parfitt won an Academy award for *Shakespeare in Love* (1998-dir John Madden, Wr Marc Norman, Tom Stoppard). Here he discusses (with Lyle's annotations) why it is so difficult for BAME creatives to gain a foothold in the TV and film industry:

'I'm thinking about the market in terms of what I want to see and what I think my friends want to see.' He qualifies this very clear statement by adding, 'in terms of taste and what I believe an audience will go for, I follow my instincts.' However, this second statement – falling back on the vague, rather ill-defined 'instincts' – cannot obscure the power of the first: He judges an audience for a film by what he and

his friends might want to see. He is putting himself and his social circle at the centre of any considerations about the audience and as a consequence, he can thus claim to 'know' this audience rather well. This is not the megalomaniacal pronouncement of someone who thinks his tastes stand for the whole world, rather an honest assessment of where he gets his audience knowledge from.

While this claim is not a megalomaniacal assertion, neither is it a humble one. Parfitt is not suggesting that he or anybody else could easily work out what his friends might want to see. There's a level of expertise still implied.

(Benedict Lyle: 117)

This kind of work is vital and parallel to the research contained within my thesis; although my development executive doesn't say it out right, there is a kind of 'we know best' attitude throughout the experience. Although the repeated refrain of 'Lenny is a great writer/I can't write like Lenny' ran as a seam throughout the development notes from both Boaretto and Prieto, we infer as we read deeper into their critique, that actually they know best and they intend to influence the outcome of the script even to the level of rewriting it themselves. And if it can happen to someone with over forty years experience in the business, then it can happen to anyone. Lyle follows his line of argument to its inevitable conclusion:

For the moment, if we follow the logic of the above approach to the audience, then

we're left with a situation where not only do the creators of these cultural products come from a particular field or class, but their conception of the audience is also identical to this field or class. We would get to a position where filmmakers are making films for people like themselves, and thinking of this as a representative audience of the wider film going public. The danger to the breadth of content is clear. Not only is a very small section of society making films; they are making them under the illusion that the audience for these films is just like their friends and family.

(119)

Therefore, I am taking from both types of investigation: autobiographic and autoethnographic. My thesis involved action, desk and field research – although I did not live amongst the staff at Revolution Films. I have adopted a deliberately readable style for the most part, like Vachon or Pierson. However when called upon to do so, there is a more critical approach when needed which allows me to tackle the politics of representation in a concerted way and also the politics of production that is the dynamic of how things get made in relation to the question of power. Even though my thesis is predicated upon the development of a screenplay, I found, as I researched, that I could not ignore questions of power in terms of the predominantly white producers, executives, casting directors, financiers etc. in our industry and the concrete traditions and 'lore' around minorities in film. This is what took me into the question of

diversity and fed into my subsequent activism around these issues.

In summary

My theoretical framework is interdisciplinary, combining production studies with a critical cultural approach to race and representation, inflected by intersectionality. I've employed mixed methods whereby my analysis of the sports genre and the representation of race and gender (in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5) is augmented by qualitative interviews with key gatekeepers, alongside action research and autoethnography in order to critically reflect on how the production process shaped the development of my screenplay. My hope is that this thesis will provide a useful contribution to the general study of race in the media, and I believe that my unique autoethnographic research will add to the growing field of production studies of race and media.

I also hope that my experiences will be of use to those engaged in diversity debates in the UK and that the issues that concern me here will in the near future no longer be relevant.

Brief reflections on my activist history and context

In 2008, before I embarked on this doctoral research, I was privileged to give a talk at the Royal Television Society about diversity in the television industry. The speech was entitled 'The

Road to Diversity Is Closed: Please Seek Alternate Routes' (Henry 2008; see Appendix 10). The content was a fairly broad historical survey of BAME involvement in British television from my perspective as the UK-born son of Jamaican parents. There were lots of jokes about race and racism in TV and an appraisal of which broadcasters were succeeding in their attempts to create a more diverse work environment (I remember Children's BBC was ahead of the curve here) and which broadcasters were failing; at that time ITV set no formal targets and had a low 7 per cent BAME inclusion across the network. It stated that one in three GMTV production trainees and two senior ITN managers were BAME, which was vague and unsatisfying. I was not enthusiastic about creating ghettos in television production with specific ethnic minority channels such as 1xtra, MTV Base and Zee TV. I said at the time: '1xtra, MTV Base and Zee TV are all hugely popular, but whenever I watch these channels, all I see is a ghetto - and I don't know about you, but I've never wanted to live in the ghetto.' (Henry 2008: 25) I then made a joke about posh white people wanting to live in the ghetto because, apparently, 'one can purchase crack cocaine and set fire to a police car, what larks!' (Henry 2008: 25).

We were all much younger then.

I had a plan of sorts - Len's list of things to do, a wish list, if you will - of reminders for the

broadcasters, commissioners, casting directors; as Pat Younge (Sugar Productions) would call them, the 'pickers and deciders' (30). The list was a set of instructions with regard to putting diversity on the agenda: creating work programmes, internships, positive discrimination in employment practice for broadcasters. The talk ended with a quote attributed to Goethe, concluding: 'Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.'

Although it was well received, the speech did not gain much traction in the industry. The subject matter of inclusiveness and diversity was, at the time, seen as a distraction from more important matters of ratings and government cuts and the like. A lot of talented and dedicated people threw themselves against the unassailable cliffs of prejudice, closed-shop employment practices, glass ceilings and immovable institutional policy. They simply ran out of steam. As such a secondary aim of this thesis, in addition to developing a film script, was to build on this moment and think more deeply about the challenges of diversity in the cultural industries, and how this can be addressed publicly. I develop this theme further in Chapters 9 and 10, but I want to close this section by adding that I consider the activism I conducted following this thesis as a key part of the practice element.

The aims of this thesis

When I began this doctorate, my original aim was to explore issues of gender, class and ethnicity through the writing of a screenplay – in this instance a sports film (I research the parameters of the genre in Chapters 2 to 5 of this thesis). My ambition was that this would be lively and exciting to read and sufficiently attractive enough to raise international finance, and that it would speak to a popular audience. At the same time I hoped I would find new formulations, new voices for the characters within it, that would speak to the communities I know and am from, and transcend what I saw as externally imposed ‘media stereotypes’. My interest in the sports film led to a commission by a seemingly progressive UK film company with a reasonably open brief. But what I was to discover, during the gruelling three-year development process, were layers and levels of obstacles, which themselves became the object of further study. How much are script decisions determined by the writer, and how much by the other members of the production team – the producer, director, financier, distributor? Are such script meeting comments as ‘Does the coach character have to be black?’ simply casual and unthinking racism, or are they made for production and marketing reasons that I, as the mere writer, cannot know but must respect? How far must I go to appease what are often presented in meetings as genre norms or media marketing

conventions? How far, in the end, might I be self-censoring? This stage of script development, documented in Chapters 7 and 8 of the thesis, led me to a crisis of confidence and of purpose, as I felt less and less able to counter the ideologies and practices I faced by simply 'writing better'. The way I resolved this crisis, both creatively for myself and in terms of this study, was to return to the field of activism and use the position I had achieved as a media player to take my findings back to the film and television industries, confront them with the restrictions I had encountered and engage them in a dialogue around issues particularly of race and ethnicity, moving the debate from the specifics of my struggle with this single development project to the larger forum of the UK media industry as a whole. My findings and recommendations are discussed in Chapters 9 and 10.

I hope that the above contexts make it clear that, for me, this process has not simply been a dry piece of study; it has been a dynamic process, based on my forty-year career as a performer and a writer, both drawing insights from that career and feeding those insights back into my current practice. And it has galvanised my campaigning aims and objectives, giving greater fluency and depth to my public arguments. For example, I have observed and been involved in the BBC Director-General's diversity roundtable committee, spoken to a government Select Committee about diversity

in the TV and film industry and won awards from BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts), the Royal Television Society and MOBO (Music Of Black Origin) for moving the debate along, ensuring that diversity remains within the public interest, enshrining the requirements of BAME within the BBC Charter (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2016; see also Blazeby 2016) and engendering change at the British Film Institute, Channel Four and Sky TV. I write more on this in Chapter 10 as part of my concluding remarks.

Genre, gender and race (Chapters 2-5)

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In 'Genre and the Sports Film' (Chapter 2) I set up the enquiry with a literature review utilising the work of various genre theorists, in particular Rick Altman (1999) and Aaron Sorkin (2016). Both point to Aristotle's poetics as the touchstone and source from which much genre theory has derived. Whilst arguing vehemently with his peers – Edward Buscombe (1970), Raphaëlle Moine (2008), Steve Neale (1999) and Thomas Schatz (1981) – Altman seeks to appropriate their best ideas and uses them to formulate new definitions of film genre.

Chapter 2 then continues with a definition of the sports film and seeks to give the lie to those who claim that the sports film does not constitute a genre in its own right (Whannel 2008). The works

of Ken Dancyger and Jeff Rush (2013) and Aaron Baker (2003) are utilised in support of the argument that the sports film may be seen to possess recognisable and recurring generic conventions.

This is followed by an exploration of how most protagonists are usually white and male, such as Al Pacino in *Any Given Sunday* (1999, Oliver Stone), Clint Eastwood in *Million Dollar Baby* (2004, Clint Eastwood) or Matthew McConaughey in *We Are Marshall* (2006, McG). In these examples, and many others, the white male coach is an attractive role for a Hollywood movie star, guaranteed central status, barnstorming speeches and key action in pivotal scenes. Thus one rarely sees an ethnic minority or physically challenged person, a woman or LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) individual in the central role.

Chapter 3 explores the notion of an 'Impossible Manhood' by focusing on the often historicised nature of the central protagonist of the American sports film: white, male and working class, which appears to be a gold standard for most feature films portraying athletes and their coaches. The chapter focuses on six films: *The Natural* (1984, Barry Levinson), *Bull Durham* (1988, Ron Shelton), *Rudy* (1993, David Anspaugh), *Remember the Titans* (2000, Boaz Yakin), *Raging Bull* (1980, Martin Scorsese) and *Rocky* (1976, John G. Avildsen).

In Chapter 4, 'The Black Male Protagonist', I explore the narrative and aesthetic consequences of

placing a minority ethnic protagonist at the centre of a film, and also what happens when a performer of colour takes a central role previously designated for a white performer. Bernie Mac stars in *Mr. 3000* (2004, Charles Stone III), which is described by film critic Armond White as a 'major advance in ethnic characterisation' (White 2004). I disagree with his assessment, because the film is not about ethnic representation; it is a very simple, high-concept baseball-based comedy feature. I point out that anyone could have played the role of Ross; as White rightly comments, 'Ross's characterisation has nothing to do with his ethnic minority status and has everything to do with his acquisitive nature, his love of money and his selfishness' (2004).

This is a missed opportunity, as I point out by comparing this film to Spike Lee's *He Got Game* (1998). I praise the film but also criticise Lee's 'scattergun misanthropy throughout', as he lashes out at blacks, whites, men, women, colleges and sports companies with equal rage and disdain. Despite these features, Lee's concern to locate an African-American protagonist at the centre of the narrative was to influence, as I later indicate, my own attempts to achieve something similar with my screenplay *No Blood No Foul*.

In Chapter 5, 'Female Stereotypes in the Sports Film', I highlight the overly conventional roles of women in sports films, which Tudor (1997) points out are usually those of 'mother, spectator,

cheerleader and booster'. I then go on to point out that sports films featuring women protagonists have a propensity to highlight and foreground the melodramatic elements of the genre. In *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002, Gurinder Chadha) our heroine, Jess, must battle her mother's wishes for her to be a dutiful wife-in-training rather than play football in the park with an all-female team. In rejecting her parents' traditional values, Jess's characterisation makes a concerted effort at breaking the rules with regard to women in sports films, but in the course of the movie she becomes entangled in a love triangle with her best friend and their coach (played by Jonathan Rhys Myers). In *Million Dollar Baby*, Maggie Fitzgerald, a working-class waitress from the wrong side of the tracks, decides to become a boxer and seeks out Clint Eastwood's experienced trainer, Frankie Dunn, for tuition before she takes to the ring. Jean O'Reilly (2007) sees the upsurge in female protagonists as anomalous and a return to the age-old tradition of keeping the woman in her place, within the arena of 'women's films', a genre that came into its own 'in the Depression era of films of the 1930s and the war films of the 1940s'.

This constant relegating of women to traditional matriarchal roles signals a diminution of women's participation in these films: Maggie in *Million Dollar Baby* is, in effect, punished in the final third of the movie for her gender and class transgressions as we discover her family's

ignorance and lack of empathy when they reject her gift of a new house. In *Fast Girls* (2012, Regan Hall) our heroine, Shania Andrews (Leonora Crichlow), comes from a broken family on a working-class estate, and must reconcile her street attitude with that of her white middle-class opponent, Lisa Temple (Lily James). Camilla Fojas highlights *Girlfight* and its maintenance of themes that are familiar to the boxing genre (an underdog takes on boxing training in order to triumph in the final third of the film). I then go on to indicate how these movies both subvert and conform to traditional sports film genre tropes (partly due to the melodramatic influence).

The chapter concludes with an appeal for a level playing field for those designated as 'other' in the film and TV industry - BAME, women, people with disabilities - and beyond. It ends with a warning that, unless we change the language and texture of cultural exchange, women will remain excluded, not just from sport films but from whole aspects of social and power transaction.

The screenplay and the development process (Chapters 6-10)

Having completed a literature and film survey of how genre relates with story structure and character stereotyping, and having specifically examined the sports genre and the ways in which it interpolates class, race and gender, I next move to the practice elements of my thesis. I have detailed

earlier in this introduction the circumstances of being invited to discuss writing a sports genre screenplay for a UK/US production with a UK production company, and how this led to my commitment to this PhD project. In Chapter 6, I present a brief reflection upon the craft of the screenwriter, which contains a number of observations about the process and its pleasures and discontents; notably, the contradiction that all writers face: between actively seeking constructive feedback and criticism of their work, so that they may revise and improve it, and being at the same time wary of aggressive or strident 'script notes' for fear that they may overwhelm the writer and unbalance the script. I then present the original outline I produced for this narrative: *Moonlight Marauders* (Henry 2010; hereafter MM Outline) and the final or 'selling' draft of the screenplay *No Blood No Foul* (Henry 2011; hereafter NBNF (Selling)). (In the Appendices can be found the two interim drafts: the initial version, *No Blood No Foul* (Initial) is in Appendix 2; *No Blood No Foul* (Director's) – the director's rewrite of my text – is to be found in Appendix 5.)

In Chapter 7, I describe the development process that produced the script, indicating the various drafts the screenplay underwent and identifying key moments in the correspondence between myself (the screenwriter) and Boaretto (the script editor). This chapter also contains an autoethnographic running internal commentary, based

on my responses to the feedback at the time, as well as the input of a selection of 'ideal readers' recruited to provide support and critique.

Chapter 8 provides a more formal analysis of the changes that took place over the course of the development process, particularly in relation to issues of gender, race and class. What this reveals is how a BAME-centric project can shift from its initial intentions during the 'industrial' development process.

What became increasingly clear to me during the three-year development process of NBNF was that the creative and ideological issues and conflicts that I described earlier were most likely not unique to me. As I discuss at the beginning of this introduction, my experience of working in the film and television industry as a performer had very often left me isolated and feeling that my views were somehow suspect, extreme, quirky or 'not appealing to the middle ground'. I experienced a similar sense of demoralisation at times during the NBNF development process. The analytical work described above convinced me that there were objective grounds for seeing similar pressures and biases in the script development process to those I had encountered in casting and in acting. This drove me to extend the original scope of the thesis to take my findings back to some of the most influential figures in British film and television today. My discussions with them make up Chapter 9,

and my conclusions and recommendations in relation to the whole thesis are found in Chapter 10.

I should make it clear that this is not a quantitative or statistically driven survey of the UK industry, but more an in-depth qualitative study, where I believe that my industry track record (including Comic Relief and my work with like-minded others as a diversity champion) has given me a unique rapport with the people I interviewed, and this has produced more honest and significant replies than would a 'cold' approach with a questionnaire. What emerges most strongly from my own experience with NBNF and from these interviews is the renewed importance of greater BAME and related diversity in our industries.

Chapter 2
Genre and the Sports Film

Since the start of the motion picture industry in the United States, sports have been a frequent subject for the movies. Hollywood has produced hundreds of films about sports for the same reason that synergistic ties have been established between American movies and other cultural forms, including theatre, fashion, television, advertising, and toys. From the documentary-style 'news films' of major prize fights and the World Series that were an important part of the early film industry, to recent blockbusters such as *Space Jam* (1998), *Jerry Maguire* (1996) and *The Waterboy* (1998), collaboration with sports has helped sell the movies.

(Baker 2003: 1)

Genre has always been a part of our lives

Whether reading books or comics, or watching television or films, our choices and entertainments are often dictated by genre. We are often unaware of this, however. We visit websites such as Amazon Prime and Netflix, and browse the multiplicity of categories: thriller; comedy; horror; fantasy; crime; martial arts; action adventure; drama; epic; musical; sci-fi; war; westerns. Somehow we navigate our way through this turbulent sea of possibilities to make a choice based on what we fancy watching that evening. The questions that present themselves are many, including: what makes us choose one particular film over another? What role does genre play in the structure of screenplays? How do genre rules affect the marketing, exhibiting and distribution of certain films?

Perhaps consumers make genre choices unthinkingly; genre theorists may help us

understand the concepts of genre and the choices we make more deeply, however. Their job is to explore the origins, life cycles and present-day status of where each particular genre resides, both in the public and in academic consciousness.

As Altman states,

[F]rom Aristotle to Todorov and from Horace to Wellick and Warren, the topic of genre has remained one of the staples of theoretical discourse.

(Altman 1999: 1)

Genre theorists frequently cite Aristotle's *Poetics* as the epicentre of storytelling conceptualisation. Screenwriter Aaron Sorkin calls it the 'rule book':

Rules are what makes art beautiful, what makes sports beautiful ... [In soccer] if you were allowed to pick up the ball, run into the stands, run down to the other end of the field, shoot the goal-keeper in the head and toss the ball in the net, it wouldn't be a very interesting game. It's the rules that make it beautiful ... The rule book is *The Poetics* by Aristotle; all the rules are there.

(Sorkin 2016)

Aristotle's rational approach in relation to naming and cataloguing the various types and classifications of performance may have engendered what we now know as film genre theory. In fact, industry insiders virtually foam at the mouth when describing the philosopher's legacy and lasting utility in relation to screenwriting:

The Poetics is still useful to screenwriters because Aristotle explained why well-structured dramatic works affected audiences the way they did. He analysed plot devices, character and everything you'd find in a Hollywood coverage sheet today. In fact, I think it's safe to say that Aristotle, besides being the greatest mind in Western civilization, was the world's first movie analyst!

(Tierno 2002: 1)

In *Film/Genre*, Altman (1999) takes issue with Aristotle's approach, asserting that his theories are incomplete, and require unpacking and further thought. He draws on various claims by a range of genre theorists, from the classical period to the present day, and either rejects their work or improvises on their themes in order to create a new perspective. His conclusions can be paraphrased in the following way: genres are akin to self-cannibalising entities, as they feed on themselves, repeatedly. In other words – the rules of film genre change continually. As film-makers, directors, writers and exhibitors append new adjectives to already existing types of film, such as action/comedy, horror/war, sci-fi/western, romcom/zombie historical, Altman goes on to compare this activity to a constant remapping of territory undertaken by human civilisation throughout its evolution:

Cycles and genres, nomads and civilizations ... all are part of the ongoing remapping process that alternately energizes and fixes human perception. When cycles

settle into genres, their fixity makes them perfect targets for raids by new cycles.

(Altman 1999: 212)

The significance of genre theory

Altman is helpful again, in mapping the complexity of the genre concept and its multiple meanings, which he proposes we might identify as follows:

Genre as blueprint as a formula that precedes programs and patterns industry production;

genre as structure as the formal framework on which individual films are founded;

genre as label, as the name of a category central to the decisions of communicators and distributors;

genre as contract, as the viewing position required by each genre of its audience.

(Altman 1999: 14)

Unpacking this, we may perhaps propose that 'blueprint' simply means a work of art or idea that sits firmly in the minds of those who design and control (in this instance) the film industry. 'Structure' can be interpreted as how a film is analysed and broken down into its component elements. Critics do this but genre study also provides a structure or set of conventions that guide-writers, film-makers and consumers use as well. Genre as 'label' can perhaps be described as how distributors and exhibitors name and programme their product. Lastly, genre as 'contract' means the unspoken arrangement between a film's audience

and the film-makers. In other words, it refers to how audiences are positioned when taking the decision to go to a film and the expectations they have concerning the kind of film they are watching. Ryall describes this contract simply, referring to it as a '[t]riangle composed of artist/structures/audience'. On this basis, he argues, genres maybe be defined as 'patterns /forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films, and which supervise both their construction by the film-maker, and their reading by an audience.' (Ryall 1975: 28)

Altman confuses matters for the layperson when he uses a variety of metaphorical paradigms to demonstrate classification, use, filing, perspective and intention, one of which is a cartographic analogy. He also discusses the establishment of genres at the beginning of film history, and how certain genres have stayed on the map of genre in general but others have been erased from the landscape through lack of visitation. So we find cinematic 'civilisations' dying out and being replaced by new (metaphorical) towns and cities. Racist westerns where Native Americans are stereotypical bad guys and Caucasian white-hat-wearing heroes gallop to the rescue are replaced by revisionist westerns such as *Dances with Wolves* (1991, Kevin Costner) or *Unforgiven* (1992, Clint Eastwood). This map is a palimpsest: a layering of transparent genre maps placed on top of each other

in order for us to understand the shifting paradigm and meaning of genre.

Moine's *Cinema Genre* (2008) improvises a variation on this theme, alluding to Altman's comparison between genre and *Jurassic Park* (1993, Steven Spielberg), a film in which genetically engineered dinosaurs run amok. In the film's narrative, dinosaurs are manufactured using '[b]iotechnology [and] programmed to be all the same sex in order to avoid the possibilities of uncontrolled natural reproduction ... their biological sex [changed] as the result of a logic of adaptation' (2008: 205-6). In the same way, because genres draw upon the social values of an era, they are subject to redefinition as well as semantic or syntactic shifts that respond to and perpetuate historical, social, cultural and cinematic changes.

Having identified the ways in which the idea of genre has been used, I shall now attempt to identify the rules or conventions that characterise the sports film.

Cold reality: sports films get no respect

Not all agree that the sports film is a genre, however. Garry Whannel damns the genre with a lack of praise that beggars belief:

Sports films do not constitute a genre, they do not have a consistent set of themes, images or tropes. They do not share a characteristic style or mise en scene. Sports

films do not lend themselves to being understood through concepts of 'auteur'.

(Whannel 2008: 195)

Aaron Baker also testifies to the sports film's undervalued status by genre theorists, film critics and pundits alike. Their contribution to the pantheon of best-selling films is impressive, however. The sports biography alone makes up the majority of the oeuvre. This includes films such as *Ali* (2001, Michael Mann), *Raging Bull* (1980, Martin Scorsese), *The Flying Scotsman* (2007, Douglas MacKinnon), *Chariots of Fire* (1981, Hugh Hudson), *Prefontaine* (1997, Steve James), *42* (2013, Brian Helgeland), *The Express* (2008, Gary Fleder), *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956, Robert Wise), *The Fighter* (2010, David O. Russell), *Brian's Song* (1971, Buzz Kulik) and *Coach Carter* (2005, Thomas Carter). It should be borne in mind that this is just a tiny selection of films which all tell the story of an individual from sports history in an entertaining way. So the question is: does this apparent plethora of successful productions give the lie to Whannel's claim?

The conventions, tropes and stereotypes of the sports film

In direct opposition to Whannel's statement about the sports film's lack of genre status, I would like to propose that sports films do have their own narrative and stylistic conventions, in the same

way that romantic comedies and war films do, and that these function in the manner that Ryall suggests above. Therefore, in order to write a unique and original sports screenplay, the author must draw upon, adapt and even subvert the normal conventions and tropes that have gone before to create something not only distinctive but also faithful to the genre in which he/she has chosen to work (and which, in turn, guides the viewer's responses).

Pursuing this matter further, it is possible to summarise how other writers have identified the recurring genre conventions and tropes of the sports film genre. Perhaps the most comprehensive overview is provided by Dancyger and Rush:

Broadly speaking the elements for a successful sports film [are]: The central character is a gifted athlete ... He tests himself within the parameters of a particular sport. Only sports that have a broad appeal to society make a good background for this genre (boxing, football, baseball). The apparent antagonist, the other team, the manager or the owner, is not as important as is the interior struggle of the central character. He is his own worst enemy. Relationships, whether they be male/female or male/male, are crucial to the central character. A mentor (father/coach or another professional) plays a key role. Family is an important component in this genre, melodramas and gangster films are the

only other genre in which family figures so prominently.

The ritual: in this case, the big game or the big fight, plays a central role in the sports genre.

(Dancyger and Rush 2013: 119)

Harvey Marc Zucker and Lawrence Babich suggest that the following plot convention is also a key feature:

Most sports films fall into the 'Triumph of the Underdog' category ... Nearly everyone can identify with – and therefore cheer on – someone who triumphs over the greatest of odds.

(Zucker and Babich 1987: 1)

They also suggest that

[g]etting there is hard enough but staying there is even tougher, which is why 'fall of the mighty' is another favourite theme of sports movies

(2)

This leads them to argue that the 'resurrection of the mighty – the comeback film' – is yet another recurring trope (2).

In his discussion of sports in film, Ronald Bergan also makes the point that the sports hero is conventionally male:

Allied to the worship of the concept of Youth and Success in American Life, is the idealisation of the He man: Sports are revealed as a reinforcement of the theory that it's a man's world; where men are men and women are ... nowhere.

He goes on to say:

The subjects of biopics have inveterately been chosen, not for the talents that made them into sporting heroes, but for some deficiency or disability that puts a blight on their careers. The drama inherent in the sporting event itself is not enough for the screenplay, thus the conflict on the field or in the ring must reflect another conflict outside it ...

(12)

All of the above contribute to a definition of the sports film genre; these opinions are far from being carved in stone, however, and there is always room for a market disruptor; a maverick who will break the mould and redefine the genre. As you will see in Chapters 7 through 9 of this PhD by practice, any attempt to 'disrupt the market' is resisted vigorously by those in control of production, who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Sports film clichés: the seven rules

'Clichés' become clichés because they work; they are also eminently easy to parody. Kelly (2013) offers seven rules of the sports film, again alluding directly and humorously to the distinctive nature of the genre. These are (in the same order employed by Kelly) as follows.

7. Every hero needs a wet blanket.

Here he cites Adrian in the *Rocky* series, as played by Talia Shire. Kelly rather chauvinistically reports:

The wet blanket, girlfriend, wife or other random family member is the one character who, no matter how inspirational your hero is, will never, ever (and let us stress, ever) believe in him. Adrian Balboa repeatedly told Rocky he couldn't win ... [S]he was killed off prior to the sixth movie. That'll show her!

(Kelly 2013)

This character does not necessarily have to be partnered with the protagonist. For example, Rudy is told by his father that he has no hope of achieving his dreams; and professional golf champ David Simms (Don Johnson) humiliates washed-up driving range owner Roy McAvoy (Kevin Costner) in *Tin Cup* (1996, Ron Shelton) by dressing better, being cleverer and stealing his girlfriend.

6. Team brawls and dances breed success.

Kelly claims that the celluloid team that dances and fights each other winds up not only staying together, but also winning the pennant, trophy, belt and badge too.

Maybe you could take a note from the team in *H*, who learned that the surest way to intimidate an opponent is to dance your way onto the field ... In *The Replacements* [2000, Howard Deutch] [they] pulled off quite the coup de grace by not just dancing or fighting

but doing both in the same night!

(Kelly 2013)

5. Every hero deserves a second chance.

This particular rule works for Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone), who begins the film cycle as a mob leg breaker and club fighter with no future to speak of, or Norman Dale (Gene Hackman) in *Hoosiers* (1986, David Anspaugh):

If you're a disgraced former player or coach, a has been or a never was who didn't get his chance to shine in the first place (like Paul Blake in *Necessary Roughness* [US TV series 2011-2013, USA Network]), chances are we're going to be rooting our asses off for you to succeed.

(Kelly 2013)

I am not sure I would have put it like that, but I know exactly what he means. In *Cinderella Man* (2005, Ron Howard) Russell Crowe plays Depression-era boxing contender James J. Braddock, who once had fast hands but broke one of them (his right) in the ring. This undeserved misfortune reverses when James whilst working as a manual labourer strengthens his left to 'knock 'em down, drag 'em out' levels. Braddock returns and soon gets a shot against the seemingly indestructible and unpleasantly German Max Baer. Braddock does indeed get to go to the ball, but in a pair of fetching black shorts rather than a sparkly gown.

4. Every hero must face internal conflict.

Kelly here mistakes external for internal conflict because he cites two moments that are the opposite of his no. 4:

A more recent example would be the irrationally racist guy in *The Express*, who only learned to appreciate Ernie Davis after they started winning, or the irrationally racist guy in *Remember the Titans*, who just decided he was better at being a douchebag and stuck with that throughout the movie. Additionally, *Major League* [1989, David S. Ward] features a pair of irrationally hate filled teammates in Eddie Harris and Roger Dorn, who despised Pedro Cerano and Rick Vaughan for ... well, reasons.

(Kelly 2013)

In *No Blood No Foul*, my protagonist has self-esteem issues related to a breakdown he had on returning from a disastrous trip to an American basketball camp. Michael Hauge, of *Writing Screenplays that Sell* (1988) fame, tells us that your protagonist must have not only a visible outer motivation but also an internal need that must be resolved by the end of the picture. Kelly is basically saying the same thing but in less flowery language.

3. Montages cure all ills.

Every sports film worth its salt contains a training montage which usually starts with the athlete/team at the beginning of their fitness/skills attainment journey and then continues with an 'it's getting better' montage that resolves that journey:

The *Rocky* movies perfected the inspirational

sports movie montage, but its practice has become standard in every ... single ... sports movie ...since. Seriously, try to think of a sports movie that didn't contain at least one montage. Can you think of one? Didn't think so.

(Kelly 2013)

In storytelling terms, the montage is a filmic shorthand that conflates time and events and shows us that our hero/es worked hard for a period of time over a succession of short moments. With MTV-style musical accompaniment and varying stocks of film sped up or slowed down, however, the montage has become a self-parodying trope in recent years.

2. Beating someone earns their respect.

In essence, in many sports films the seemingly unbeatable opponent will cross the Rubicon of their pride and admit that the best person won, or at least fought them to a halfway decent draw. This is what occurs in *Rocky* (1976) and also in the brand's most recent offshoot, *Creed* (2015, Ryan Coogler), where Adonis 'Donnie' Johnson (Michael B. Jordan), the son of an extra-marital lover of former heavyweight champion Apollo Creed, fights the champion, Pretty Ricky Conlan, almost to a standstill and earns his respect

1. You must have a miraculous ending.

Kelly argues here that audiences do not want to see realism in a sports film; they can get that at their local park or stadium. They want magic:

We as an audience want to savor every second of our hero and/or team snagging victory out of the arms of the villainous (and probably better) opposing team. Because, at the end of the day, we all think of ourselves as underdogs, and we'd like nothing more than to see the people around us have their dreams shattered. Which reminds us: inspiration really comes second to vengeance which is disguised as inspiration. Victory is sweet, but it's even sweeter when you can also take some bully's pride at the same time. Just ask Daniel Larusso.

(Kelly 2013)

This is exemplified in *The Karate Kid* (1984). Directed by John G. Avildsen (who also helmed *Rocky*), and written by Robert Mark Kamen, *The Karate Kid* crafts another underdog-style hero in the form of Daniel Larusso, who begins his story as a skinny and bullied schoolboy and ends as a champion. This scenario is a further distinctive trope of the sports film genre. This sense of progress or uplift for the central protagonist in a sports film is important in consumer terms, another aspect of the genre's distinctive nature.

So, if every narrative's beginning, middle and end describe this triumvirate of structural blocks – 'order/disorder/order re-established' – then every sports film, such as *Hoosiers*, employs

the climactic contest conventional to sports films to re-establish a moral order that rewards hard work and determination of underdog protagonists. Even historical sports films that are more qualified in their optimism generally suggest that things have gotten or are getting better, although they

may emphasise the price paid for such progress.

(Baker 2003: 7)

This paragraph alone gives enough clues for any diligent sports film genre student: at least these three tropes, traditions and structural beats simply must be present in order for a film to be accepted into the pantheon of sports films:

□ the climactic contest;

□ a sense of disorder in the guise of a losing team or athlete;

□ a player, coach or team owner who not only prescribes the remedy to the player/coach/team's problems but also puts a strategy in place to fix their psycho/social/economic wounds so that they can play and win.

Having surveyed the above writers, such as Kelly, Bergan, Dancyger and Rush, etc., the linking notion from each is that the sports film genre employs their models and conventions variously as and when appropriate. This suggests a flexibility which further supports this notion, so that, like the best movie genres, it reflects a capacity for a wider accommodation of style and approaches.

Whilst in Chapter 3, 'Impossible Manhood', there is discussion of how the historicising of a film's subject matter precludes the participation of certain sociological and cultural groups, we can take early note that the very fact of a mainstream

Hollywood film being set in the past tends not only to limit the status of minorities, but also to airbrush them from existence. In sports films set in the present day, however, it could be argued that characters are more representative of the USA's demographic, but upon closer analysis the truth will be revealed that these characters are still secondary to the dominant white male: the coach, team manager or financier. As already noted, Bergan (1982: 9) comments that sport 'is a man's world; where men are men and women are ... nowhere'.

This in itself represents a distinct and unique feature of the contemporary sports film genre. In Baker's estimation there are many ways to present sports as a cinematic subject matter; he cites Rosenstone's claim that sports films tend to retroactively relate the story of an athlete/coach/team: 'Using a strong element of closure that leaves the audience with a "Moral message and (usually) a feeling of uplift"' (1995: 3, cited by Baker 2003: 7).

This also means that the achievement of a special sense of uplift is a characteristic of the sports genre film, namely the exhilaration of a successful training session; the montage sequences demonstrating the hero's physical progress towards his/her goal; the use of slow motion in order to prolong the climax of the race/fight/contest/or match; and finally the exuberance of victory.

An additional significant dimension

Having identified the main rules of the sports film genre, this analysis can now continue and demonstrate how these rules can apply to gender, race and class, as we will discover in later chapters.

The preceding analysis of the sports film genre invites a further significant consideration, which is reflected in the fact that in many of the sports films in the above investigation the coach character is an outsider. So, in *The Karate Kid*, Mr Miyagi is Japanese/American and visibly 'other', as are Samuel L. Jackson in *Coach Carter* and Denzel Washington in *Remember the Titans*. These are anomalies, though, in the general scheme of the sports film. The key role of the coach is usually given to a white performer of marquee value, such as Robert Redford, Al Pacino, Kurt Russell or whomever; only recently have we seen the stranglehold these A-listers possess weaken a little, with Forrest Whittaker's sensitive if traditional performance as the boxing coach in *Southpaw* (2015, Antoine Fuqua) or Terence Howard's competitive swimming coach in *Pride* (2007, Suno Goner) – or, indeed, *Hurricane Season* (2010, Tim Story), which features yet another sensitive and barnstorming performance from Whittaker as the coach of a high school basketball team at the time of Hurricane Katrina. These performances are rare exceptions, however; the status quo has barely

shifted. We therefore find that the majority of sports films are monocultural affairs, where we as an audience relive

historical contests we have witnessed in the past. Heightened realism in scenes in which the star competes is especially important in validating an ideology of agency that assumes that individual performance in these situations counts most in making the athlete what he is.

(Baker 2003: 13)

The privileging of the protagonist in this way is problematic for minority actors. We are only now approaching a time when performers of the non-dominant colour and gender are taking centre stage in feature films such as *Remember the Titans* and *Bend It Like Beckham*, and even then both films focus on an aspect of race. The domination of Hollywood within the sports film genre means that the individual or protagonist is king/queen and should take the leading role, ensuring an audience by virtue of their marquee value. This reduces the opportunities for BAME performers, because, even in the USA, there are only a few of these who can carry a film, and even fewer who can convince as a sporting legend on screen. So we find Will Smith in *Ali*, Denzel Washington in *Hurricane* (1999, Norman Jewison) or Woody Strode in *Spartacus* (1960, Stanley Kubrick), and more recently Chadwick Boseman as Jackie Robinson in *42*.

So it is that the Hollywood star-making system

has created an institutionally exclusive and un-diverse model within the sports film genre, which will be changed only by a high level of activism. This additional characteristic of the genre will be explored in later chapters, and goes to the heart of the subject of this thesis.

In summarising the issues raised by this chapter it is proposed that our understandings of genre conventions are many and various, and partly dependent upon which theorist or commentator we choose to favour. These genre conventions lead us to conclude that the sports film is pre-eminently masculine and white. These features are individually explored and complement the current chapter by focusing on race, class and gender. The following three chapters in order are: 'Impossible Manhood', 'The Black Male Protagonist' and 'Female Stereotypes in the Sports Film'.

Chapter 3
Impossible Manhood

In this chapter, the idea of Impossible Manhood is of course referring to exclusionary practices in mainstream cinema on the basis of race. Kibby's astute assertion regarding the structural change in white male sporting activity in the real world of eighties broadcast television prompted a counter move from the Hollywood industrial complex. This put white male experience at the centre of the majority of their stories and marginalized, subordinated or erased the black experience. The following chapter expands on this idea.

Even the most cursory examination of the Hollywood sports film genre suggests a range of values and attitudes characteristic of an emphatically male monoculture. This finds its expression in the proposition that sports heroes generally reflect the hegemonic nature of the masculine, conventionally rooted in nostalgia and the safeguarding or reintroduction of an idyllic, revised idea of the past. Such heroes are untainted by modernity and resistant to the pressures for change that modernisation seeks to impose upon the traditional notions of the sports film.

This finds no better expression than in the works of Marjorie Kibby, who states:

Sports became the major social forum for traditional male ideas of success, masculine power, and male superiority. In prioritizing traditional male qualities, sport, and its fictional representations, conjured up nostalgic ideals of an increasingly

impossible manhood. However, sport itself had changed within the context of evolving social structures, and sport in the eighties was not the haven of hegemonic masculinity it once had been.

(Kibby 1988: 19)

Kibby expands on her theory on the historicising of the sports film, and how '[t]he personal and social past is revised to compensate for the present, and provide hope for the future' (21).

The idea that Hollywood, rather than create new projects that tell contemporary stories in a truthful manner, would prefer to rewrite the past in order to please the predominant culture is also put forward. Kibby insists:

These two nostalgic scenarios, going back to a better time and rectifying past wrongs, were repeated in film after film during the eighties. The film of *The Natural* translated a rather grim novel about a necessarily doomed search for the American Dream into a bucolic parable of sporting success set in a sepia-toned, soft-focus past. After losing an arm Ray Hobbs (Robert Redford) is 'remasculinized', hitting a home run as he finds out that he is the father of a son.

(Kibby 1988: 21-2)

Kibby was not a lone voice in this argument. Other commentators have also expressed similar ideas regarding Hollywood's retroactive reframing of sporting events. Latham Hunter (2005), Frank Ardolino (1990), Roger Ebert (1988) and Joel Martin (2002) all indicate how the sports film is not only

white, middle-class and male but also reshapes history in its own image.

My research presented me with an uncomfortable truth, which was that much of this writing, and many of the sports films which had been focused upon, had been produced and were set in time periods that preceded two great social movements that were pertinent. These were the civil rights movement and the global rise of feminism. This, therefore, lent justification and piquancy to the exploration of not only the predominance of the masculine figure in the sports film but also the exclusions that went with this. In this chapter, however, I have chosen to examine six sports films which help to shed light on how the sports film addresses masculinity, and, in doing so, also illuminates the representation of race and gender (themes that I pursue in the following two chapters). These films are *The Natural*, *Bull Durham*, *Rudy*, *Remember the Titans*, *Raging Bull* and, finally, *Rocky*.

Some additional reasons for choosing these films were as follows. *Rudy*, *Remember the Titans* and *Raging Bull* are sporting dramas that are historical and periodised, in that they tell stories from a specific era. Their stories are told from a working-class perspective. Both *Rudy* and *Raging Bull* feature African-Americans in stereotypical roles – those of mentor/friend or seemingly unbeatable opponent – whilst *Titans* focuses on race as its thematic issue and relating

its story of black and white coaches battling for respect at a time when America was trying to come to grips with racial discord, which necessitates an integrated diverse cast. In film-making terms, this has consequences for matters of inclusion, marginalisation and the related tropes through which demographic and social tensions manifest themselves; *Titans* reveals the trope of Hollywood choosing to make racially inclusive films only if the subject matter is about a race-based issue. There are three biographical and three fictional films. The value of this is to contrast and compare how mainstream Hollywood film-makers choose and construct narratives. It also enables an examination of the degree to which both types tend to portray an essentially patriarchal and culturally dominant related perspective. In almost all cases (apart from *Remember the Titans* for obvious reasons) minority characters are marginalised in favour of their white counterparts.

It was also decided to select films that adhere to the conventions frequently associated with the sports film genre, namely: the aspirations of the underdog; the struggle against seemingly impossible odds; and the effect of an unsympathetic social environment as an inevitable background against which the struggle for success is located. *The Natural* is about a forgotten baseball player making a comeback (the underdog); *Bull Durham* is about an older, more experienced baseball player in a struggle for continued relevance in both love and

his chosen game; *Rudy* is about an unlikely underdog hero; *Remember the Titans* is about the integration of a high school football team in a racially contentious historic period; *Rocky* is about not only an underdog but also battling a seemingly unbeatable black opponent to a draw; and *Raging Bull* is a masterful combination of self-sabotage, racism, misogyny, homophobia, pre-civil rights, pre-feminism, working class to middle class, rags to riches to rags – all in the space of 129 minutes.

Finally, because of later analysis in this thesis, the films were chosen because they reflect a degree of consistency in their employment of the structural conventions found in Joseph Campbell's mono myth as found in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). I will explore Campbell's work in greater detail in Chapter 5, relating to the development of my screenplay *No Blood No Foul*. In essence the hero's journey can be summarised thus:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

(Campbell 1949: 28)

When the analysis of all stories is complete, the analyst tends to discover that Campbell's assessment of the bare bones of the story holds true. The hero or heroine must leave the world of common day, wherever that happens to be, and venture into the valley of darkness, wherein a

challenge may lie in wait. In sports films the valley of darkness can be a formidable rival, the brutal rituals involved in training for the ultimate tests or a battle with the physical self: addiction, illness and injury.

The inner self can portray an even more testing battlefield for athletes, for here they must face obstacles such as a lack of confidence, parental or spousal approval, gender confusion and a myriad of other self-inflicted hurdles to overcome.

***The Natural* and mythic matters**

The underpinning narrative of *The Natural* is as follows. It is the 1930s, and golden-haired farm boy Roy Hobbs (Robert Redford shot through a Vaseline-smearred lens) is the greatest baseball player no one has ever seen. In a nod to the mythic tales of King Arthur, Roy witnesses the old tree under which his father died of a heart attack being struck by lightning. This experience inspires him to create his own personal Excalibur, a baseball bat he names Wonderboy, on which he carves a lightning bolt. He leaves his true love, Iris Gaines (Glenn Close – more Vaseline), on the farm and heads for the big, bad city for a trial with a major league team. Once on the train, however, he meets a mysterious woman called Harriet Bird (his own personal Morgan Le Fay) and suffers tragedy at her hands.

Roy disappears and then reappears, as if by magic, sixteen years later to play for the

struggling New York Knights (yet another Arthurian homage). After a bench-warming period Roy becomes the team's star due to a spell of spectacular athleticism; but then, following a sustained bout of energy-sapping trysts via Memo Paris (Kim Basinger in the guise of a temptress), Roy and the team suffer a punishing losing streak. Thankfully, his true love, Iris, appears in the stands, dressed in angelic, virginal white. Spotting her, Roy regains his composure and starts batting as he did of old. He still has many obstacles to overcome before story's end, however, but eventually, after facing down bribery, poison, more temptation from Memo and a brief stay in hospital, he battles his way back into the team and manages to score a match-winning home run, knocking the ball into the lights and producing an extraordinary fireworks display to end the film.

What are we witnessing here? Set in the 1930s, the story paints a nostalgic picture of blond-haired baseball players, in short pants and caps, playing a children's game; the sun shines, and at the end of the day they triumph, and all is well in the world. America is great again. In Hunter's illuminating commentary we find the following:

The Natural plants father and son – man and boy – with their baseball mitts in a field, as if this kind of image were as natural as a stalk of corn springing from the earth. It is, of course, anything but, giving white middle class masculinity a privileged sense of national belonging and entitlement by making

it the primary occupant of the building and iteration of baseball mythology.

(Hunter 2005: 73)

Interestingly, not only does the above neatly summarise white masculinity in the sports film, but it also acts as an additional, effective tool. This is that it teaches film students about racial exclusion, which is why Hunter uses it to show

[w]hat it means when Americans and the American cultural industry favour an agrarian, white male association with their national pastime. Who is excluded from this narrative nationality? The cinematic representations of black males in baseball are typically urban and cynical.

(Hunter 2005: 72)

The Natural, through its backward-looking focus, performs an act of exclusion, distorting reality by sidestepping it completely. White males are manly, black people do not exist and women are either femmes fatales or stay-at-home paragons of virtue – ‘cinematic handmaidens trapped in the classic, static roles of good girl or bad girl – with none of Roy’s complexity or development’ (Hunter 2005).

Additionally, *The Natural*’s nostalgic, sepia-toned storytelling style perpetuates old-fashioned values and a conservative view of America. When this film was released, however, in the mid-1980s, it became apparent to some media commentators that the white sporting values expressed in the film were under stress. Athletes from all parts of the

world ruled the mound, basketball court and football field, as they do to this day. So white middle-class males were not seeing themselves on television as often as before, leading Hollywood to create an alternative sporting universe that reverted to, as Kibby tells us, a more soothing, simpler time, 'prioritising traditional male qualities'.

Contextually, the eighties were not a good time for the sports-loving white American. Minority athletes were everywhere, on every magazine cover, billboard and TV screen. Athletes' salaries were rocketing. The increasing control of sports by corporate and media interests, and also the ubiquity of the African-American super-jock and the increased visibility of female sports stars, served to lessen 'the availability of the male athlete as a role that could be unequivocally occupied by those who saw "masculinity" as under threat in their own lives' (Kibby 1988: 20). Nostalgia in the form of the sports film, and in general, is a defence mechanism; an artifice that Kibby calls 'a response to fear of change, either actual or impending; it represents concern over, or denial of a future' (27). She goes on to argue that *The Natural*

emphasised male homosocial relationships in that they established male-only social groupings and prioritised male/male friendships over cross-gender relationships.

(22)

Finally, we anticipate an additional gender issue within the film. Glenn Close's role as Iris Gaines confirms this notion; she is merely there to be Roy Hobbs's object of desire, the mother of his illegitimate child, his female Obi Wan Kenobi.

At the denouement she appears as if by magic, clad in white, almost urging him telepathically to 'use the Force'. In contrast, Kim Basinger's character Memo, a blonde bombshell in league with the villains of the piece, is a web-spinning black widow, a shape-shifter in the Campbell (1949) mono-myth tradition. She is a plot device and an obstacle who, once dealt with, is discarded. In this world women are

marginalised or excluded ... from the narrative, legitimating by a veneer of historical accuracy, their regulation to the bleachers or their characterisation as the source of men's problems.

(Kibby 1988: 22)

Bull Durham: inverting the dominant male paradigm

'Impossible manhood' in this context arises from an early notion of the female protagonist, explored more extensively in Chapter 5. *Bull Durham* attempts to upturn Kibby's ideas concerning 'impossible masculinity' by flipping the usually rigid sports film structure. Once again the subject is baseball, where men are men, but play ball games whilst wearing short pants. In this movie, however, Annie Savoy (Susan Sarandon) is the narrator. It is her wit, sexuality and baseball expertise that

delineate this particular story about minor league baseball, encompassing romance, sex, the poetry of Walt Whitman and the struggle between talent and experience. A love triangle ensues as Annie assumes the focal position between young and inexperienced Ebby 'Calvin' Laloosh (Tim Robbins) and Minor League veteran and new man Crash Davies (Kevin Costner).

Annie does things a man would do sexually - a lot of her sensibility is masculine - but she's still feminine and vulnerable; and she's smart, a real survivor.

(Kibby 1988: 60)

It is not very surprising that Annie's masculine qualities shine through her portrayal; she was, after all, created by a man. Ron Shelton, the film's auteur, clearly meant to portray a fantasy/wish fulfilment for all sports-loving, beer-drinking alpha males.

Interestingly, given the relaxed manner of Costner's portrayal of Crash Davies, we may find an antidote to Hollywood's usual representation of standard male sexuality. Mary Dalton and Davis March summarise this as follows:

[I]n such contexts ... we might find an antidote to Hollywood's take on normative male sexuality, which in athletic settings especially tends towards the promotion of a very rigid, narrowly circumscribed masculine sexual response, having mostly to do with the male orgasm at all costs. What's typical of an American sports movie in fact is the

suggestion that climax is really only the dynamic the boys require women for at all - that for all other, intermediary forms of pleasure, the company of males is actually preferred.

(Dalton and March 1998: 72)

There is certainly a preoccupation with unbridled, unadulterated, untrammelled, heterosexual carnal activity in this film, but the only participants are Caucasian. 'Twas ever thus.

Coincidentally, the only people of colour featured in *Bull Durham* are the old African-American men (background action) watching an intoxicated Crash practising his moves in the street, a black team-mate (featured player) who smokes during games and is so laid back he should by rights be horizontal; and finally when at 1.22.46, Ebby visits the pool hall to inform Crash that he's been invited to play in the Big Leagues (or 'The Show' in baseball parlance). The pool hall's owner is Sandy Grimes (Henry G. Sanders), who legendarily hit '.376 in Louisville' - Sandy is given a moment in the spotlight, as Crash eulogises his achievements. However Sandy is still relegated to bystander status, almost immediately edged to the margins as the white protagonists act out the rest of the scene. The narrative then cuts to Larry (Robert Wuhl) as he carries Ebby's luggage to his scarlet Porsche assisted by an African-American boy. The images denote the hierarchy and tell their own story.

Ultimately, Ron Shelton gains points for representing gender in a mostly positive way, but loses out by colluding with traditional sports movie practice by almost erasing people of colour from his story, unless they are in their stereotypical roles as bystander or comic relief.

Rudy: race versus class

Rudy stars Sean Astin as the titular Daniel 'Rudy' Ruettiger. The significance of this film is that it delineates the degree to which notions of manhood are impacted upon by environment, especially that of an industrialised nature and its effect on the working-class male. The blue-collar context of this story is made clear from the opening shots, as we see Joliet, Illinois, a steel mill town in all its smoky, industrial, harshly lit glory.

In this gritty environment (ably assisted by cinematographer Oliver Wood and production designer Robb Wilson King's muted colour palette) we discover that Daniel's family is dominated by industrialised alpha males. His future at the steel mill is assured, because his father (Ned Beatty) is the foreman. His brothers work at the mill too. Rudy dreams of playing football for Notre Dame University but lacks the athletic ability, size and intellectual capacity for his dream to come true.

Rudy's struggle to become even a small part of the team provides the narrative core of this movie, which portrays working-class America as frightened and risk-averse. Rudy's father, Daniel Ruetigger,

crippled by class consciousness, warns his son against failure and hubris in the clearest terms, saying:

DANIEL

Chasing a stupid dream ... causes you and everyone around you heartache. Notre Dame is for rich kids ... smart kids ... great athletes; it's not for you. You're a Ruettinger. There's nothing wrong with that. You can have a nice life.

This film is all about class and knowing one's place; values hung around our hero's neck like a millstone. This unwanted weight is perhaps a metaphor for these other industrialised and social factors that impact on the notion of an impossible manhood that, in many respects, is unattainable.

The story ticks all the boxes of the usual sports film conventions; however Roger Ebert denotes concrete storytelling skills throughout:

Although this story reads, in outline, like an anthology of clichés from countless old rags to riches sports movies, Rudy persists too. It has a freshness and an earnestness that get us involved, and by the end of the film, we accept Rudy's dream as more than simply sports sentiment.

(Ebert 1993)

Impossible manhood and important character stereotypes

Ebert is correct in suggesting that Rudy's dream transcends conventional genre sentimentality. He fails to mention the vital supporting character who facilitates Rudy's dream, however: Fortune, as

played by Charles S. Dutton. Fortune is an aptly named, imposing, bald, African-American groundsman at Notre Dame, who functions as Rudy's almost supernatural mentor. He provides our hero with a part-time job, lodgings and, when Rudy is at his lowest, the big emotional speech that pushes our white protagonist to achieve his goal:

FORTUNE

You're 5 foot nothin', 100 and nothing, and you have barely a speck of athletic ability. And you hung in there with the best college football players in the land for two years! And you're gonna walk outta here with a degree from the University of Notre Dame. In this life, you don't have to prove nothin' to nobody but yourself. And after what you've gone through, if you haven't done that by now, it ain't gonna never happen ... now go on back.

As an inspirational tool, *Rudy* works on many levels, but its utilisation of Fortune as the genie to Rudy's Aladdin is a trope of countless sports films, in two distinct ways. The most obvious is that of Campbell's mentor figure, who provides inspiration, encouragement and the will to win. Less obvious is the more recent evocation of this character: the super-duper magical, all-knowing friend, who is often an African-American. Christopher Farley describes the origins of this characterisation:

Most Hollywood screenwriters don't know much about black people other than what they hear on records by white hip hop star Eminem. So

instead of getting life histories or love interests, black characters get magical powers.

(Farley 2000)

There are other characteristics of the magical negro: he is usually a janitor (or a groundsman, like Fortune), or a prisoner, like John Coffey in *The Green Mile* (1999, Frank Darabont). This character usually has no past; he just appears one day to help the white protagonist. This stereotype possesses no desires or goals of his/her own. The magical African-American friend's energies are 'ostensibly directed toward helping and enlightening a white male character' (Hicks 2003: 28). Although Fortune has a higher status in this film because he is the head groundsman at Notre Dame, he is still a janitor to all intents and purposes. He may not have magical powers, but he does provide a lifeline for Rudy by providing the final kick up the backside it takes to motivate his return to the team.

How does the concept of the mentor, supernatural or otherwise, impact on notions of impossible manhood? Clearly, this idea in itself describes the dependence which characterises so much of male aspiration and success, in that it provides repeated cinematic instances of the fact that many heroes cannot achieve greatness (as one would expect of true masculine protagonist) by themselves, despite the fact that so many sports

films champion the idea of unfettered autonomous male achievement.

Remember the Titans: race and class revisited

Another relevant and recent cinematic archetype for notions of impossible manhood has come to the fore in the last decade, in effect what Farley (2000) calls 'the Bigot with a heart of gold'. This character features in *Remember the Titans*, in which Will Patton plays Coach Yoast, a white football coach at the soon to be integrated T. C. Williams High School in Alexander, Virginia. In 1971, at the height of racial unrest in America's south, Yoast resists the idea of relinquishing his coaching position in favour of Coach Boone (Denzel Washington), who will handle the integration of the all-white college football team. The film tracks Yoast's and the entire town's opposition to Boone, who eventually turns everything around and leads this now racially mixed team of young titans to victory.

Titans is a traditional sports fable, with almost all the howling clichés that this sub-genre implies. Both coaches are tough and honourable men with unimpeachable codes of conduct. This archetype conforms with the tropes outlined by Douglas Noverr, who states that the coach character is usually 'the key to the athlete's experience and the mirror by which the athlete judges his efforts' (Noverr 1990: 121). He also states that the 'coach is not only the team's athletic supervisor, but also a mentor

and a teacher and redeemer who inspires athletes in an exemplary way and commands awe and respect' (121).

By complying with the new integrationist edict, Coach Yoast facilitates Boone's leadership, providing the chief requirement in all team-oriented sports movies: uniting disparate elements to achieve a common goal. In some sports films this can result not in a dramatically satisfying resolution of all conflicts but in a convenient obliteration of their existence.

[In t]he coming together – particularly in team films – issues like gang violence and race relations are overcome and solved between players on the team, usually in a rather frustratingly simplistic way. They start the film on opposite sides of the issues and are unified by competing together. (Quigley 2008)

This turning point in *Remember the Titans* takes place on an old battlefield, where Coach Boone has led his unwilling students for a stirring lecture, which cuts through their resistance. From this moment on the boys decide to forget their differences and perform as a team. The fact that this emotional scene succeeds without any of the usual locker-room histrionics (see, among others, Al Pacino in *Any Given Sunday* [1999, Oliver Stone] and Nick Nolte in *Blue Chips* [1994, William Friedkin]) or cursing or unnecessary violence is extraordinary, given that punching, yelling and

swearing are the usual tools of this 'impossible manhood'.

This film utilises the star power of Denzel Washington's oratory to defuse racial tension on the battlefield of Gettysburg, by channelling the voices of the past to remind his young team of the sacrifices made, and also the positive opportunities available for society (and his team) through unity:

BOONE

This is where they fought the battle of Gettysburg - men died right here on this field, fightin' the same fight, that we're still fightin' amongst ourselves today. This field right here was painted red. Bubbling with the blood of young boys. Smoke and hot lead pouring right through their bodies. Listen to their souls, men; 'I killed my brother with malice in my heart'; 'That red destroyed my family'; you listen - and you take a lesson from the dead.

In the film, realisation and growth arise from the eventual acceptance by Coach Yoast of the extrinsic and intrinsic value of his African-American counterpart, Coach Boone. In effect, this represents the thematic discussion of the film, namely questions of race and the associated playing down of conflicts.

Rocky: 'Women weaken legs!'

In thematic terms, *Rocky* is a romance and fairytale with boxing as its main narrative. Rocky asks the question: what would happen if a white Italian-

American club fighter were to get a title shot against the unbeatable black heavyweight champion of the world, and fight him to a draw? This film is set in the year of the USA's bicentennial, 1976, and centres on Rocky Balboa, a down-at-heel club boxer who has lost his way, and who now has a part-time job breaking thumbs for the local mob loan shark. Most of the film is given over to Rocky's romantic pursuit of Adrian, the painfully shy clerk at the local pet store. Although Adrian figures strongly as Rocky's inner need (the need to make a family/form an emotional connection), she is silenced for most of the film. Adrian's role is to be a bystander, submissive to the men in her life, but supportive when the chips are down.

Rocky's luck changes when the champ, Apollo Creed (a Mohammad Ali clone, played by Carl Weathers), loses his challenger for a title bout and (in a fit of mad invention) searches a club fighters' directory in order to find a new opponent. He chooses Rocky Balboa, 'the Italian stallion', because that name in opposition to his own on a fight poster sounds like 'A damn monster movie!'. Creed does not over-emphasise Rocky's whiteness, but the subtext is clear.

Using the film to explore the term 'impossible manhood', I may suggest that Rocky fills a void that reality left empty. In essence, this is to throw into high relief the fact that mainstream film-makers continue to ignore the pronounced domination of black fighters from the 1960s to 2000,

as they constantly attempt to create a new cinematic archetype: 'the great white hope'.

In relation to this, some have posited that the appearance of *Rocky* in 1976 coincided not just with the bicentennial but also with a reappraisal of the white American male in the twentieth century. It has also been argued that this film heals a broken nation's self-esteem:

The film's characters and its outcome provide a neo-conservative resolution to the challenging social, economic, political and military shifts that had taken place since the end of World War Two. A culture of burgeoning consumerism, the unsuccessful campaign in Vietnam and the loss of faith in the democratic experiment implicit in Watergate, all elicit a response from the film's world. However, the social advances made by African-Americans and women in the quarter decade after the war receive the most intense and shrewdly plotted resolution in the ideological implications of the film's narrative.

(Elmwood 2005: 49)

Rocky's white, Italian-American lower-class status resonated with America in its bicentennial year, in a way that no other movie had previously. The character embodied an underdog quality that the superpower itself was feeling for the first time in centuries. In 'going the distance' with a seemingly unbeatable opponent,

Rocky offers masculine status and national citizenship to a previously rejected group in

exchange for their allegiance in a quest for the masculinization of white men (and, by extension, the nation).

(Elmwood 2005: 49)

Clay Motley's reading of the film also highlights the USA's struggle to reassert its 'impossible manhood':

The movie fully recognises the social and economic turmoil of the Seventies, but it uses the American Bicentennial celebration as a moment of rebirth, of a 'Recapturing' of its perceived traditional values of confidence, virility and success. More specifically, Rocky is a paean to the 'anti modern' man, one who shakes off the emasculating trappings of modernity and rediscovers the essential, primal and successful self.

(Motley 2005: 63)

In effect, Stallone's creation signalled a return to a more usable role model for white American males:

Thus, to a middle class audience of the 1970's seeking a primal sense of manhood, Rocky's ancient and brutal profession of boxing, his silent demeanour, and even his 'Italian' status, give Rocky the qualities of something ancient, more primal than the modern American Man.

(Motley 2005: 64)

Rocky: a love story

The most interesting aspect of the movie, for me, is the comparative lack of boxing in it – though

the best sports films, in my humble opinion, and as I've said before, utilise their chosen activity as a seasoning as opposed to the meat and potatoes. Due to the difficulty of recreating sporting events with mere actors, it is perhaps wise to reduce the replication of sports to a bare minimum.

In the first *Rocky* film, the film-makers clearly angled the story to prioritise the development of Rocky and Adrian's deepening love for each other, thus ensuring a bigger box-office gross because women go to the movies too. Although Talia Shire's Adrian mostly reacts to her male counterparts throughout the film, there is one key moment when her presence is allowed to signify and add strength, support and comprehension to Rocky's cause. When Rocky has his huge moment of doubt the night before his title shot, the newly attractive, now non-nerdy Adrian comforts him by saying 'What are we going to do?', as if she were going to be in the ring with Rocky too. Her presence in the film is, as Victoria Elmwood describes it, 'pivotal':

Though his love for Adrian is viewed by his trainer as an obstacle to his fighting prowess ('Women weaken legs,' the old man barks), it is clear that the moral universe of the film relies solely on her efforts to fulfil a properly feminine role by serving the champ and humanizing him.

(Elmwood 2005: 57)

Rocky therefore inhabits a conflicted hinterland of post-Watergate/Vietnam/feminist/ civil rights America, a land undermined by self-doubt that,

perhaps, is in dire need of a film like this to provide a healing elixir for its broken society, and an uplifting allegorical tale apposite to that austere period in its history. For Peter Biskind, the anti-black narrative is starkly outlined:

The film's implicit statement, that blacks have gone too far, that they've unmanned decent, ordinary guys like Rocky, is at least part of the reason for its box office success. For white audiences, racism gives the Rocky's an illicit thrill.

(Biskind 2005: 69)

The footnote on that page is just as telling about the *Rocky* films and their unsubtle demonising of the black man.

In *Rocky II*, a black man lays Rocky off from his job at the meatpacking plant. He's not a bad guy, but white paranoia dictates that in both *Rockies*, blacks have power over whites. With the exception of *Blue Collar* (1978, dir Paul Schrader, wr Paul and Leonard Schrader), blacks are strikingly absent from all these films.

(ibid)

Additionally, however, we still find notions of the 'impossible manhood', mediated by Rocky's need for Adrian fulfilling a traditionally feminine role, and acting as a traditional resource upon which his manhood depends for his subsequent success.

***Raging Bull*: fighting for scraps in the American dream**

Raging Bull is the story of yet another Italian-American boxer, Jake La Motta, and his rise and fall. This is the boxing film shot through a noir lens, in the sense that *Raging Bull* embodies a more morally ambivalent perspective of the boxing industry. Although the film is shot beautifully in grainy black and white by Michael Chapman, its subject matter and eventual conclusion reside in shades of grey. This film does not seek to uplift or fantasise, but succeeds as an unflinching look at a complex human being. La Motta thrived on violence in the ring, and took great pride in the knowledge that he could take a beating. Out of the ring, however, his inability to communicate with anyone beyond grunts and profanity drives the film to its pitch-black denouement.

By the end of the story, after Jake has served time for pimping under-age girls at his grubby nightclub, we find him compering at a strip joint. He rehearses Terry Malloy's poignant 'I shoulda bin a contender' speech from *On the Waterfront* (1954, Elia Kazan). The bull has finally ceased raging; he is not an animal but a human being –albeit a tragic one.

Some argue that La Motta's demons stem from an overwhelming sexual insecurity. David Thomson explores this sexual theme:

Notice how Jake's sexual dysfunction rises to the certainty that Vickie has been unfaithful

with Joey and drives him into increasing, boastful isolation. And notice the compelling but sinister and insidious scenes in which the wise-guys conspire to make Jake their tool. *Raging Bull* is not about boxing or even the isolating power of male terrors. It's about a failure to get through the layered bravado and dishonesty of male companionship to discover the tenderness of a life with women.

(Thomson 2007)

The impossible manhood of this movie stems from Jake's inability to leave well enough alone, to trust his wife and his brother – in fact, anyone. When Vickie expresses her opinion that Jake's next opponent is a 'good-looking fighter',

Jake jokes about not knowing whether to 'fight him or fuck him'. The slippage from real macho talk to a terrible homosexual paranoia is one of the best things Scorsese has ever done. It is followed by the Janiro fight, a monstrous piece of sadism and punishment and one that would have been stopped if it had happened as shown in the film.

(Thomson 2007)

Although part of La Motta's rage stems from his inability to communicate with those who love him, Scorsese's camera and editing fill in the gaps with much-needed visual subtext. *Raging Bull's* editor, Thelma Schoonmaker,

seems to have particularly bonded with the Vickie character speaking of the anguished cutaways to her as she witnesses the beating her husband takes from Sugar Ray Robinson in

their final bout – shots that seal our identification with this unlikely figure ... Vickie is often isolated in the frame: a lonely, puzzled, yet somehow determined woman ... In their editing Scorsese and Schoonmaker almost subliminally enlisted the audience's compassion for the film's principals – an element that was not all that evident in the final script.

(Schickel 2010)

Vickie La Motta's marginalisation is similar to Adrian's in *Rocky*, but at least she expresses her sexuality and her dissatisfaction with married life by taking steps. She actively attempts to inflame Jake's desire during his training, and proves so alluring that he has to pour ice cubes down his shorts. Later on, when his behaviour has become unendurable, she leaves. Scorsese therefore delineates a world in which the lower classes fight amongst themselves for scraps of the American dream. There is no national healing akin to that which occurs in *Rocky*.

The significance, inclusion and value of *Raging Bull* for my enquiry is that it reflects, on the one hand, the confidence, virility and success of one who shakes off the emasculating trappings of modernity. On the other, however, it demonstrates the limitations of this aspiration to be the dominant species, and hence the impossibility of 'impossible manhood'. This is because, ultimately, Jake's epiphany stems from being at his lowest ebb, isolated in a prison cell and claiming 'I am not an

animal'. In other words, Jake himself acknowledges that mere brute masculinity lacks sufficiency.

This chapter has built on the ideas of genre explored through the examination of six films. As well as extending ideas of genre and 'impossible manhood' per se, it also anticipates notions of the black protagonist and, ultimately, later in the chapter, is concerned with the stereotyping of the female character in the sports genre movie.

Conclusion

Initially, it can be concluded that the characteristics identified by Kibby at the beginning of this chapter appear to be supported by my own investigation through the six films examined. These characteristics, it may be recalled, were the expropriation of a major social forum for traditional male ideas of success, masculine power and male superiority.

Associated with this, I particularly conclude that nostalgic ideas of an increasingly impossible manhood dominate the films, and perhaps also the genre that is the focus of this enquiry. To this extent, therefore, sports no longer represent an inviolable assumption of the genre, race, class and gender limitations which characterised the early examples of the sports film genre.

Of particular interest, however, was the idea that the two nostalgic scenarios were repeated in film after film during the aforementioned period, remaining as powerful phenomena throughout the

sports film genre to the present day. Consequently, it can be stated with some certainty that this enquiry has supported the notion that cultural and financial dominance remain largely the same in relation to production, casting and subject matter. The consequences of this for the issues of diversity and inclusiveness in the film and television industry remain profound for the garnering of talent from across all spectrums of society, and their associated creative opportunities.

These conclusions compelled me to write a contemporary sports-centred screenplay with a black protagonist, antagonist *and* coach. I was soon to discover as the project developed that the production company may have had other ideas.

Chapter 4
The Black Male Protagonist

Following the discussion of the white male protagonist (*Impossible Manhood*) and related films, I then chose to seek out the slim volume of sports films that do feature a black protagonist to gain a sense of how my script might avoid some of the problematic depictions and omissions as stated in the previous chapter.

What follows focuses on the representation of the black protagonist in the sports film and seeks to answer the following three questions:

- What happens in the sports film when the male protagonist is black?
- How does this relate to the conventions of the sports film overall?
- How does this relate to the traditional stereotyping of black characters?

In answering these questions I employ close analysis of two films in particular:

- *Mr. 3000* (2004, Charles Stone III)
- *He Got Game* (1998, Spike Lee)

The selection of these two films is related to their similarity in theme, use of black male protagonists and contemporary setting. In considering the films, Donald Bogle's arguments on cinematic representations of African-Americans have

also been instructive. For Bogle, the stereotyped black male role in feature films may be categorised as follows:

- 'the Uncle Tom' (and betrayer of his race)
- 'the buck' (symbol of black machismo, eventually emasculated)
- 'the jester' (a revised Uncle Tom figure, dancing and singing and acting the fool for his white masters)
- 'the trusted negro' (as with Sidney Poitier in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967, Stanley Kramer))
- 'the militant brother' (who can be traced back to the black killers played by white actors in black face, exemplified in D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), and to the Blaxploitation heroes of *Shaft* (1971, Gordon Parks Jr), *Super Fly* (1972, Gordon Parks, Jr) and *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971, Melvin Van Peebles).
- The significance of these cinematic stereotypes is summed up by Bogle as follows:

As far as the audiences were concerned, the toms, the coons, the mulattoes, the mammies, and the bucks embodied all the aspects and facets of the black experience itself. The audience's deep-set prejudice against any 'foreigners' accounts for the typing of all minorities in all American films. But no minority was so relentlessly or fiercely typed as the black man. Audiences rejected even subtle modifications of the black caricatures.

(Bogle 1994: 17)

The relevance of the above statement by Bogle for this chapter is that the two films I have chosen demonstrate what happens when a black male protagonist is the focus of a narrative. Black male protagonists are so rarely seen at the centre of these films that, when they are used, they are usually represented as a symbol of something that has existed since the birth of cinema. Bogle's list of pejorative terms for African-Americans reveals the deep-seatedly racist portrayal of them, stemming back to D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and other similar films, where frightening black killers were portrayed by white actors in black-face. 'The buck' and the 'badass nigger' are almost representational uniforms that actors of colour wear when playing most roles in contemporary fare. The two films I have chosen, whether the makers intended them to or not, feature leading black male protagonists who fall into Bogle's descriptions of 'the buck' and 'the badass nigger' to varying degrees. This chapter will explore whether the film-makers in question were able to subvert these tropes to their advantage, or fell foul of stereotypic practices.

Mr. 3000: a study in lost opportunity

Mr. 3000 features Bernie Mac as the lead protagonist Stan Ross, a loud-mouthed, selfish baseball player. In the film's opening sequence Stan hits his 3,000th ball, which automatically qualifies him for the Baseball Hall of Fame. Having

achieved his goal Stan retires, and in doing so leaves his team without one of their star players in the middle of the 1995 play-offs. Subsequently Stan proceeds to use his soubriquet, 'Mr. 3000', to rake in the cash with various businesses. Big-mouthed Stan is now a rich man, living in a big house and hanging out with his best friend, Boca (Michael Rispoli), and all is good.

Except we soon learn that all is not good. When Stan gets the call that he is to be honoured with a testimonial by his old team, the Brewers, he is moved by the size of the crowd but shocked by the absence of most of his old team-mates. Meanwhile, the local sports media have done a little digging, checked their baseball statistics and found that Stan has hit three balls fewer than he thought, rendering his proud title untrue. Feathers well and truly ruffled, Stan decides to retrain and get back on the team after a long lay-off, in order to reclaim his much-vaunted 'Mr. 3000' title. The story then proceeds in a formulaic pattern. Stan attempts to get back in shape. He also attempts to rekindle an old flame (as played by Angela Bassett), and has doubts about his fitness (though this subsequently improves), until he returns in triumph. He hits two balls (after a lot of trouble, because he's been away a long time) then regains his old flame. Finally, and significantly for the film, once presented with the hit that will place him in the Hall of Fame for good, Stan decides to take one for the team, rather than go for his own personal

glory. Ultimately, our flawed hero has learnt at last to be a team player.

This film is pertinent to notions of the black protagonist because, although *Mr. 3000* does feature Bernie Mac as Stan Ross, it is fair to say that anyone could have played the role irrespective of race. This is because there are no concessions made to the fact that Stan is an African-American – apart from Bernie Mac's pretend 'militant brother' attitude. Some find this refreshing. *New York Press* reviewer Armond White has argued:

This is a major advance in ethnic characterization (both Mac and Rispoli peak). It illustrates how individual responsibility (casually referred to as brotherhood, or teamwork) often founders in an age when so many people lack any agreed upon moral imperative. Ross (and Boca urging 'Do your thing') is up against a team of apolitical jocks and a world of self-interested owners, clueless fans and a battalion of hostile sports reporters. *Mr. 3000* breaks new ground by honestly exposing – and mocking – the biases that small-minded sports writers put into culture.

(White 2004)

White's suggestion that 'this is a major advance in ethnic characterization' (apparently because Mac's ethnicity is sidelined in order to foreground the moral imperative) is, I believe, flawed. A prime feature of this flaw is that Mac's potential as a black protagonist is neutered. In other words, his performance potential is set aside, and he merely represents what the generality of such films

attempt to display; his blackness is deemed irrelevant. In effect, the film has no ethnic characterisation other than the normal clichés of black representation. So we find that Ross's characterisation is strangely colourless and rootless, with hardly a reference to his African-American heritage. The role majors on Stan's acquisitive nature, love of money, selfishness and desire to be his own boss. I would contend that this has more to do with class than race.

The article continues its praise of *Mr. 3000's* protagonist, however:

Stan Ross recalls Lionel Trilling's assessment of a black man in John O Hara's short story *Bread Alone*: 'The Negro is so precisely seen in all his particularity as a Negro that he wonderfully emerges, by one of the paradoxes of art, as a man.' That comment from 1945 was made without the benefit (or confusion) of the many social changes that would affect the social condition and mainstream perception of black men.

(White 2004)

Irrespective of the deployment of Trilling's comments in support of his particular view, I nevertheless contend that Bernie Mac's characterisation of Stan Ross is absolutely not playing the archetypal 'Everyman' in *Mr. 3000* but, rather, is representing 'a black macho cartoon'.

What is the significance of this for my enquiry? In effect, we have found that the black male protagonist, in this instance (as in many others), is depicted in a manner that – to return

to Bogle's description – emasculates him for the purposes of pleasing the mass audience. This, therefore, is a major determinant in the somewhat purblind portrayal of the black protagonist in this film and others. Put more directly, a character's innate blackness is often diminished or softened when utilised in a mainstream film.

Another consequence of this mode of interpretation of the black protagonist is that it confuses many filmgoers; thus, the Mac fans who came to see this movie (or any movie with a similar approach) wondered why it was so tame (in comparison to his previous offerings), and those who weren't Mac fans were offended by the low level cursing and off-colour sexual humour. Yet the stars of the film insist that the story had merit beyond the colour of the protagonists' skin.

Angela Bassett (Maureen Simmons) spoke about the film's colour-blind status:

You look at the story, when it was written ... [T]he writers did a spec [uncommissioned] script right out of college. The Stan character was not black. Reading it you could assume that it was probably a white character, not set in black places or anything like that.
(Bassett, in Murray 2004a)

This now raises another major consequence that arises from the cautious portrayal of the black protagonist. The question that sums up the quandary precisely is this: who is this film aimed at? The relative failure of *Mr. 3000* to connect with a wider audience perhaps can be attributed to the

fact that it does not seem to know who its target demographic is, whether a broad family crowd or the hard-core Mac fans. Ultimately, it pleased neither. Bassett maintains that the film-makers' intention was to create a film that would appeal to all and sundry, however – thereby revealing a further instance of this confusion:

For 10 years [in the time it took], to get the movie made, baseball movies were in and out of fashion. It's set in the world of baseball but you don't have to be a baseball aficionado to watch it or be in it [laughing]. It's about so many other things. It's about second chances and a second chance is a very human experience. It's neither black, white, Puerto Rican or anything. It's human and that's what I'm attracted to. Because although I respect the differences of everyone, I really hate the dividing line.

(Murray 2004a)

The film features an arrogant big hitter called T-Rex, played by Brian White. T-Rex resents Stan's return to the team, and his behaviour is a direct echo of how Stan used to be back in his time. White too, just like Bassett, asserts the movie's colour-blind status:

This role wasn't written for a black actor, and then it became nondescript. After they'd seen a bunch of people, I got the opportunity to go and meet for it. And that's my kind of agenda: to find films that just happen to have African-American characters. I think that this is a very mainstream film: it just happens that Bernie Mac happens to be African-American.

So when I jumped into this character, I started speaking to Charles (the director) about, 'Look, this guy has a lot of swagger, he has a lot of bling, he has a nice car and he's into these things. These are his trophies, these are how he tells himself he's successful, or how he proves it to himself. So he has to be able to see things on him that he didn't have when he was younger.

(White, in Murray 2004b)

As well as the inherent confusion described above, there is an interesting further consequence of this muddle. In the absence of other directorial or text-based guidance, White's description of how he fleshed out the role of T-Rex in the film reads like an instruction manual entitled 'How to be a stereotypical Hollywood black protagonist':

- swagger
- fancy car
- bling

Rather than pursue this further, it may also be profitable to divine from whence such confusions stem. This we can propose is a result of the film's antecedents, namely that it is of direct descent from films of the 1980s, a period that Bogle has dubbed 'the Age of Tan'. This is brilliantly evinced in the following quotation, when Bogle speaks of

[a] time when films did all they could to make audiences forget the blackness of a black star. Often when a black performer appeared in a general release, he or she had no cultural identity. All ethnic edges had been sanded down, so that whilst they looked

black, everything about them seemed expressed in a white cultural context.

(Bogle 1994: 268)

Examples of this confusion and its manifestation are easily discernible in such films as *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984, Martin Brest), *Lethal Weapon* (1987, Richard Donner), *Running Scared* (1986, Peter Hyams) and *Brewster's Millions* (1985, Walter Hill).

My research shows an additional underpinning of the issues explored above – which can, to a degree, explain all the skewed representations of the black protagonist, as revealed through the analysis of *Mr. 3000* and films with analogous features. This is the role played by economic forces in the activity of casting and overall control. The question is 'How much box office can this star make?', rather than 'Can we be true to this character's upbringing, parentage and so on?'.

As it stands, *Mr. 3000* presents an African-American baseball player with no sense of his lineage. The film makes no mention of black baseball history and players such as Jackie Robinson or Satchel Paige. Its black protagonist is depicted as a cynical urban male, and by ignoring his blackness the film erases history. The following quotation from Hunter aptly describes this somewhat pernicious fact of commercial decision-making:

Who is excluded from this narrative of nationality? The cinematic representations of black males in baseball are typically urban

and cynical – look at the recent *Mr. 3000* (2004) and the exceedingly dark *The Fan* (1996) – with none of the romantic, wholesome, ‘love of the game’ expressed in movies such as *The Rookie* (2002) and *Bull Durham*.

(Hunter 2005: 72)

It is for this reason that *Mr. 3000* could be deemed a failure by some: it falls between stools. And the film-makers have made decisions about the protagonist’s race for economic, marquee value, social acceptability and other related reasons.

He Got Game: most sports films are horrible

The best sports film ever was *Raging Bull*. The other film I love is a documentary, *Hoop Dreams*. Most sports films are horrible because, athletes, they are real. And the key to sports is that the game is so dramatic, and you can’t recreate that. One way that you can get around it is by not having the film come down to the big game at the end. The big finale. That is so corny.

(Lee, in Aftab 2005: 231)

He Got Game, a 1998 film directed by Spike Lee, tells the story of a young black athlete on the verge of glory and his convict father’s attempts to utilise that status to trigger an early release from prison. Jake Shuttlesworth (Denzel Washington) is a black convict imprisoned for killing his wife. He has to convince his son Jesus (Ray Allen), an incredibly gifted high school basketball player, to sign exclusively to the prison governor’s chosen college rather than go for the big money elsewhere,

in return for his father's receiving a shorter jail sentence. The big obstacle is that the boy hates his father for what happened with his mother, and rejects the proposition. In the meantime, Jesus is beset by temptation from all sides. Everyone around him wants to 'wet their beak' in that big college money. Everyone, including his girlfriend Lala (Rosario Dawson), wants a piece of him. So he has to make the right decision, and, in a tense finale, Jesus plays his father at one-on-one basketball to decide whether he will sign the papers that mean early freedom for Jake.

The boy wins, and cruelly tells his father to get lost and go back to prison; and so it goes. Ironically, once Jake has returned to his cell we see that Jesus goes to the governor's alma mater anyway, but, unfortunately, his father will not benefit (at least, we don't find out if he does), because he didn't get Jesus to sign the papers. The film ends in a mythopoeic fashion as Jake throws a basketball from the prison yard, which magically lands in his son's hands on a completely different court miles away; proof of a new relationship of love and mutual respect between father and son.

Unlike Charles Stone III and *Mr. 3000*, Lee's helming of *He Got Game* takes an unconventional approach to the sports film genre by flouting the usual conventions. Jesus's coach is not the traditional 'curmudgeonly coach with a heart of gold in there somewhere' archetype. Instead, he wants to corrupt the boy in order to make money;

there are training montages, but they are between father and son on a raggedy court; there is also no big finale with game-winning thirty yard dunk. Lee is more interested in the nasty, grimy, illicit underbelly of the basketball industry. Romance is also absent from this film; all the women in Jesus's life (apart from his saintly mother and little sister) are gold diggers or sensual distractions on his path to greatness.

This is a piece of cinema that is truly rooted in the African-American experience. Lee's films, according to Paula Massood,

explore the myths of self-determination and success so integral to American literary narratives. In *He Got Game*, for example, Aaron Copland's music situates the story of an African-American basketball player on Coney Island within the wider scope of an African-American context and vice versa, in the process of creating a mode of address that acknowledges a black subjectivity as part of a national point of view.

(Massood 2008: xvii)

This musical contradiction resonates completely. Lee's insistence on mixing Copland's new American classical music along with Public Enemy's hip hop positions the film as not just an African-American artefact but most definitely an American one. It is a film that perhaps only an African-American could have made. Lee's films encourage inter-racial debate; he draws audiences into a situation which insists that the

African-American audience members ... consider the ways in which intellectualised racism can fragment – or unite – a community. Further, they suggest to audiences unfamiliar with black life – and his other films, whilst geared to black audiences, attract a diversity of viewers – that African-American experiences are heterogeneous and complex.

(xvi)

To witness a Spike Lee film, then, is to enter into a direct conversation with an African-American who has something to say about black life in America and wishes to elicit a response from his or her audience. Very much a black film-maker with black concerns, Lee, unlike the director of *Mr. 3000*, is keen to create a discourse around black images, issues, politics and sexuality. Therefore, when we first meet Jake he is in jail. Lee has placed Jake on this societal level to make a point:

More African-American men are in prison, jail, on probation or parole than were enslaved in 1850 before the civil war began.

(Michelle Alexander, in Eitzen 2000)

There is a surprising contradiction in all of this, however. To an African-American audience, Jake's incarceration would raise barely an eyebrow; this is just the way things are for many black men in America. On the face of it, this suggests an authenticity absent from *Mr. 3000*, and so it is. In one sense, however, this becomes a film about black men for black men in America. The flaw is that it resonates with the additional audience of other

races, genders and ethnic types only at the perceived level of cliché. So, for this wider audience, it barely raises an eyebrow, because what is represented reflects the clichés and therefore the expectations that surround the familiar depictions of the situation in which society at large views the black protagonist. Accordingly, in its expected portrayal, the film does not extend knowledge, empathy or understanding of the black protagonist as hero beyond the normal tropes of cinemagoers' expectations. This therefore limits what on the face of it is an authenticity that absolutely contradicts what we find in *Mr. 3000*. How to resolve this remains a matter of debate. Possibly, and more hopefully, we might conclude that Lee's mistakes reflect an honourable intention in pursuit of a more truthful representation and artistic integrity.

On a less ambiguous note, we can possibly say that the success of Lee's portrayal of the black protagonist is enhanced and made memorable by an authorial authenticity which is derived from his wider range of experience, artistic scope and creative control.

Much of the power residing around the narrative is derived from the use, for example, of music. In particular, this is the use of Copland's stirring American classical music juxtaposed with hip hop as purveyed by Public Enemy. This roots the portrayal of the hero and his journey within the broad sweep of American musical tradition. The dramaturgy of

the scene setting, particularly at the story's outset – the painterly use of colour (hats off to cinematographers Ellen Kuras and Malik Hassan Sayeed) often redolent of a Raphael or a Titian, and pictorial compositions reflecting a kinetic use of colour-saturated sunshine and additional photographic effects – are key features of Lee's aesthetic range:

Spike likes bringing different cultural elements in music. And only Spike would bring together Aaron Copland and Public Enemy. It is really bold: If I have to pick a quality that I've learned from Spike it is that I've learned to be bold.

(Aftab 2005: 239)

Lee also adds:

I've always loved Copland's music – it is definitely American. And basketball, even though it's played world over now, is very American. You always hear *Fanfare for the Common Man* in commercials; people who don't even know who Aaron Copland is still know his stuff. I just felt juxtaposing Aaron Copland with Public Enemy would be a good mix, and it came off.

(239)

Conclusion

In relation to sports films overall I find that many of the familiar tropes of the sports film are produced irrespective of the race of the protagonist, but it is the addition of the ethnic experience which often gives these tropes added

resonance. For example, in terms of the sports genre film, success in the chosen field matters but is impacted by the additional obstacles present in the black protagonist's journey. This enhances the expected tropes through the prism of obstacles and obstructions relating to the institutionalised constraints of the black experience.

It is also apparent that more ambitious and skilful appropriation of the wider arts, such as music, composition and dramaturgy, serve to provide deeper and more profound reflections on the journey of the black protagonist. The relationships between this chapter and that concerned with 'impossible manhood' are noteworthy, chief among which is that, for a black male protagonist to assume visibility at the centre of the traditional Hollywood sports film narrative, an assumption of humility and selflessness must be yoked to the mantle of manhood.

That, of course, is what has to happen with Stan Ross in *Mr. 3000*, through the actions of his almost mute coach Gus Panas (Paul Sorvino), when finally he recognises Stan's value to the team and steps onto the baseball diamond to argue with the umpire on Stan's behalf. This also occurs for Jake in *He Got Game*, in the heartbreaking penultimate basketball match. Lee flouts genre conventions by presenting the antithesis of the usual basketball film denouement (the game is played with few onlookers, on a dimly lit court, in a black neighbourhood, between father and son). It is here that Jake finally realises that he will never

triumph against his extremely skilful and athletic son, and so must rely on a cessation of Jesus's negative intention towards him to gain his freedom.

Absent from this analysis is the role of women in these films, both as catalysts for the male protagonists' development and in terms of the role of the female protagonist in the sports film per se.

Clearly, my desire as a screenwriter leans more towards the Spike Lee model, which is more centred on the contemporary African-American protagonist and his societal problems. The authenticity and authorial presence throughout stamps a confidence and film-making skill on the whole proceeding. The attendant problems of it being a 'Spike Lee Joint', concerned with Spike Lee's opinions on race, gender, class and the exploitation of black athletes by the major corporations, is the price you pay for the ride. However the freedom Lee has to portray his characters his way is to be admired and if possible emulated. The representation of women in Lee's (and most sports genre films) feature is problematic and I will discuss these issues in the next chapter.

Chapter 5
Female Stereotypes in the Sports Film

Having established the conventions of the sports film genre, and also highlighted the problems of mainstream Hollywood and its repression of the black male protagonist, I have shown that the black male protagonist's almost marginal existence in cinema history has been exacerbated by damaging stereotypic roles, as illustrated by Bogle. Seán Crosson points out:

Women may today feature more prominently in professional sports and within the sports film genre and such representations may suggest that a considerable degree of gender equality has been achieved. However, successive studies have indicated that gender inequality in terms of 'material resources, power and status' (Ridgeway 2011: 4) continues to be a major issue in the modern world, including in the United States and in the world of sport.

Indeed, the institution of sport continues to be a principal site for the 'inculcation, expression, and perpetuation of masculine habits, identities, behaviour, and ideals including a belief in patriarchal supremacy over women' (Smith 2009: 160). Elite sport in particular and its representation is overwhelmingly associated with men who provide the standard for performance.

(Crosson 2013: 104)

We could be forgiven for assuming that the pro-feminist battle for equal screen time is over, but the truth of the matter is that, even with the relatively recent release of films such as *A League of Their Own* (1992, Penny Marshall), *Million Dollar Baby* (2004, Clint Eastwood), *Girlfight* (2000, Karyn

Kusama), *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002, Gurinder Chadha) and *Fast Girls* (2012, Regan Hall), when the female characters featured are given the opportunity to occupy the central space their presence is often plagued with controlling rationalisations that inflect their roles with stereotypic behaviours from a bygone era.

In other words, representation is everything. Meanwhile, the female protagonist in the sports film genre is often framed within the boundaries of a melodramatic setting and situation. Melodrama, with its associations with 'women's films', is additionally a genre that is often hybridised with sports films to allow women a pivotal role. A reflection on cinematic history is a useful avenue to explore in relation to gender stereotypes. As O'Reilly states:

Women in men's sports films typically appear as supportive wives and girlfriends (*Rocky*, *Bull Durham*) and ineffective obstacles to sporting achievement, such as the unscrupulous female owner/coach/agent (*Major League*) or the unsupportive love interest who must be won over or discarded (*Damn Yankees*).

(O'Reilly 2007: 285)

Let's add some more, newer female stereotypes to that list: there's the 'protagonist's first love', as portrayed by Glenn Close in *The Natural* (1984); and her exact opposite, 'the murderous temptress' (Barbara Hershey); not forgetting the 'seemingly treacherous team-mate and same-sex lover' (Patrice

Donnelly) of *Personal Best* (1982, Robert Towne); we also have the 'doting big sister', who takes her passive little brother's place in the boxing ring. These additions show that there are indications that the roles of women are slowly changing for the better, but that change is happening at a glacial pace.

Clearly, the predominance of male film-makers and screenwriters is one reason for the lack of credible female protagonists in the sports film, but there are other reasons:

The focus on masculinity in sport was evident from the codification of sport and the emergence of film in the late nineteenth century. Sport in the United States in this period, in a pattern also reflected in Britain, France and elsewhere in the western world, was a primarily male domain ... As such, it provided an important forum for demonstrating male (and white) superiority.

(Crosson 2013: 105)

The notion that some kind of white supremacist illuminati is preventing minority talent from participating in films of any type is depressing, but there have been shifts in tone and ethnicity with regard to female and ethnic inclusion. Characters such as Jesminder 'Jess' Bhamra (Parminder Nagra), the eighteen-year-old daughter of Punjabi Sikhs in London, is able to almost magically curve a football around a wall of her

opponents and score a goal, just like her hero in *Bend It Like Beckham*. Shania Andrews (Leonora Crichlow) overcomes her poverty-stricken background to play a pivotal role in the World Athletic Championships as part of the fictional Team GB women's relay team in *Fast Girls*. The laser-beam stare of aspirant boxer and teenage delinquent Diana Guzman (Michelle Rodriguez) in *Girlfight* enraptures viewers as she defies her physically abusive father by joining a boxing gym in Brooklyn and learns to channel her anger into her training. Maggie (Hilary Swank) in *Million Dollar Baby* almost escapes the bounds of her existence as a waitress when she seeks out a grizzled trainer (Clint Eastwood) to assist in her quest to become a boxing champion.

It is interesting to note that the films which strive to subvert the traditional marginalised role of women in this genre (*Bend It Like Beckham* and *Girlfight*) are both directed by women. It is important at this point to take a look at how these films performed at the box office:

Million Dollar Baby – \$100,492,203

Bend It Like Beckham – \$32,543,449

Fast Girls – \$1.111 million

Girlfight – \$1.7 million

(figures from BoxofficeMojo.com)

Notwithstanding their relative success, each has elements of the past, and especially a propensity

to utilise the tropes of the melodrama to delineate character and situation.

In *Million Dollar Baby*, which is ostensibly about Maggie, the ambitious female protagonist, the thematic concerns, denouement and greatest change occur in the patriarchal role of her coach, Frankie Dunn (Clint Eastwood). Her fatal predicament, and his vow to see her wishes through to the end, smack of melodrama – which is, as O'Reilly points out,

a term Hollywood pirated from an older critical lexicon and reoriented to publicity use, [and] known as 'the women's film' as well. It dates back to the silent era with films such as *True Heart Susie* (1919) and *The Big Parade* (1925). The genre came into its own in the Depression-era films of the 1930s and the war films of the 1940s and flourished with the lush, elegant weepies of the 1950s.

(O'Reilly 2007: 284)

She adds that melodramas

are also known for their use of repression and excess. Characters, often female, are prevented by social and family pressure, often patriarchal, from pursuing what they truly desire.

(284)

Certainly, in *Fast Girls*, Shania's lack of social mobility and near-homeless status are utilised as the inciting incident for the narrative. She trains with a local shopkeeper and sleeps in his shed overnight. Her sister and bullying boyfriend have

forced her out of her aunt's council flat; clearly, Shania has a great deal of social misfortune from which to escape. In *Fast Girls*, the question of patriarchal control is not an issue for Shania, but her opponent, Lisa Temple (Lily James), has to cope with her father, David Temple (Rupert Graves), who exerts untold pressure on her to win medals, just as he did in his heyday. Shania's outward desire is to compete at a high level for her country, but her inner need is to escape from poverty and be part of a family or a relationship. Lisa's outer motivation is to win medals like her dad, but her inner need is to stop competing with his memories of Olympic gold and live her own life.

Here, just as in a number of other sports films too numerous to mention, hegemonic chauvinistic expectations remain burdensome. In a sports film with a male protagonist, the plot is never about our hero's male status; a woman's presence in sports, however, is more often than not mediated by her struggle to be accepted as a woman in her desired role.

In *Pat and Mike* (1952, George Cukor), Pat Pemberton (Katharine Hepburn) plays against female golf professionals and succeeds until her patronising fiancé, Collier Weld, shows up and distracts her with his negative comments. Pat loses confidence and stops making the effort when Collier is around and Mike (Spencer Tracey) assumes the mantle of mentor, keeping Collier away from Pat so that she can focus and eventually triumph on the

golf course. Although, for the time period, this was a rare depiction of a female athlete at the top of her game, the plot revolved around her inability to perform to her best potential when her boyfriend was present. Pat has to fall in love with sports promoter Mike in order to diminish the negative influence of her fiancé.

Baker notes the irony that, in this particular narrative, female success in an athletic competition is possible only 'provided she has the guidance of a good man' (Baker 2003: 79).

Transgression and melodrama

Having established that women in sports films generally transgress in order to earn their place at the story's centre, this might be a good place to explore a narrative system that illustrates how this might work.

The woman often wishes to move from an unsafe or uncomfortable position in society to somewhere that feels more secure. An example of such a template can be seen in the position of women in Hollywood melodramas of the late 1930s and the 1940s:

1. Sexual transgression: The heroine transgresses the socially acceptable female role, usually through some aspect of her sexuality: a refusal to marry, an affair with a married man, loose behaviour. She is often confronted by another character who demands that she reform her ways, and

she is usually contrasted with a conventional female.

2. The redeeming power of love: The heroine falls in love with a man and is then separated from him. The love affair makes the heroine change her previous ideas/appearance/lifestyle, moving her toward socially acceptable behaviour.
3. Sacrifice and tears: The heroine offers some form of self-sacrifice to atone for her social sins, leading to a denouement that is never unconditionally happy.

(O'Reilly 2007: 286)

O'Reilly then seeks to confirm her thesis by giving examples of how certain films, *A League of Their Own* (1992) and *Personal Best* (1982) to name but two, conform to her ideas.

O'Reilly allows that the post-war periodisation of *A League of Their Own* dictates its own melodramatic momentum. So, whilst the husband of Dottie Hinson (Geena Davis), Bob (Bill Pullman), is away fighting World War II, she is recruited to play for an all-girl baseball team but resists at first because she wishes to remain true to her husband's patriarchal authority. Due to the insistence of her younger sister, Kit (Lori Petty), however, she accepts the challenge and signs on for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. The key relationship that develops within the narrative, and that also confirms O'Reilly's theory about melodramatic tropes underpinning women's role in sports films, is the relationship

between Dottie and Jimmy Dugan (Tom Hanks). She keeps the drunken manager at arm's length for a while, but as he sobers up he realises that not only is she a hell of a ball player, she's also rather beautiful too. So, Dottie finds herself reciprocating his attentions. Luckily, her husband comes home from the war, and she is able to abandon her sister, and her position on the ball team, to return to her former position as subservient wife.

The key structural beats are as follows.

- Dottie transgresses the socially acceptable female role by joining a baseball team.
- She does not have an affair with Duggan, but they do become close enough during the season to make Dottie feel guilty as the story rounds the corner into its latter third.
- Dottie's self-sacrifice to atone for the sin of growing emotionally closer to Jimmy is to turn her back on baseball and resume her proper wifely duties, tending to her husband's beck and call.

In terms of righting past wrongs and drawing the players at the margins to the centre space, *A League of Their Own* is a solidly monocultural affair; people of colour are relegated to the background, except for one key moment when Dottie

throws a fast ball into the crowd and it is caught by an African-American woman, who whiplashes the ball back with equal force, nods and proceeds on her way, as if there were more important things to be concerning herself with than a silly child's game.

In *Girlfight*, Diane Guzman (Michelle Rodriguez) must prove to her father, the neighbourhood and herself that she is more than just a teenage delinquent Latina troublemaker. Her transgression is about taking on the traditionally masculine role of a boxing contestant. Everyone tells her that she should try something more feminine but Diana responds: 'I didn't make the cheerleading team.'

Diana wants a boyfriend too, however, and in due course she falls for a boxer called Adrian (a homage to *Rocky*?) and transgresses further by having to oppose him in the ring. This gender reversal threatens to overturn their relationship as, through guts and determination, Diana defeats Adrian in the ring, thereby transgressing once more. There are tears as Diana realises that she may have lost her man in order to prove her superiority in the ring.

The screenplay allows for a bittersweet ending, where love may win out, but on points only.

That ambiguity, and the fact that Diana feels she has a choice, are an opening to a new, positive ending for the melodrama, one in which, without the help of comedy, the heroine has a chance of holding onto both work and love.

(O'Reilly 2007: 289)

In *Million Dollar Baby* (2004) the narrative overturns the traditional marginal position of women in the sports films. A working-class diner waitress wants to prove to her family that she can do more than serve coffee and Danish pastries on demand. Maggie (Hilary Swank) yearns to be a boxer, and, to an extent, she succeeds in this, but in a heartbreaking scene with her blue-collar family we realise that she will never be able to show them her true worth, because all they see when they look at her is 'the same old Maggie, just with more money'.

When Maggie visits home to show her mother the house she bought her out of her fight earnings, her mother complains that owning a house will ruin her welfare status. And in general Maggie's family is unhappy to see her and finds her boxing career a joke.

(O'Reilly 2007: 294)

As well as Maggie's problems in overcoming societal and familial negativity towards her new chosen career, another melodramatic strand throughout the movie is Frank (Clint Eastwood) and his efforts to use Maggie as a surrogate for his estranged and absent daughter. The following quote is from Robert Sklar and Tania Modleski's article on *Million Dollar Baby*.

Now and again a 'Paternal Melodrama' comes

along to challenge the primacy of women in the parenting and self-sacrificing departments – *Kramer vs Kramer* (1979) is one example of such a film; *Million Dollar Baby* is another. True to the dictates of the genre, Frankie sacrifices his surrogate daughter who wants to be freed from life support machines; whereas, what he really wants is to keep her with him always.

(Sklar and Modleski 2005: 7)

This appropriation of the central space of the film by Eastwood's Frank is, perhaps, what potentially derails the narrative of *Million Dollar Baby*. Once Maggie is hospitalised and begging for a dignified death, the narrative through-line is hijacked by Eastwood's superstar grandstanding. Far from being about the million dollar baby, the film becomes about Clint's billion dollar granddad and his third-act struggle to facilitate his surrogate daughter's peaceful and dignified death with the appropriate drugs administered by his unwavering (and, hopefully, Oscar-winning) hand.

An outline of the hero's and heroine's journey

As I state later, *No Blood No Foul* and *Moonlight Marauders* (Outline) were written partly utilising Joseph Campbell's concept of the hero's journey as a template. It will be recalled that Campbell's story configuration envisages twelve steps of an imagined journey, beginning with 'the Ordinary World' (when the hero is introduced), 'the Call to

Adventure' (the hero faces the beginnings of change), 'Crossing the Threshold' (the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World), 'Tests, Allies and Enemies' (the hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the 'Special World'), 'the Reward' (the hero possesses the treasure/elixir/ prize) and 'the Return' (the hero returns with the elixir, complete with the power to transform the world; the hero has himself also been transformed) (Campbell 1949). Here in the twenty-first century, however, we can permit ourselves a broader examination of Campbell's male-centred theories and include a female perspective, which throws an alternative light on the subject matter.

Maureen Murdock believes not only that Campbell's ideas are reductive but also that they exclude women from the journey. She also believes that the heroine's journey as a narrative paradigm differs significantly from that of her male fellow travellers.

She developed a model of the heroine's journey based on her work with women in therapy. When she showed it to Campbell in 1983, Campbell reportedly said 'Women don't need to make the journey. In the whole mythological journey, the woman is there. All she has to do is realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to.'

(The Heroine Journeys Project:

heroinejourneys.com)

In effect, Murdock's work exposed Campbell's

monomythical musings as chauvinistic, revealing a lack of interest in the

[w]omen's qualities that had been lost to them through enculturation or those that had never been viewed as rightfully theirs, or he was blinded by the fact that the myths that he was examining involved (predominantly) male figures.

(heroinejourneys.com)

At any rate, Murdock became convinced that women were involved in their own psychospiritual journeys and quests, and developed the following model. What follows is an attempt to annotate, with my own observations, the heroine's journey via *Bend It Like Beckham* (the numbered headings correspond to Campbell's hero's journey).

1. Heroine separates from the feminine – often a mother or societally prescribed feminine role. So, in *Bend It Like Beckham*, Jules is impressed by Jess's skills during a pick-up game of soccer on the park with some mouthy boys. She tells Jess that she has improved and should come and have a trial for the Hounslow Harriers girls' side. Jess makes the decision to defy her mother's wishes for her to conform to the feminine/traditional ways of Sikh culture; she is on her way to her transgression – or, as her mother puts it, 'showing her legs to 70,000 people' over the trials of choosing a dowry suit ...

2. Identification with the masculine and gathering

of allies for a new way of life. This often involves choosing a path that is different from the role prescribed for her, and a decision to fight an organisation, role or group that is limiting her, or entering some male/masculine-defined sphere.

3. In relation to this, a constant source of humour throughout the film is Jules' mother (Juliet Stephenson), who repeatedly assumes that her daughter is a lesbian, with dialogue such as this:

JULES'S MUM

No boy's gonna want to go out with a girl who's got bigger muscles than him.

Or:

JULES'S MUM

Honey, all I'm saying is there is a reason why Sporty Spice is the only one of them without a fella.

Here the danger of transgressing into the male-dominated sphere is made crystal clear: women are not welcome in that particular arena and risk being mistaken for men if they choose to take up that particular role.

4. Road or trials and meeting ogres and dragons. Here the heroine encounters trials and must overcome them (ogres and dragons or their metaphorical counterparts). In *Bend It Like*

Beckham, the trials, ogres and dragons are represented by Jess having to overcome her personal obstacles in order to play football. Due to severe scarring from an accident with a toaster, Jess will not show her legs, so can never wear shorts. The handsome coach (Jonathan Rhys Myers) easily persuades her to wear shorts by showing her his scars; he tells her that hers are 'gorgeous, no doubt about it. No one's gonna care once you're out there.' He is right; even though a rival player teases her about her burn scar, she humiliates him with her skills.

5. Experiencing the boon of success by overcoming obstacles. This would typically be where the hero's, or 'shero's' (a female protagonist on a hero's journey), tale ends. Jess's self-esteem is raised by her success on the football field, even though her mother expresses disgust and disbelief over her appearance on the pitch and her proximity to boys. Although Jess wants to play, her mother firmly stands in her way:

JESS

I'm joining a girls' team; they want me to play in proper matches. The coach said I could go far.

MUM

Go far? Go far to where? Jessie, we let you play all you wanted when you were young, huh? You've played enough.

JESS

That's not fair! He selected me!

MUM

He?! She said it was girls!

JESS

The coach, Joe.

MUM

See how she lies? I don't want you running around half naked in front of men, huh? Look how dark you've become, playing in the sun!

6. Heroine awakens to feelings of spiritual aridity/death – because the new way of life is too limited. Success in this new way of life is either temporary, illusory or shallow or requires a betrayal of self over time. Jess, of course, debates her status, even at one point saying 'Indian girls don't play football'. It seems as though all is lost at this point.

7. Initiation and descent to the goddess. The heroine faces a crisis of some sort, in which the new way is insufficient, and falls into despair. All her 'masculine' strategies have failed. Obviously, in *Bend It like Beckham*, the aftermath of this patriarchal censure is that Jess goes into a downward depressive spiral; she rejects the traditional roles of the Sikh teenage 'wife in training'.

JESS

Anyone can cook aloo gobi – but who can bend

a ball like Beckham?

8. Heroine urgently yearns to reconnect with the feminine, but cannot go back to her initial limited state/position. The section of *Bend It Like Beckham* where Jess explains her predicament to her team mates is enlightening; we can almost infer her yearning for traditional Sikh values as she explains about arranged marriage:

SOCCKER TEAM GIRL

So, can you choose? Does that mean you can marry a white boy?

JESS

White, no, black, definitely not, a Muslim, eh-eh!

JULES

Guess you'll be marrying an Indian, then!

JESS

Probably.

SOCCKER TEAM GIRL:

So, how do any of you Indian girls put up with it?

JESS

It's just culture. That's all. Better than sleeping around with boys you aren't going to end up marrying; what's the point in that?

This line of dialogue shows Jess mitigating the tradition of arranged marriage, whilst disobeying her parents and proceeding with her dream of

playing football.

9. The heroine heals the wounded masculine within. She makes peace with the 'masculine' approach to the world as it applies to herself. Jess undertakes this by listening and empathising with her father's story about how he was not allowed to play cricket at an English club:

MR BHAMRA

When those bloody English cricket players threw me out of their club like a dog ... I never complained. On the contrary, I vowed that I will never play again. Who suffered? Me. But I don't want Jessie to suffer. I don't want her to make the same mistakes her father made of accepting life, accepting situations. I want her to fight and I want her to win ... because I've seen her play. She is, she's brilliant!

The scene ends with Mr Bhamra defying his wife's entrenched position and allowing his daughter to go to college in America on a football scholarship. There are tears, and then Jess tells her gathered relatives that 'she didn't ask to be good at football'. Her defiance still must be sanctioned by her father, however. The patriarch speaks, and Jess's future is set. Her mother tells the two older ladies either side of her: 'At least I've taught her full Indian dinner; the rest is up to God.'

10. The heroine integrates the masculine and feminine to face the world or future with a new

understanding of herself and the world/life. The heroine sees through binaries and can interact with a complex world that includes her but is larger than her personal lifetime or geographical/cultural milieu. The film ends with both Jess and Jules departing to America on their full scholarship; women in a man's world, unstoppable, together.

The significance of this chapter and its issues

How does this all relate to the title of this enquiry and its vehicle screenplay, *No Blood No Foul*? The appropriation of melodrama in sports films, which in many respects reduces women to stereotypes of wife, supporter, girlfriend, obstacle, can be fought only by better scripts, stronger writing, more women directors and brave producers who wish to do more than just tick all the right boxes when choosing the kind of films they want to make.

With *No Blood No Foul* (initial draft) I was guided through the scripting process by a team of non-BAME development executives. This isn't to say that a good film cannot be developed by someone of a different culture; when I watch *Il Postino: The Postman* (1994, Michael Radford) I don't complain that it is an Italian film directed by a Brit. When *Pulp Fiction* (1994, Quentin Tarantino) burst onto our screens, I too was surprised and exhilarated by the fact that Tarantino – an Italian-American from Knoxville, Tennessee – could channel the rhythms,

rhymes and cadences of the African-American vernacular.

I am more and more aware as a BAME writer, actor and aspiring producer, however, that there are very few black, Asian and minority ethnic producers, financiers, directors, commissioning editors and exhibitors working in our industry, and unless something is done to 'un-create' this discriminatory practice more and more BAMEs will leave this industry and seek employment elsewhere. The Women in Film and TV website revealed in June 2016 that, just in terms of critics alone,

[t]he vast majority of 'Top Critics' on the Rotten Tomatoes website are men. In spring 2016, women comprised just 27% and men 73% of these individuals. Regardless of job title, male writers, outnumber female writers. Men accounted for 74% and women 26% of individuals working as film critics for media outlets.

(Lauzen 2016)

On 8 May 2014 Directors UK revealed that, despite the fact that women represent almost 30 per cent of the TV- and film-directing workforce, the percentage of women actually directing television output as a whole is far lower.

No Blood No Foul and its female characters

When mapping out the structure for *Moonlight Marauders* and *No Blood No Foul*, the character of Khaled Massi had sprung fully grown from my

imagination. His quirks, quips and quiddities were all there. His obstacles, both in MM (Outline) and the initial draft of *No Blood No Foul*, were to do with poverty, fatherhood, relationships and more poverty. The status of the female characters for this script was never brought into question. This is interesting, because in television the script executives seem to have a very good handle on women's roles in drama. Commissioners and development executives want characters who live and breathe; in other words, properly drawn and motivated female characters. Unfortunately, when working on the various versions of what became *No Blood No Foul*, the changes made to the script were to do with class and social mobility for women.

They were still supporting characters and, therefore (from my perspective and from the amount of development work that went into them), did not seem to merit as much time as the male characters. The women in the screenplay – at least in MM (Outline) – seemed destined to fulfil the traditional roles of which I have already spoken.

In *Moonlight Marauders* (Outline), Anya Massi (Khaled's mum Mk. 1) was a supportive figure, there to be saved from penury and sickness and elevated to victor's status, vicariously, through her son's success. Cookie, Khaled's druggie ex and baby-mother, was an unsupportive figure, created to provide a number of obstacles to place in Khaled's way just when we think he is going to make it.

Cookie yells, screams and threatens to physically assault and overdose her way into Khaled's path, forcing him to react or act accordingly.

In *No Blood No Foul* (initial), however, the women become more pivotal, more proactive and complicated in their opposition or support. Now Cookie is the unsupportive ex-wife, who provides a benchmark for Khaled to reach, telling him to step up and be a real father and pay for his daughter's skiing trip. Charlotte Massi, Khaled's pre-teen daughter, is now a vulnerable yet active force in Khaled's story – no more a two-year-old baby boy (Kobe), she can talk her way into problematic situations, such as working with drug dealer D'Angelo and finding herself in hospital for her troubles.

Mum (Winnie Massi) is now an unsupportive figure in Khaled's life too; she recognises that her son, who once almost suffered a breakdown due to his failure as a professional basketball player, risks further illness by re-entering the game. She will do anything in her power to prevent him making the same mistakes again, and is a more powerful presence in the story now. Victoria Hempel is sexy, seductive and duplicitous, a shape-shifting temptress who entrances Kenji Burton and honey-traps him into telling the truth about what happened the night of the sexual assault. Cameron Taylor is the ultimate female character in *No Blood*

No Foul (initial draft): as the owner of the company that makes the Sentinel Soldier basketball shoe, she has a controlling hand in the financial resources that enable the 'Ball Till You Fall'

competition. Cameron is an all-powerful woman, who can control the coach, the players and her investors whilst she rules the roost.

As discussed earlier, due to its relatively niche status, the sports film tends to be marketed towards a particularly male-centred audience. Film exhibitors, when planning the launch of a sports film, position their product to attract a mostly male demographic, and spend little time attempting to appeal to their female counterparts. Unless the central theme of the film is 'women as underdog' or 'fish out of water', the traditional women's roles within films such as *Girlfight* or *Million Dollar Baby* or *A League of Their Own* are '[m]other, spectator, cheerleader, booster' (Tudor 1997: 94). These tropes of representation are long-standing and stem from a time when

juvenile literature ... depicted women only as mothers or as one-dimensional, overwhelmingly supportive girlfriends. Good (1997) echoed the assertion that women occupy a limited number of sports films, noting that in baseball films women serve either as supportive nurturers or as temptresses. As evidence the author cited examples from the earliest baseball films of the Depression era, through biographical films like *Pride of the Yankees* and *The Stratton Story* in the 1940s, to more contemporary baseball films such as *The Natural*, *Bull Durham* and *Field of Dreams*.

(Tudor 1997: 192)

Conclusion: Female stereotypes in sports films

By highlighting the structural conceits of my chosen films *Pat and Mike*, *Girlfight*, *Bend It Like Beckham*, *Million Dollar Baby* and *Fast Girls*, I have illustrated that very little has changed from the earliest days of sports films to the present day. The selected films, all of which to one extent or another tend towards the melodramatic in their portrayal of female characters, tend to have stereotypic connections and behaviours which follow in a direct timeline from past depictions.

To conclude, what I have found with this exploration of female stereotyping in the sports film genre has been as follows.

1. Entrenched assumptions that reinforce gender stereotyping remain a persistent default setting in the portrayal of the female sports protagonist.
2. Materials and resources are the unquestioned leverage factors in the decision-making process in relation to gender-related inclusion.
3. There is an historical precedent of gender silencing which remains relatively unbroken in the expectations and anticipations of sports film tropes.
4. The use of established templates, even those of respected theorists, can act in a pernicious way against more gender aspirational motives, decisions and conventions.

The significance of these findings for the

development of the screenplay I wrote is as follows.

5. That melodrama remains a substantial and persistent influence in the sports film genre.
6. That male dominance and the notion of the 'manly creative' remain the dominant tropes.
7. That, where there is collaboration between filmmakers and cinema audiences to create more progressive film-going experiences, the latter nevertheless fail to significantly move gender stereotyping to a profound degree.
8. That, where storytelling is concerned, the dominant group in charge of this activity remains males, and, whilst this persists, melodrama will continue to be the controlling factor when a woman takes the leading role in a sports film.

Finally, I have found the writing of Richard Delgado particularly supportive of my views and findings, and I can probably do no better at this stage than to provide two quotations from Delgado in his essay 'Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others: A Plea for Narrative'. He asserts that, where storytelling is concerned, there are two groups: the dominant group (the in-group) and the out-group,

whose marginality defines the boundaries of the mainstream ... whose consciousness has been suppressed, devalued and abnormalised. The attraction of stories for these groups should come as no surprise. For stories create their own bonds and represent cohesion, shared understandings and meanings.

The cohesiveness that stories bring is part of the strength of the out-group. An out-group creates its own stories, which circulate within the group as a kind of counter-reality. The dominant group creates its own stories as well. The stories or narratives told by the in-group remind it of its identity in relation to out-groups and provide it with a form of shared reality in which its own superior position is seen as natural.

(Delgado 1989: 2412)

Delgado has outlined the idea of the mainstream culture and the voices from the edge of that culture. The situation has not changed in hundreds of years; the white male perspective predominates, and everyone else has been relegated to the margins:

The stories of out-groups aim to subvert that in-group reality. In civil rights, for example, many in the majority hold that any inequality between blacks and whites is due to either cultural lag, or inadequate enforcement of currently existing beneficial laws – both of which are easily correctible. For many minority persons, the principal instrument of their subordination is neither of these. Rather, it is the prevailing mind set by means of which members of the dominant group justify the world as it is – that is, with whites on top and browns and blacks at the bottom.

(2414)

He might have added, 'And women and gays.' The

dominant culture has a vested interest in holding onto its position. The patriarchy has remained dominant by not relinquishing its hold on the physical, financial and spiritual controls that enable it to continually create stereotypes in terms of storytelling, and, indeed, in the positioning of those of a different class, race, gender or sexuality from itself.

In this chapter I sought to scrutinise how women are stereotyped in sports films. Having said that, sins of omission, erasure and stereotyping are relatively easy to commit. My own screenplay *No Blood No Foul* centres on a mixed-race protagonist, with women supporting in the (on reflection) disappointingly traditional roles of mother, ex-wife, daughter and source of finance. I find myself repeating the mistakes of other writers by failing to create a significant/pivotal/kick-ass role for a female protagonist. Not only that, but – given that women of colour participate in track and field events, on football pitches and arenas and basketball courts, and have won medals at the Olympics and beyond – where are the films that tell us these stories? And why isn't my screenplay one of them?

The heroine's journey is made conspicuous by her absence on the large and small screens that fill our lives. And, although there have been minor breakthroughs in the sports film genre, women of colour remain marginalised as subject matter. It might be that the problem of female representation

must be resolved first before we cut the Gordian knot of racial portrayal.

Only when this particular glass ceiling has been well and truly smashed will we see women of colour in sports films taking the lead roles with panache and flair, telling stories about their forebears: the female pioneers of sport who broke through the glass ceiling, such as Alice Coachman, a stand-out track athlete at Tuskegee Institute who became the first black woman to win an Olympic gold, in 1948, breaking existing records with her high jump. Or Ora Washington, who won the American Tennis Association singles trophy in 1929. She held the title for seven years. Althea Gibson won ten tennis titles in a row. Gibson won her first Grand Slam singles title at the French Open in 1956, and then won back-to-back titles at Wimbledon and the US Open in 1957. All these extraordinary women deserve a film based on their considerable achievements. And let's not even talk about Venus and Serena Williams ... (See www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-women-in-sports).

I now move into the next section of my thesis, which tests these ideas of genre, race, class and gender, and also the utilisation of the black protagonist, the pitfalls and relative absence of the female protagonist (particularly in my own work) and the perils of being a BAME writer set against the lack of diversity in the UK TV and film industry.

However, some final observations on the intersectionality of these four phenomena provides us with a concluding framework to take subsequent chapters forward.

It will be noted that within the preceding four sections my writing comments upon the exclusionary/discriminatory practices in mainstream sports film (and films in general) and television. This summation is also refracted through my own experience as a black working class Briton in broadcast media. From this position it is possible to observe where race, class, gender and sexuality intersect both in terms of onscreen portrayal but also in terms of the means of production, and how the production decisions are made. As this PhD by Practice progresses it becomes clear that the demographic profile of those producers, financiers and distributors has a direct influence not only on what is greenlit for production, but also on what we see at the multiplex and on our TV screens.

Chapter 6

Reflections on Screenwriting: *Moonlight Marauders*
(Outline) and *No Blood No Foul* (Selling Draft)

This section of the thesis refers to four principal documents.

1. The first of these is my first extended outline, called *Moonlight Marauders* (MM Outline), written without very much input from Revolution Films.
2. The second is the completed draft of the full feature screenplay, now named *No Blood No Foul* Initial Draft (NBNF Initial), which can be found in Appendix 2.
3. After that there was an extensive period of work and revision under the supervision of Revolution Films' development executive; he had already nominated a director, which resulted in the third document, *No Blood No Foul* Director's Draft (NBNF Director's), which can be found in Appendix 5.
4. Finally, there is the Selling Draft; this is my rewrite of the Director's Draft but closely monitored on a regular basis by Luis Prieto, the director. This is entitled *No Blood No Foul* Selling Draft (NBNF Selling).

The two drafts to which I will most frequently refer in the following chapters are the first, MM (Outline), and the last, NBNF (Selling), which are copied below in this chapter.

It should be noted that, whilst these are referred to as the principal drafts, there were many others – as would be normal in screenwriting practice; around eight versions of the outline and a similar number of the screenplay itself. Chapter

7 documents excerpts from the scripts' full development history, and Chapter 8 draws conclusions about the textual changes that accompanied this process.

Before we delve into these two principal texts, it might be pertinent at this point to outline the 'typical' process of producing a screenplay, and offer some general observations on how this process played out from the author's standpoint.

As a relatively new screenwriter, some might say that I'm hardly equipped to pontificate about the 'typical' screenwriting process. The experience of developing *Moonlight Marauders* (Outline) into *No Blood No Foul* (Initial) is still relatively fresh in my mind, however. Therefore, this is the process as seen through the lens of a recently graduated BAME aspirant screenwriter.

A writer can create an idea and write a brief outline, and then pitch to producers or commissioning editors in the hope of being tasked with the job of writing a more detailed treatment, outline or synopsis or, if he/she is lucky, the full text. Alternatively, in other cases (this happens more and more these days), a production company will contact a writer's agent with regard to a property that it has in development, in the hope of marrying the writer (whose methodology the company has researched) to the project, which is of a similar genre. If the writer is experienced with accompanying credits, once contact has been established and enthusiasm for the project has been

confirmed, a deal is struck between the writer's agent and the production company. This contract dictates and pays for the writer's commitment to the project, and usually outlines remuneration for the following products, or stages of development:

- treatment;
- first draft;
- first set of revisions;
- second draft;
- second set of revisions.

Generally speaking, the agreed payment depends on the experience and clout of the writer. These also influence to what extent the writer can expect to work with the producers on the story outline, plotting, character concerns, theme, etc. An experienced author can expect a very firm hand on the rudder. Sorkin, for example (whose screenplays include *Moneyball* [2011], *Charlie Wilson's War* [2007], *The Social Network* [2010] and *A Few Good Men* [1992]), shows utter confidence whilst wielding the rudder, but completely understands the vagaries of his writing path.

From the moment I say I'm starting until the moment I deliver it is usually about eighteen to twenty-four months on a screenplay, but most of that time is spent trying to think of it, and being depressed. There are people for whom it is ten weeks, twelve weeks. In fact, I'm pretty sure the contract I sign says I'm going to deliver it in twelve weeks and nobody ever believes that. Most of that eighteen to twenty-four months is spent not writing, most of that eighteen to twenty-four

months is spent bulking up, preparing to write. Once I start typing the screenplay, if everything is going great, I can usually do it in two or three months.

(Sorkin 2016)

For less experienced screenwriters, such as myself, however, the time constraints set by the paymasters must be adhered to, within reason.

It will be clear from what follows in Chapter 7 that the process as a whole was not only exciting and creative, but also a journey which caused conflict, self doubt and a momentary loss of confidence.

Everyone's a critic

Another aspect of my journey towards becoming a more mature (if still relatively insecure) screenwriter was learning how to receive and work with criticism. At the start of my MA course I had no idea that criticism would upset me as much as it did. It turned out that I had a problem with it. I would ask for notes and then promptly ignore them. What was I so scared of?

It could be said that all acts of creativity are a set-up for rejection. Vincent van Gogh, for example, did not sell a single painting during his lifetime; not one. J. K. Rowling was penniless, divorced and raising her child as a single mother whilst writing her first novel. She went from living on benefits to becoming one of the wealthiest women in the world in the space of five

years because she strove to overcome her situation. Stephen King's first book, *Carrie* (1974), was rejected thirty times. Steven Spielberg was rejected from the University of Southern California School of Theatre, Film and Television three times. Eventually he went elsewhere and then dropped out to become a director before completing the course (he finally returned to college in 2002 to complete his BA).

My problem was probably linked to the relationship between performance and reaction. As a performer, I am used to the instant gratification of applause. I tell a joke and, if I have told it correctly, the audience laugh. At the end of a show, if the sequence of pre-planned events have been executed properly, the audience will applaud. In contrast to this, I find writing frightening because of the time lapse between getting the words down on the page and actually receiving some kind of response. The longer the gap, for me, the more frightening the prospect of what might be said about my work. I never understood that concept before I became a writer; one must assemble armour plating that will provide protection from the slings and arrows of opinion; one must protect oneself from feeling rejected and keep going no matter what. This is because failing is crucial to the creative process:

[Samuel] Beckett came to believe failure was an essential part of any artist's work, even as it remained their responsibility to try to

succeed. His best-known expressions of this philosophy appear at the end of his 1953 novel *The Unnamable* – ‘... you must go on. I can’t go on. I’ll go on’ – and in the 1983 story *Worstward Ho* – ‘Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.’

(Power 2016)

Apart from ‘fear of failure’, there was (and probably still is) an element of my suffering from the performer’s malaise of wanting to be liked by everyone all the time. This can get in the way of creative activity; great works of art do not just spring into being on a wave of agreement. The back and forth of failing, failing again and failing better usually occurs in an atmosphere that toggles between the solitude of creativity (the writer alone) and the collegiate crucible of the development meeting.

Obviously, if you’re in a writing partnership with someone very smart, you’ll have had this experience already and it will have contributed to your script. Many great screenplays were written by duos, such as the Coen Brothers, the Wachowski Brothers, Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, Billy Wilder and I. A. L. Diamond, the Farrelly Brothers – you can create your own collaboration before you get in the development arena and work out story problems for yourself. But I wonder if the majority of us want the glory for ourselves, so we forge on in isolation?

Towards maturity

Here's what I didn't know when I was starting that I now know – I thought when you were starting out it was really hard to write because you hadn't broken in yet, you hadn't really hit your stride. What I found out paradoxically is that the next script you write doesn't get easier because you wrote one before ... each one gets harder by a factor of ten.

(Black 2013)

So far I have shown that, from my own experience and from the claims of established writers, screenwriting is a highly rigorous craft requiring much diligence and method, and that I was still naïve and wet behind the ears when I entered the arena with Revolution Films. There is no villain here; revisions, notes, guidance, story concerns and prospective fixes all appear to be typical not only for a writer relatively new to the business but also for industry warhorses. Everyone, from Robert McKee to Syd Field to Blake Snyder, talks about the idea of rewriting being a key factor in the successful production of the script. What they don't tell you, or prepare you for, is the complete and utter fear, tedium and frustration of actually executing the task from start to finish. On rereading the development of the script, and my reactions, it's perhaps fair to say that the reactions at times bordered on the immature. Perhaps I had to grow as a writer. The only way to understand the process is to immerse yourself in it.

Maturity comes from experience, and this was my first experience as a screenwriter.

The questions that arose repeatedly throughout the development process, from treatment to selling draft, were as follows.

- When you enter the crucible of development (i.e. an office where your script editor sits waiting), whose side are they on?
- How do you learn, as a writer, to distinguish between their care and value for you as an employee and creative, who they have chosen, and their commercial and other interests and motivations?
- How do you know and decide as a writer what to fight for and what not to fight for?
- Which aspect of the script (e.g. character, gender, tone of dialogue), if you were asked to change it, would cause a derailment of the development process?

These are areas that I explore in the next three chapters, which describe obstacles typical to the screenwriter. As a BAME practitioner, however, the added burden is, in the British film and television industry, that one is constantly faced with a non-BAME editorial voice seeking to influence the end result in BAME-centric work, which can be challenging.

The following chapters demonstrate these challenges, and also show my reactions, and actions, in adapting to the development process.

MOONLIGHT MARAUDERS

A FEATURE FILM TREATMENT

by L. G. HENRY

LOG LINE

ONE BROTHER WALKS THE WALK;
THE OTHER TALKS THE TALK;
AND COACH NEEDS TO FIGURE OUT HOW
TO GET THEM TO 'PLAY THE GAME FOR ITS OWN SAKE AND
NOT FOR THE FAME ...'

SYNOPSIS

KHALED AND SAMIR MASSI ARE BROTHERS HUSTLING BASKETBALL COURTS IN SOUTH LONDON FOR RENT MONEY.

KHALED PLAYS LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN MICHAEL JORDAN AND MEADOWLARK LEMON; SAMIR, THE BROTHER WITH THE GAMMY LEG, IS A SMOOTH-TALKING HUSTLER, TAKING COURTSIDE BETS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE GAMES.

THEY'VE GOT PROBLEMS, THOUGH: KHALED'S BABYMOTHER, COOKIE, IS AN EX-CRACKHEAD; THEIR MOTHER, ANYA, IS SICK, AND THEY NEED TO PAY THEIR MUCH OVERDUE RENT OR RISK EVICTION. HE'S NOT JUST PLAYING FOR FUN...

THEN COACH JACKSON SHOWS UP, WITH A STORY ABOUT PAST FAILURE, ADULTERY, ADDICTION AND A MISSED OPPORTUNITY.

HE MIGHT GET A SHOT AT REDEMPTION, MONEY AND NBA SUPERSTARDOM — IF KHALED WILL JUST SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE FOR THE HOTTEST BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT IN EUROPE: **MOONLIGHT MARAUDERS** — AN ALL-NIGHT GAME WHERE THE WINNER GETS TO PLAY NBA LEGEND KENJI BURTON FOR A COOL QUARTER-MILLION!

GAME ON!

FADE-IN

A ball spinning endlessly on a finger; then it jumps from finger to finger, then flicks onto the player's head and continues spinning.

KHALED MASSI (at least 6' 8", and eighteen years old) catches the basketball one-handedly and grins at his brother, SAMIR MASSI (6' 0", and twenty), who tells him to stop goofing around, 'Cos there's cash money out there just waiting to jump into our pockets'.

We're in Hackney, an inner-city 'hood with an edgy, predominantly black and Asian populace, rubbing along together like nitro and glycerine.

KHALED and SAMIR are good-looking, mixed-race French/Algerian brothers who live with their mother, ANYA (black, fifties), a waitress in a local restaurant taking too many sick days due to her vanishing eyesight.

They all live in a shitty part of town, renting from a landlord who makes Stalin seem like Fozzie Bear.

The two brothers hustle the local basketball courts; Khaled, tall, muscled, gentle, plays whilst Samir (not so tall, with a gammy leg and an attitude) drums up challengers: 'Winner stays on and keeps the pot.'

Khaled plays like a Harlem Globetrotter and wins easily, but there's only enough cash to buy

groceries once Samir's taken his cut; it's hardly the good life.

Khaled is tired of being the family meal ticket. **He dreams of playing pro ball for the NBA** – but he's not confident. He's got a sick parent, a baby mother called Cookie – and she's an ex-crackhead – and, worst of all, he doubts himself. Could he go 'all the way to the NBA'? Or is he just a low-life scrub street player?

The only person who seems to listen to his dreams is Audrey (twenty-two, black), the cook at the restaurant where his mother works. She is smart, streetwise and funny and is on a mission to cook her way out of the ghetto. She makes Khaled laugh – and he finds her easy to talk to.

Samir declares that whatever's paying the rent is what you should stick at; it's pure common sense.

Khaled reminds *him* that he has fathered three boys by three different baby mothers; maybe he should take care of them before he chats rubbish about anyone else's problems.

Samir's right, however; what's paying the rent at the moment is the street ball.

At the restaurant, Anya spills a hot drink over her landlord, who gets her sacked. She is distraught: what will she do for money?

Samir has deliberately advised her to put pressure on Khaled, because he wants his brother right where he can see him: earning money for the family.

Cookie asks why she and Samir never made a go of it when they were going out... Samir tells her that she kept taking all his money and spending it on drugs; she reminds him that they had some good times, and even hints that Kobe might not be Khaled's baby, but Samir doesn't want to hear it – though he does still carry a torch for Cookie...

Meanwhile, at the community centre, Khaled sees a flyer for MOONLIGHT MARAUDERS; an **all-night sudden death basketball** competition featuring the best players from all over the UK. The overall victor challenges an NBA champ to a one-on-one, no-holds-barred battle for court supremacy.

Audrey comes out from her Ashtanga yoga class, sees Khaled and asks what he's doing. He shows her the flyer, and she sees the sparkle in his eyes at the possibility of being an NBA ball player; she tells him to **go for it**.

When Khaled tells his brother about the competition, Samir is skeptical, however. Street ball is one thing – but the NBA? Completely different! Khaled is good, but he's no Michael Jordan; he's better off doing what he's doing.

Khaled is furious with Samir, and later that night, when they are hustling 'civilians' on the court,

Khaled **dazzles** to prove to his brother that they **should** go for it.

By the end of the evening an appreciative crowd has gathered, and in the crowd watching the whole thing, with his jaw on the floor, has been CLIFFORD JACKSON (fifties, black), a world-weary basketball scout for the Moonlight Marauders basketball competition.

At the end of the session Clifford runs to Khaled and introduces himself, and then tells him that he has to participate in Moonlight Marauders because not only could he win the damn thing, but he could also beat the NBA guy and make him cry and run home to his mama!

Samir is suspicious but Khaled is clearly smitten with the guy, who continues to flatter by telling Khaled: 'Genius ball players like you appear once in a blue moon, and in my experience, when you see 'em, you gotta snap 'em up!'

Khaled agrees to take part in Moonlight Marauders, as Clifford is the first basketball professional to tell him he's **any good**.

FLASHBACK

But there are reasons for Clifford's fervour: years ago he scouted for the NBA. He always tipped off his favoured pro coaches, around the country, as to who the hot shit was this season: the new Michael,

Rodman, Barclay. He made good money, and had twin boys and a good-looking wife.

The job entailed a lot of travelling around the country, appraising high school and college ball players.

In the downtime, Clifford would drink excessively and wind up banging waitresses and generally making a fool of himself.

Pretty soon his marriage was on the rocks, and, as a result, he lost his edge. He failed to spot KENJI BURTON (black, late twenties), a young point guard out of Atlanta; he dismissed the kid because he cheated, hustled the referee and was stretchered off.

Kenji got signed for a steal for Atlanta, however, and when he turned out to be a game-changer like Jordan his contract was renegotiated; since then Burton has become one of the most celebrated players in the NBA.

Jackson quit his job before they fired him. He left his wife and kids and combined an extended drunken binge with a basketball coaching/scouting gig in Europe.

His best friend, EDDIE SIMON (white, fifties), a foul-mouthed, avuncular NBA coach for a minor team, got him a good-paying gig on the Moonlight Marauders project as a scout/advisor.

Legion, the sneaker company sponsors of Moonlight Marauders, wants its product to attract great talent and has put up a lot of prize money for the competition. This could be Coach Jackson's opportunity to atone for his big mistake – though he can't believe who they've chosen as the MVP for the big, grand one-on-one finale. **It's Kenji Burton.**

Maybe Khaled Massi will be his redemption? If only he could get him away from that awful, gimpy brother of his...

The **Kenji Burton** sexual assault case is the talk of the basketball community; it's the O. J. Simpson trial of the noughties. Khaled and Samir watch the whole thing on cable TV. Burton's evangelical Johnny-Cochran-style lawyer, WADE HAYWARD (black, forties)m tries to defend Kenji's horny behaviour by uttering such pearls as 'If the leather ski mask with the zippered eyeholes don't fit – you **must** acquit!'.

Kenji is charged with assaulting three cheerleader types in his hotel room. Kenji's defence is hardly gentlemanly: 'If they in my room after midnight, talkin' some bullshit – they gonna get some...'

Khaled thinks Burton is a dishonourable fool; Samir wishes they had his money.

Meanwhile, Khaled is helping his mum out at the Algerian restaurant and flirting with Audrey, who seems wise beyond her twenty-something years.

Khaled likes the way she responds to his son Kobe. But when Cookie appears, to argue about money, she sees how close Audrey and Khaled are and starts a fight! She *screams* at Audrey: 'If you want the little fucking brat you can take him!'

She storms out. Audrey tells Khaled that he deserves better.

Khaled signs up for Moonlight Marauders and begins training with his street-baller friends; they train, eat, drink and shit basketball, dreaming their dreams of NBA stardom... Coach Jackson comes in and pushes them hard; Moonlight Marauders is not a game. They are gonna be playing against the best guys in the country; if they are to succeed – they must work till they drop. Khaled's knee goes during training. It hurts like hell, but he pops it back in; no harm done. Jackson wants him to see someone about it, but Khaled's dealt with it before – it's no big deal. But we see that it *is* a big deal...

Anya is threatened with eviction from her house unless she comes up with two months' rent in advance. Khaled finds out that Cookie is on the street trying to get money for crack cocaine. He finds her and promises her that if she can stay clean he will give her anything she wants. Anything. He takes her home, but is scared for his boy.

He confides to Audrey and she tells him that he must trust in God; why would they bless him with this talent if he wasn't going to make it?

On TV, we see Kenji Burton arriving at Heathrow with an entourage; Kenji brags to the press that he has no need to train for Moonlight Marauders; he just has to sleep off his jet lag, play some pool, check out the London hotties, play a little ball and then: 'Take alla that UK cash-money back to my crib.' Like a basketball Muhammad Ali, he brags about how great he is. At the airport he is thrown a ball by one of his crew and gives an impromptu performance; the gathered paparazzi, press and hangers-on applaud his showy performance.

Samir watches this with great interest; since Khaled's been in training, he's not been making any money, and all his babymothers are on his case for child support, and more... He counts out some money that he has saved in a shoebox under the bed...

He goes to Khaled and asks him if he really thinks he can beat Burton. Khaled doesn't know; he just wants to train. But, when he has gone, Coach Jackson tells Samir that miracles have happened. 'Anyone can beat anyone if the gods are on their side.'

Samir tells Jackson that, if he could be sure Khaled would win, he would place bets all over and make big money. Coach tells him to get out – he doesn't want any hint of gambling or match fixing anywhere near Moonlight Marauders. Samir tells him that he would be 'part of the deal', and Jackson slaps his face and tells him to fuck off. Samir, chastened, leaves.

Cookie, furious about Khaled's closeness to Audrey, waits in an alleyway near the restaurant, and when the cook comes out she slashes her with a Stanley knife and kicks the shit out of her, telling her to leave her man alone.

Meanwhile, Samir has taken to dealing drugs again; it's what he did before he and Khaled came up with the street hustle.

He reckons it's no big deal; and, besides, now that Khaled's going for Moonlight Marauders, Samir's got to make money.

At training, after a particularly hard session, Khaled reveals to Coach Jackson that he used to do drugs. Coach goes ballistic; wants to know if it's still going on, because if it is, if he's hanging around with ANYONE who's messing around with drugs, Khaled will be dropped like a hot potato. End of.

Just after this, Khaled finds out about the attack on Audrey and goes into free fall. Luckily, Audrey's wounds are surface; she has defence cuts on her hands and one scar on her face that will probably heal. She advises Khaled: 'Ditch the mad bitch.'

He goes round to Cookie's place, and she kicks off, kicking, screaming, and cursing him out. Kobe the baby wails, almost in counterpoint to their arguing.

Khaled then notices that there are crack pipes and the residue of drug abuse in Cookie's flat; she's begun using again, and, worse than worse, **Samir sold her the drugs.**

In reaction to her huge argument with Khaled, high on crack, Cookie falls down the concrete stairs of her flat and miscarries. She is found by a neighbour and taken to hospital.

On hearing the news, a distraught Khaled misses training to look for Samir, and finds him dealing in an alleyway. They have a massive argument, which ends with blows being exchanged. Samir has always blamed Khaled for his gammy leg; running to save him from being hit by a car was the worst thing he could have done: 'I should have let you get hit, then you woulda bin the gimp.' The brothers fight heartbreakingly, terribly – and then limp away from each other, their relationship changed for ever.

Audrey finds Khaled, depressed and unwilling to go on with Moonlight Marauders; his life has turned to shit, and he doesn't know what to do. He doesn't want to train; he feels depressed. Audrey offers to help care for the boy if Anya's adoption application is successful – which means Khaled would be free to pursue his dreams. Khaled asks why she would do that for him and she just smiles, enigmatically... He kisses her, and resolves to go for it: Moonlight Marauders, here we come!

Meanwhile, Coach Jackson goes to see Kenji Burton, who is ensconced at the Dorchester Hotel in London

with his crew. The Legion sneaker company rep, a weedy man called WILLIAM HAVERGILL (white, thirties), informs Jackson that Kenji is driving the Dorchester staff crazy, what with having changed his hotel suite eleven times, the entire penthouse floor smelling like a Turkish brothel and the constant traffic of blondes, brunettes, redheads and Afros. He feels that Burton is not taking the Marauders one-on-one challenge seriously enough.

Jackson faces Burton for the first time since he blew his big chance. Burton is rude, telling Jackson that he missed out on the gravy train, and he also tells him he would have been a zillionaire by now 'if he'd made the right decision...'. Jackson just takes it, and then asks Kenji if he is ready to take on the best basketball player in the UK. Then Kenji's manager, 'FLOW' HENDERSON, a huge, exquisitely bejewelled and dressed brother with an Afro, tells him: 'The boy's gonna be just fine; he just need to relax for a while - then he's gonna be ready to tear some shit up.' Jackson is shown the door, but not before he warns Kenji about pride coming before a fall. Kenji reminds him: 'Maybe you know more about that shit than I ever will.'

Forewarned, however, Burton pops up throughout the Moonlight Marauders eliminations. He and Flow are all business as they watch the wannabe ballers battle it out. He is surprised at the high standard, skill and aggression of the British players, but

still insists on dismissing them as amateur hour ball players. In a private moment, though, we get a sense that perhaps his bravado is covering something else: these guys are **good**.

Meanwhile, Khaled wages war throughout Moonlight Marauders – playing all night long as if completely broke with an army of babymothers on his case for child support ...

Meanwhile Samir counts out the money that he'd saved in the shoebox under the bed...

Next day we find Flow Henderson and Kenji Burton at the Dorchester having breakfast. They are listening intently, and we reveal that **Samir** is dishing the dirt on Khaled's weaknesses—particularly his dodgy knee. Money changes hands.

It's the grand finale: Khaled Massi, representing Hackney, Kobe, his mum—and now Audrey—plays Kenji Burton in the one-on-one championships.

NBA scouts are watching.

Burton is full of trash talk; Khaled says nothing. He just wants to PLAY BALL!

Burton repeatedly targets Khaled's knee, which eventually pops out after a particularly hard lunge...

In a timeout, Khaled pops it back in and manages to play Burton to a draw, and then on a penalty shoot – WIN THE GAME! It's exciting, thrilling!

Samir watches the game on local-access TV; he's high, and stressed out–conflicted.

Khaled is given his trophy.

Burton is a bad loser and rolls outta there, claiming that it was a bullshit competition anyway.

The noise of (seemingly) all of Hackney fills the arena!

Jackson is proud that Khaled played the game and didn't worry about the fame; he buttonholes a couple of NBA coaches, who rave about Khaled and attempt to outbid each other for a contract... The coach is vindicated.

Khaled is triumphant; his boy sits in his arms, and he realises that his dreams have come true.

He asks Audrey to come to the States with him. Coach Jackson thinks it's a great idea. Audrey agrees; she'll help out with Kobe – no funny business, though.

He kisses her, and their romance is sealed.

CAPTION: '5 Years Later'.

A basketball spins on the finger of a little boy.

Samir is sitting on the edge of a basketball court and watching three different-coloured boys fool around. He claps his hands three times, and tells

them that, if this is going to work, they must listen to him, promise to work hard and think about the game, not the fame...

(While muttering under his breath, 'Because three brothers with the same father and three different mothers – and they play good basketball? That's a licence to print money...')

And we fade out on Samir putting his sons through their paces on the basketball court.

ENDS

NO BLOOD NO FOUL

by L. G. HENRY

FADE IN – AGAINST BLACK

TITLES: LUPE FIASCO'S 'SUPERSTAR'

Shots of CHICAGO – and its sports history.

SOLDIER FIELD: the Bears – PHOTOGRAPH of football legend JIM MCMAHON

WRIGLEY FIELD: the Cubs – PHOTOGRAPH of baseball legend KERRY WOOD

UNITED STADIUM: the Chicago Bulls! PHOTOGRAPHS of basketball gods SCOTTIE PIPPIN, MICHAEL JORDAN and KENJI BURTON

TITLES END

On Burton's unbeatable physique CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO COURTHOUSE – DAY

A September morning, and TRAFFIC NOISE accompanies the SOUND OF A BASKETBALL THUMP-THUMPING as THREE BLACK TEENS toss their ball between parked cars.

BOY 1

I'm a be LeBron James - muscle yo ass all over the court...

BOY 2

James? What? I'm a be Michael Jordan. Game over, fool!

BOY 3

I'm a be Kenji Burton – n' kick all ya'll's asses!

They flow past THE COURTHOUSE

CAMERAS, REPORTERS, RADIO and PAPARAZZI wait. A microphone-stacked podium lingers in shot. Suddenly – movement. The courthouse doors open and KENJI BURTON of the Chicago Bulls steps to the podium; FLASHBULBS explode! Burton stands like a god – suited, booted, wing-tipped and snake-hipped. He smiles, and the women get crazy.

A PAPARAZZI gets too close and – BAM! POOKIE MCINTYRE, Burton's PA, shoves the guy – HARD. Kenji signals Pookie to calm down and then proceeds.

KENJI

Look, man. I wanna – pay respect to my lawyer, Billy Nightingale, who fought real hard on this case. Brother Billy: thank you, man.

A smartly dressed lawyer, BILLY NIGHTINGALE, nods, masking disappointment like a pro.

KENJI (CONT.)

I hope Ms Munroe feels we treated her fairly, and that this case is now...

SUDDENLY a MAN in a balaclava RUNS at Kenji, THROWING something as hard as he can –

MAN (O.S.)

FUCKIN' RAPIST!

Burton is SPLASHED with YELLOW PAINT! The guy then runs FAST, with Pookie and the POLICE in pursuit!

BURTON

Motha-FUCKA!

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR/INTERIOR THE TAYLOR APARTMENT A PRIVATE GYM - DAY

CHICAGO - ESTABLISH an expensive UPTOWN apartment building: INTERIOR PRIVATE GYM CONTINUOUS

An attractive WOMAN (white, thirties) pounds the treadmill. This is CAMERON TAYLOR. She watches the Burton fiasco on TV.

CAMERON

Fudge and doody!

She stops and is WHIPPED backwards by the treadmill! A loud THUD follows.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT BLOCK/CLIFFORD JAMES' BEDROOM - DAY

A shitty apartment block – one step up from a motel. LOW-LIFES congregate on the corner; there is an old abandoned CHEVY on blocks and a broken NEON sign...

INT. CLIFFORD'S BEDROOM CONTINUOUS

The crappy tiny TV is blasting out the Kenji Burton case – loud.

Nasty green wallpaper has peeled to reveal nasty green damp underneath. A quart of Jack Daniels stands on the bedside table.

A photograph of a gorgeous bikini-clad BLACK WOMAN, sitting poolside, toasting us cheekily. The picture is taped to the wall next to the bed, so that, whenever whoever is in bed awakes, the first thing he sees is this photograph.

Watching Kenji Burton get redecorated is CLIFFORD JAMES – a handsome, middle-aged, kinda naked guy, in just socks and basketball cap; he's on the bed, laughing and coughing so hard he TUMBLES out and onto the floor – BAM!

CLIFFORD (from behind the bed)

Now – THAT is funny!

He yells at the screen.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Hey, Kenji! (Sings) 'They call me mellow yellow – quite rightly. They call me mellow yellow – quite rightly...'

Then he jams his butt against the screen.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Hey, Kenji! Dig this, dig this, Kenji - it's my booty! (Raps) 'My bum is on your lips, my bum is on your lips, and if I'm lucky (forgets words, so improvises) lalalalalalalalalalala, a little bit...

He grabs the Jack - gargles, swallows. Wipes his mouth.

Watches TV.

INSERT

On TV, Kenji is completely smeared in yellow paint, helpless.

Clifford laughs and coughs, supporting himself on the bed.

CLIFFORD (TO HIMSELF)

Fuck! I may die...

The phone rings. Clifford picks it up; the caller ID says 'Blocked'.

The phone keeps ringing. Clifford thinks - then answers.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

'Lo. (Listens)

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Sup Dave? (Listens) Yeah. I nearly coughed out my liver laughing at that shit.

He tells him he's the best illegal recruiter and

will get Deshaun Moore – no probs.

EXT. THE HOT SPOT NIGHTCLUB – NIGHT

Clifford is flung into the garbage bags! ENORMO, the bouncer, picks him up and brushes him off, turns him around.

ENORMO

Mr James, you ain't welcome in the club no more. You can't be tryin' to recruit players when they gettin' they freak on. Management says I gotta put my foot in yo' ass to show you I mean business.

CLIFFORD

I got a pretty good idea you do mean...

BAM! The security guy kicks Clifford in the ass.

ENORMO

Get the fuck outta here – fuckin' has-been!

BAM!

CLIFFORD

WHAT THE...?!

Enormo kicks Clifford again – BAM!

ENORMO

If I see you round here again, I'ma git Big Charles to bus' a cap in your ass.

CLIFFORD

He's the guy who got me in this shithole in the first fuckin' place!

BAM! One more for luck! Enormo heads off into the club and Clifford walks off, lopsidedly, down the street.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

I want my \$20 back!

Enormo shakes his head and continues.

EXT./INT. GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE – NIGHT

ESTABLISH Guildford, the Friar's shopping centre, the red and cream single-decker BUSES wobbling up and down – and finally GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE.

A noticeboard proclaims: 'TONIGHT: BASKETBALL! GUILDFORD HEAT VS EVERTON TIGERS!!!'

INT. THE GYM – NIGHT

The end of the first half of a basketball game.

A tall, striking, intense man (thirty, black), wearing a well-worn but smart dark blue suit with navy shirt, watches the game.

He makes notes... His face is a picture of passion. He loves basketball; this is KHALED MASSI.

A twelve-year-old mixed-race girl sits next to him. This is Khaled's daughter, CHARLOTTE. She's just as passionate about basketball as her DAD normally –

but tonight she's preoccupied: she fiddles with a LETTER as her father jumps up and down with frustration.

EVERTON TIGERS are dominating play, and their ATTACKER CHEATS and manages to scrape a quick basket before the whistle blows.

Khaled stands up and bangs on a nearby pillar in anger!

KHALED

(Angry stuff about cheating)

CHARLOTTE HAS A LETTER IN HER HAND, WHICH SHE IS NERVOUS ABOUT

Khaled vaults the railing and legs it to the locker room.

Charlotte sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HEAT LOCKER ROOM – NIGHT

The TEAM sit in a semicircle, munching oranges and rehydrating, listening; Khal's giving a pep talk, and he really knows his stuff.

MAN

Big J - their guy's all over you, man! You should have 'Welcome' tattooed on your arse!

BIG J, a very tall dude with an Afro, is indignant.

BIG J

Khaled – he's fast, man; what am I supposed to do?

KHALED

You're stronger than he is! When they're fast, we muscle 'em off the court – inniy? Dreadie, am I right?

Another tall PLAYER, with dreads and a lisp, stops drinking water for a second.

DREADIE

The...the geethers are thlick, though, man; they're playing fatht, end-to-end ball!

KHALED

Well, let's outthink 'em and shut 'em down. Defence!

Twin behemoths, both 7 foot something, look a bit sheepish.

KHALED (CONT.)

WAKE UP!!!!!!!!!!

The TEAM laugh, cheered a bit by this...

REYNOLDS (forties), a guy in a tracksuit and baseball cap, enters.

KHALED (CONT.)

Anyway, man, you know what you gotta do. We say this every week: you've got the skills, you know how to use 'em, you can beat these guys. Just go out there and show 'em your passion, man!

The GUY clears his throat.

GUY

Khal? Can I – have a word with you outside for a second?

KHALED

Sure.

The guy leads the way. Khal follows him out. The PLAYERS react, even though we don't know why...

INT. THE CORRIDOR – CONTINUOUS

The guy waits for Khaled, who wishes good luck to the lads. The guy interrupts him.

GUY

Khaled – there's five minutes left before the second half. I thought I should just pop in there quickly

and maybe have a quick word with the lads before they go back on? You know – cos I'm their coach?

Khal looks sheepish.

KHALED

I know that, Coach Reynolds; it's just – I've been watching, and I know what...

REYNOLDS

Yeah, but you don't play for us any more, do you, Khaled – remember? We let you go – you and that temper of yours – for one thing...

A beat.

Khaled reaches into his rucksack and gives Coach a Tupperware container.

KHALED

Mum's sent you some curried goat and rice. She says: 'It hot like fire.'

Coach Reynolds is disarmed, even though he's mad at Khal for usurping him.

REYNOLDS

Oh – thank you. Lovely! Look, Khaled – don't take this the wrong way, but you can't keep talking to them like this during the games. It sends the wrong message.

Khal stares at his shoes.

KHALED

I just...miss you guys – is all.

Khaled sees that Reynolds 'gets it', and then walks away towards the arena for the second half.

A beat.

REYNOLDS

Did you tell 'em to muscle their fast geezer off the court?

KHALED

Yes.

REYNOLDS

Defence?

KHALED

Wake the hell up!

And Khaled's gone! Coach Reynolds just stands there...

REYNOLDS

Yeah, yeah... Good – absolutely correct.

He opens the Tupperware container and smells.

REYNOLDS (CONT.)

Dear God, that's good!

He enters the locker room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GUILDFORD HEAT VS EVERTON TIGERS GAME —
NIGHT

EXCITING MUSIC.

Khaled watching the game; the Guildford Heat are playing well this half.

TIME CUT

Big J. muscling an even big player off the court.
Khal laughing.

TIME CUT

The twin defenders completely blocking Everton's attacker - outwitting them at every turn.

Khal on his feet, yelling.

TIME CUT

The ref arguing with Dreadie. Khal shouting at all of them!

TIME CUT

The ref blows the whistle; Big J's face disappointed. Dreadie angry.

Coach Reynolds steely. Charlotte still bored, happy it's over.

Khaled disheartened...

The Guildford Heat have lost.

TIME CUT

Khaled standing by the barriers, patting his ex-team-mates on the shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. THE TRAIN TO HACKNEY – NIGHT

The London train zooms through the darkness.

Charlotte shows Khal the letter: ski trip - £800!!!

Khal and Charlotte sit opposite each other in the second-class carriage, staring at their reflections in the window.

Charlotte's watching her dad. She pulls a face at his reflection.

Khal sees this and pulls a similar face. Charlotte sticks out her tongue.

Khal sticks out his tongue. Charlotte crosses her

eyes.

Khal falls and bangs his head on the table.

Charlotte does the same.

They both stay down; they both laugh. This is something they've done before.

He fetches the letter from his breast pocket, smooths it out and looks at it again.

KHALED

£800's a lot of money.

Charlotte looks hopeful.

A beat.

KHALED (CONT.)

There's only one thing you can do. (Beat) Daddy's gonna have to rob a bank, innit?

They laugh. He puts the letter away and holds her hand.

EXT. DE BEAUVOIR ESTATE/THE GRAFFITIED BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Late-night Hackney: bright lights, multi-ethnic shops, BLACK CABS, LAP DANCING BARS, THE HACKNEY EMPIRE, POLICE VANS whizzing through the streets, sirens blazing.

The De Beauvoir Estate; a rubbish basketball court sits at the base of two hulking tower blocks.

This is the local druggie's one-stop shop. A black HUMVEE is parked to the side, and the local prince of powders, D'ANGELO CHANG fourteen (Chinese, late twenties) is serving PUNTERS (black/white, female), who are led away by a YOUT' (black, fourteen) on a skateboard. Khaled and Charlotte come to a halt. Khaled's angry.

KHALED

Decent people live round here, you know.

A beat.

D'Angelo strolls across to him, swarming with attitude.

D'ANGELO

Who d'you think half my fuckin' customers are?

KHALED

Do you wanna watch your mouth around Charlotte, D'Angelo?

Hey! Li'l Charlotte, I never saw you there; you look lovely – your daddy looks very smart. In fact – if I might be so bold – you both do.

Khal takes Charlotte's hand and they begin jogging home – but D'Angelo joins him.

D'ANGELO

Where you bin, then – Lion King? You never see a brotha in a suit 'less he's goin' court or to see Lion King.

D'Angelo teases Khal about working as a janitor and living at his mum's (so does D).

They are on their way to Cookie's.

D'ANGELO (YELLS) (CONT.)

Khaled! Me and you need to talk soon – get me?

He gobs on the ground and then strolls back to Yout' and the others.

D'ANGELO (TO HIMSELF) (CONT.)

He's a fuckin' janitor now, innit? Used to be a halfway decent baller...

Yout' approaches with two GEEZERS (white, thirties)

D'ANGELO (CONT.)

Fuckin' pussy'ole.

CUT TO:

EXT. COOKIE AND GREGORY'S HOUSE – NIGHT

The cab arrives outside Cookie and Gregory's. There's a nice front lawn and flowers; it's very different from the De Beauvoir Estate.

As Khal and Charlotte reach the front door, an attractive, fit white woman – COOKIE (thirties) – opens it and lets Charlotte in.

Khal trying to win Cookie back, but she's with Greg now.

(poss. use dialogue from karate scene)

He's not accepting it. Greg's a nerd.

Cookie reminds him he's gotta step up and take responsibility for the ski trip.

Khal accepts that rejection for a moment and then jogs down the path and off home.

KHALED

Where'm I gonna get 800 quid in ten days? Fuck, fuck, fuck!

He pulls out his wallet: nothing but a £5 note and a small square of paper that says: 'Anger dwells only in the bosom of fools. Albert Einstein.' Khal looks at it. Folds it. Breathes deeply.

HOLD ON Khal as he tries to meditate his anger away.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. THE CHICAGO 'BURBS - DAY

We're back in Chi town; traffic's moving smoothly as we see a cab scoot through an amber light and - KABONG! - off a pothole.

EXT./INT. MULTI MEDIA SPORT AGENCY BUILDING -
LATER

Multi Media Sports Agency is a typically modern skyscraper downtown: glass; steel; space; size. Clifford sits near a Kenji Burton action shot.

Clifford glares at Kenji's athletic physique and growls. A GUY in a black suit (white, thirties) approaches.

GUY

Mr James?

Clifford stops growling.

The GUY ushers Clifford to the lifts.

CUT TO:

INT. ROMANOFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A huge office with leather furniture, a massive desk, a cocktail cabinet, 50-inch wall-mounted plasma TV and original LeRoy Neiman sports paintings. Mohammed Ali, Athlete of the Century takes pride of place.

The monarch of this particular glen, the boss, is tiny: DAVE ROMANOFF, the CEO of Multi Media Sports. Romanoff is all smooth bonhomie.

ROMANOFF

Clifford James - 'the Hardest-Working Man in Basketball'!

CLIFFORD

Dave Romanoff - 'the Pocket Rocket'!

Romanoff flinches.

ROMANOFF

No one calls me that any more.

CLIFFORD

I just did. Look, about Deshaun Moore; I think he's decided to – you know – stay with Detroit... He figures they pay him well, he has that new Nike deal, he doesn't feel – you know – under-represented by his people. Just wants to play ball and get a decent pay cheque and go home and – you know – buy a jumbo jet or somethin'.

ROMANOFF

There's video of you being thrown into a garbage heap for trying to 'recruit' DeShaun Moore.

CLIFFORD

Fuck outta here.

ROMANOFF

Look...

He flicks his iPad on, and there, in living colour, is the CCTV of Clifford being thrown into the garbage. Romanoff reacts to each bit.

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

Ow! Ouch! Ooh - he kicked you right in the ass -
ouch! Not just once - ouchie! But three times.
OOOHHH - that one hurt!!

He clicks, and we see that he has frozen Clifford's
pained expression.

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

That should be your Christmas card my friend. Trust
me.

CLIFFORD

Hey, I was working for this fucking place; don't
break my balls!

Romanoff gets all squirrely.

ROMANOFF

You? Working for this place? Illegally attempting to
recruit a baller away from his current
representation? To someone here?

He goes right in close till he's nose to nose
with Clifford.

ROMANOFF (WHISPERING) (CONT.)

I'll deny it till the day I die!

He eyeballs Clifford for a moment and then moves
away to his desk.

CLIFFORD

Well – this has been a treat. I know my way out...

He walks to the door.

ROMANOFF

So. Pauletta called me.

Clifford stops. Romanoff takes Clifford's arm and guides him gently to a chair...

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

And she told me you needed – no, her words, 'desperately' _needed some work. You're not eating right, you're drinking too much... Keep calling the house – crying and hanging up, crying and hanging up. (Beat) She told me you'd do anything. I told her I'd watch out for somethin'. I got a gig for ya, if you want it.

All Clifford's bravado has momentarily evaporated.

CLIFFORD

I don't understand... Why would my ex-wife call you about a job for me?

ROMANOFF

She knows we go back a ways, played ball together before your injury... She knows you're living in that shithole near the freeway – and you owe money. She also knows you're terrible at recruiting.

CLIFFORD

How does she know that?

ROMANOFF

She saw the video, Clifford! She watched you on ESPN, TMZ, and YouTube, personally suck at recruiting in a discreet manner. Look! I wanna show you something.

The guy in the suit presses buttons; the blinds descend, the plasma flickers into life. Images appear on the screen. The words 'SENTINEL SPORTS' and a picture of an old but wealthy-looking MAN (white, seventies) appear.

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

Sentinel Sportswear - ever hear of 'em? They were a rinky-dink local Chi town firm running wear, vests, shorts. Then old man Taylor died. His kid took over. Cameron Taylor (the woman from the gym) appears on the screen.

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

She's real smart - already pushed the firm's dollar value 25% higher than when her daddy was boss. Now she wants a successful basketball shoe - and she's willing to sponsor a tournament in Europe to launch it. I want you on the team.

CLIFFORD

If I'd wanted to sell shoes I'd'a been working with Uncle Nat in Brooklyn. And If I'd wanted Pauletta to know where I was 24/7? I'd'a stayed married.

Romanoff writes a figure on a piece of paper.
Clifford takes it - reads figure. Raises an eyebrow.

ROMANOFF

Look at that number. That would be your fee, plus per diem. Non-negotiable.

Clifford licks his lips.

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

Whole thing's in Europe: mission control in London, qualifiers in Paris; you source the European players and hold the NBA guy's dick till the final, which is at the end of this month.

CLIFFORD

Who ya got?

ROMANOFF

Kenji Burton.

Clifford is up and putting on his coat, grabbing his bags. He storms to the door. Romanoff follows, oozing charm.

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

Clifford! You guys had a misunderstanding: you pushed him around on live TV, and – he cold-cocked you!

CLIFFORD

Fuck him! Fuckin' punk – tryin' to grab my wife's ass behind my back. You try to help someone; Coach says (mocking) 'spend some time with Burton – get him acclimatised to the big leagues'; meanwhile, he's tryin' to acclimatise my WIFE! FUCK HIM!

Romanoff loses patience.

ROMANOFF

No, Clifford, FUCK YOU! He's our guy. You're gonna TAKE this goddam job! Pauletta called me and begged me – and...I...I can't say no to her – alright?

Clifford looks at Romanoff quizzically; Romanoff backpedals.

ROMANOFF (CONT.)

She...she's like a Jedi – you know that. Obi Wan Pauletta! Look, idiot, you need the money. You in or not?

Clifford is torn.

(A beat.)

CLIFFORD

I'll do it. (Beat) But any bullshit and I'm out.

ROMANOFF

Sure. (Casually) And remember: we don't want anyone making Kenji Burton look too bad.

Clifford raises an eyebrow.

CLIFFORD

Didn't I just say 'Any bullshit and I'm out'?

ROMANOFF

Don't you need to cash a big-ass cheque soon and pay bills and shit?

Clifford accepts his fate.

CLIFFORD

London. Mother-fuck.

Romanoff rubs his hands together.

ROMANOFF

We're gonna make crazy money. Oh – and you're gonna have to watch that mouth around Cameron Taylor; she don't like cursin'.

Kenji Burton's good-looking visage fills the screen.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LEISURE CENTRE HACKNEY – DAY

The main road to the leisure centre. Khaled's on his way to work; Charlotte rides her bike alongside him.

CHARLOTTE

You've got to play basketball again, daddy.
Guildford Heat NEED you, man! Coach Reynolds needs a
firework up the arse.

KHALED

Charlotte Massi - I'll wash your mouth out with
soap!

CHARLOTTE

I'm only sayin' what YOU said to D'Angelo the other
day...

Khaled responds – fast.

KHALED

Charlotte - do NOT mention that you and me and
D'Angelo were chatting to mum, 'cos she yank out my
arms and beat me with them. Believe.

Charlotte laughs but knows he's being serious; her
face grows serious... Khaled dials it down a notch.

KHALED (CONT.)

Listen. D'Angelo's trouble... Your mum really don't like him. Keep out of his way - promise?

Yout' whizzes by on his skateboard. He checks out Charlotte - and nearly careens into a car. He corrects himself. Charlotte ignores him.

CHARLOTTE

I promise...

Khaled kisses her forehead.

KHALED

Good... Now - g'wan! Tek yu backside to school!

Charlotte smiles - then speaks.

CHARLOTTE

Don't forget my skiing trip money.

KHALED

I know; thanks for reminding me. (Beat) It's a done deal.

CHARLOTTE

Love you!

Charlotte sees Khal hanging with D.

She rides off; Khal turns and lopes up the steps and is met at the door by a sweaty D'Angelo wearing an expensive tracksuit.

KHALED

D'Angelo! You look...exhausted...

D'Angelo's breathing heavily, doing yoga stretches and using the door for balance.

D'ANGELO

'SWEATIN' TO DUB STEP' – knackerin'! Half the people in there are buyin' shit off me to keep up – it's off the hook.

Khaled starts walking away.

D'ANGELO (CONT.)

Hey – I know you're under pressure, dollar-wise, now you ain't ballin' no more. You barely holdin' it together, bruv...

He grabs Khaled's shoulder – but Khaled shakes him loose, keeps on walking.

KHALED

I ain't doin' so bad; the money here's...

D'ANGELO

You ain't built for unblockin' toilets, Khal! Look...hear what – right? Come work for me.

This stops Khal in his tracks.

KHALED

What?!

D'ANGELO

I'm settin' up my own betting shop. I want YOU, Khal, to represent my other interests.

KHALED

A bettin' shop? Why?

D'ANGELO

Gamblin', man - now, THAT shit is addictive. And it's legit - right? Geezers will bet on anything - horses, dogs, basketball. I can bet on who does what, when, how, in what order - it's all gravy, bruv. Come and work for me, Khal; end of problems.

Khal looks at Yout', hovering nearby.

KHALED

What? And be one of your boys? (poss. adjust to: You're offering me a job as a drug dealer?)

D'ANGELO

Nah, man, BE the man! I reckon people'd wanna buy from you - you look good, smell good. You're still

fit. I'll show you the ropes and – blaps! – money flyin' out your arsehole, man! Guaranteed.

Khal is tempted.

A beat.

KHALED

Listen, D'Angelo; I'll think about it – yeah?

Later.

He disappears into the leisure centre...

Yout' bounds up the stairs and hands a RUCKSACK to D'Angelo, who unzips it, extracts a fat roll of twenties, hands a couple to Yout' and then disappears. Yout' FLIPS his skateboard onto the railings and slides back down; a passing TRAMP applauds.

INT. THE LEISURE CENTRE'S STORE ROOM - DAY

The store room is deliberately dark and musty. Khal dons overalls and assembles his tools: a broom, a mop, gloves, etc.

INT. THE GENTS' TOILETS - DAY

The gents' toilet is relatively clean – apart from the PUKE everywhere. Khal mops the floor, squirts antibacterial spray liberally.

Khaled asks his boss for overtime work. The boss

rebuffs him and instructs him to put up posters.

INT. FRONT RECEPTION - LATER

Boxes of posters wait at reception. The BOSS checks his watch. Khal arrives and loads the boxes onto a trolley. A POSTER is taped to the top of a box.

As Khal loads, he reads, and we see his POV:

SENTINEL SPORTSWEAR PRESENTS: BALL TILL YOU FALL
- A ONE-ON-ONE BASKETBALL COMPETITION! £200,000
PRIZE MONEY! QUALIFIERS IN PARIS - SUPERSTAR
KENJI BURTON PLAYS THE WINNER...

Despite himself, Khal's interested. His boss has clocked the whole thing.

BOSS

Don't get any ideas in your head, Khaled Massi; them days are long gone! (You can't handle the pressure.)

KHALED

I know.

BOSS

Basketball's allergic to you, mate. (Beat) You're like Kryptonite to basketball!

HOLD ON Khaled's face as he pushes the trolley.

(deleted animation scene)

EXT/INT. AN IPAD SCREEN – NIGHT

Click!

An iPad flowers into life and shows an Aardman-style Claymation commercial.

GREAT MUSIC THROUGHOUT.

1. A Claymation rocket arcing through space.
2. A Claymation KENJI BURTON pilot.
3. Touchdown 1: retro-rockets blast as the ship lands.
4. Touchdown 2: Kenji's spanking new SOLDIER^(tm) basketball boots hit the planet's surface and shadows fall across them as...
5. BADASS ALIENS, with cartoon weaponry aimed at Kenji, appear.
6. Kenji REACHES inside a utility bag.
7. A HUNDRED cartoon weapons and their safety catches being RELEASED!
8. Kenji is just reaching for his trusty BASKETBALL. He presses a button and a hoop slides out from his rocket 10 feet off the planet's surface. His shoes magically swell, becoming extra boing-y, and he LEAPS many feet off the ground and dunks the ball!

9. The ALIENS applaud, divide into two teams and start a game, where Kenji continues to SOAR and dominate.

The tag line reads: The Sentinel Soldier - TASTE THE AIR

CUT TO:

INT. KENJI'S JET

On Kenji's luxury private jet; Kenji sits up front, next to Cameron, as they watch the commercial on her iPad screen. Kenji scowls throughout. Cameron beams at the tag line, and then notices Kenji's expression.

KENJI

Why they gotta do that?

CAMERON

What?

KENJI

Make out it's the shoe that jump, NOT the nigga.

A beat as Cameron considers her reply.

CAMERON

I suppose it's the conceit of the commercial, the

unique selling point? We're saying, 'Wouldn't it be terrific if new "Sentinel Soldier" basketball shoe could help all...uh...N-words dunk like Kenji Burton?'. It's marketing, Kenji - all the N-words will want to be JUST like you...

KENJI

I don't want any nigga watching this shit thinking they can jump like me 'cos of a GOT-DAMN mo'fuckin' shoe!

CAMERON

Is that language really necessary?

POOKIE gets in between Cameron and Kenji so's he can talk sense to his friend.

POOKIE

Much money they payin' you, nigga? I would lie my ass off bout some shoes. (Pretends he's on TV)
'Yeah, nigga, buy these shoes and you can fly to the moon.' (To Kenji) You in YO' OWN private jet, fool! You know how much the gas costs for this mothafucka??

Kenji laughs, then pushes Pookie out the way. He turns to Cameron...

KENJI

Change that shit about the jump. It's me that jumps,

not no motherfuckin' shoe. (Beat) And what'sa matter with my language? It's English – right?

Cameron nods – and backs off quickly. She makes her way to her seat and sits, relieved that THAT particular ordeal is over. Closes her eyes. All goes black.

PILOT (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats for landing. We are approaching London Heathrow. Cabin Crew: prepare for landing.

Then, real close:

KENJI

Hey, Cameron!

Cameron jumps! Kenji is sitting next to her, buckling up.

CAMERON

Fudge and Doody! You scared me!

KENJI

I wish I could see Clifford James' face when his driver pick him up, man... Somebody should be filmin' that shit.

He laughs and...

The lights go off; landing.

EXT./INT. CLIFFORD'S CAR - DAY

A hybrid cab rounds Shepherd's Bush Green.
Clifford's in the back seat, glaring out of the
window, muttering.

The BLACK DRIVER (forties) says nothing throughout.

CLIFFORD (MIMICKING)

'We got you an earlier flight, Clifford! So you can
hit the ground running.' Yeah - you hit the ground
runnin' after nine hours in coach, bitch - sittin'
next to a morbidly obese Hell's Angel with halitosis
and terminal flatulence... Filthy rich lying cow!
(Beat) England - my ass; shoulda called it
'Rainland' or 'Freezin' frikkin' cold land'... What
about 'Shitland?' Does the sun ever shine here??

The driver remains mute.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Shoulda bought a fuckin' canoe.

EXT. CLIFFORD'S CAR/THE SHITTY B&B - CONTINUOUS

The car pulls up outside a shitty hotel. Clifford

gets out, stares in disbelief at where he's expected to stay and then punches a number into his cellphone.

The driver waits expectantly; Clifford is talking.

CLIFFORD

Yeah, honey - I DO know 'what time it is out there?'. Could I speak to Dave Romanoff, please?
(Waits) 'No'?

Clifford mimes beating the shit out of the person on the other end of the phone. The driver watches impassively. Clifford resumes the conversation.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Alright, just tell his tiny, 'Sleep in a Matchbox' GI-Joe-uniform-wearing ass that Clifford is at the London branch of the Bates Motel and is so mad, steam is coming out of his ears and ass.

Clifford hangs up. The driver now stands with his hand out.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

I'm sorry, man, but would you mind awfully getting the fuck outta here?

Clifford picks up his bags and enters the hotel. The driver watches this.

DRIVER

(SUBTITLED) 'American Asshole'.

(DELETED SCENE WITH COOKIE)

INT. KHALED'S BEDROOM - LATER

Khal's bedroom walls are plastered with posters of BASKETBALL PLAYERS on the walls: Charles Barclay, Kobe Bryant, Penny Hardaway, several of Michael Jordan, and, of course, the unbeatable KENJI BURTON.

He's holding the letter in his hands.

His basketball sits waiting on the bedroom floor and so he picks it up and starts bouncing it gently, finding a rhythm.

Thump-thump, thump-thump. It helps him to think.

Thump-thump, thump-thump...

WIN, his mum, comes in and tells him off.

No basketball allowed.

She's got a little snack for him.

EXT/INT. GUILDFORD/COACH REYNOLD'S OFFICE – DAY

ESTABLISHING shot of GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE.

Clifford and Reynolds sit in Reynold's tiny office; there are a some trophies and a few framed sports pages on the walls, 'Special K signed to Guildford Heat' being one of them.

Reynolds has shelves of files and DVDs everywhere; they are in mid-conversation.

Clifford moaning about London to Reynolds - or faking how much he loves it. Explains why he's come to Reynolds - flattery/everyone else turned him down?

COACH REYNOLDS

...Amazing, really, that we're the nearest pro club to London. You'd think London would have its own top-of-the-line basketball club - maybe two or three - but, no. (Beat) I'm sort of flattered, Mr James - but why do you need me?

Clifford lays it on thick for this Limey...

CLIFFORD

Coach Reynolds, I'm here to put together this...uh...one-on-one basketball tournament for Sentinel Shoes. I basically need whoever will play and wants a shot at Kenji Burton in the final. The qualifiers are in ten days' time; I got a few calls out to some guys in Europe, but - right now? The UK end's not lookin' so good... Sentinel want this 'shoe' launch to be faultless, which means: no amateur shit. I need a full squad of solid players willing to fight for the honour of their country. We got ESPN, I think Sky are involved - even...uh...the Showtime, maybe, and (he looks at his piece of paper) Radio One Xtra. So, are you with me on this journey or not?

A beat.

COACH REYNOLDS

No.

CLIFFORD

What?

COACH REYNOLDS

I can't give you any of my guys; before you know it, the new season'll be here. I'm not risking injuries in order to flog some poxy shoe.

CLIFFORD

When you put it like that, it hurts. I am actually, physically hurt when you say that...

COACH REYNOLDS

You understand what I'm saying, though?

CLIFFORD

You're not speaking French! I get it.

Clifford slips off his chair and gets on his knees; he's begging.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

You gotta have SOMEBODY? Look - if they're tall and they don't drop the ball, I'll take 'em; how hard can it be? (Beat) You gotta help me: I got Sentinel breathin' down my neck, I got my ex-wife breathin' down my neck, I got Dave Romanoff breathin' down my sock - I basically got a lotta people breathin' on my, on my neck - and it's...uh...it's unpleasant, is

what it is.

Reynolds thinks for a moment, then picks up a stack of DVDs on his desk and starts sifting through them.

COACH REYNOLDS

Hmmmm... (Beat) I've got an ex-point guard/janitor, if you're interested?

Clifford grins; that's the ticket!

EXT. BATTERED BASKETBALL COURT - LATER

We're back in De Beauvoir Estate; Khal jogs past the old basketball court when he sees SOMEONE throwing a ball through the hoop repeatedly. Boom-swish! Cars SHOOM, KIDS play, a TRAMP ambles by having a coughing fit, and, on court, Clifford James is shooting hoops like a pro.

CLIFFORD

Khaled Massi - right?

Boom-swish!

KHALED

What?

CLIFFORD

The media are gonna eat you up with a teensy tiny spoon!

Boom-swish!

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

'I was a professional baller, but now I'm a lowly janitor.' Damn, that's good. The action on this baby is gonna be sweet.

Boom-swish!

Khaled is getting really pissed off with this guy.

KHALED

Who are you?

CLIFFORD

Clifford James, out of Chicago. Played a little ball one time. I've seen your DVD...

Khaled watches yet another ball fall cleanly through the hoop.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

We want you for this tournament; you'd have to play tons of ball, but if you qualify – well, then, you'd get a chance to kick Kenji Burton's ass.

Khal processes this information.

Boom-swish!

KHALED

I'm done with basketball. I'm a janitor at the leisure centre.

Clifford ignores him, fishing a card and an entry form out of his pocket.

CLIFFORD

My contact details... An entry form, right here. Come on, it's basketball; it's gotta be better than unblocking toilets – right? Tell you what. I'll come by the leisure centre around quittin' time? We'll go one on one, and – oh, let's make it interesting! – I'll make a bet with you: if I beat you, you enter the competition; if you beat me, I get the fuck outta your life. Deal?

KHALED

I'm done with ballin'. I'm a janitor.

Clifford flings the ball over his shoulder at the hoop jogs off court. The ball bounces off the rim. Khal catches the rebound, sinks it in one – then does a little celebration.

Clifford watches and then jogs off.

CUT TO:

INT. LEISURE CENTRE/BASKETBALL GYM - NIGHT

Khaled mops the floor of the basketball court. Up, down, up, down... He sighs. Looks at the clock on the wall; it says 8 p.m. Then he goes to the equipment cupboard and takes out a basketball

FANTASTIC UK MUSIC.

TIME CUT

Khal's practising - crossovers.

TIME CUT

Shooting from different parts of the court.

TIME CUT

Dribbling.

Clifford watches from the door. He's wearing very short shorts and an old school basketball vest bearing the legend 'BIRD'; he also wears a stocking cap, which makes him look like an underdressed burglar.

KHALED

Oh, you into Larry Bird? Boston Celtics. Old school.

Clifford's got the ball, practising his crossovers.

CLIFFORD

In my book, old school is the only school, Khal.

KHALED

You don't get to call me that. Look, I'm done with ball; it's over. I don't play no more.

Clifford grins like Donald Trump on payday and bounces the ball back and forth between his legs; he torments Khaled.

CLIFFORD

Ooh – ball's over for you? Ball damaged you? Poor Khaled...poor baby – don't play ball no more? Ahhh, shame – you want a lie-down? You want...

Khal steals the ball from him – but Clifford steals it back, blocks Khal and scores a basket.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Are we gonna do this? I get the feeling it ain't gonna last too long. First to ten. If I win, you do this competition. If I lose, you do what you want – OK?

Khal nods.

MUSIC BEGINS.

KHALED

Yeah, yeah! When you're done, close the door on your way out.

On a mutual signal the game begins, and - POW!
Clifford's scored already.

Khal rushes him, steals the ball, but Clifford's pivoted on the ball of his foot and gets past Khal, grabbing the ball on his way. Clifford commentates like an enthused schoolboy...

CLIFFORD

The great Bird is all over this young Magic Johnson wannabe.

Clifford scores another basket, and pushes Khal away roughly.

KHALED

Get off me!

CLIFFORD

This ain't team ball, Khaled - it's one-on-one '86 style. You love ball, I can tell.

Khaled steals the ball, scores. Clifford claws the ball back, finger-rolls it, bounces it twice, scores again.

Khaled can't believe it: Clifford's got the ball again!

KHALED

What the fuck?

CLIFFORD

Oh yeah, baby - Bird's on the turnaround -the classic duel with Dominic Wilkins in 1988. Look at you; I got you sweatin' now, don't I? Khaled Massi, you're thinkin': what happens if this old asshole beats me?

Khaled tries to muscle him down...

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

You are watching what greatness is all about. Bird was a big white guy who worked his ass off; he never stopped tryin', never gave up.

Clifford, echoing Bird's style, scores again.

KHALED

What? I don't believe this...

Clifford bounces the ball behind Khaled, runs round him, grabs the ball, tosses it into the net. It bounces off the rim.

CLIFFORD

Oh no - I'm gonna - oh my God!

Clifford catches the ball and shoots again; it goes in.

Khaled's huffing and puffing, but manages to scrabble the ball away and shoot; he scores - but Clifford's got the ball...

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Look at you, Khaled; you're actually trying - working your little booty off. But - oh nooooo! - Bird's got the ball once more, it's an amazing steal, he runs at the basket. This crowd is going crazy - it's over the backboard - America's game! It's fantastic!

He's scored again.

KHALED

Fuck you, man. This is bullshit!

CLIFFORD

Hey, Khaled - I'm only six up... What - you're gonna...give up? Is that what you do, Khaled? Just stop - 'cos you're not winning? You just give up?

Khal steals the ball - scores.

Clifford grabs the ball back, Khal wrestles the ball from him, scores again.

Clifford's got the ball on the rebound, dodges round Khal – but Khal bumps him, Clifford slips, and Khal scores again.

Clifford manages to get the ball, score a seventh – but he's breathing a lot more heavily now...

Khaled scores again – and in quick succession:

6 – again.

7 – again.

8 – again.

Clifford's not even trying now; he's got Khaled's blood up: 9.

10. Khaled is running round the court doing a victory lap.

Clifford sits at the base of the hoop, smiling. Khaled runs up to him and slaps him on the head. He's like an eager kid.

Clifford sees this and smiles, perhaps for the first time: this kid could be something...

KHALED

Best of three –come on! You wanna play, old man?
Let's play!

Clifford can barely walk now, his breathing laboured.

CLIFFORD

You might have been done with basketball, my friend

- but she ain't done with you! You were born to do this, Khaled. Give yourself another chance. Take part in the competition. Show everyone what you can do.

Khaled wants to, but is unsure...

A beat.

KHALED

We're gonna have to convince my mum.

HOLD on Clifford's confused reaction.

Clifford thinks it'll be no problem.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT - LATER

A tiny place on the main road; all palm trees and sunshine - despite the rain pissing down outside.

Inside there are pictures of BUJU BANTON, BOB MARLEY, GWEN STEFANI, MR VEGAS and, strangely, BARRY MANILOW and the cast of THE SOPRANOS on the walls.

Clifford and Khaled and Win sit at a table. Mum, a large, sexy, powerful and impressive woman (black, late fifties), is being ever so nice - dishing up food.

She turns to Khal.

A beat.

WIN

Wha' him want again?

Khaled glances at Clifford, who shifts into serious pitch mode.

CLIFFORD

Khaled's taking part in a prestigious basketball tournament, called 'Ball Till You Fall'. It's sponsored by Sentinel Sportswear; the qualifiers take place in Paris and if he wins that he'll...

Win SLAPS Khaled round the face!

WIN

You don't learn!

KHALED

Mum...

WIN

SHUT YOU MOUT'!

Silence.

FARRINGDON, the chef, exits the kitchen with food, and sees Khaled holding his cheek and Win breathing flames. He reverses back into the kitchen.

A customer throws money on his table and is gone. Win yells at Clifford.

WIN (CONT.)

'If he wins'? (To Khaled) You think basketball goin' take care of Charlotte? Find you a new girlfriend? Pay you rent? You give that game everything and it drag you down.

KHALED

I was doing OK with Guildford.

WIN

Only 'cos I come to every game to keep an eye on you. What happen if you break down again? It take a whole year to get you well after Kentucky; I'm not goin' through that again!

CLIFFORD

If I might just...

She turns on Clifford again.

WIN

Khaled, if you go back into you lickle fantasy

basketball world with this man – as God, Moses, Jesus and the lickle donkey are my witness – you don't come back. It's me or basketball. You decide.

Khaled looks at Clifford and shrugs.

KHALED

Sorry.

Clifford gets up to leave.

CLIFFORD

Well, ma'am, it's been a pleasure not communicating with you.

Win turns on him, really pissed off.

WIN

Come outta my restaurant before I give you one and two bitch licks!

Khaled glares at his mum, then gets up to escort Clifford out the door.

EXT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Clifford and Khaled walk to his hire car in silence.

CLIFFORD IS SHOCKED AT WIN – SHE'S WORSE THAN PAULETTA.

Then on Khaled.

CLIFFORD

What happened in Kentucky?

KHALED

It wasn't just Kentucky – it was everything:
Kentucky ball, UK ball, home stuff.

FLASHBACK

INT. UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY GYM – DAY

CAPTION: '2000'.

A huge, airy gym: the Kentucky Wild Cats are playing
Mississippi.

A younger, bouncier, Khaled, in Kentucky colours, is
on a fast break. SUDDENLY the ball is STOLEN by his
opponent, who gives Khal a rabbit punch just for
being there: Khal is floored momentarily but then
gets up, chases the guy and

PUNCHES HIM REPEATEDLY IN THE FACE! (Careful on tone
of violence)

Uproar! MISSISSIPPI players steam in and lash out at
Khal, who doesn't relent, just keeps punching and
punching and punching.

The Kentucky boss, COACH HOLLOWAY, looks at a
clipboard

HOLLOWAY'S P.O.V.

A felt-tip pen puts a red line put through two

words: KHALED MASSI.

CUT TO:

INT. A BRITISH AIRWAYS FLIGHT

Khal sits in economy; a basketball cap, the brim low over his eyes... Tears stream down his cheeks. He's next to a KID.

The kid watches Khal cry for a while, then takes his hand.

INT. KHAL AND COOKIE'S LITTLE FLAT – DAY

KHALED (V.O.)

Me, Cookie and Charlotte moved back down here; I was playing for Guildford...

Khal is giving Charlotte spaghetti bolognese. Cookie is wandering around in the background. Charlotte's about six.

Charlotte looks at the spaghetti bolognese with revulsion, picks up her plate and throws it at the wall – quite a lot of it hitting her dad.

KHAL THROWS HIS SPAGETTI EVERYWHERE TOO.

KHALED (V.O.)

Cookie told me that basketball was ruining my family. We struggled on for a bit and then I packed it all in, for Charlotte's sake. But it was too late by then.

EXT. MAMA'S RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Clifford and Khal stand next to the hire car.
Clifford pats Khal on the shoulder, then 'bip-bips!' the car opens with the remote and he gets in. He winds the window down.

CLIFFORD

Khaled – I don't know quite how to say this without sounding like a complete imbecile, bearing in mind how talented I think you might be, but...your mom's right. If basketball screwed you over then maybe you should say 'Screw you' to basketball. Put your family first. If I'd done that, I'd prob'ly still be married.

He pulls away.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

If you change your mind, call.

Khal stuffs his hands in his pockets and pulls out Clifford's card.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAFFITTIED BASKETBALL COURT – NIGHT

It's later, and the court is starlit – magical. Khal leans against the fence in the darkness, deep in thought. It's a FULL MOON. Khal stares up at the constellations as if looking for a sign – and then:

he gets one.

ORION animates, and grabs the MOON and bounces it around the sky for a while like a stellar Michael Jordan - then slam-dunks it through the PLOUGH.

Khal's eyes widen in wonder

CUT TO:

INT. THE MASSI APARTMENT - LATER

The front door opens; Win's back home, with a tin-foil-covered plate of food. She kicks off her shoes and makes her way to Khaled's room and pushes the door open.

WIN

Khaled. I know you tink say I was a lickle rough on you earlier, but I couldn't just let...

But Khaled's gone; the bed's neatly made and his stuff's packed away.

Win sits on the bed and tries not to weep.

(Deleted scene: Kenji sees Victoria at gym)

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL GRILL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The epitome of old-school money, the Savoy Grill is the classiest dining location in London.

Kenji and Pookie and Malcolm and Cameron, all suited and booted and looking flush, sit at a big table, they're all reading Lion King programmes; Kenji is

fascinated.

KENJI

How come the shit still runnin', though? The movie was years ago.

POOKIE

Yo, man; they ain't got nothin' else up in this bitch.

KENJI

Fuckin' typical: white folks make a hit cartoon 'bout Africa, ain't no human brothers and sistas in it - we jus' animals...

Pookie and Kenji high-five each other grimly.

Cameron looks round to see if anyone's getting annoyed with the volume.

KENJI (CONT.)

It's like we even animated too much for white folks...

POOKIE

Just a nigga's luck. Eddie Murphy's black ass ain't made a decent movie this century, but you put that nigga in a donkey costume in Shrek? He be makin' motherfuckers laugh all night long.

Cameron has been listening to all of this and now she has to get involved.

CAMERON

He wasn't...uh...wearing a donkey costume in Shrek, Mr Pookie; he was animated - like Kenji in our commercial.

POOKIE

Bitch, please! Nigga ain't animated in Beverly Hills Cop, or Tradin' Places, or 48 Hours - but that shit was a loooong time ago; once a brother's sell-by date happen, that shit is over. 'You a donkey bitch' and that's all she wrote.

Pookie continues his thesis but the sound tunes out as we focus on

THE BLONDE at an adjacent table, on her own, eating a caesar salad. She flirts with Kenji, beautifully; it's a work of art.

Kenji smiles at her.

She smiles back.

BINGO!

She raises a glass and silently asks him to join her.

Cameron watches all of this with a kind of amusement.

CAMERON

Do you have to swear quite so much, Mr Pookie...?

POOKIE

It's just 'Pookie', like 'Mookie' but with a 'P' –
right, Kenji?

But Kenji's over by the Blonde's table now;
indicates Pookie...

KENJI

He a little loud sometime - sorry 'bout that.

The blonde eyes Pookie and nods.

BLONDE

I've have friends like that: five Martinis and
they're anyone's.

She sips her Martini.

KENJI

How many's that?

She fixes him with an incredibly sexy gaze.

BLONDE

Five.

Kenji laughs out loud. She extends a hand; Kenji
takes it.

BLONDE (CONT.)

Victoria Hempel, costume designer.

KENJI

Kenji Burton, baller.

VICTORIA

Lovely.

Kenji explodes a smile in her direction. She lobs one right back.

Game on.

EXT./INT. CLIFFORD'S SHITTY HOTEL - LATER

The hotel bar is dead. Clifford sits alone at the bar, drinking and staring moodily at the worn photograph of the beautiful black woman (PAULETTA?) in a bikini. He folds it up, puts it back in his wallet. Then he looks around at the shitty flock wallpaper and decrepit furniture, slugs his drink and leaves.

INT. RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

In the shitty reception, he finds Khaled with a rucksack and other bags at his feet. Khal smiles; he's got his trusty basketball in hand. Clifford's

over the moon.

CLIFFORD

Well, alright. Good; you made a good choice.

KHALED

Yeah. So – were am I staying?

CLIFFORD

OK. Well – now you go home, and we begin training tomorrow.

KHALED

Uh, hang on: what do you mean, 'Go home'?

CLIFFORD

What I said. You go home and you get yourself together, and we train.

KHALED

There's no going home. Mum said if I do this don't come back. I can't go back – I've chosen basketball over her.

CLIFFORD

Well, you can't stay here. I mean...

KHALED

Oh, great! So, I make the second most important decision of my life, and you can't even sort me out a bed for the night!

CLIFFORD

I didn't know you expected to stay with me!

KHALED

Look: if I have to go back to my mum's, that's it for me. You won't see me again.

Clifford's panicking.

CLIFFORD

I have a tiny hotel room; barely room for me, let alone the Chrysler Building with an Afro!

KHALED

I can sleep on the floor.

CLIFFORD

You're training; you sleep on the bed. I'll sleep in the bath.

KHALED

Done. See - that wasn't hard, was it?

INT. CLIFFORD'S ROOM – A BIT LATER

This room's nearly as bad as Clifford's shitty hotel room in Chicago. Clifford takes some sheets and a pillow, points at the bed. He goes in the bathroom and makes up a temporary bed. He gets in.

Khaled comes in, wearing vest and shorts.

KHALED

It's just a pee – yeah, no probs.

Clifford turns his back and waves at Khal to go ahead. Khaled then does the loudest, longest pee ever known to man.

Every time Clifford thinks it's over, Khaled manages to squeeze a bit more out.

This happens four times.

Clifford covers his head and ears with a pillow.

NEW SCENE? Clifford wakes Khal up super-early and lays out a training plan, but then gets a call from Sentinel and has to go. He arranges to meet Khal later.

EXT./INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL – DAY

Moved forward from Act 1. A meeting in Kenji Burton's suite, a beautifully appointed room in the classic Savoy style.

Cameron Taylor is there, as are Kenji and Kenji's PR, MALCOLM FORBES (black, thirties) and the ever-present Pookie.

Cameron nibbles sushi and sips a health drink. Kenji has a blender, which is whirring. WHIZZ! He adds a large handful of supplements. WHIZZ! It's done. He pours the gloop into a large glass and takes a big drink, then wipes his mouth and BURPS prodigiously. Lovely!

Kenji laughs.

KENJI

Man, I can't wait for Clifford James to git back here, man.

Pookie nods.

KENJI (CONT.)

Mothafucka hit me on my TV debut, man — just 'cos I dropped some charisma on his wife an' shit.

POOKIE

Try that shit now, nigga...

He and Kenji bump fists.

KENJI

Damn right! I'm a big-ass, NBA all-star. He ain't even damn coachin' ball any more...

Clifford enters at this point. He takes a seat and smiles at everyone.

CLIFFORD

No, my job is to fake some 'one-on-one' bullshit to make you look good. I hope you and your charisma appreciate it.

KENJI

Fuck! You mean 'Make me look good'?

CLIFFORD

Kenji – you're a team guy: this is 'Ball Till You Fall' – a one on one with kids so rough they'd beat they own ass to git a shot at your mile-high jumpin' NBA ass.

KENJI

You sayin' I can't handle myself against some snot-nose kids?

CLIFFORD

I'm sayin' you'd be surprised how many kids out here think you're overpaid, over-rated and...

WHOOSH!

Kenji leaps at Clifford's throat, scattering

supplements, sushi and stationary! Pookie and Malcolm intercept and grab him. Clifford stands there – defiant...

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Yeah – what? Come on, Kenji – hit me! One time. You know you want to... Come on, Kenji: just pop me – right here!

Clifford starts doing a weird Ali-shuffle-type thing; he moves his head from side to side like a cobra.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Yo, Kenji. Come on, fool – gimme a right cross or somethin'; ahh, are your boys holdin' on to you? Can't you move? What a shame!
Clifford starts waxing on and waxing off.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Wax on, wax off, wax on, wax off... I love waxing off in front of you, Kenji; I bet you love it when I 'wax off' in front of you too...

KENJI

I'ma slap the shit outta you!

Cameron steps in between them.

CAMERON

Relax, Kenji. Mr James has total respect for your abilities, and, even if he doesn't, we're paying him more than enough to lie and say he does till the

job's over. Isn't that right, Mr James?

There's steel in her voice.

CLIFFORD (MUMBLING)

Didn't mean anything by it.

KENJI

Fuckin' has-been!

CAMERON

Gentlemen! I did not fly all this way to hear this...this...this...bad language and...bull...doody!

Silence. What did she just say? Pookie mouths 'Bull doody?'

CAMERON (CONT.)

The qualifiers are in ten days' time. Mr James, do we have any British competitors yet? Bearing in mind what I just said about 'paying you enough'?

CLIFFORD

The European contingents just about OK, UK-wise? Coaches don't wanna risk injuring their best players just before season starts – but I think we're gonna be fine.

Cameron nods. Good - then she remembers something important.

CAMERON

Mr Burton must be protected from 'gunslingers' trying to make their reputation. It's important that we make him look good.

Clifford looks at Kenji, who shrugs carelessly...

KENJI

Just get me some punk wannabe baller, so I can beat his ass, get paid and get the fuck outta here.

CLIFFORD

Well - if that's how you wanna play it, I think I got just the guy. He's a janitor - but he used to ball.

CAMERON

Whatever! We're selling shoes, Mr James. Remember that.

Clifford gets up and leaves.

EXT. DU BEAUVOIR ESTATE - DAY

(C&Y1 -Moved forward from Act 1.) Charlotte on her bike, whizzing past pedestrians at warp speed. She's

got a bag full of NEWSPAPERS over her shoulder. She screeches to a halt, drops the bike, VAULTS a fence and slots a newspaper through the letterbox.

She returns to find Yout' admiring and holding her bike.

YOUT'

Cool bike – yeah?

Charlotte regards Yout' warily; he offers her the bike, and she takes it (phew!) and fronts it out...

CHARLOTTE

What you want, man? I'm busy – yeah?

YOUT'

Just sayin' – bike's dread. Believe.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks.

YOUT'

You like deliverin' papers?

CHARLOTTE

My new job, innit? Doin' the papers for Mr Silas.

Yout' pulls out a roll of twenties and tens thick

enough to choke a horse.

YOUT'

There's other jobs – get me?

And he kick-pushes away on his skateboard. Charlotte mounts her bike.

CHARLOTTE

Hey! Who you work for then?

And she rides off after him

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. BRIXTON RECREATION CENTRE – DAY

The Brixton recreation centre is one of the most famous basketball locations in the UK. Traffic is gridlocked. A sign proclaims 'NBA star KENJI BURTON launches children's fund TODAY!'.

INT. BRIXTON GYM – DAY

In the main gym are Kenji, Pookie and Cameron Taylor. Victoria sits in the bleachers. There are twenty KIDS of different ages, sizes and colour, along with their CHAPERONES. A banner suspended from the wall proclaims 'BURTON'S BALLERZ, sponsored by Sentinel Shoes'. Journalists and TV crews are all gathered to watch Kenji give an impromptu exhibition for the kids.

KENJI EXHIBITION OF BASKETBALLS SKILLS

Kenji struts his stuff, and, utilising various KIDS as assistants, he demonstrates:

THE LAY UP

TIME CUT

THE CROSSOVER

TIME CUT

THE DUNK

TIME CUT

THE SLAM DUNK

TIME CUT

Kenji is a HELLACIOUS baller; the gathered throng applaud SPONTANEOUSLY.

LATER, the inevitable press conference. Cameron Taylor leads off. During the following, Kenji's eyes find Victoria Hempel, and they smile secretly at each other. It's all new and lovely and flirtatious.

CAMERON

My father, Burt Taylor, was nothing if not determined. I was number 6 in his efforts to produce a male heir to the Sentinel fortune - after which my mother started blocking the bedroom door with a chair and doping his food. (Beat)

The press laugh dutifully, a few cameras snap away. Kenji checks Victoria's reaction: she's laughing. He laughs too.

CAMERON (CONT.)

Aside from that, my dad was a great believer in encouraging young people to be the best. In that spirit, Kenji's new charity, Burtons' Ballerz, will contribute to the development of young British basketball talent at this gym, for ever. Now, I think Kenji has time for just a few questions?

Kenji steps forward and waits for the barrage – and, sure enough...

PRESS GUY 1 (THE TIMES)

Mr Burton, I wonder if you'd care to comment about your out-of-settlement agreement with Renate Munroe. You were accused of sexual assault – surely...

KENJI

Yo, man, I'm here with the kids today; I ain't talkin' 'bout no sexual assault.

PRESS GUY 2 (THE DAILY TELEGRAPH)

You must have known that your private settlement with Ms Munroe was going to raise a few eyebrows in the media, surely?

PRESS GUY 3 (THE SUN)

Look, chief, what everyone wants to know is: did you slam-dunk Renate Munroe and then knock her about?

Cameron senses that Kenji is about to kick off – and, sure enough...

KENJI

Look, ya'all: I'm out here with these kids, givin' 'em a chance to play ball someplace safe. I'm done talkin' 'bout Renate Munroe – it's over. Ya'all motherfuckers need to find new shit to talk about.

All the children take a SHARP INTAKE OF BREATH.

The CHAPERONES react to the bad language. The press write it all down. Cameron steps in and signals to a TECHIE, who presses buttons on a remote. A projection screen slides down and the lights dim. A spotlight finds Cameron smiling winningly.

CAMERON

Don't forget: heats for 'Ball Till You Fall' next Friday in Paris; the finale featuring Mr Burton will be a couple of days after that. Here's the brand new commercial for the Sentinel Soldier!

She smiles professionally and signals to the techie to get on with it.

The screen reveals:

INT. A MAD SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY – NIGHT

We are in Tim-Burton-style territory
SHOT IN BLACK
AND WHITE

The lab, a Gothic monstrosity, is filled with weird electrical equipment.

A monster (Kenji) lies on a slab.

A MAD SCIENTIST (DENNIS RODMAN) works feverishly, connecting electrodes to Kenji's unmoving monster.

The scientist flicks a switch. Nothing happens.

He flicks it again; a few sparks fly, but there is no response from the MONSTER.

The OGRE (PENNY HARDAWAY) watches his master throw the switch in vain for a third time and then takes a pristine white box and indicates to his MASTER to open it.

The box contains a pair of new Soldier basketball shoes by Sentinel.

The master places the shoes on the monster's feet and flicks a switch.

HIP HOP KICKS IN.

The monster leaps up from the table, ready to rock in his brand new Soldier shoes, which swell and twitch in a toon-like way.

The ogre throws him a ball and the monster jumps like Jordan from a trampette, soars to the nearest basket and 360-dunks the ball: KA-POW!! A flash of lightning ends the commercial.

The logo: 'The Sentinel Soldier - Taste the Air'.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIXTON GYM - DAY

The kids and press applaud, all is forgiven. Kenji makes a 'Shoot me now' signal and grins ruefully at Victoria Hempel, who shakes her head and smiles back. Pookie notices this exchange.

POOKIE (WHISPERING)

Oh, she wanna snack on you, son. She wanna chow down on you like you was chicken and mash potatoes! That bitch wanna munch on yo' Hershey bar like she hungry...

KENJI (HISSING BACK)

Shut up, Pookie. Shit - she ain't no bitch!

Now vexed, Kenji turns to the kids.

KENJI (CONT.)

Yo, kids; remember: it's ME, not the shoe, that jumps. I ain't no got-damn cartoon! Alright? Peace. Kenji turns on his heel and leaves, with Victoria Hempel in tow.

VICTORIA

You're a model of etiquette; Oscar Wilde would have been proud!

KENJI

Shut up, man. Are you hungry? I'm starved - I could eat a dead coyote's ass on a bagel with mayo and a side o' 'slaw!

Victoria says 'Ew' and laughs; the banter continues.

Pookie follows, peeved that his boss has snagged a beautiful companion.

EXT. CANAL TOWPATH - DAY

(moved forward from Act 1)

Yout' kick-pushes and Charlotte cycles hard. She's hypnotised...

CHARLOTTE

'Bring people to him'?

YOUT'

Yeah, customers.

CHARLOTTE

And you - drop bags off?

YOUT'

Yeah. Back at his house - his mum's house.

CHARLOTTE

And it's just you?

YOUT'

Yeah - and now he's talkin' 'bout settin' up this betting shop thing? I reckon I could do with a second-in-command - a deputy.

CHARLOTTE

A deputy... You offering me a job?

YOUT'

Might be...

And he rattles off down the hill like he's auditioning for Jackass 3D... Charlotte laughs and mimics him.

CHARLOTTE

'Might be.'

INT. SILAS'S NEWSPAPER SHOP - DAY

Khaled waiting for Charlotte and checking out the job ads on the noticeboard. He needs work! Silas has to explain that some of those jobs aren't right for him.

A cluttered, but clean newsagents, with confectionery, alcohol and cigarettes near the front counter. The newspapers are laid out on the floor, the magazines are shelved, the nasty ones in brown paper bags 8 feet off the ground.

Khaled and the newsagent, MR SILAS (late sixties),

an old, feisty Jamaican man.

SILAS

She workin' hard; you should be proud.

KENJI

I know, Silas; I know.

SILAS

Not many kids helpin' the parents out these days;
they usually helpin themself to the contents of you
wallet...

Khaled laughs...

SILAS (CONT.)

Khaled, I know she savin' money for the skiing trip,
but she doin' it for you as well. So, if you need
any help?

Khaled is gobsmacked

KHALED

She told you about that?

SILAS

It's why I give her the job.

KHALED

Silas, I can't take your money; it's not right...

Silas interrupts him; he goes to a shelf and finds an old tin. He opens it with a key around his neck and takes out an envelope. He hands it to Khaled. This all done in a reverent manner.

SILAS

I bin savin for me house in Jamaica. I got just enough to pay for the doorknobs and one towel; I will prob'ly be dead before I live back-a-yard!

Khaled puts the money away and shakes Silas's hand.

KHALED

You'll get it back - I promise.

Charlotte runs into the shop and dumps her paper bag on the counter.

CHARLOTTE

Boom! Finished, Mr Silas!

She turns and sees Khaled, runs to him and hugs him. He waves to Mr Silas as he leaves.

SILAS

Good luck, you know: eight days to go...

Khaled nods. Yout' passes them and enters the shop.
We hear Silas.

SILAS (CONT.)

Keep you hands where my eyeballs can see them, you
hear me, you teefin' lickle raas, you...!

EXT. SILAS'S NEWSAGENT - DAY

Khaled and Charlotte laugh.

CHARLOTTE

Nan says that word when she burns her finger on the
stove.

KHALED (MOCK HORRIFIED)

No.

Charlotte nods.

KHALED (CONT.)

It can't be that bad, then... I've got basketball
training in a minute; do you want to come and watch?

CHARLOTTE

What? I thought you wasn't playin' any more, on
account of basketball givin' you the right hump?

Khal rubs his temples.

KHALED

Do you want to come and watch me train or not?

CHARLOTTE

Mum says I've got to be back on time for my tea.

KHALED

Let's just go – alright?

She jumps on her bike and rides away quickly. Khal jogs after her.

Yout' exits the shop with an ice lolly in one hand and his skateboard in the other. He watches them go.

EXT. THE BATTERED BASKETBALL COURT – DAY

Clifford is waiting as Khal and Charlotte make their appearance. He looks at his watch.

Charlotte skids to a halt and Khaled jogs onto the court.

CLIFFORD

What's she doing here?

KHALED

'She' is my daughter, Charlotte, and I invited her. If I'm gonna do this – it's for her.

Charlotte looks at her dad; she can't believe he just said that.

CLIFFORD

You think this is some kinda joke? You got a twelve-hour tournament next week and you bring your kid? You might have to play Kenji Burton in the final.

Charlotte squeals with delight!

CHARLOTTE

Kenji Burton? Oh my days!

Khal laughs.

KHALED

Mr James. Look, we all know...

CLIFFORD

What? That 'That's not gonna happen'? What happens if it DOES happen? What? You don't think you might catch a break? Play your heart out? There's no reason you can't go out there and kick his ass.

CHARLOTTE

Also, dad, Burton's a knucklehead; he's all muscle, no brains, and he cheats.

CLIFFORD

What you mean?

CHARLOTTE

When the ref isn't lookin' - he's a bully. He's nowhere near as good as he thinks he is; my dad's better. Mum says, if dad could control his temper, he'd be up there with the best.

Oops! Maybe she wasn't supposed to say that. Khaled stares at Charlotte; he hasn't heard that for a while. Clifford smiles.

Clifford puts his 'game face' on. He's all business now.

CLIFFORD

Paris is eight days away. The cream of Europe's ballers are comin' to kick your ass in order to get to Burton: 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., last man standing wins.

KHALED

That's a long time.

CLIFFORD

Do you love basketball? (Beat) I SAID: 'DO YOU LOVE BASKET-BALL?'

Khal's got a poker face, but Charlotte knows the answer to this one.

CHARLOTTE

My christening was held at half-time at Guildford Heat vs Glasgow Rocks.

Clifford's impressed.

CLIFFORD

That answers my question.

(A beat)

Alright, she can stay. But what we gonna do with her?

(deleted dialogue)

FANTASTIC MUSIC KICKS IN.

MONTAGE

Khal runs up and down a hill giving Charlotte a piggyback.

TIME CUT

Put Charlotte in as resistance all these scenes.
Khal doing shuttle sprints; Clifford's timing him.

TIME CUT

Khal doing press-ups.

TIME CUT

Sit-ups.

TIME CUT

Jumping.

TIME CUT

Lunging.

TIME CUT

Squats.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAFFITIED BASKETBALL COURT - EARLY
EVENING

The sky's darker now; people are starting to make
their way home.

FANTASTIC MUSIC UNDERLINES THIS...

Charlotte and her dad doing step-ups as fast as they
can, with Clifford standing by.

This suddenly becomes a rhythmic sequence, as Khal
stamps out a rhythm and encourages Charlotte.

She stamps out a rhythm; he copies her.

He stamps out another rhythm; she copies him.

It's a joyous moment: they smile at each other, father and daughter, loving this moment together. Clifford lets it go on for a short while, then blows his whistle

MUSIC STOPS abruptly.

CLIFFORD

Alright! Cut it out, Khaled; I need you to run for twenty minutes and then bring your ass back here. I'll watch Charlotte...

Charlotte chews her bottom lip.

CHARLOTTE

Um – Mr Clifford? My dad looks half dead now, and if we don't finish soon my mom will finish the job, 'cos we're late for my tea.

Khaled, all sweat and heavy breath sounds, is now alert. He scrabbles for his sports bag, checks the time on his phone.

KHALED

Shit! She's right. She should have been back ages ago! See you tomorrow!

And he gets on Charlotte's bike, she jumps on behind and he pedals like fury! Clifford watches them leave.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. COOKIE'S PLACE - LATER

Khaled and Charlotte SKID to a halt outside the house. They run up the front path; Cookie doesn't bother waiting for them to ring the doorbell.

COOKIE

Inside - now! I'll pick her up from now on.

Charlotte is watching from behind Cookie. Khaled doesn't see her; he's angry.

KHALED

I was training, cook, for this tournament. Coach thinks I can beat...

COOKIE

I've heard it all before, Khal; IT'S ALL BOLLOCKS! Why aren't you trying to beg, borrow or steal the skiing trip money? You're supposed to hand it in at the end of next week! Take some responsibility, 'stead of fannying around playing basketball!

In the B.G., Charlotte eases away, very upset. Khaled is furious.

KHALED

Basketball put food on the table for us...

Cookie moves in close.

COOKIE (HISSING AT HIM)

Basketball changed you, Khaled: always angry, always miserable – you nearly hit our child! Don't forget that!

KHALED

I can't, can I? YOU WON'T LET ME!

GREG (thirties, black), Cookie's new man, is standing behind in the doorway now. He's young, and dressed in slacker-ish style.

He's got a headset on and carries an iPad; he strokes it as if working and talking simultaneously were the easiest things in the world – which, for him, they are...

GREG

You guys wanna bring it inside? Charlotte's crying. (To headset) No, I'm talking to my missus and her ex. No – it's private. Barry – will you be quiet for a sec, please.

COOKIE

GREG! Please?

Greg looks contrite; he listens to his headset and

says a quiet 'Shhhh' under his breath.

COOKIE (CONT.)

Khaled was just leaving.

She slams the door on Khaled, who stands there, very angry. He walks away and then turns his head to the sky.

KHALED

Fuck!

He kicks a divot out of the front lawn. Above, at the window, Charlotte is frightened.

INT. COOKIE'S PLACE - LATER

Charlotte, Greg and Cookie arguing

The living room door is open a shade and we see snatches of them as they move back and forth.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

You guys stayed in touch because you wanted him to be close to me; well, he is, and you don't like it!

COOKIE (O.S.)

It's not that.

CHARLOTTE

It IS! You hate that he cares about me.

GREG

Don't shout at your mother, Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE

Leave me alone, geek!

COOKIE

You do not talk to Greg like that, Charlotte Massi!
He's here for us 24/7.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

You never give dad a break; at least he hasn't run
away, like some of these other guys!

GREG

Why don't we all play a nice game of Scrabble?

CHARLOTTE AND COOKIE

SHUT UP, GREG!

GREG

Calm down, will you...

COOKIE

No - I've had enough...

The argument continues.

CUT TO:

Khal looks puzzled, but Clifford claps him on the shoulder conspiratorially.

CLIFFORD

You're gonna love tomorrow.

He counts out the money from Khaled's envelope.
Khaled watches him.

FADE OUT

Against black: a CAPTION reads: 'The Next Day...'

FADE UP

INT. THE GYM - A BIT LATER

Clifford's got Khaled doing shuttle runs, very fast. Finally Khal crashes onto the floor, in a heap of sweat. Clifford stands over him, looking at his watch.

CLIFFORD

You think we're done - right? You think, 'Ah, that's it, Clifford won't make me do any more because that would be crazy.' That's what you're thinkin' - right?

He turns towards the door. Khal's eyes follow

and widen as they see the GUILDFORD HEAT
basketball team walk enter the gym.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Wrong! Told you you were gonna love today.

Khal gets up and jogs over to the guys; hugs and
high fives all round.

KHALED

What are you guys doin here?!

BIG J hugs Khaled.

BIG J

We look after our own... S'what family's all about,
Khal.

DREADIE hugs Khal too.

DREADIE

Tho – thith ith the high-clath training
ethtablithment you're uthing. Thought you'd be at
the Thavoy.

The rest of the guys crack up as they get ready to
ball. Khal stares at Big J and holds his gaze.

FLASHBACK

INT. GUILDFORD HEAT GYM - NIGHT

CAPTION: 'One Year Ago'.

Khal's approaching the basket, Big J is running parallel with the ball. Khal shouts; Big J doesn't pass.

Big J jinks, and twists and turns and makes a shot at the basket. He misses.

While the OPPOSITION steal the ball and attack Guildford's basket - Khal is in Big J's face, yelling. Suddenly Big J punches Khal, who retaliates. Now the whole TEAM wades in; Khal takes on everyone, his face contorted in a berserk fury. The referee runs in to break things up. Khal accidentally punches the ref! The whole team recoil; that's bad...

Coach Reynold's watches helplessly.

FLASHBACK ends.

INT. THE LEISURE CENTRE GYM.

Khal nods at Big J.

KHALED

Thank you.

BIG J

Coach Reynolds said to say: have you still got his bit of paper?

Khal rushes to his bag, pulls out his wallet and

shows Big J the Einstein quote. Big J smiles.

Clifford blows a whistle to get their attention... Big J unzips his tracksuit top and drops his trackie bottoms; he's in vest and shorts, ready to rock.

CLIFFORD

You can all chit-chat when you hit the showers, ladies. Let's work.

The lads, all ready now, jog over to Clifford and form a circle.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Alright. Good - I wanna tell you a story... Now, back in the day, the king...

Suddenly we are in a STORYBOOK WORLD: Michael is portrayed as a MANGA SUPERHERO-type figure, wearing an exaggerated and bejewelled crown.

CLIFFORD (V.O.) (CONT.)

Michael Jordan retired - at the top of his game - forever, but he was unhappy in retirement: smoking big-ass cigars, chillin' with Spike Lee, flying on his own private jet and playing ball with Bugs Bunny...

Manga ILLUSTRATIONS of Mike bored in retirement:
yawning at a golf game, asleep in front of the TV,
hanging out with Spike Lee, piloting a jet with Bugs
Bunny by his side.

CLIFFORD (V.O.) (CONT.)

...so, after a break, he came back. That's right;
thought he could just pick up where he left off.
Well, that's where he was wrong: he got his ass
kicked. I don't know - arrogance, ring rust - but,
whatever it was, he wasn't ready.

Manga ILLUSTRATIONS of Jordan's return - the
audience cheer - but his opponent dances rings
round him and dunks repeatedly.

CLIFFORD (V.O.) (CONT.)

So, in the off season, to avoid further
embarrassment, Jordan did an amazing thing: he
invited the best college players from around the
country, paid for their round-trip tickets -
business class - so they could come and kick his ass
daily, help him iron out his weaknesses. It worked.

Further ILLUSTRATIONS: Jordan on the phone to
black, white and Hispanic players; the same players
on the plane, drinking champagne and watching
movies; the same players playing against Jordan;
Jordan giving a thumbs-up and grinning to his team-

mates.

CLIFFORD (V.O.) (CONT.)

You guys know Khal better than anyone else. Kick his ass; expose his weaknesses – no mercy. He's here to learn. Are ya ready for this?

The players nod, and they place their hands together – AND KHAL places his hand down too.

ALL OF THEM

1, 2, 3 – team! HOO HAH!

At the window, Cookie arrives with her students. She watches Khal and the Guildford mob warming up. Khal catches her eye.

She nods, then takes her pupils into their training space.

Khal stands on court alone – faced by Guildford Heat.

TIME CUTS, as Clifford brutally pushes Khal and his team-mates to the extreme.

Khal plays against Dreadie and Big J and has to use every ounce of energy to beat them.

It's a real beasting.

TIME CUT

Big J, pushing Khal. Trying to wind him up. Khal outwitting Big J.

Clifford is talking to D'Angelo; D'Angelo's talking ten to the dozen, waving his arms around. Clifford takes out a bit of paper, writes something down. D'Angelo crosses it out, writes something else down...

TIME CUT

Mum's at the window, looking in; she watches as Dreadie bounces Khal away from a shooting position. Khal skids along the floor but keeps his composure.

TIME CUT

TWO REALLY BIG GUYS put pressure on Khal; he yells at one of them and starts pushing back. Clifford blows the whistle!

TIME CUT

Cookie and Charlotte, watching KHAL leaping up to basket against major opposition from a BADASS GUILDFORD DEFENDER, who SWATS Khal away like a flea. Khal gets up to have a go - but Big J and Dreadie rush him and pin him on the floor. Clifford laughs - can't blow the whistle for laughing.

MONTAGE ENDS

The guys drip with sweat. Khaled lies on the floor, one massive, exhausted bruise. Clifford still looks chipper. He delivers his exhortation almost like a rapper or a preacher...

CLIFFORD

This is how it's gonna be in Paris in a couple days' time: at two in the morning, you're gonna feel like this and still have four hours to go. How'd your knees feel? How'd your hips feel? How's temperament o' yours right now - you ready to lash out yet? Smack the shit outta somebody?

Khal listens intently as he rotates his ankle, trying to stretch his calf out. He breathes heavily...

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

You ain't gonna have time to catch your breath in Paris, brother; if it's your name they callin', that's it' baby: you ballin' - and you won't be playing these guys, either. It's gonna be some Spanish dude, or a good-looking eye-talian or a Lithuanian homie with young-ass legs - all of whom hate your British ass - just like in Eurovision! So, what you gonna do 'bout it? We're gonna run again; let's pick it up this time.

They all get up and do shuttle runs. Khaled,

refusing to rest, is sweating a river.

TIME CUT

Charlotte watches, looks concerned; Cookie sees Charlotte's anxiety for her dad, gets her phone out and sends a text.

Cookie and Charlotte leave.

TIME CUT

The session is over. Khal's so tired he just lies there on the ground. Clifford walks over to him with a towel. He throws the towel over Khal.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Go take a shower and rest. We're gonna do this every day till we hit Paris. I invited London Pioneers over for a session tomorrow.

You gotta step up, Khal, or no skiing trip for Charlotte... That is why you're doing this - right?

Clifford wanders off... The guys help Khal up and embrace him.

BIG J

You're gonna kill it, man; don't listen to Clifford, man. You got it in you. You can win. We're all puttin' money on you.

DREADIE

If you can thurvive thith you can thurvive anything.
I'm theriouth, man!

Khal hugs them back and then goes towards his bags.
His mobile pings; he picks it up and reads the
message.

INT. COOKIE'S HOUSE: KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM/BACK
CONSERVATORY - LATE AFTERNOON

The front door opens to reveal Khal standing there.
Cookie ushers him in. They go inside the house -
down the hallway, through the living room into the
kitchen.

COOKIE

I'm only doing this because Charlotte's worried
about you.

KHALED

Where's Charlotte?

He takes off his shirt.

COOKIE

Paper round. Greg's at work. We've got at least an

hour and a half.

KHALED

Good.

Khal's in just his pants, his body long, lean and lightly muscled. They're at the back of the house, in the conservatory, which is curtained off and contains a massage table.

Cookie draws the blinds and lights candles. Khaled lies face down on the table and Cookie takes off her jacket. She's wearing a vest. She begins stretching Khal's legs, massaging his shoulders. It's a very emotionally charged atmosphere; both Khal and Cookie are aware, but they ignore it and continue as she's kneading his calves, pushing at his hamstrings.

She takes his left foot in her hands and starts rotating. Khal yells out in pain.

COOKIE

Christ! How long have you been hiding that?

KHALED

I can play with it.

COOKIE

Khal – this needs an MRI! It's like you've had a terrible sprain and it's not healed properly.

Khal grimaces as she works on it.

TIME CUT

COOKIE'S PHYSIO ROOM — LATER

Khal is now facing up, which means he can look at Cookie and around the room. We've been fairly tight up till now, but now, as Khal looks around Cookie's work space, we see at least two dozen trophies, lots of framed press clippings, karate pennants. Several gold medals are framed; a couple of silvers.

She's massaging his sternocleidomastoid (neck/shoulder) muscles and he's looking directly into her eyes as she does so. He speaks softly.

KHALED

Cookie - why'd you stop? I mean - you were a champ. God, if I'd achieved what you had - I would have...

COOKIE

I know.

Beat.

She continues to massage him.

COOKIE (CONT.)

I got tired of watching you lose it out there, Khal. Basketball was driving you crazy. I couldn't watch you fall apart any more.

Cookie starts crying. Khaled reaches up to her face

and strokes her cheek.

(Adjust so it's clear to audience [but not to Khal] that Cookie doesn't return his feelings)

He puts a stray lock of hair behind her ear and then smiles at her. She leans in, very close; they're almost kissing. The sexual tension is almost unbearable... Then the HOUSE PHONE RINGS and breaks the spell.

COOKIE (CONT.)

Aaaand relax.

She answers the phone.

COOKIE (CONT.)

Hi, Greg; uh-huh. Uh-huh? OK, yeah; no problem.

Khal gets up and starts to make himself scarce, but she waves at him to stay.

COOKIE (CONT.)

Hi, sweetie. Yeah. OK, OK; no problem. (Listens) Stew – don't know; I just chucked everything in as usual... (Listens) Well, you would say that. (Listens) She's doing her paper round – back in a bit... Oh, Khal's here; I think I just sorted his ankle for Paris... Yes, he should pay me. I know, it's a joke. He can't afford me... Yep. Yep. Love you, too. Love you. Bye.

Khal's eyes as he watches her. It's so clear to him now: she's moved on.

She's hung up; smiles and refers to Greg.

COOKIE (CONT.)

Lovely man. You're a lovely man, too. But we had our turn, didn't we?

Khal makes a decision. (Adjust - he thinks he might be winning her back)

KHALED

Thanks for the physio, Cookie, yeah? (Beat) And don't worry: I'm gonna sort out the skiing money. I'll find a way.

COOKIE

You've made your bed, Khaled. It was either borrow the money, or steal it or take a big risk on the basketball. We all know what's more important in your life; just be careful out there - that's all. We'll work something out - needs you. God bless her.

She nods; he leaves. The door slams. Cookie leans against the wall, flushed; she touches her face where Khaled touched her and exhales... That was close.

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL: CAMERON'S SUITE - LATER

(Moved forward from earlier - this is now time clock starts)

Cameron Taylor has various supplements laid out in front of her on the table, plus her green drink. She takes a handful of supplements and palms them into her mouth and then drinks the liquid. Clifford sits opposite her, watching incredulously. Cameron ignores him, takes her time drinking her potion.

CAMERON

OK, well, we've decided that the big shootout between whoever wins Paris and Kenji should happen the day after Paris. They finish at six and - boom! - at eight that night they battle again!

CLIFFORD

What?

CAMERON

It will shake things up; give the contender a real obstacle to overcome.

CLIFFORD

All due respect, Ms Taylor, but are you fuckin' nuts? Whoever the winner is, they're gonna need recovery time from playing twelve hours of almost non-stop basketball! You can't DO this!

Her stomach boils noisily again. She ignores it and continues.

CAMERON

Firstly, I don't appreciate that kind of language around me; and, secondly, it was Kenji's idea. He said the real SOLDIERS would treat it as a badge of honour to show up ready for battle.

CLIFFORD

I'm calling Dave Romanoff; this is some bullshit.

CAMERON

Mr Romanoff is well aware of what we're doing and signed off on it last night.

Clifford is overwhelmed.

CLIFFORD

I resign.

Cameron is ice cold.

CAMERON

Alright, then. Take care, Mr James. You're on your own dime now.

Clifford storms out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CANAL TOWPATH - DAY

(moved forward from earlier)

Seen from above.

The water's up, fumes rising from it. Old supermarket trolleys float and odd shoes, bin bags and dog shit line the path. It's pretty grim.

Yout', on his skateboard, kick-pushes along the towpath and meets Charlotte on her bike. He stops, and she pulls in next to him.

(This is an alternative point of view: someone's watching this)

An exchange of words and Yout' hands her a rucksack and a £20 note. She takes it and cycles off.

Yout' kick-pushes off in the other direction. On the bridge above, two COPS (one white, one black) in plain clothes exchange a 'Gotcha' look.

INT. CLIFFORD'S CRAPPY HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Clifford sits on the edge of the bed bellowing into the phone. Khaled is just visible, doing press-ups in the bathroom.

CLIFFORD

Dave – how was I to know you agreed with that insane bitch? She holds more than the purse strings – right? She got your dick in her purse too – right? Well, in the words of that great song, Dave – fuck you! And I know all about you and Pauletta; you can keep her!

He slams the phone down.

Khaled continues his press-ups. Clifford gets up and starts pacing up and down.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

Lying, two-faced, little-assed, fit-in-my-wallet, Babygro-wearin' asshole! Fire ME?

KHALED

Anything I can do?

A beat.

Clifford sits on the bed.

CLIFFORD

I'll tell you what you can do, Khaled Massi: you can win this tournament. You're better than all these sons o' bitches!

Khaled is beside himself with joy.

KHALED

You, you think I can win this?

Clifford nods.

Clifford explains they have expenses now and he has no money. Persuades Khaled to invest his savings from ski trip, swears to him he'll get it back tenfold.

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL: KENJI'S SUITE - DAY

It's the best room in the Savoy, beautifully decorated with works of art complementing the decor. A king-size bed takes centre stage; pristine white sheets, a mountain of pillows – and, within, Kenji Burton and VICTORIA are clearly coming to the end of some vigorous and lovely naughtiness.

VICTORIA

Whoo!

KENJI

Damn!

VICTORIA

That was...

KENJI

I know.

He grins, grabs some bottled water from the bedside table. Chugalugs it.

A beat

VICTORIA

That's a bit presumptuous.

KENJI

What, baby?

VICTORIA

Well, you don't know what I was going to say. I could have said 'Terrible', 'Mediocre', 'Middling', 'OK-ish', 'Like having root canal surgery without anaesthetic'.

KENJI

I hope you wasn't gonna say any of that shit; I'd have to throw yo' ass out.

VICTORIA

Joke, Kenneth...

KENJI

'Kenji'. I like 'Kenji'.

VICTORIA

Why? Sounds like a Japanese sex doll.

KENJI

'Kenji' is what my friends call me. 'Kenneth' is what they called me at school, at the police station. In court...

Victoria laughs.

VICTORIA

Yes - you've spent a lot of time in the courthouse, haven't you?!

KENJI

I got my own parking spot down there!

Victoria doesn't crack a smile, just looks at him carefully.

A beat.

Kenji knows something's coming.

KENJI (CONT.)

What?

VICTORIA

You never talk about it, do you?

KENJI

What?

VICTORIA

The case. You hate talking about it.

KENJI

I don't hate it. I'm just tryin' to forget it... I ain't never had to take no pussy – not at school, not at college, never.

VICTORIA

That's horrible.

KENJI

Sorry. It's how the guys...

VICTORIA

Well, I'd rather you didn't say things like that – if that's alright with you.

He nods. All ice cool. He likes her, wants to talk. He pours more champagne. They snuggle up under the covers.

A beat.

Kenji wants this moment to be about something other than the sex... He wants to talk to her – can't help himself.

KENJI

You know... I mean... Some ballers are like, 'Get the money, the pussy and the weed!' I ain't never paid for the thang, ain't never had to take the thang – never needed to.

VICTORIA

But Renate Munroe said you did take the 'thang'; is she lying? Come on – you can tell me...

Kenji looks at her; she pulls a 'Who – me?' type of face.

KENJI

Look, I settled – alright? End of story.

VICTORIA

You could have pursued it further through the courts – protected your good name.

Kenji sighs – as if he's exhausted with the whole thing.

A beat.

KENJI

'Good name' – shit... (Beat) Look, me and Pookie...

VICTORIA

What's it got to do with Pookie?

KENJI

We go back – you know? Me and him: any chick I don't want, he...

He can't even say it; he knows how it sounds.

Victoria gets up and pours herself a drink. Downs it in one. She gets back into bed.

VICTORIA

What?

Kenji relives the whole thing.

KENJI

I was tired... Pookie took over – sweet-talked her into his room. Next thing I know – BAM! Blood and scratches and shit all over her face. Pookie's try'na chill her out, but she just grab her stuff and gone. Next thing I know, I'm a rapist.

VICTORIA

Why'd she accuse you and not Pookie?

KENJI

Hey, I love Pook, but he ain't no motherfuckin' superstar NBA baller – a'ight? She followed the dollar and then hollered.

And Kenji almost breaks down with relief.

Victoria rubs his shoulder sympathetically, sighs, then starts to move.

VICTORIA

I'm gonna get a shower, and then you need to get ready for Paris – yeah?

Kenji nods; she leaves him be. Turns and goes to the bathroom.

She shuts the door. Sits on the toilet seat, looks at her iPhone. She presses rewind and listens.

EXT. THE CANAL TOWPATH – LATER

(Moved forward from earlier)

Charlotte pedals furiously and arrives at her vantage point: a broken lamppost at a bend in the canal. She waits near some bins. It stinks. There are shopping trolleys half submerged in the water. Old bleach bottles. Grim.

Yout' arrives and gives her the rucksack.

Gives her more lessons: handling yourself, what if someone tries to rob you, etc.

YOUT'

You don't look in there – right? It's not your business – get me? You get an envelope at the other end. You done good.

Charlotte grins

CHARLOTTE

Yeah?

YOUT'

Yeah. You better jet – yeah?

A skinny, pale, ginger GUY (nineteen), all ears, runny nose and nervy excitement, watches the whole thing from behind the wheel of a dodgy VW. As Charlotte gets on the main road, he pulls out and follows her discreetly.

Watching HIM from a side street, our two undercover COPS from before...

EXT./INT. CLIFFORD'S SHITTY HOTEL – LATER

Clifford has made up a bed on the floor. Khaled is on the bed. It's still early: by the time on the wall clock, 7.15.

CLIFFORD AND KHALED HAVE A HEART-TO-HEART TALK ABOUT REFINING THEIR DREAMS/LOVE FOR BASKETBALL. CLIFFORD TELLS HIS STORY.

They stay up late chatting

(Deleted scene)

EXT./INT. THE EUROSTAR TRAIN – DAY

Along the platform, Khal's feet jog to the train,

Clifford following behind panting. He just makes it before they slam the doors and blow the whistle.

INT. THE RAILWAY CARRIAGE - DAY

In a second-class carriage, Khaled's on the phone, with Clifford drinking coffee and listening.

Khaled leaves a message for his mum. Asks her to pick up.

He hangs up. Explains to Clifford how she's always been with him at every game.

Khal looks sadly out of the window at the whooshing scenery. Clifford tries to cheer him up.

CLIFFORD

Paris, man - huh? Hey - make sure your phone's good and charged; you're gonna want to take pictures.

CUT TO:

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS OF PARIS - LUNCHTIME

Khal and Clifford are in a van being shuttled around Paris, having a whirlwind tour of the big city. Khal's taking pictures on his phone.

STILLS OF:

ARC DE TRIOMPHE;

EIFFEL TOWER;

MONTMARTRE;

NOTRE DAME.

Clifford takes pictures on his phone too.

STILLS OF:

Pizza Express;

McDonald's;

Subway;

Starbucks.

Clifford laughs maniacally.

EXT./INT. THE TOURNAMENT VENUE - LATER

It's a little later, and we're in the big Ball Till You Fall venue. A huge SENTINEL SHOES logo dominates, along with a massive poster of Kenji holding the Soldier shoe.

BALLERS from all over Europe are practising on court: GREEK PLAYERS, SPANISH PLAYERS, LITHUANIANS, TURKISH, SCOTS, WELSH, ENGLISH (teens to late twenties). All file past Khal and mutter to each other. They all give Khal the stink eye. Khal gives it right back.

KHALED

Wish my mum was here; she'd be cussing these guys, man. She used to come to every home game - calm me down... One time, this bumbo hole...

CLIFFORD

What's a 'bumbo hole'?

KHALED

Jamaican for 'dickhead'. Anyway, this guy fouled me - really hurt, man. Mum comes down - onto the court, you know (marvels at the memory) - and told him about his backside right there in front o' the crowd. He was shamed, man! I was laughing so much, I couldn't help but play good, man...

Clifford laughs.

CLIFFORD

You're mom's good people, Khal! Don't forget that. I'll see ya before we go.

Clifford leaves Khal to get into his zone.

EXT./INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT - MID-AFTERNOON

(Deleted dialogue)

Win notices a copy of the local paper, which has on its back page a picture of Khal with the headline 'Not so Special K takes one last shot'.

Win picks it up and shoves it in the bin, then looks at her watch and drinks her tea.

EXT./INT. THE TOURNAMENT VENUE - LATER

(Moved down from earlier - possibly wrong place)

Clifford walks over to a GREEK contestant, gives him the stink eye.

TIME CUT

Clifford standing next to an ITALIAN, gives him the stink eye.

TIME CUT

Clifford standing next to some SCOTTISH players, gives them the stink eye. A HUGE JOCK PLAYER (twenties) picks him up and draws him very close and gives him the stink eye back.

SCOTTISH BALLER

Yew got a fukken problem, pal?

CLIFFORD

No, no - not at all...

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. KENJI'S PRIVATE JET - MID-AFTERNOON

Kenji and Victoria, Pookie and Malcolm the PR guy, Cameron and Dave Romanoff sit in their various positions on the luxury jet.

Kenji is pensive. Victoria squeezes his hand.

VICTORIA

Alright?

Kenji sighs, and glances at Pookie, who also sighs, rather theatrically...

KENJI

Sure. We just gonna watch some shitty European ball – is all... S'like surgery but without the general anaesthetic.

POOKIE

S'like Lauryn Hill without the Fugees.

KENJI

It's like hoe cake without no bacon grease... Let me tell you somethin'.

POOKIE & KENJI

They just can't ball like we do.

CAMERON

You might be surprised.

Kenji and Pookie look at her askance.

KENJI & POOKIE

Bitch, please!

They crack up.

Cameron exchanges a look with Victoria. Jesus Christ: Romanoff looks sheepish.

ROMANOFF

Come on, guys; there are ladies here.

A beat.

KENJI

Sure, man. (To the ladies) Sorry, ya'all. Uh, Dave – could you get me some coffee here? Pookie – would you like some coffee?

POOKIE

I'd LOVE some coffee!

KENJI

Cameron? Victoria?

Cameron and Victoria shake their heads. Romanoff is terribly embarrassed.

KENJI (CONT.)

That's just two coffees, then. Dave – now!

Romanoff hesitates, then gets up to see about the coffees. Pookie and Kenji exchange a look.

Cameron's reading the Evening Standard; Kenji's picture is on the back page, along with Khaled's sad but determined face - the Hackney underdog.

The jet taxis along and takes its spot for take-off...

EXT./INT. THE 'BALL TILL YOU FALL' VENUE: LOCKER ROOMS - LATER

Queues are thinning out as FANS take their seats.

Excitement everywhere; the clock reads 5.40 - not long to go now.

INT. THE LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Khaled sits on a bench taping up his ankle. He checks his phone for messages - NOTHING.

Clifford enters, TAKES the phone from Khal.

CLIFFORD

Get your mind on the game.

Khal continues to tape his ankle up, put his socks on, get his basketball boots on - the ritual.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

I took a look at some o' your competition out there; you might think...

CUT TO:

KHALED

(Adjust this: he's not doing it for Charlotte yet)
Clifford – I don't need the big speech – blah, blah, blah, blah. Just let me play, let me do my job. I'm doing this for Charlotte – yeah? Gonna do my best not to let her down. I'll do my best not let HER DOWN. That's all I've got.

CLIFFORD

Now we got ourselves a ball game!

CUT TO:

INT. 'BALL TILL YOU FALL' ARENA – NIGHT

The CLOCK strikes six o'clock.

SUDDENLY a massive FANFARE blares out; the CROWD go nuts.

Burton enters the arena, to huge cheers AND boos.

Cameron Taylor follows, ascends a little platform which has been erected CENTRE COURT. Kenji stands next to her at the microphones. Pookie is nearby, yelling and hyping up the crowd.

Cameron speaks in flawless French, which for our purpose is subtitled.

CAMERON (SUBTITLED)

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. It is my honour to present this extraordinary Sentinel Sports promotion, here in the most beautiful arena I've EVER seen – puts many of our American playing spaces to shame.

Kenji pulls a face. Pookie laughs. The Soldier basketball shoe appears on the screen, with the logo 'Taste the Air'.

CUT TO:

EXT. D'ANGELO'S STREET - EVENING

(Moved forward from earlier; place somewhere in tournament)

This is a middle-class street, with reasonably nice houses.

Charlotte ZOOMS down the pavement, a rucksack on her back and a bag full of papers slung over shoulder. She SCREECHES to a halt outside one of the houses, drops the bike and walks up the path – but, SUDDENLY, BAM!

The skinny ginger kid driving the VW mounts the pavement and KNOCKS her down!

Charlotte goes flying and lands hard. She lies still, unmoving.

The ginger kid gets out of the VW, which is parked on D'Angelo's mum's lawn. He jogs over to where Charlotte landed, yanks the rucksack off her back. He unzips it and a flask and a Tupperware container fall out. Ginger kid's puzzled. He reaches inside the rucksack again, and finds more Tupperware – a spork??

He kneels and punches Charlotte in the face, slapping her, gets up, goes through the rucksack again. Nothing. He kicks her hard in the ribs. Charlotte doesn't move.

GINGER SKINNY KID

Where's the fuckin' gear??

But then – WHAM!

A big plainclothes guy BODY-SLAMs the teenager, hard. The kid goes DOWN...

The other plainclothes guy runs up, and drops the cuffs on him.

PLAINCLOTHES GUY

Fuckin' traffic! Get this twat in the car. Call an ambulance.

Skinny ginger is led away, as the plainclothes guy kneels down, feels for Charlotte's pulse, takes his jacket off and covers her gently.

PLAINCLOTHES GUY (CONT.)

DID YOU CALL THAT FUCKIN' AMBULANCE YET? THIS GIRL'S

BADLY HURT!

We hear the squawk of a radio and a muffled voice.
Fade-out.

INT. 'BALL TILL YOU FALL' ARENA - NIGHT

It's a little later now.

Kenji is now at the podium. He has an enormous AIR HORN in his hands. He BLASTS it!

KENJI

SHALL WE PLAY SOME BASKETBALL, PARIS, FRANCE?

The crowd cheer!

KENJI (CONT.)

LET'S GET READY TO RUMMMMMMMBLLLLLLEEEE!

He BLASTS the horn again.

The crowd cheer, and the podium is moved swiftly away from centre court and out. The clock strikes six and the games begin.

Fast and furious playing on both ends of the court.

Khal watches his fellow COMPETITORS preparing for battle.

One-on-one basketball - fast and furious, slick and wicked, exiting and energetic, executed

with maximum force!

And we keep our eye on the CLOCK, because time is going to pass very quickly here, the point being that Khal is on court virtually non-stop: time will slow, time will speed impossibly fast.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Quick cuts of:

CLOCK - 6.45 P.M.

Khal versus a GREEK PLAYER (teens), who muscles his way to the basket, knocking Khal down.

Sweat, pouring from a BALLER'S head.

TIME CUT

A REF is booed by a section of the crowd.

Cameron Taylor, Dave Romanoff, Kenji and Victoria and crew watch the games on a 50-inch plasma in their CORPORATE BOX.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 7.45 P.M.

Two WHITE PLAYERS (teens), fighting; the referee blows the whistle - this game's done. They are escorted from the court.

A knee being manipulated back into place – POP!

TIME CUT

CLOCK – 9.30 P.M.

Khal limps off court, exhausted. Clifford makes him
glug water, lays him down, stretches out his
hamstrings. The whistle blows. Khal has to return to
the court.

Clifford rapping on the phone.

Some CHEEKY GIRLS showing their bosoms to the
camera.

EXT./INT. COOKIE AND GREG'S HOUSE – LATER

(Moved from earlier – place somewhere in middle of
game)

The phone in the hallway rings.

Greg comes out talking into an earpiece,
carrying his iPad.

GREG

Alan! Alan – you've got to stop panicking. You live
in an area where blackouts happen all the time; you
need a surge protector – it's so simple! That
way...hang on – gotta get the house phone.

He gets the phone and places it to his ear.

GREG (CONT.)

Y'ellow? (Listens) What? OK – we're on our way!

Greg looks grave.

GREG (CONT.)

Shut up, Alan! Buy a new computer – it's cheaper than calling me!

He runs to the bottom of the stairs.

GREG (CONT.)

Cookie...COOKIE!

Greg reaches for his coat, gets his car keys.

Cookie runs downstairs, her hair wet from the shower.

COOKIE

What?

GREG

Charlotte's in hospital!

Cookie just stands there, dripping.

GREG (CONT.)

Come on!!

They rush out of the door.

CUT TO:

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 10.25 P.M.

In the corporate area: Cameron and Romanoff watch the game, Pookie drinks Coke Zero from the bottle, Kenji and Victoria kiss.

On the 50-inch plasma TV: TWO GIRLS show their bosoms to camera.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 1.00 A.M.

A Spaniard (twenties) battles it out with a lanky Scot. The Scot triumphs and does a mini highland fling to celebrate!

Clifford imitates him. Khal laughs.

TIME CUT

A FAT BLOKE is asleep in the audience, but everyone else is on their feet.

PLAYERS lunge and parry at each other on both ends of the court. Meanwhile, Khal rests. Clifford rubs him down.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 2.50 A.M.

SLOW MOTION: Khal is EVERYWHERE... MULTIPLE IMAGES OF KHAL ON COURT - HE'S ALMOST PLAYING HIMSELF.

TIME CUT:

CLOCK -3.00 A.M.

Kenji Burton, Victoria, Pookie and the crew leave in the midst of a game. The crowd boo him. Kenji turns and grabs his crotch. Lovely.

SPEEDED UP TO HIP HP, MC SOLAR STYLE

Khal, on the floor, awash in sweat. Clifford TALKING fast on his cellphone.

Clifford makes Khaled eat a banana; the whistle blows. Khal runs onto the court. Clifford eats a banana too - then another one.

PLAY BEGINS - SUPERFAST; A BLUR; KHAL TRIUMPHS.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 5.00 A.M.

Corporate area: Cameron drinks water. Romanoff drinks from a hip flask.

Clifford drinks coffee. Khal POURS water over his head, trying to stay awake... COLLEAGUES (players now out of the competition) pat him on the shoulder.

A FEW PLAYERS are still on court playing like there's no tomorrow: the end games.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 5.50 A.M. SLOW MOTION

Khal versus a HUGE ITALIAN PLAYER - last man standing. The Italian is strong, tall and fit.

Scores are neck and neck. Then, with a burst of last-ditch energy, Khaled twists, turns, feints and then flings the ball backwards over his head - and it goes into the basket!

The whole crowd goes crazy - ape-/ batshit! The clock strikes 6.00 A.M.

GAME OVER!

CLIFFORD (ON THE PHONE, YELLING HIMSELF HOARSE)

KHALED WON! HE WON! HE WON!

Khaled, exhausted, sweaty, hobbling a little, is led up the podium. The exhausted crowd cheer themselves silly.

He is handed a trophy by Cameron Taylor. The PRESS crew snap away.

CAMERON TAYLOR (SUBTITLED)

The winner of this year's 'Ball Till You Fall' is...from Hackney in London; his name is - KHALED MASSI! So, the battle royal of Kenji Burton versus Khaled Massi will happen in Hackney, east London - TONIGHT. Congratulations!!!

Huge respect from the crowd! Cameron shakes Khal's hand.

Clifford grins HUGELY. Khal is genuinely happy.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

(Might not need this)

Cookie and Greg at Charlotte's bedside, distraught. Charlotte's leg is in a cast.

EXT/INT. EUROSTAR - EARLY MORNING

The Eurostar express train yomps all the way back to the UK - like a matt black motorised python on skates.

In the first-class carriage, Clifford and Khal sit and celebrate over a Continental breakfast.

Clifford holds up the sports pages of the local newspaper. There is a picture of Khal triumphantly hoisting silverware - the same trophy that sits on the table next to him.

CLIFFORD

You took on the best of Europe - kicked they ass!
Greece - shishkabobbed. Spain? Adios, amigo!
Italy - Berlusconi, THIS motherfucker! Them other
Brits? You were like: 'I say, old pal, toodeloo!'

Khal's laughing, though he's very tired.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

I'm already gettin' phone calls from people, man... You get through tonight? Europe-wise - play for whoever the hell you want; I'm talkin' sponsorship! Damn - send Charlotte skiing on the Moon! Doesn't matter what happens with Burton tonight! I'M proud o' you. You made me love this game all over again!

KHALED

Just hope Charlotte's feeling better today; that's all.

CLIFFORD

She'll be fine. Now - get some sleep; you can bet Kenji Burton's chillin' in his hotel suite right now...

He gives him back his mobile phone. Khal turns it on - a deluge of messages.

EXT./INT. HACKNEY HOSPITAL - LATER

(Moved forward to end of Act 2)

Greg stands outside one of the private rooms in A&E, talking to plainclothes cop. Khaled and Clifford run in.

Greg turns and looks gravely at Khaled, stopping him in his tracks. Khaled goes to go in, but the plainclothes cop flashes a badge and stops him.

GREG

He's her father; let him through!

Greg nods and the cop allows Khaled to go in.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOSPITAL ROOM – SIMULTANEOUS

Khaled enters to find Cookie sitting by Charlotte's bed.

Charlotte is all bandages and bruises, her leg in a plaster cast. Khaled starts to cry.

Cookie looks up at him; she speaks very quietly.

COOKIE

She won't wake up.

Khaled stands by the bed.

COOKIE (CONT.)

Why won't she wake up?

Khaled reaches down and holds Charlotte's hand.

KHALED

What happened?

A beat.

Cookie looks vexed.

COOKIE

Do you really want to know, Khal? Really?

Khal is aware of Cookie's state change.

KHALED

Of course I want to know what happened.

COOKIE

She was dropping off a package at D'Angelo's yard. Something she's been doing for a while, according to that policeman outside.

KHALED

What?!

COOKIE

She was running errands for D'Angelo, Khal. Dropping off packages. She's lucky it was his packed lunch, otherwise she'd be looking at jail time.

KHALED

She's only twelve!

COOKIE

So? She could have been moving coke or speed or money or anything. She was doing it to help you.

KHALED

Oh God!

COOKIE

You better pray she's alright, 'cos if she don't recover from this...

(Don't have her exit)

Cookie gets up and leaves Khaled alone with Charlotte.

Khaled sits down, strokes Charlotte's arm. He tries to talk to her but he can barely get out the words.

KHALED

Charlotte, I am so sorry... Thought I was gonna to make everything alright: get the money to pay for the skiing... I was doing it all for you. You didn't have to do this. I was gonna get the money for you - I told you not to get involved with D'Angelo. I told you! I told you! I'm gonna kill him.

(Adjust so that he's realising he is to blame)

Charlotte's eyes flicker and then open.

CHARLOTTE

Daddy?

Charlotte starts crying.

Cookie rushes over and sees that Charlotte is awake.

COOKIE

Oh, thank God!

CHARLOTTE

Mum – I'm so sorry.

COOKIE

Well – let's get you better now. The policeman is satisfied that you had no idea what you were doing. Or who you were doing it for. You need to rest now, Charlotte...

Clifford is hovering; they can still make it.

Khaled barks at him, tells him he isn't going to go. Angry with Clifford for making him put himself before his daughter.

KHALED

Charlotte's more important than basketball; she always has been. I'm staying here!

(Deleted dialogue)

Clifford leaves, devastated.

Charlotte realises that her dad has won in Paris and

is thrilled. Tells him he has to go.

(Deleted lines)

Charlotte gives her dad a talisman for luck.

CHARLOTTE

Because you love it. You've always loved it and you'll never stop loving it. Daddy, you've got to go the final and beat Kenji Burton and get his autograph for me. I love you. Now – go and play.

Khal is convinced; he leaves, overcoming the pain of seeing Cookie, Greg and Charlotte together as a unit.

Cookie nuzzling into Greg's shoulder.

EXT/INT. THE PURPOSE-BUILT ARENA - LATER

A domed affair, with the Sentinel logo displayed everywhere. Like Cirque du Soleil's performance tent, but for 3,000 fans tops. There are food stands, bookies, merchandise hawkers and a MASSIVE queue at the box office.

Clifford approaches, summoning up the strength to tell them the game is off.

Khaled arrives, just in time. Clifford is thrilled.

INT. BACKSTAGE, KENJI'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

It is, of course, huge, beautifully appointed, with its own physio table, three-piece suite, day-bed, flowers everywhere, and a mini gym. Kenji is on the physio bed being massaged by his GUY (black, fifties). Pookie is watching a video of Khaled at 'Ball Till You Fall' in Paris.

There's a shot of Khal limping.

POOKIE

Yo, Kenji - your boy be limpin' like Long John Silver up in this bitch - on the left. Ya'all need to cancel that shit out... He can ball, tho'.

Kenji lies there being pummelled. Thoughtful. He signals to the physio to stop and leave; he does, and now it's just Pookie and Kenji...

Kenji sits up, looks at his old friend...

KENJI

Yo, Pookie. We need to talk, man.

Pookie turns the DVD off.

POOKIE

'Bout what?

CUT TO:

INT. KHALED'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

He's got a table and a day-bed and a Portaloo, but it's all much smaller. Khal lies on a day-bed; he's got Charlotte's talisman.

Clifford tries to give him a pep talk, but Khaled just repeats that he's doing it for his daughter. But he's clearly exhausted.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. THE PURPOSE-BUILT ARENA - NIGHT

The CROWD surge into the arena - hundreds of them. Silas is here, as are ALL of Guildford Heat.

D'Angelo's taking bets, counting money in the open. He's brazen.

(Highlight this a bit more)

Big J and Dreadie are being interviewed by local radio. The other guys are there too. Dread holds court.

DREADIE

What will Khaled Mathi be thinking at thith prethithe moment? I thould think he'd be uthing the lavatorieth - that'th what I'd be doing. I'd be on the lavatory.

PRESENTER

Why are you all here? He used to ball for Guildford Heat, but not any more.

BIG J

We're here to show our support. Khaled's family to us - yeah?

The HEAT cheer.

CUT TO:

INT. PUNDIT/NEWS CREW AREA - CONTINUOUS

A SPORTS CABLE PUNDIT's got Coach Reynolds on camera pontificating about Khaled.

COACH REYNOLDS

Khaled's living proof that we've got ballers in the UK with great talent.

PUNDIT

But you guys let him go; what was the thinking behind that?

COACH REYNOLDS

We love Khal at Guildford - he's a one-off: he's got a lot of spirit, a lot of heart and he's a maverick. Sometimes these things cause conflict, you know - I wish him luck tonight. Go get him, Khal!

INT. KENJI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Kenji sits, oiled to perfection, hair cane rowed. Muscles rippling. Outfit fresh out the box. One-of-a-kind, personally monogrammed Sentinel Soldiers on his feet.

Pookie stands by, looking as if he's just taken a direct hit from a stray Space Shuttle.

Romanoff and Cameron enter the locker room.

Panicked, Pookie looks at Kenji - who shakes his head...

KENJI

Say nothing.

CAMERON

Good luck, Kenji.

Romanoff gets into Kenji's personal space, all 'We're all jock's here - right?'

ROMANOFF

Outstanding crowd tonight. Twitter's goin' berserk, the news feeds say: 'It's the event of the year,' the bookies say the action tonight is mental - and if any more Brit celebrities call me asking for

tickets I'm gonna barf right here...

Cameron turns sharply; Romanoff's fake bonhomie drops off him in chunks.

Cameron takes the lead.

CAMERON

This is going to be a great game. Enjoy.

They leave.

Kenji gets up and starts pacing the room. He flexes his foot.

KENJI

You sure these are the right size? Motherfuckers pinch...

He leaves the room.

Pookie is left with his own thoughts, and looks thunderstruck.

CUT TO:

INT. KHALED'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

(Adjust)

Clifford present or enters during following. Kenji psyches Khaled out and really pisses off Clifford. Clifford tells the freaked-out Khaled to wait there, saying he's going to sort it out.

The door opens but he doesn't hear it. Kenji walks in, alone, looking like fresh-minted money...

Khal sits up immediately.

KHALED

What's this?

(Deleted dialogue)

KENJI

Let's show these people somethin' - right?

Khal gets up, nods at Kenji - and they walk out together.

KENJI (CONT.)

Get yo' game face on, fool; we ain't friends an' shit. I'ma still crush yo' ass out there.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Greg, Cookie and Charlotte watching on Greg's iPad with tiny speakers.

Kenji and a not too confident-looking Khaled enter the arena and the crowd go absolutely BAT-SHIT!

Charlotte looks at her mum; they're worried.

INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN - DAY

Mama sits at the counter with the till's cash float in notes and change in front of her. Farrington

scurries back and forth in the kitchen. It's pre-teatime, so it's quiet.

Suddenly, Clifford BURSTS in through the front door, on a mission from God! Farrington listens at the hatch. Win is enraged at this invasion.

CLIFFORD

Mrs Massi, I want to talk to you; we don't have much time.

WIN

Take you backside outta my place! I tell Khaled: 'Basketball or me; him mek him choice. Farrington, you make the cornmeal porridge?

CHEF

You deal with out deh so and me will deal with back yah so.

WIN

You cheeky raas, you!

The chef laughs and continues working and listening.

CLIFFORD

Mrs Massi, I want you to come down to that arena

tonight. I want you to come and watch your son and calm him with your presence, the way you used to. He's played his heart out all night long. He needs a boost!

Win looks as though she might crumble - but she turns and maintains her steel.

WIN

I have work fe do.

She turns her back on him, starts counting out change. Clifford grabs her wrist. Win turns, reaches for a nearby machete, grabs it.

WIN (CONT.)

Unless you wan' them call you 'Stumpy', from this day forward you better let go my raas hand! You tell Khaled...

Clifford interrupts.

CLIFFORD

Kenji Burton's been massaged and oiled, pampered and trained to perfection. Khaled Massi just wants his mama courtside... It's my job to get her there!

WIN

I don't know...

CLIFFORD

Khaled didn't ask me to come here, Mrs Massi. I'm here because, within the brief time I've known Khaled, it has become very clear to me that he loves and respects and needs you very much, Win. Khaled isn't just representing himself tonight; Khal's representing Hackney. And not just Hackney; ALL of Britain! Mrs Massi, you've GOT to be there tonight... Your son – dammit, your country – needs you.

Win is entranced by Clifford's rhetoric. She rises to her feet.

Farringdon has already made up a Tupperware dish of food for the journey.

FARRINGDON

One and two pattie, some plantain, lickle jerk chicken and some dumpling. Wish Khal luck from me.

Clifford takes the dish and is surprised by its WEIGHT.

CLIFFORD

Get your coat – and a forklift for this; we're going to a goddamn ball game.

WIN

If you blaspheme in this house once more, I will

chop off you seed bag.

CLIFFORD

Amen.

He hustles her out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PURPOSE-BUILT ARENA - NIGHT

(Deleted lines)

CAMERON

Our new shoe, the Soldier, needed a unique athlete: a powerhouse. I give you...one of the greatest players basketball has ever seen, wearing the Soldier shoe for the first time, MR KENJI BURTON!!

Kenji flashes a million-dollar smile at Khal – then runs out to wave at the fans. Suddenly, every single mobile phone camera in the place goes NUTS.

Screens display his stats: three times most valuable player in the NBA; best dunk; most baskets. Lots of cheers – which eventually die down. Kenji is stretching and begins yelling at Khal.

KENJI

You, Clifford James! I'ma CRUSH yo' boy!

Khaled tries to steel himself.

KENJI (CONT.)

I'ma pound and pound and pound him so hard they gonna change his name to 'Pound Sterling! Yo' mama'll be able to keep you in her purse!

Kenji plays to the gallery, musing aloud.

KENJI (CONT.)

What kinda name is 'Khaled Massi' anyway? Soun' like some kinda Middle Eastern shit. You a terrorist, Khaled? I'ma beat yo' ass for makin' a motherfucka take off his shoes at security at the airport every goddam time...

Suddenly a voice interrupts, indistinct at first but getting closer and closer. It's Win.

She glides like a Jamaican battleship towards Khal and Kenji, in full voice; the crowd react accordingly...

WIN

Kenji Burton? Kenji Burton? Is who tell you to talk to my son this way? You see you? You're not even worth the dirt on his shoes. I've watched you, Burton; you're a liar, a cheat and a BULLY. My son is none of these things - that's why he'll ALWAYS be better than you, you wretch!

Kenji flinches at the barrage of insults.

Khal hugs his mum. Heartbreaking moment!
Clifford appears and looks on proudly; he made it!
The crowd CHEER and laugh; SECURITY guys have now
caught up with WIN, and she is given mighty ovation
as she is dragged off court.
The MEDIA are loving this.

UK PUNDIT

Khaled's MUM there giving Burton a well-deserved
earful. Not quite the done thing, bringing your mum
to the game – but apparently she's done it before.

Shots of Win telling Kenji off.

Shots of Khaled and Clifford reacting.

US PUNDIT

...Massi seems embarrassed but happy. We'll see how
happy he is when Brutal Burton breaks out the heavy
artillery.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Watching the TV.

Cookie and Charlotte cheer as Win returns to her
seat; Charlotte's eyes twinkle.

CHARLOTTE

That's my gran!

CUT TO:

INT. ON COURT - CONTINUOUS

Kenji and Khaled walk at the court's centre; the referee talks to them, but neither listens. They know how to play this game.

US PUNDIT

The ref's layin' the law down out there: best of five games, first to ten points in each game.

On Kenji: moving his shoulders, bouncing on his toes, moving his head from side to side.

On Khal: flexing his ankle, bending his arms behind his back - staring at Kenji.

UK PUNDIT

In case of a tie, obviously there'll be a sudden-death playoff to decide the winner.

The ball is tossed up into the air and seems to stay there for the longest time. It hangs, and in SLOW MOTION we see

Khal's eyes watching;

Kenji's eyes focused.

And then - BAM!

Kenji has the ball, spins, runs, dominates; Khal

tries to keep up but Burton's on fire.

SCOREBOARD: GAME 1

We're in among them, jostled, hustled - this is real.

The game begins - and it's brutal; Kenji doesn't take any prisoners.

TIME CUT:

GAME 2

US PUNDIT

Massi's got a pretty good all-round game here.

Burton's skilful, and uses everything he knows to dismantle Khal's game, but Khal pushes back, forcing Burton away!

UK PUNDIT

Burton's getting the measure of this UK ball player - he ain't just gonna lie down here.

TIME CUT:

Game 3: Burton 6 Massi 8

Khal's muscled away from the ball - pushed and stamped on. Burton sends the ball arcing into the

basket – boom-swish!

IN THE CROWD

WIN screams her disapproval! COOKIE has her hand over her mouth.

Charlotte holds Greg's hand. He looks at her.

TIME CUT:

GAME 4

UK PUNDIT (CONT.)

You know, I think Burton's surprised by how good Massi is. He's a decent player. He's not NBA but he's holding his own out there.

Burton gets mad and pushes Khal to the floor and almost says 'Stay down.'

IN THE AUDIENCE

Big J and Dreadie are on their feet, yelling 'Foul'.

ON COURT

The referee's warning Kenji continually for gangster tactics. Khal surprises Kenji with a couple of fast turnarounds. He sends a ball thundering into the basket! Burton's sweating. He shoots a look over at courtside.

Cameron and Romanoff are watching. Burton looks

worried.

US PUNDIT

You're not telling me a guy of Burton's class can't put Khaled Massi away? What's this kid ever done?

TIME CUT

Music begins.

GAME 2

UK PUNDIT

Massi's found his form – this is real basketball!
Come on, Special K!!!

IN THE CROWD

Charlotte, Greg and Cookie and Win are dancing with joy!

Cameron and Romanoff are in heated discussions.

ON COURT

Kenji shows his class – there's a reason why he's an MVP. This guy's superb. It's almost mercurial the way he moves on the court. Khal is limping, favouring his left... His ankle's playing up, but he's getting by. Kenji is once again surprised by Khal's turn of speed and skill. Then, after a particularly tough basket, Kenji STAMPS on Khal's LEFT foot and pushes; Khal's ankle makes a horrible GRINDING sound.

Clifford calls for a timeout. The ref blows his whistle.

Khal is down.

Khaled is seen overcoming his anger.

UK PUNDIT (CONT.)

Massi's down! This isn't good at all.

COURTSIDE

(Change this to Clifford?)

Cookie vaults over the barrier and runs to him. She flexes his foot, sprays it with something cool and REBANDAGES it during the following.

COOKIE

Wanna stop?

KHALED

No! No blood, no foul. I'm gonna keep on.

COOKIE

Bloody fool!

KHALED

I know. What are you doing here?

COOKIE

Greg sent me. Anyway, we've got time. Your mate's arguing with the ref.

CUT TO:

INT. MID COURT - CONTINUOUS

Clifford is in the midst of an enormous battle with the REFEREE.

CLIFFORD

Well, you can kiss the whole of my hairy nutsack, then!

REF

Get off my basketball court, Mr James; you're irritating me.

CLIFFORD

What are you, Henry VIII? Burton's running his usual gangster bullshit, so let's get Stevie Wonder to referee, 'cos even he'd notice what was goin' down here!

REF

Sit down, Mr James.

The ref is serious.

CLIFFORD

Come on now, ref. Just asking you to keep your eyes open.

UK PUNDIT

That's Clifford James, Massi's coach. There's a bit of history between James and Burton - something to do with the coach's wife; we won't go into that here... Burton hates James' guts and wants to cripple Massi to prove it.

INT. TEAM KENJI - CONTINUOUS

Kenji and his ENTOURAGE; He's being rubbed, stretched, massaged, rehydrated - a superstar athlete's pit stop. Burton is breathing heavily.

Pookie glances at Kenji. A wall of silence between them.

INT. TEAM KHAL - CONTINUOUS

Clifford (?) has taped up Khal's ankle.

CLIFFORD

Go easy on him, Khal. He's only a Yank.

The whistle blows and the crowd erupt into a huge cheer. Clifford gets Khal to his feet and he slowly jogs back onto the court.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

They're still watching on TV. Greg kisses Cookie.

Charlotte's watching...

CHARLOTTE

Ew! Get a room, you two.

They look at her, then at each other. FADE OUT

INT. ON COURT - LATER

Khal, in slow motion, defends against Burton, winning the ball and getting away to the basket! Khal's face is riven with effort.

TIME CUT:

INT. ON COURT - LATER

TIME CUT:

Burton, in slow motion, head down, sweat pouring off him. He's worried: what the hell is going on?

FADE UP

CUT TO

INT. ON COURT - LATER

It's GAME 10 - the final game. The pundits are on fire about Khaled Massi!

UK PUNDIT

If you've just tuned in, do not go anywhere: this is where you wanna be!

Burton and Massi tussle for the ball. Burton wins this point.

US PUNDIT

The UK underdog has taken Kenji Burton to the hole and they are now neck and neck; the referee has signalled a sudden-death playoff - first to ten points!

The CROWD roar as Khal fights back!

UK PUNDIT

This is one of the best one-on-one battles I've EVER seen in my time. First to ten baskets wins. Hang on to your hats!

INT. COURTSIDE - NIGHT

CUT BETWEEN TEAM KENJI AND TEAM KHAL

KENJI is drinking water. KHAL is drinking water. CLIFFORD hunkers down and hisses into Khal's ear.

CLIFFORD

This is some life-changing shit right here. Do you want this? 'Cos it ain't gonna happen if you don't

want this!

KHAL

I think I...

Clifford slaps him round the face!

KHAL (CONT.)

What?!

CLIFFORD

I saw your mama do it – thought it might work for me!

KHAL

DON'T DO THAT!

CLIFFORD

There's no 'I think' now. There's only 'I will' or 'I won't'. Your whole family is here waiting for you to show 'em something: that you got heart; that you will stand up for yourself. This is your time, Khaled!

KHAL

Don't ever slap me again.

CLIFFORD

You're right; it was uncalled for.

The ref blows.

CLIFFORD (CONT.)

GO!

Khaled jogs out to the court's centre and Kenji Burton follows.

FROM ABOVE

The ball SOARS in slow motion, and Kenji's and Khal's faces describe the determination within. Neither of them wants to lose tonight.

Continuing in slow motion – a series of shots à la ZIDANE; it's all about these two Titans now. Kenji outwits Khal and steals a basket- once, twice, three times! Khal is distraught. Clifford yells his head off!

TIME CUT

Khal twisting and turning his way past Kenji's defence – three, four, five times!

Kenji body-slams Khal and gets a basket! Khal pushes BACK – and gets a basket!

TIME CUT

SCOREBOARD: Burton 8 Massi 8

It's the last few moments of the game.
CAMERON and DAVE, watching intently - their eyes constantly on the REF, who flicks them the odd glance. BURTON, playing rough, taking no prisoners. KHAL, slipping, sliding, hustling - working incredibly hard. Kenji has the advantage.

UK PUNDIT

If Massi is to win, he must score now...

AND SUDDENLY, ALL SOUND IS TUNED OUT - EXCEPT FOR THE THUMP-THUMP of the basketball and the Ba-BUMP of a heartbeat.

IN-CROWD SHOTS - ALL IN SLOW MOTION

MUM frightened. CLIFFORD calm. POOKIE shouting and gesticulating.

Charlotte - yelling. D'ANGELO, coolly on the phone.

SNAP into REAL TIME!

ON COURT

The next bit happens real fast: Kenji's got the ball, but then Khal STEALS it and - B'DOING!!!! - LEAPFROGS OVER KENJI'S HEAD FOR THE DUNK!

A zillion flashes go off!

US PUNDIT

I think Burton has just been served what is known as a 'full English'! Massi wins – but only just... What a game!!

It's a FREEZE-FRAME moment - almost posed. Khaled Massi has beaten the NBA superstar; it's almost like a Nike poster.

Clifford is beside himself with joy. D'Angelo is furious. KENJI glares at Cameron and Romanoff in the corporate area.

What the fuck? Cameron Taylor and Dave Romanoff stand; they signal to the ref - it's a no-go. Cameron makes a 'throat-cutting' sign with her hands. The ref speaks to both players.

Khal's face falls.

KHALED

What?

Clifford kicks a whole tub of drinks over! The basket is disallowed!

US PUNDIT

What?! I think the ref is gonna make them play the point over!

In SLOW MOTION - the point is replayed, Khal working doubly hard, Kenji elbowing, pushing and shoving,

and eventually...

KENJI gets the basket-the whistle blows; now the game is over.

SCOREBOARD: Burton 10 Massi 8

The crowd go absolutely NUTS! Kenji's entourage STORM the court and SLAP their leader on the back.

BUT Khaled is being CHAIRED round the court. No one cares that he lost; to the rhythm of WE WILL ROCK YOU's boom-boom-clap they chant.

CROWD

PEOPLE'S CHAMP! PEOPLE'S CHAMP! PEOPLE'S CHAMP!

US PUNDIT

The wrongfully disallowed Massi dunk is already uploaded onto YouTube - it really is sensational! Let's look at it again!

UK PUNDIT

Khaled Massi definitely won that - we've got a shot of Cameron Taylor from Sentinel Shoes.

The shot is of Cameron giving the 'rollover' signal.

UK PUNDIT (CONT.)

You could argue that she's actually telling the ref

to disallow the basket... We all know who the real winner is here!

All throughout this we hear cries of 'PEOPLE'S CHAMP!'.

Clifford strolls over to Cameron and Dave, gives them the finger and walks away.

Khal is dropped off by the barrier where Charlotte, Cookie and Greg are: THEY'VE MADE IT FROM THE HOSPITAL! They congratulate him.

KHALED GETS AUTOGRAPH FROM KENJI FOR HIS DAUGHTER.

THE PRESS SNAP AWAY.

Clifford stands by mum; she smiles at him and gives him a dumpling. Clifford eats some of it. His phone rings.

CLIFFORD

What? Yeah, s'me; who's this - Nike? You like Khal? Well, yeah, he just kinda kicked Wonderboy's ass here. Let's talk, Monday.

The crowd chant 'PEOPLE'S CHAMP!' and sing 'Special K' to the tune of Amazing Grace - it's joyous.

CUT TO:

INT. KHAL'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Khal is lying on the day-bed. D'Angelo eases into the room like a ninja; Khal sees him and sits up.

D'ANGELO

Easy, superstar! Nice one...! Look - your boy, Clifford - yeah - he come and check me about how you guys should bet on Paris and tonight - and I told him, but he never listened.

D'Angelo gets out a wad of notes thick enough to choke a horse.

D'ANGELO (CONT.)

Shame he never let me hold the money for you guys.

Khaled isn't violent.

KHALED

I like you, you know, D'Angelo. I've always liked you: you're funny, you're stylish. But see - you're a drug dealer now. You don't get to hang out with me any more? And if you get anywhere near my Charlotte again - I will kill you, and no one will care. See! That's why you should quit dealin'; no one cares if you live or die. Now, get out; tell your little mate what I said too.

D'Angelo gets up.

D'ANGELO

Fuckin' hell, Khaled; just tryin' to help - that's all. I was gonna - you fuckin' mental case...

Yout' comes and helps D'Angelo away.

KHALED

I don't care. Get out.

D'Angelo leaves. Clifford comes in.

(Adjust: Clifford - I did a bad thing)

CLIFFORD

He gone?

KHALED

Yes. How did we do?

CLIFFORD

Let's count it.

Clifford puts a chair against the door and then empties a big fat envelope out onto the day-bed.

There's a lot of money there. He and Khaled look at each other.

KHALED

So, this was a 'I bet Khaled loses by one point in the final, but wins everything else' kinda bet.

CLIFFORD

I knew they'd try some shit... I just bet with my

nose. Most times it doesn't work

KHALED

This is a lot of skiing trips...

They both laugh.

CUT TO:

FADE OUT

CAPTION against black: '6 Months Later'.

FADE UP

EXT./INT. CHARLOTTE'S MASSI'S SCHOOL CLASSROOM -
DAY

(Change to Charlotte skiing?)

The KIDS are all writing essays, heads down, pens moving. Charlotte's on fire, writing up a storm.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

It's funny how life can change in the blink of an eye. Kenji Burton's mate, Pookie, got done for hurting that girl.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO COURTHOUSE - DAY

Pookie is being led away to a prison truck. Kenji stands nearby, dressed to the nines, looking sad.

Victoria stands next to a smiling Renate Munroe.

Suddenly Pookie is splashed with YELLOW PAINT - and everyone chases after the perpetrator. Kenji has managed to escape this time.

CUT TO:

INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN - DAY

The place has relocated to smarter surroundings. There's a two-man STEEL BAND in the corner and CLIFFORD and MAMA are served massive cocktails by FARRINGDON, who wears sparkling whites. Clifford is having a ball.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Nan upgraded her restaurant with dad's help. Uncle Clifford's there all the time.

CUT TO:

INT. A KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP - DAY

COOKIE steps up to her OPPONENT, a big WOMAN (white, twenties) radiating power. They bow to each other and then, swiftly, Cookie takes her down for the game.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Mum started competing again.

Charlotte is snapped getting a massive trophy. Greg kisses her full on the lips in celebration. She's number one again!

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

And Greg – well, he sort of grows on you, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. COOKIE'S KITCHEN – DAY

Greg and Charlotte are playing Scrabble. Charlotte lays down the word 'XERXES' on a triple word score; Greg upends the board in mock prima donna fashion.

GREG

Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

Charlotte laughs fit to burst.

CUT TO:

INT. A SPORTS SHOE SHOP – DAY

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Cameron Taylor lost her job.

INT. CNN-TYPE TV STUDIO

A logo reading 'RUINED HEIRESS' runs in a strapline along the bottom of the screen. CAMERON TAYLOR sits in the hot seat as a BUSINESS REPORTER harangues

her.

(Insert: the now notorious clip of Cameron signalling to the referee)

CAMERON

Well - first of all, Sentinel Sportswear is not on its knees; let's say we're a little winded. I am no longer the CEO, as it were; my younger sister, Lucy, has taken that role.

A shot of Lucy: blonde, power-suited, driven - exactly like Cameron.

BUSINESS REPORTER

Are you happy to relinquish your position like that?

CAMERON

Bitch please.

The reporter is shocked.

CUT TO:

INT. LEISURE CENTRE - DAY

Khaled is sitting in the gym on the floor with forty kids (black/white/Asian, all between eight and ten). He's talking earnestly to them.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

And my dad? He never had to worry about anything ever again.

Khal gets the kids up and gets them running round the court. He leans up against a wall.

PULL BACK to reveal that, next to him, is a huge poster, which says simply:

THE PEOPLE'S CHAMP! An Annie Liebowitz photograph: Khaled sits on a throne of gold. In an expensive black track suit and UNIQUE, GOLD BASKETBALL BOOTS! MICHAEL JORDAN – that's right, **the** MICHAEL JORDAN – places a big diamond encrusted crown on Khaled's head.

LOGO: The Nike 'SPECIAL K' – a Just Do It!

Khal realises what he's standing next to, smiles and then jogs off to work with the kids. He gets a ball and starts bouncing it – Thump-thump, thump-thump.

And it mixes in with his heartbeat – and we FADE OUT

Chapter 7

Development from *Moonlight Marauders* to *No Blood No Foul* (Initial) and Beyond

This aspect of the thesis describes the genesis of *No Blood No Foul*; the changes made to the screenplay arising from responses from trusted film industry professionals; and my responses to this experience as a BAME screenwriter, which, in turn, generated new research questions concerning opportunities for BAME creatives within the UK film industry.

The 'unknown screenwriter' has this to say about the successful development of a speculative screenplay:

50 spec screenplays sold every year out of 250,000 spec screenplays circulating around Hollywood and various other filmmaking venues = 1 spec screenplay sold for every 5,000 spec screenplays put into circulation.

Hmmm. Does that translate into 5,000 to 1 odds? Let's put it into perspective.

- Odds of getting a hole in one: 5,000 to 1
- Odds of winning an Academy Award: 11,500 to 1
- Odds of being murdered: 18,000 to 1
- Odds of being the victim of serious crime in your lifetime: 20 to 1
- Odds of fatally slipping in bath or shower: 2,232 to 1
- Odds of being considered possessed by Satan: 7,000 to 1
- Odds of dying on a bicycle: 4,472 to 1
- Odds of dying in a car accident: 18,585 to 1
- Odds of winning the California lottery: 13,000,000 to 1
- Odds of being killed in any sort of non-transportation accident: 69 to 1

(Source:
www.screenwriterunknown.com/observations/odds-of-
selling-a-spec-screenplay)

The following is a descriptive account of the development process. However informal this chapter might be in its presentation, it does reveal significant findings, particularly about managing one's expectations. The reason you have been commissioned to write a screenplay is because there is an element of your work that excites the production company or producer. You have to remember this: you would not be there if they did not want you. Have some self-esteem. Also, be prepared to rewrite: everyone has to rewrite, and you are no exception.

Rewriting screenplays is hell, but you have to rewrite almost every screenplay again and again and again and again. It used to be that I would do a certain amount of preparation and then write my first draft in ten days. Then I'd take two days off and rewrite it in ten days. Then I'd take two more days off and rewrite it again. In 34 days I had something approximating a reasonable first draft. I don't do that anymore because rewriting is such hell.

(Kazan 2013)

As previously identified, the texts throughout this study are referred to as:
Moonlight Marauders Outline, begun 25 March 2010 -
MM (Outline).

No Blood No Foul first draft screenplay, begun 18 April 2011 - NBNF (Initial).

No Blood No Foul director's draft, begun 14 August 2011 - NBNF (Director's).

And finally *No Blood No Foul* selling draft, begun 7 September 2011 - NBNF (Selling).

Origins

In 2010 I began the research journey described below. My supervisors were Professor John Hill and Sue Clayton of Royal Holloway, University of London, and, after a period of reading, reflection and advice, I began to develop a sports film screenplay. Reasons for this were an enhanced confidence arising from a recently completed MA in screenwriting, the desire to challenge the notion 'Sports films just don't work' and the new insights my initial research had given me.

I had developed a particular interest in the sports film genre, and felt sufficiently confident in pursuing this subspecies of the popular film world. As my investigations continued, however, I began (as indicated in previous chapters) to observe the convention that, although many sports films had BAME antagonists/protagonists and supporting players, *they were rarely at the centre of the story*; these stories always seemed to centre on the coach or team owner – usually a white man or woman. I felt compelled to explore the issues around which ethnic minority professionals remain marginalised and under-represented in the film

production world. As my research deepened, the more I came to believe that there was, in fact, a paucity of BAME screenwriters, authors, actors, producers, directors and technicians. This is a crisis which I have sought to confirm, explore and understand.

In parallel with my work on *MM* (Outline) and *No Blood No Foul*, I also wanted to undertake research from the perspective of participant observation. In other words, I wanted to explore whether there was any kind of unconscious discrimination during the development of the project; just what are the barriers, presumptions and prejudices brought to bear on a BAME screenwriter in a predominantly white industry?

A storyline was eventually approved, a cast of mostly BAME characters agreed upon; events were to occur mainly in Hackney, east London, and satellite areas – from a battered basketball court near Mare Street to the Savoy Hotel.

Once completed, the mission with any script is to target those in the industry who might commission such a property in order to facilitate a commercially viable feature film for a domestic (and perhaps even international) cinema audience. Revolution Films, a British production company (founded by two progressive industry professionals: Andrew Eaton and director Michael Winterbottom), is famous for such productions as *24 Hour Party People* (2002), *Rush* (2013) and *The Killer inside Me* (2010). Eaton and his junior development executive, David

Boaretto, were particularly open to the idea of sports films in general, and basketball in particular, as Boaretto was anxious to place the sport at the centre of British awareness.

Additionally, they wanted and were willing to commission my screenplay, and thereafter Boaretto was to be my script editor, overseen by Eaton. A director was on board almost from the beginning of the process; his name was Luis Prieto, and he was from Spain and had recently been nominated for a Goya Award for Best Fictional Short Film.

Revolution and I plunged into a period of research before writing began in earnest. I approached the sports film genre from several key perspectives, in large part derived from preliminary writings I had completed during my PhD by practice: establishing a context for the work I was about to undertake. As argued in previous chapters, Chapter 2 identifies the over-prevalence of the white male leading actor in these films; Chapters 3 and 4 highlight the effect of having a black protagonist; whilst Chapter 5 focuses on the stereotyping of female roles in the sports film.

Once my complete initial draft of *No Blood No Foul* was presented to Revolution Films via Boaretto, there then followed extensive feedback and advice as to changes I might make. Rewriting ensued, and then resubmission of further drafts. In common with industry practice this was a protracted process, and lasted from March 2010 to August 2013. Despite Revolution's support for the project, my reaction

as an author to the onslaught of notes that followed every submission was raw, to say the least. All writers experience disappointment and frustration with their script executive's critique of their work. What follows in this chapter is a look at how the script got made and my responses to the requested changes.

In the following chapter (Chapter 8) I consider the significance of these changes both for the script in itself (in terms of plot and characterisation) and for changes in ethnicity, class and location. Because the script was being developed by an all-white editorial team – Andrew Eaton, David Boaretto and, eventually, Luis Prieto – I began to consider whether their attitudes and assumptions reflected not simply prevailing attitudes towards a 'good script' but also a lack of BAME awareness disguised as commercial nous. This then leads me, in Chapter 9, to assess how far my experience links to industrial practices more generally.

The development begins

Do not research. Research is a bad thing. I mean it.

(Wallace 2013: 22)

The first thing I was asked to write was an outline – which is a rough narrative that will eventually become the screenplay. An outline can be anything from one paragraph to 100 pages long. The intention

is to set out as much of the story as possible with as little dialogue as the writer can manage. Sometimes called a 'step outline', this helps the producer and script editor ascertain whether they can work with the screenwriter, who must listen to their notes and make appropriate changes to structure, character, theme, tone and so on. I found that working for a production company was completely different from writing for myself, my colleagues and tutors. There was a real sense throughout the whole process of being held in the iron grip of one's employers. It could perhaps be my freshman naivety that led to this thin-skinned delicacy, but I really didn't cope with the persistent prodding and poking of my ideas at all well.

What follows is an annotated analysis of the outline of *Moonlight Marauders*. The comments are written as 'notes to self' (and appear in italics) and were initially written before I received Revolution Films' critique.

Screenwriting is a collaboration ... *Moonlight Marauders* (Outline)

I know there's a lot of derision about Mamet's well-known quote, 'It's a collaboration; bend over', but in fact it *is* a collaboration, and if you're not drawn to collaborative work you probably shouldn't find yourself in the midst of film. I like the problem-solving aspect that comes up, and there are frustrations, but they're the

frustrations we've chosen in choosing this field.

(Swicord 2007)

The opening page of the *Moonlight Marauders* treatment contained a synopsis. There was obviously a long way to go ...

Khaled and Samir Massi are brothers hustling basketball courts in south London for rent money.

Problem number one: there appear to be two protagonists here. Usually, Hauge (1988) states, all film stories are about a man/woman who wants to achieve something; even if the piece is about a group of people/a team/a heist crew, there is usually a main protagonist who has assembled the whole thing.

KHALED MASSI - plays basketball like a cross between Michael Jordan and Meadowlark Lemon.

Michael Jordan played fifteen seasons in the National Basketball Association for the Chicago Bulls and Washington Wizards. His biography on the NBA website proclaims him thus: 'By acclamation, Michael Jordan is the greatest basketball player of all time.' Meanwhile, Meadowlark Lemon was the leader of the Harlem Globetrotters; he played more than 16,000 games and in 2003 was inducted into the Naismith memorial basketball hall of fame. Good luck casting Khaled, Len.

SAMIR MASSI, the brother with the gammy leg, is a smooth-talking hustler, taking courtside bets on the outcome of the games.

I think here I was working under the assumption that Khaled (our HERO) would need a 'REFLECTION'-style character in order to function well in the drama. Samir is his brother, someone with whom he is familiar and in whom he can confide. Trouble is, in this treatment, Samir operates as a second protagonist and also a NEMESIS: his outer motivation is to push his brother to win money in order to pay the rent etc.; his outer conflict is that he's a drug dealer and a hustler and he depends on Khaled to win the games or he can't run things. His inner motivation is a selfish need to be 'the man'; his inner conflict is that he feels secondary to Khaled since a car accident robbed him of his mobility and he has become hardened to his brother, despite being dependent upon his skills.

They've got problems, though: Khaled's baby mother Cookie is an ex-crackhead; their mother, Anya, is sick and they need to pay their much overdue rent or risk eviction. He's not just playing for fun.

In Hauge's thesis, these problems/ obstacles are known as 'undeserved misfortunes', all embodied in the form of characters that can 'walk their problems' through the door and give Khaled a physical obstacle to overcome. Cookie's failure to stay on the wagon, Anya's illness and the rent being overdue are all concrete problems that Khaled must overcome ... His internal struggles would be developed in later drafts.

Then Coach Jackson shows up with a story about his past failure, adultery, addiction and a missed opportunity. He might get a chance at redemption, money and NBA superstardom.

The big problem here is that, in most (if not all) sports films, the coach is the main protagonist; he is the healer, as I stated before – the man who enters stage left, with the plan. It is usually the juicy role that might (if they can get it right) push the actor into Oscar territory. Think Clint Eastwood as Frankie Dunn in Million Dollar Baby (2004), Gene Hackman as Coach Norman Dale in Hoosiers (1986) or Al Pacino as Tony D'Amato in Any Given Sunday (1999): these are roles that all actors worth their salt would give their eye teeth for, because in terms of the sports film genre, the coach/mentor character is the person who represents the engine room, the behind-the-scenes workings of creating champions. They insinuate themselves psychologically into the player's or team's head space, make huge inspirational speeches and get the job done (or not) in the best sports films. Perhaps, If I'd done more research at this point, I would have concentrated on the coach's story more?

If Khaled will just sign on the dotted line for the hottest basketball tournament in Europe: MOONLIGHT MARAUDERS – an all-night game where the eventual winner gets to play NBA legend Kenji Burton for a cool quarter-million! Game on!

Even though this is a synopsis, it is possible to see glaring problems even here. Not enough space has been given to the main protagonist's outer and inner motivations. It feels too complicated (who is the antagonist? Samir? The coach? Cookie? Kenji Burton?), and why should we care? And who the hell is Kenji Burton? In later drafts, he becomes a clear nemesis for both Khaled AND Coach Jackson, but in this first treatment Burton is just a seemingly unbeatable African-American opponent – brought in at the last moment to give Khaled a hard time before he wins. There was a lot of work to do with my employers; their notes came thick and fast ...

Development is hell

I was soon to learn what David Mamet's adage re 'collaboration' (as quoted above) really meant. Boaretto's first e-mail regarding the *Moonlight Marauders* (Outline) might give any fledgling writer enough of a steer on just what to expect when collaborating with a large mainstream film producer. The notes are fundamental here, whether because of my newbie status or Boaretto's inexperienced yet kindly approach at critique. Either way, this was how the development of *No Blood No Foul* proceeded for the foreseeable future. Boaretto and I began our development correspondence, which consisted of e-mail exchanges and the occasional meeting. My commentary on Boaretto's notes are in italics.

Hi Lenny,

I hope you are well.

We really enjoyed reading the treatment you sent through on Thursday. There is already so much that's great in place and numerous elements that work very well - among others: the Clifford Jackson backstory, the Kenji Burton character and his backstory, the good balance between male and female characters and the exciting world.

At this early stage and because the treatment is still evolving and developing, we thought it might be more useful in this email to raise just one or two challenges we foresee and share three of the ideas we had with you.

In terms of the story we think the two biggest challenges at this stage are:

1. To nail the big idea/theme of the film in order to pull everything together

We would need to pin down precisely a single central idea and take it as the story's theme. What is this story about? What do all the characters, in their own various ways, need to learn, need to overcome in order to achieve their goal/dream?

Imposing a theme on the screenplay based on this treatment feels a bit premature; as Michael

Hauge (1988: 89) says, 'If you try to impose a theme on your story, it may not be true for either you or your screenplay. [I]t is best to develop your plot and then see what underlying principles come to light.' Once your theme begins to emerge, applying these principles can help you reveal and enhance the theme by clarifying the differences between your hero [in my case Khaled] and your reflection [at this stage the reflection is Samir] and the similarities between your hero [Khaled] and your nemesis.

In this outlined version of the story the nemesis is Kenji Burton – but I feel he was severely underdeveloped here and only began to be fleshed out as we moved into later drafts.

2. Raising the stakes

What does Khaled need to overcome and how is it all or nothing, life or death, now or never?

I found this statement odd. It's clear in the treatment that Khaled and Samir are broke, have a problem with rent money and a poorly mum, and also that Cookie is a crack addict who keeps giving Khaled a hard time about maintenance etc.; surely these are big enough obstacles – poverty, sick mum, lack of rent, crack addict girlfriend and baby mother – for anyone to overcome?

Can Khaled go back to hustling for a year if he loses and come back the following year to win the tournament or not?

I guess what they wanted to know was, is Moonlight Marauders a once-in-a-lifetime deal, like Rocky getting his shot at Apollo Creed? It was clear that Khaled's outer motivation needed to be clearer and also needed to contrast with his inner motivation – i.e. broke janitor and ex-baller Khaled wants to take on Kenji Burton in the Moonlight Marauders competition and win the prize money in order to pay the rent/for his mother's eye operation/etc. – despite having inner doubts about his ability.

To give myself a little credit, this was a first draft and I was just marking out my territory ...

We also wanted to share the following ideas with you:

These are big story A-bombs, all good ideas and game changers in terms of story development; and because I was so willing to please, I actually took them on board. Not all suggestions from your development editor are risible.

1. Could the story somehow start in the US in order to contrast the glitter and sparkle of the basketball

world there with the bleakness of the equivalent world in the UK?

Quite a big ask, this, starting in the USA, because it raises expectations both in the production and in the reader; also, if you begin with Kenji Burton (as I do in later drafts) we know immediately that he is the nemesis, the guy to beat. We also learn from the onset that he may or may not have done something bad – so this is a good call. I went for it, and every draft from here on begins in Chicago, on the steps of the courthouse.

2. What if Khaled was 35, at the end of his career, playing in the desolate British Basketball League (BBL)?

What if he was now cut from his BBL team to make way for a younger Z-list American player? Down and out, what if this tournament was Khaled's LAST CHANCE to prove to himself (or others) that he has what it takes to do it? This could radically change some of the other story elements or tone but could also contribute to identifying a central idea and to raising the stakes. [As a visual reference we've attached a photo of Mike Martin who is 35 and who was featured in the Midnight Madness documentary.]

I fought this notion of Khaled being older for the first two or three drafts. To me, a thirty-five-year-old basketball player seemed incongruous; how would he get up and down the court?

If he had a kid, it'd be older (Kobe, his son, in this treatment is between six and eight); perhaps he would have resolved the problems with Cookie by now? Would a thirty-five-year-old hang out on a basketball court with his brother hustling for change? It really opened up questions for me. Plus the fact that they sent me a photo of Mike Martin, a British basketball player, didn't help. I made a short documentary for my own personal use, where I interviewed Mike Martin and others: British players who'd had a modicum of success in America but hadn't quite grabbed the brass ring. I had become wedded to my own story spine, however, and so was reluctant to change; it took a few meetings and some heated words (from both sides) before we reached a place where I could facilitate change. The whole 'last-chance saloon' element of their notes felt too similar to every sports film I'd ever seen: 'He's over the hill, he's a drunk, he's a divorcee – he's got one last shot at redemption ...'. Perhaps I might have received the notes in a more welcoming way if they'd written them more amenably.

3. In the direct line of what is already on the page, could Kenji Burton's participation in the tournament clearly be part of a PR campaign by his sponsor/NBA team to rehabilitate him in the media's eye after the scandal that's hit his private life (à la Nike and Tiger Woods). All eyes on the tournament.>>>

This was a good note: I took this and ran with it. In my story Kenji and his friend Pookie were involved in a sexual assault case, but Kenji had hired a hot-shot lawyer in the style of Johnny Cochrane (O.J. Simpson's legendary mouthpiece), who's represented him until Kenji's people settle out of court. Which means that Kenji's still under suspicion, even though the case is over; this is how the story now begins.

It will be great to be able to all sit down together again soon in order to discuss everything in more details and agree all aspects of the story.

Please let us know if you think you will have enough time before our next meeting to consider our comments.

We are confident there is potential here for a great movie and that this treatment will develop into a very strong and rich story.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts.

All the best,

Boaretto

(e-mail 2010, Boaretto)

There was much more of this type of criticism and the 'hail fellow well met', 'I love you, now change' style of feedback to come as the outline developed. Fortunately, I'd had advice from screenwriting colleagues, who told me to take a deep breath, read all the notes and make a list. There were many versions of the outline – so many, in fact, that I went off-piste and began writing an initial draft way before Boaretto was comfortable. My agent was contacted and I went back to work on further iterations of *Moonlight Marauders*, each version a little longer than the last.

Boaretto had ensured that research was uppermost in our minds as we worked through the many drafts of the outline. He rewrote the treatment at one stage including references to every piece of research in which I had participated, and quite a lot that I hadn't. Was there a hidden agenda here? I knew that Boaretto, who was also a junior producer at Revolution Films, had made several basketball-based documentaries for online distribution. Perhaps his rewrite of my treatment was a signal, a foreshadowing of what was to come? There were various suggestions for the screenplay as a whole in the script; some I agreed with, some I did not. Clifford the coach's antipathy remained constant throughout all drafts, though his skin colour did not.

Samir, Khaled's brother, disappeared, as it was decided that having two brothers at the centre of the narrative created a split focus, because, as

Tina Turner reminds us, 'We don't need another hero'.

Kobe, Khaled and Cookie's son, became Charlotte (in this particular rewrite she was aged seven, but eventually she was twelve/thirteen and able to show a pre-teen romantic interest in Yout', D'Angelo's lieutenant).

We changed the opening scenes of the screenplay from Hackney to Chicago. The demands on production values and beginning with Kenji as our antagonist foregrounds the possible problems to come. Kenji Burton's in trouble due to this court case, but he is also rich, talented and connected.

Charlotte's involvement with D'Angelo became more significant as the narrative transformed throughout the drafting process. As I agreed to have her run errands for the drug dealer, this opened up much more conflict between Khaled, Cookie and his mum, Anya/Win.

The big change, of course, is the lack of tactility or connection between Khaled (our protagonist) and any love interest. In *Moonlight Marauders* (Outline) he has Cookie and Audrey, the chef, struggling to cook her way out of the ghetto. In subsequent drafts of the screenplay, Khaled's sexuality is diminished. This may have been a subconscious nod to other mainstream sports films, where athletes of colour merely perform in their chosen field and never in the bedroom.

Boaretto's rewrite of the treatment succeeded in making me redouble my efforts to hand in something they couldn't argue with.

NBNF: notes from colleagues – madness ensues

Sometimes you get notes from friends. Sometimes the notes are valid, and sometimes they're not, but it's always worth listening when somebody says, 'You know what I didn't get.' They may come away thinking the movie is about something you don't think it's about, and that's a real clue to take another look.

(Kazan 2013)

Having survived thus far, there inevitably had been compromises. Clifford my coach was now white, the film opened in Chicago – it all seemed a much broader, whiter affair. I pressed on and somehow delivered *No Blood No Foul* (Initial). This was Boaretto's reaction (my responses are in italics).

28 April 2011

From: Boaretto

To: Lenny Henry

Hi Lenny,

It was great to talk to you yesterday.

I'll repeat myself here: your first draft is REALLY good. The characters are all endearing, the dialogue sizzles off the page and the scenes with Kenji, Pookie, Cameron, Winnie and Farrington are

absolute classic. The subplot with Victoria works really well and the set up for Khaled pp 3-7 is genius. The set up for Sentinel (pp 11-12) and Kenji (pp 1-2) work really well too. There is also a voice and tons of little details (for example the opening of the film with a (great) UK track over US images that sets up perfectly one of the themes of our story) that make this script UNIQUE. I could go on and on.

I've since learnt that 'Your first draft is really good', in script-editor-speak, is Latin for 'Holy sh t, do we have a lot of work to do; you're lucky we don't fire you, but we'd have to pay real money to find someone good.' I was not panicking yet.

Luis Prieto read the draft overnight and called me this morning to say he woke up his wife laughing out loud. He gave me two notes very similar to the ones I've addressed in the attached document (the Clifford/Khaled relationship and the Khaled/Charlotte emotion). He is starting shooting his film this week for 6 weeks, but can't wait to meet up.

I've attached some thoughts on the draft. I've mainly focused here on Clifford and Khaled. If you think the ideas might work for the story we can discuss very practically how to include them when we meet. It might look like a lot but over half

could fit in just a few scenes at the beginning of the second act and a few scenes at the end of the second act. For the rest we could just go through existing scenes and discuss how to insert them.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

I'll call everyone next week to see when we can pencil in a time to meet together.

This is going to be a fantastic script and a great film!

Most importantly for now though, all the best for the end of the tour!

Boaretto x

There were eleven pages of notes attached to this e-mail (see Appendix 4).

This is where I descended headlong into a spiral of panic.

You've got to have friends

I decided to take some advice. Rightly or wrongly, I asked industry professionals to read the next draft of the script: a team of 'ideal readers' – as described by Stephen King in *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*:

When I've finished reading and making all my little anal-retentive revisions, it's time to open the door and show what I've written to four or five close friends who have indicated a willingness to look ... I think that every novelist has a single ideal reader; that at various points during the composition of a story, the writer is thinking, 'I wonder what he/she will think when he/she reads *this* part?'

(King 2000: 216)

I sought out several people, my 'ideal readers' whose opinions I trusted to help me navigate through the morass of notes. They were as follows.

Hilary Bevan Jones (HBJ): of Endor Productions;

Neil Gaiman (NG): screenwriter, novelist and comic author;

Steve Bergson (SB): researcher;

Mark Hurdle (MH): screenwriter, film editor and MASTFIR classmate; and

Jan Pearson (JP): CEO of Screenwriter.co.uk.

Once everyone had read the initial draft, they were given a week to gather their thoughts and then were asked to send their notes via e-mail. It was a lot to take in, as you will see from this brief excerpt.

Ideal reader notes (Appendix 3):

MH: Built a dramatic family story around drama and sport, but at the moment I don't think the two overlap enough. If you've got an 'A' story (Khaled trying to win the basketball tournament) and a 'B' story (his connection with Charlotte and Cookie) at

some point the two have to overlap with dire consequences.

HBJ: Wanted to know what happened with Cookie and Charlotte

HBJ: [It needs] a serious prune – get 15 pages out and not hurt it ...

HBJ: Take trims from the set-up – opening ...

JP: Quite dense with info in the dialogue so far. You're throwing it all in a bit of a rush in dialogue after dialogue all in a row and they're all quite long.

Try trimming down to essence or holding back some cards for later. We don't have to know absolutely everything in one gulp.

NG: It needs to start faster, and get everyone on stage. I'd start with the Big Important People in the story and then go to Guildford, where they are huddled around an iPad or a telly finding out that Kenji's been let off.

This is the problem with asking your smart friends to weigh in on a project. You're going to have to deal with how clever their notes are; here's Neil Gaiman on the ending:

NG: Would have liked one of those wrap-up things where we saw a few of the bad guys sort of get

theirs. I'd like the Soldier shoe to fail and Cameron be reduced to a reality show Bankrupt Heiress, for Pookie to be arrested by the family of the girl he raped (who had settled with Kenji, but with the tapes from the blonde private investigator are now accusing the right person) etc.

And Mark Hurdle gave one of the best pieces of advice ever with this:

MH: In terms of the actual basketball itself, I think you're missing a huge opportunity. Firstly, a staple of sports films are the training scenes: Rocky hits raw meat, chases chickens and charges up those famous steps in Philly. I feel you need something like this ... that iconic moment. I filmed a motivational talk one time, where this guy was talking about why he thinks Michael Jordan is the greatest sportsman ever. Basically, the story goes that by the time Jordan reached age 30, he'd already won everything there was to win in the game and was widely regarded as the greatest basketball player ever ... so he retired. A year later he came back and although he helped the Bulls to a championship and was high on all the stats reports, he knew within himself that he wasn't the out-and-out greatest player anymore. Maybe in the top three, but not undisputed. So during the close-season, when all the other players were on holiday resting their legs, Jordan locked himself away in a private mansion with a secluded basketball court. He then invited all the greatest college ball players in

the country to come and play him one-on-one ... players that were young, fit, hungry, skilful and all dying to kick his ass. He basically wanted them to expose every fault in his game, so he could correct it, steal all of their best moves and come back greater than ever. Apparently, the following season he finished top of every leader board ... most points/assists/mvp etc. My thought is that if Clifford used to train Jordan, what if he uses that same technique with Khaled? Puts him up against player after player ... all designed to test him in different ways - pace, trickery, brute strength, defence. And what if there's one problem with Khaled's game that they just can't correct? No matter how hard they try? What if there's a certain type of player that Khaled just can't cope with? Or a move he's got no answer for ... like a blind side, or something? That's an interesting seed to sow and one that could rear its head again during the tournament.

I stole all of that.

Jan Pearson was concerned with long scenes and came up with a solution:

JP: Get a feel for getting out of scenes early - knowing where to cut naturally on the raised question - you got anyone in mind? Let the audience fill in the gaps they enjoy doing it and being pulled through by their own speculation. It gets boring for them otherwise. So you don't even have

to mention K's name here. We know what's going to happen. Think more lean like this and it will also help you to develop a sense of getting into scenes later. Develop your editing skills and it will make for a more gripping read.

(There is a complete record of these responses in Appendix 8.)

Although I was frustrated at the lengthy nature of these notes (I felt as though I'd hurtled from the frying pan into the inferno), I did pick my way through and match what was said with what my script editor and producer had also commented upon. If there was a consensus about scene length, character viability, setting, comedic beats, structure – then I would make the change as best as I could. Still – the idea of wilfully choosing five or six critics to pull your work apart does feel strangely reductive. For this particular project I was of the notion that 'Whatever helps is what I will do'. This process helped immensely – even if it was a case of 'I don't agree with that' or 'I'm not going to do that'. It was helpful to the scripting process, and I thank my friends for their patience and intelligence.

This advice from the Gotham Writers' Workshop seems apposite at this particular juncture:

When you are given feedback, make sure you filter it. You don't have to follow every piece of advice. Which opinions resonate for

you? How can you *improve* your story, not change it into the story someone else wishes you were telling? I'm not suggesting that you be defensive when people tell you what they think. It's not a question of right or wrong. It's about making your script better. The comments will be useful or they won't. You decide. But first listen with an open mind, and let other people's advice help you see your own work from a different perspective.

(Fox 2008: 298)

Quiet storm

The responses to the initial draft and subsequent draft were all of a similar tone. Revolution Films went quiet, and then I received an e-mail from Luis Prieto, who'd read my screenplay. His response began in the usual way ...

Luis Prieto's e-mail:

Dear All

I think Lenny's drafts are really good. They are exceptionally funny, well written and enjoyable. Without any doubt a great story.

I did however feel that some parts could be strengthened. From a director's point of view I saw some moments where the script lost some of its power and focus – mostly when our main story is told through backstories or complicated subplots rather than through our central narrative. From personal experience, most of the times when this

happens in a script, those parts are cut out or rearranged completely later on in the editing room.

I tried to include some of the changes I felt would improve hugely our current draft in the document attached, hoping we can solve any potential problems before shooting rather than in the editing room. Obviously there is no way I can write as well as Lenny does, so I didn't try to replicate his wonderful style - I just did my best to try to put in place those things that I strongly felt we needed in order to make the best film possible.

I know that everyone is very busy (or on vacation like myself) and that we have very little time before the Toronto Film Festival, but I am completely available to come to London - even for a day, a weekend or just a couple of evenings - to go through the script with Lenny if he is available (even a reading of the scenes with him would help immensely).

Please, find below some of the main changes that I felt will help to channel and further build the film's story ...

(Luis Prieto's e-mail, July 2011)

Luis Prieto had rewritten my screenplay - without telling me or *anyone*. I felt sick.

I had heard of such things but I had no idea that this would happen to me. I have read that this

kind of thing is fairly common in Hollywood; screenwriter John August (*Go*, 1999; *Big Fish*, 2003; *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, 2005; *Frankenweenie*, 2012) is very clear on what's going on when the director chooses to intervene on a text:

The producer/director is not happy with the current state of the script. Whether she's saying it or not, that's what is really going on. There is no grand tradition of a 'director's pass'. When it happens, it's because some directors believe they can write and believe they can fix the perceived problems in the script. They may say they want to 'make it their own'. But underlying that is the fact that there's something about the script that bugs them, and you haven't been willing or able to address it.

(August 2011)

I was strangely hurt by this unasked-for intervention. Perhaps if I'd been told that Prieto was going to take a pass at my screenplay, I would have been able to deal with it in a much more mature manner. Further research reveals, however, that I am not alone. Directors are constantly rewriting scripts for whatever reason. Jack Warner christened his sheep-like staff writers 'schmucks with Underwoods' (a kind of typewriter – the writers' weapon of choice back in the day). The director's draft can be found in Appendix 5.

I sought advice and eventually stood up for myself, informing the producer and Boaretto that I was uncomfortable in being rewritten this way. In fact, there was a distinct feeling on my part that

Boaretto and Prieto were collaborating behind everyone's back on an alternative screenplay. This paranoid behaviour meant I was blocked for a while. I asked Hannah Robinson of Scriptreader.co.uk to read my draft and the director's draft. Hannah thought that their draft was 'a pretty rough rewrite' (see scriptreader.co.uk notes on director's draft 14 August 2011). She also said: 'Whole chunks of what seems to be a different script have been grafted on.' If I had been Sherlock Holmes at that moment I would have been puffing on a Meerschaum and playing the violin whilst dancing a hornpipe. I vowed to redouble my efforts to be heard as an author. I wanted ownership of my own work; they *would* listen to me. I was allowed to make my changes to the director's draft.

Prieto commented on my redrafting efforts thus:

Hi Lenny,

All is good!

Sorry that I didn't get back to you earlier, but I am in [PRIVATE INFORMATION] and there was a storm today and the internet connection was down the whole day in the town where I am staying. So only now I am retrieving the emails ...

I read your script and I think you improved a lot what we already had - that it was great. Some of the scenes are a bit more longer than before, but I think it doesn't matter at all now. We can always go back and trim them if we feel it is needed later on.

I am flying tomorrow back to ... (although there is a strike on), so I am not sure where I will be the whole day (flying?). So I may not be able to email tomorrow.

I will say go ahead and send the new draft to the producer and the script editor and we are ready to go to Toronto!

It was great working with you,

All the best

Luis Prieto

Conclusion: everything changes - 'That's the problem'

Having endured the slings and arrows of screenplay development, responded to notes, been rewritten, found a backbone and gone back to what I'd written before and adjusted and rearranged it back to my own personal satisfaction - what did all these changes mean, if anything?

There is a great story which I'd like to quote from *On Story: Screenwriters and Their Craft*. Two old-school screenwriters, Bud Shrake and Bill Wittliff, are discussing rewriting:

At the time, there was this very famous director, and Bud sent him a script, they had a meeting and the director said, 'Get out your notepad,' so Bud did. Then the director said, 'Do this, do that with this script.' So for a day and a half they talked notes. Bud went home, and for six weeks he did all those things. He came back to the director, the director read it, and he said, 'This is fucking awful, and nobody would ever make it.' Bud said, 'I did everything you said to do.' Then the director said, 'That's the problem.'
(Shrake and Wittliff 2013: 146)

For *No Blood No Foul* (Initial, Director's and Selling drafts), the changes were very apparent. *Moonlight Marauders* was set in Hackney in east London, which is a multi-ethnic, diverse community. The characters in that outline were predominantly people of colour and their concerns were those of the working class. The leap from outline to full-length screenplay meant that there were many character, tonal, thematic, ethnic and gender-related changes along the way. In the next chapter, I will explore the nature and significance of these changes.

Chapter 8
Analysis of Changes

While reviewing the changes that the screenplay underwent, I got the impression that the story had moved upmarket, become older, more male and whiter, as it progressed through the development process. In order to confirm my perceptions, I recruited a professional writer for film, TV and radio and fellow graduate from Royal Holloway's MASTFIR screenwriting MA, Kay Stonham, to collect some raw data on how much the script had changed in content, locale, race and gender from *Moonlight Marauders* (Outline) through to NBNF (Selling). Her findings may be found in tabular form in Appendix 6.

What her findings reveal is that, in the course of the revisions to the script, female characters became stronger and more positive (Cookie, Anya/Win) than at first portrayed in the earlier treatments. Also, new female characters had been added (Cameron, Charlotte, Victoria). The new female characters are predominantly white, however (or, in Charlotte's case, mixed-race or dual-heritage), and the main positive black female character Audrey/Shanice does not appear in the script at all.

White characters also seem to feature more prominently in the scripts than in the treatments, due in part to the development of the American corporate element of the story. These changes are significant, and the reasons for them inform the rest of this chapter. In what follows I focus upon five key areas: character; race; gender; ethos; and class. In doing so, I seek to identify the main directions of change across the scripts, as

encouraged by the producers, which resulted in a shift towards a whiter, more middle-class and less culturally specific text.

Character

The script focused on three main characters. Susan 'Cookie' Doe, Khaled's crackhead ex-girlfriend from MM (Outline) onwards, was changed into a responsible mother, now constantly holding Khaled to account for maintenance arrears or parental neglect. Her criticisms of Khaled are now voiced from a socially elevated position and her obsessions include school skiing trips, karate and being 'the best physio in Hackney'.

More significantly, Khaled, formerly – in MM (Outline) – proactive in controlling and mitigating the worst of Cookie's dependences, finds himself – from NBNF (Initial) onwards – in a role that is, to a degree, emasculated. The significance of this for the narrative is that he becomes more inclined to behave in a reactive, rather than a proactive, fashion. The ultimate consequence is that Khaled becomes a weaker character in terms of the energy, ambition and tenacity he needs to maintain and extend his basketball prowess. Khaled's loss of authority as a man has a similarly debilitating effect.

Cookie was at first intended to be a bravura role for an actress: a challenging role that, admittedly, took as its opening gambit the

traditional trope of working-class ghetto girl with a problem, but then developed, drawing on a variety of modes for interpretation: smart, sexy, motherly, addicted, remorseful, shamed, and so on. The original conception, however, was perhaps too much of an urban archetype. In the producer's draft assembly, based on his discussions with me, Cookie is described as '25, mixed race and beautiful' (see Appendix 1).

It is clear that, from Boaretto's perspective, Cookie works better as an upstanding, lower-middle-class citizen with a job and a boyfriend; making her an aspirational incentive for Khaled, as opposed to the more violent model in MM (Outline).

Charlotte was originally Kobe, an innocent, unspeaking toddler. By changing age and gender, however, she can now be proactive within her own narrative, and make decisions that will plunge her into deep trouble, causing major problems for her father.

When Kobe was a baby and his mother a drug addict, Khaled's role in the relationship was more proactive; with the change in Cookie's social status this impetus has now disappeared.

ANYA/WIN

Khaled's mother's role in MM (Outline) contrasts with NBNF (Initial): Anya is the third female character to undergo significant change in a way that substantially alters Khaled's mental

stability, status and worldview. Initially she is a dependent character, suffering illness and psychological uncertainty, characterised by her great reliance on her two sons. Khaled is required to respond to her in a range of situations, such as playing pick-up games of street basketball, in order to provide rent money for the family to avoid eviction. He also has to rush to her aid when Cookie makes a violent appearance and threatens everyone in the café. Anya is weak throughout MM (Outline), distressed and constantly needing the urgent attentions of Khaled.

This character contrasts with the later version of Khaled's mother, now called Winnie. She is now the owner rather than the employee of her Caribbean restaurant, and more confident, strong-willed and interventionist in relation to Khaled's role and commitment to basketball. She much prefers her son working as a janitor and cleaning toilets. She sees her insistence on his remaining in a servile job as a more realistic and safer option than travelling all the way to America to fail again at basketball. So, whilst in earlier drafts Anya was portrayed as a tragic figure, the subsequent version of Winnie is a much stronger and at times comedic role, given her overtly Jamaican dialect and attitudes.

Race

As a BAME screenwriter, I sought to paint a picture of British urban contemporary ghetto life. In MM (Outline), the ghetto is a setting from which our

protagonist must escape. Subsequently, however, the social settings and ethos become more middle class and socially elevated. The nature of this change and its significance for the genre are described below.

Early versions of the narrative refer to the ghetto thus: 'We're in Hackney, an inner city "hood" with an edgy, predominantly black and Asian populace, rubbing along together like nitro and glycerine' (MM (Outline), p. 3).

This relates to the inner city and its confusing mix of diaspora inhabitants, including those of African, Caribbean, Indian, Asian, Irish and east European origin. They attempt to live together, but invariably fail. To be clear, the descriptions of an 'inner-city hood' came from my creative endeavours. No one told me to write these words; the creative process often involves producing a great deal of material from which to choose – and, invariably, there will be some wheat and some chaff. My first attempts at creating a credible story outline were filled with urban UK grime/hip hop cliché descriptions, which were later rightly revised to give a broader perspective of a diaspora working-class community. From NBNF (Initial) onwards, however, the narrative begins with local images, places and sportsmen that firmly set our story in Chicago, USA – yet another significant alteration in the author's intentions.

Visible 'otherness'

The names of the characters, and their visibility in the initial drafts, are clear indications of the author's intention to create a more diverse setting for the screenplay. Thus 'Khaled' and 'Samir' are Middle Eastern or Arabic names. They are described as mixed-race French-Algerian brothers, who live with their mother, Anya. The significance is that the boys, wherever they choose to live in the UK, are noticeably foreign and 'visibly other'. They have brown skin and Muslim names, and they speak in the semi-Jamaican lingua franca of the young working-class community in the UK.

As the screenplay developed, I was able to keep a degree of the 'hood ambience' – that is, ghetto slang, music and drug references – but I deliberately moved it away from the main African-American characters.

As well as having to address the issue of how to place my UK characters within the context of contemporary urban UK/US culture, I also faced the challenge of portraying African-Americans in as authentic a manner as possible. In my mind, Kenji Burton was a basketball player who had fought his way up from Chicago's urban core to play at the top level of his game. Everything he has achieved has been earned through his own blood, sweat and tears. He is unvarnished, a rough diamond, as far away from Sidney Poitier as you could get.

We, as British consumers, have absorbed the

rhythm, tonality and dialects of the African-American journey from slavery through the civil rights movement and beyond, via cinema and television. This 'media osmosis' describes the prevailing and pervasive nature of the cinematic tropes of black portrayal. Since the 'buttoned-down liberal' Sidney Poitier portrayals of the 1960s, audiences have witnessed *Shaft* (1971, Gordon Parks), *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984, Martin Brest), *Do the Right Thing* (1989, Spike Lee) and *12 Years a Slave* (2014, Steve McQueen), to name but four features that showcase African-American idioms, lifestyles and situations.

The Americans in the different versions of the screenplay develop and change in small but important ways. For example, Clifford James in early drafts is always portrayed as a fifty-year-old black basketball coach with emotional baggage and a drink problem. In later drafts, however, he becomes a white rather than black basketball coach. This change was generated by commercial rather than artistic considerations; whilst working on MM (Outline), as mentioned before, I received eleven pages of notes from Boaretto (28 April 2011). On the front page was a full-colour picture of Bill Murray in the crowd at a basketball game, along with a suggestion that he should be cast as the coach. (The full notes can be viewed in Appendix 4.) I can only imagine that this change was sought because it would seem that the usual, stereotypical portrayal of a coach as white would appear more

attractive to international distributors and investors, and reflects the commercial aspirations associated with mainstream sports films. Thus, the reasoning for Clifford's change on the part of the production company with which I was developing NBNF (all drafts) is understandable within the terms of its practice. Almost every film in the American Film Institute's top ten sports films of all time has a white male superstar in the role of main protagonist.

This does not chime with what Professor Stuart Hall hailed as the 'revolution' that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, and, though accompanied by 'ill health, criminalisation, the expansion of the black ghettos and the growth of a black underclass', this halcyon period also heralded

[t]he growth of an affirmative self confidence in, and an insistence on, 'respect' for black cultural identity, as well as a growing 'black separatism' - which features nowhere so visibly as in the massive impact of black music (including 'black rap') on popular music and the visual presence of the music-affiliated 'street style' scene. [...] Black actors agitated for and got a wider variety of roles in film and television. 'Race' came to be acknowledged as one of the most significant themes of American life and times.

(Hall 1997: 256)

An authority on such matters is producer and director Spike Lee, whose unapologetically pro-

black films include *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *School Daze* (1988) and *Mo' Betta Blues* (1990) and are all about African-American lives, loves and activism. Lee can raise money to make the kind of films he wants to make. Even he is frustrated by the erratic path of the minority film-makers' success on the world stage, however. Here he is in 2013, despairing at the Oscar (Academy) Award choices:

I love Steve McQueen's work, I know it will treat slavery as the holocaust that 400 years of slavery was. Not a cartoon. Not an action movie.

Every 10 years, I've read the same articles ... I remember reading them one year when Denzel won for *Training Day* [2001, Antoine Fuqua], Halle Berry won for *Monster's Ball* [2002, Marc Forster] and Sidney Poitier won an honorary award. And then what happened? We've been getting these new black cinema waves every 10 years or so since 1986, when I had *She's Gotta Have It* and Robert Townsend had *Hollywood Shuffle* [1987]. For me, I just wish it was consistent, and not this feast or famine thing that's been going on.

(Hill 2013)

So, the experience of developing the screenplay for *No Blood No Foul* reinforced the notion that BAME film-makers, when presenting their culture and lives on screen, are continually fighting to preserve the authenticity of their scripts and perspective, and should continue to do so. Therefore, the change, or morph, concerning racial

profiles gives active evidence of issues of inclusion and omission affecting BAME-related film productions.

Gender

It could be argued that Khaled losing his love interest, and therefore the possibility of having a scene of sexual intimacy with someone, falls in line with many portrayals of black men in feature films and television. As comedian Franklyn Ajaye has commented about the Sheldon Leonard television series *I Spy* (1965–1968, NBC): ‘They wouldn’t let Cosby touch a white woman unless she was dead.’

Perhaps, throughout the development of Khaled’s character, I as the author did not think enough about his sexual orientation within MM (Outline) and NBNF (Initial). In a screenplay, a character’s sexuality can be a lifeline or an obstacle, but I did not think about this aspect of Khaled until it had been revised out of the text. The only BAME character having sex in NBNF (Initial) onwards was Kenji Burton, but his sexual prowess was besmirched by the accusation of sexual assault.

Ultimately, the screenplay does contain a black man having a sexual relationship with a woman; it just turns out that Victoria Hempel is a shape-shifting, betraying temptress (in the Joseph Campbell (1949) sense) with ulterior motives. She aims to learn the truth about the sexual assault case, and write a tell-all for *Vanity Fair* magazine.

As the helpless baby, Kobe is a male toddler in early treatments of *No Blood No Foul*, but his role in the narrative was reduced to 'baby in distress' and 'child at risk'. In many ways, this could have worked well; people live and die for helpless young children – in life and in movies. Once the idea had been mooted by Boaretto and Revolution Films, however, the infant boy became the twelve-year-old daughter Charlotte. In changing age and gender we facilitated a change: Charlotte could now participate actively in the story. She becomes a vocal advocate for her intentions; Charlotte gets herself into trouble in the final sequences of *No Blood No Foul*: she befriends Yout', she delivers what could be anything to D'Angelo's house and, ultimately, she is beaten up for her precocious, adventuresome demeanour.

This change was appropriate in many ways, since Charlotte has a clear, funny and feisty voice throughout subsequent drafts. NBNF (Selling), p. 46:

EXT. THE LEISURE CENTRE HACKNEY - DAY

And we're back - on the main road to the Leisure centre. Khaled is on his way to work - his daughter Charlotte (mixed-race 12-13) rides her bike alongside.

CHARLOTTE

I can't believe you're never gonna play basketball again, daddy. Guildford Heat

NEED you, man! Coach Reynolds needs a firework up the arse.

KHALED

Charlotte Barclay Massi - I'll wash your mouth out with soap!

Unlike the saccharine relationship between Will Patton's coach and his daughter (Hayden Panettiere) in *Remember the Titans* (2000), Khaled and Charlotte's relationship (in screenplay terms, anyway) feels unforced and natural. The interactions between Khaled and Charlotte, throughout, allow us to see his parental ability, his kindness and his wisdom.

The preservation of Charlotte's healthy presence in this screenplay becomes Khaled's inner need; our hero wishes to protect her with his life. Khaled realises that the most important aspect of his life is not basketball but his daughter's well-being. When her life is threatened and her safety compromised, Khaled threatens to give up everything to be with her, and it is only Charlotte's request that he get back into the game that makes him return, with Clifford, to the 'coalface'.

As the matriarch, Khaled's mother Winnie (in MM (Outline), Anya) gets more screen time in the screenplay from NBNF (Initial) onwards. She becomes yet another obstacle for Khaled to overcome. Because she nursed him through a breakdown after a US basketball camp, Winnie is very confident that she is doing the right thing when she forbids her

son to don his Air Jordans once again, and play ball. She slaps Khaled round the face and orders Clifford out of her restaurant for even suggesting that her son resume his basketball activities. She turns her back on her son and becomes the last piece in the jigsaw in the final scenes, when Clifford has to persuade her to show up at courtside for her son (see NBNF (Selling), scene 128, pp. 100-2).

The transformation of Anya in MM (Outline) to Winnie in NBNF was a triumph, to my mind. From the timidity of the original characterisation - 'their mother ANYA (black, fifties); a waitress in a local restaurant taking too many sick days due to her vanishing eyesight' (MM (Outline), p. 3) - she changes to the emphatically more robust styling of Winnie in NBNF (Initial).

Victoria Hempel begins her journey as the blonde who flirts with Kenji in the gym, then attracts him to her table at the Savoy Grill. Soon they are an item, and she attends his basketball display for Burton's Ballerz, and witnesses his unfortunate meltdown in front of the nation's press corps.

Victoria is a strong woman in the sense of Joseph Campbell's description of the shape-shifting woman (Campbell 1949), hence a character archetype who appears as one thing to our hero and then is transformed over time into that which he dreads. A perfect example of this is showcased in the femme

fatale Memo Paris in *The Natural* (1984), who seduces Roy Hobbs. When they meet he is on something of a winning streak, but by the time she has finished with him he is doing exactly the opposite, striking out at every pitch. When he rejects her advances by returning his affection to his childhood sweetheart (a shimmering, white-costumed Glenn Close) his game improves, and the only way Memo Paris can reverse this state of affairs is by inviting Roy to a party and poisoning him. Roy has to overcome the effects of his potential ruination, however, suit up for the game and eventually win the day for his team

In MM (Outline) Cookie is a formidable opponent, though early on in the writing process she is a crackhead and baby mother, appearing at key moments in the script to yell, threaten or attack. Her addiction means she can destabilise any situation and provide more chaos in Khaled's life.

This rather negative portrayal was perhaps seen as excessive ghetto stereotyping, however. Cookie's shift in the development of the narrative has been the greatest. Her characterisation changes from baby mother/crackhead, drug-dependent, neglectful and powerless to NBNF's more responsible, drug-free and powerful textual portrayal.

From NBNF (Initial) onwards, Cookie is an alpha female with two jobs, namely physiotherapy practitioner and karate teacher. She still presents as an antagonist for Khaled, however, making him

feel the sting of her tongue when she lambasts him for not holding up his end of parenting with regard to his daughter. Khaled's lowly job status means an irregular cash flow, which also means he cannot give his daughter the extra things a child needs – such as a skiing trip, or even regular maintenance payments: 'At least let her have this! Do you know Charlotte's got herself a paper round to try and help you with this?' (NBNF (Selling), scene 13, pp. 10-11).

Ethos

The development of a specific ethos, which we may assume is the 'characteristic spirit of a culture, era or community', proved a fertile genre element in the development process of the screenplay. Three key features of this element were especially important, and the paramount one was culture. In terms of the script, this arises from the interplay between three national dynamics: British, black British and African-American.

The British dimension reflects a hegemonic approach based around football and cricket. This is reflected in the original draft in the following ways: the neglect of the street basketball court; the fact that a talented player such as Khaled is seen hustling for rent money on an open-air court; and the lack of potential for advancement once skills are attained in British basketball. Thus Khaled is at the bottom of a minority sport. The opportunities for progress within his chosen sport

are severely limited, because mainstream British sporting priorities are restricted, in large part, by the national obsession with football and cricket. This means that aspirational sporting individuals are denied associations, promotional mechanisms and such matters as academies and apprenticeships. Thus, progress for Khaled in his chosen sport is random, rare and restricted in terms of support mechanisms that he can employ.

It is significant that Khaled is required to fit his own sporting aspirations around other very basic preoccupations. At the outset we find him having to hustle on a public basketball court in order to get money for the necessities of existence and family support; hence his preoccupation with acquiring money to pay the rent. This is obviously in marked contrast to a sporting ambition which has the necessary finances and support from government and national sporting bodies, and this perhaps is one of the most potent and limiting deficiencies of the British sporting culture for Khaled. In other words, in British sporting culture all the money goes the other way.

A second consideration is that the recognition and legitimacy of his chosen sporting activity have none of the energy that other countries give to basketball. This is where a comparison between African-American and black British cultures seems valid. Khaled's skill in this sporting domain is dependent on his own self-esteem, motivation and confidence; and these forces must all be derived

from his own tough and resilient personality. Also, the symbols and fashions associated with his sport in different national cultures lack perceived music, cultural personalities and artists, and the backdrop of legitimacy that such a culture brings. In particular, this enhances the loneliness and isolation with which Khaled is burdened.

A third consideration is that Khaled's chosen sport, unfortunately, presents him with two further problems. First, it is relatively technically demanding in terms of equipment and facilities, whereas the traditional British obsessions can be played with a minimum of resources, especially at pavement level. A wicket can be chalked on a wall; goalposts can be provided by discarded clothing. Basketball is more technically demanding. Second, in cultural terms the UK black community's perception of legitimacy means that Khaled is an oddball, because conventional social attention is more likely to be given to the two dominant national sports, which treat other pastimes, especially those of a street-related nature, as lacking conventional validity.

Class

From the perspective of class, certain very raw issues dominated the original versions of the narrative: neighbourhood, social mobility, status in society and entrepreneurial success.

The neighbourhood is the setting, location and community within which Khaled's struggles are

placed. They have a particular drama, however, in that they come to represent a class shift in a very clear way.

Thus, the reader is initially positioned along with Khaled in a location whose social demographic is poor, violent, multi-ethnic and riven by crime and related tensions with the forces of law and order. In particular, the setting functions as one from which Khaled wishes to escape. It thus provides him with much of his commitment and aspiration, which he sees as achievable via basketball. It is also apparent that those around him, such as his mother, girlfriend, brother and further significant others, share his dissatisfaction. Thus Audrey, Khaled's early love interest, states her life's aim as being to '[c]ook her way out of the ghetto' (MM (Outline), p. 44).

In the original draft the story begins in Hackney, which is portrayed through harsh descriptions of street scenes. This sets up a gritty, documentary-style film with an independent viewpoint. As the script moves into subsequent drafts, however, the biggest change is that the role of Hackney as a principal location is diminished. Thus the screenplay opens in Chicago, thereby conveying to an international audience that this is a traditional American sports film. There are further scenes in America, and only after these do we cut to Guildford in Surrey, to see Khaled watching his old team get thrashed. Finally, we wind up in Hackney. To complement this setting,

Khaled is now a lower-middle-class father, steering his beloved daughter through difficult times in order to get her back to her middle-class home, where her middle-class mother waits impatiently with her middle-class boyfriend.

In relation to social mobility, in the course of the screenplay the following transitions occur. Khaled moves from working as a janitor in a leisure centre and achieves success by becoming the 'people's champion', beating an NBA Hall of Fame star in a one-on-one contest. Also, he now promotes basketball shoes and is featured in a photographic advertisement being crowned as 'King of Basketball' by none other than Michael Jordan. Coincidentally, it is obvious that Khaled has also responded to earlier demands that he 'man up' and take control of his life: for example, he now finances Charlotte's ambitions and leisure activities, as he was so frequently encouraged to do earlier in the narrative (NBNF (Director's), scene 10, pp. 9-10).

The Selling Draft shows Khaled contributing socially in a hitherto unexpected way, namely coaching young basketball aspirants: Khaled is doing crossovers with a basketball – reveal forty multi-ethnic KIDS doing the same.

(NBNF (Selling), scene 112, p. 108)

This comes at a price, however, in that Khaled has become a perceptibly homogenised individual in terms of race, class and ambition. Consequently,

the narrative reflects this somewhat more controlled version of our protagonist, as he arises from the journey he has undertaken during the scripting process. Thus we find that he is, to a degree, debilitated by various dominant forces encountered on his journey: his mother's initial lack of support; his ex-wife's insistence that he be a 'real dad'; his daughter's uncertainty as to whether he will be able to raise the money for the skiing trip; his own self-doubt and history of mental ill-health. This weakness relates to the roles undertaken by women in the text, to influence, control and manipulate him to embrace a preferable and acceptable male persona: once he has been spiritually healed through the almost magical training sequences with the coach, we as an audience can see the change in Khaled; he is unwilling to be a doormat any more.

The female characters have also changed. Cameron Taylor has control of everyone due to her financial powers; Cookie influences via exploiting parentally related guilt; and Winnie uses physical violence, though not with complete success, to dissuade Khaled from his basketball aspirations. Expanding the contribution of the women characters to the issue of social mobility from treatment to final draft, we can further summarise the shifting nature of their involvement in the following way.

Khaled's mother (now called Winnie) owns her own business called Mama's Caribbean, and refurbishes her surroundings once Khaled has

achieved his aims. Cookie is now renowned as the 'best physio in Hackney' and is a successful karate teacher and competitor.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the significance of key changes to the script in terms of plot, setting and characterisation and the ways in which these are related to issues of ethnicity, class, gender and location. Although some of these changes were positive in terms of the representation of women and the downplaying of Khaled's machismo in comparison to earlier drafts, the analysis has tended to confirm that these changes were also accompanied by a certain reduction of cultural specificity and BAME-related content. As suggested in the previous chapter, such changes partly reflected ideas about a 'good script' and 'commercial appeal'. They also seemed to indicate attitudes and assumptions that reflected a certain resistance to BAME subject matter, however. For this reason, I decided to explore how far my experience might be typical of the industry more generally, and, in the following chapter, I report and assess a number interviews that I undertook with key industry personnel.

Chapter 9

Diversity and Inclusion in the UK Film and Television Industry

The hypothesis generated through the initial stages of this enquiry (see Chapter 1, 'Introduction') arose directly as a result of my experience in writing and, more especially, offering my screenplay *No Blood No Foul* to the film industry. As evidenced in Chapters 7 and 8, my findings demonstrate that, within the particular industrial script development process I undertook, there were factors at play which caused the screenplay to gravitate towards some of the very clichés and stereotypes I had identified and had sought to overturn. I have thus far tried to identify such factors as potentially being related to the dominance both of the sports genre formula and of conventions of storytelling that pertain in Hollywood and the mainstream film industry (Campbell 1949; Vogler 2007; McKee 1997; Snyder 2005; Hauge 1988; Field 2003) – conventions which can be helpful as creative guides and, equally – as with genre – can also, if not monitored appropriately, rapidly segue from archetype into stereotype. In Chapter 7 I explored in more depth the nature of the feedback supplied by Revolution Films, and examine which of their 'limiting' comments might relate to these predispositions in script and genre convention. I also investigated their tendency to circle back to the norm, the safe, the middle ground, which I suspect could be driven by the company's prevailing social and cultural attitudes, perhaps influenced by the (generally speaking) monocultural demographic of their

production staff. In analysing the nature of the script feedback, I contend that much of it may come from conscious or unconscious bias, stemming from a lack of familiarity with the characters and situations about which I chose to write. As I have observed in the Introduction and elsewhere, I have grown accustomed, as a BAME professional, to finding myself in situations, be they boardrooms, commissioning or creative meetings, shoots or performances, where I am the only person of colour, and likely the only person from a working-class background. Again, as explained in the Introduction, I now consider my original aim – to write a screenplay that not only confronts stereotypes but wins support on the basis of the writing quality alone – to be naïve, as the research I have done has led me to uncover greater obstacles in both the genre convention and in commercial practice. Thus, I committed to take my original thesis further, and utilise my professional standing in the film and television industries to conduct qualitative research across a number of production companies and executives. The reason for doing this was twofold: first, to test my research findings against a larger group, and see if they resonated; second, to discuss with these industry insiders what they see as potential strategies for bringing new stories and greater diversity into our business.

Before conducting these industry interviews I turned to the conventional sources for industry data on BAME and other minority representation in

the media industries. The statistical 'bible' for the film industry is generally acknowledged to be the British Film Institute's *Statistical Yearbook*. One issue with this publication, however, is that it does not take ethnicity into account as an organising factor for the data it presents, with the exception of a brief section on audiences. Similarly, the BFI's database (www.bfi.org.uk/archive-collections), another key resource for the exploration of British films, does not allow one to filter searches by the ethnicity of, for example, director, screenwriter, subject matter or cast. *Creative Skillset's 2012 census* (https://creativeskillset.org/assets/0000/5070/2012_Employment_Census_of_the_Creative_Media_Industries.pdf) provides the most recent statistical data of BAME representation in the creative media industries. In particular, the figures provide insight into BAME representation within the various sectors and occupational groups within these industries. They also provide a useful comparison with statistics collected in 2009 and, in some cases, 2006; for example, they show a decline of BAME representation in the British film and television industry from 12,250 in 2009 to 10,300 in 2012. The report does not provide any detailed analysis of the collected data, however, such as the trend in BAME leading roles both in front of and behind the camera. It is only with the recent release of the Directors UK survey (www.directors.uk.com) that we have found a

deplorable lack of representation amongst TV and film directing jobs for BAME individuals.

The BBC's diversity figures are published in the recent White Paper on the Corporation (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2016) but, even here, there appears to be a lack of granular analysis. The figures show that, as of September 2012, the BBC estimated 12.5% of its workforce to be made up of people from a BAME background, 6.5% in senior manager positions. What is not clear from these figures, however, is the number of BAME people who hold editorial positions and who can therefore influence programme-making, commissioning and policy. The BBC's Director-General has, nevertheless, been proactive in pushing diversity onto the agenda. The author now sits on a Diversity Advisory Board for the BBC, and has had several meetings with the Culture Secretary in order to ensure that diversity is at least mentioned and highlighted in the BBC White Paper. Channel Four quotes the number of non-white employees as of 31 December 2013 to be 14.1% (Channel 4 2015), but does not provide ethnic diversity data for those in senior positions (it does for gender, though).

The following statistics are extraordinary, however. In 2012 UK film contributed over £3.8 billion to GDP. 172.5 million people went to the cinema and the box office took £1.1bn. The percentage of BAME people who bought a cinema ticket was 9.8%. Therefore, the value of the cinema-going BAME audience is approximately £108

million. There are two BAME films (those that feature either a predominantly BAME cast, subject matter or director) featured in the top twenty highest-grossing UK independent films between 1980 and 2012: *Bend It Like Beckham*, 2002 (number 13, with a £11.6m gross box office) and *East Is East*, 1999 (number 16, with £10.4m gross), thus beating *The Iron Lady*, 2011 (number 17) and *The Queen*, 2006 (number 18). In terms of the twenty highest-grossing films over the past thirty-two years, BAME films have a 10% share. In 2012 *Shame*, co-written and directed by award-winning black filmmaker Steve McQueen, came twelfth in the top twenty UK independent film releases. The British audience's appetite for diversity and self-representation is also shown in foreign films that have met success in the UK. In 2012 films from India accounted for 13.1% of all releases (85 films out of a total of 647), earning £13.8 million, or a 1.2% share of the total annual box office.

It would seem, therefore, that there is incontrovertible evidence that UK audiences are able, given the chance, to respond positively to BAME themes, actors and film output when offered. Consequently, the underpinning notion of limited appeal - in respect to culturally and ethnically diverse topics, actors and directors - could be seen as fallacious. It is in the light of this fallacy that the following interrogation was undertaken.

The interviewees

Unlike my more sociologically minded counterparts, I chose not to send out several hundred questionnaires to the industry but, rather, to personally approach a range of individuals occupying leading positions in British film and television, and interview them about their opinions on diversity and inclusion. A limiting factor was the lack of availability of some of these people; they are all busy and very particular about who they choose to allow to interview them. Added to this, I was investigating issues that could be considered sensitive, given that many of them are in positions of considerable power and influence. It seemed strategic at the time, therefore, to maximise my connections as a long-term industry professional; those who I did manage to interview spoke to me for the very reason that I was already a trusted colleague, or could be vouched for by someone else they trusted. Of the individuals who I approached, nine agreed to be interviewed, and to have their comments included and analysed in this thesis. They comprised seven producers, one exhibitor and one distributor. For the uninitiated, the producer's role involves the orchestrating of various aspects of film production, such as selecting scripts, coordinating writing, directing, editing, arranging and – most importantly, perhaps – the finance.

The interviewees are as follows.

Tim Bevan

Bevan is a film producer and co-chairman of Working Title Films. In partnership with Eric Fellner he has executive-produced over forty films, such as *Moonlight and Valentino* (1995), *Fargo* (1996), *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (2001), *Love Actually* (2003), *Notting Hill* (1999), *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001), *Atonement* (2007) and *Frost/Nixon* (2008). To date the films he has co-produced have grossed almost \$4 billion worldwide. In 1999 Working Title Films signed a deal with Universal Studios for a reported \$600 million, which gave Bevan and Fellner the leverage to sign projects with a budget of up to \$35 million without having to seek permission from their business partners. Other films include *Rush* (2013), *Les Misérables* (2012), *The Theory of Everything* (2014), *Senna* (2011), *State of Play* (2009), *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007) and *Wimbledon* (2004) He was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2005.

Hilary Bevan Jones

Bevan Jones is an award-winning film and television producer and CEO of Endor Productions. She was made chairman of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts between 2006 and 2008, the first woman in its sixty-year history to hold this

position. Bevan Jones has worked on several acclaimed television drama programmes including the multi-award-winning *State of Play* (2003). Her career began at BBC Television Centre, where she worked as an assistant floor manager in the studios. In the 1980s she worked mainly on comedy shows such as *Not the Nine o'Clock News* (BBC, 1979–1982) and *Blackadder* (BBC, 1983–1989, and then various specials till 2000). She became a producer in 1988, and produced *Red Dwarf* (BBC, 1988–1993). Departing from the BBC in the 1990s, she went on to produce at Granada Television and worked with Paul Abbot on *Cracker* before going on to collaborate (with others) on *State of Play* (co-produced by Bevan Jones' own Endor Productions), *Mary and Martha* (TV movie, 2013), *The Boat that Rocked* (2009), *All in the Game* (TV movie, 2006) and *The Girl in the Café* (TV movie, 2005).

Graham Broadbent

Broadbent is a British film producer who co-founded Mission Pictures with Andrew Hauptman and Damien Jones. The company produced *Thunderpants* (2002), directed by Peter Hewitt, and *Piccadilly Jim* (2004), directed by John McKay. More recently Broadbent has overseen production on Danny Boyle's *Millions* (2005), which won a British Independent Film Award for Best Screenplay.

Before his stint at Mission, Broadbent ran Dragon Pictures and produced films such as *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997), *Dancing at the Blue Iguana*

(2000), *Some Voices* (2001) and *Very Annie Mary* (2001). Ever restless, it would seem, Broadbent once more upped sticks and created a new production entity in 2004, Blueprint Pictures, which produced *Becoming Jane* (2001), *Wind Chill* (2006) and, perhaps most successfully, *In Bruges* (2007). Success has continued for Broadbent, as he has produced *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2012), *Seven Psychopaths* (2012), *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2015) and many more films.

David Garrett

Garrett is CEO of Mister Smith Entertainment. He is responsible for the financing, co-financing and licensing of high-quality mainstream feature films and authored movies for the global market. The first venture as a company was to launch two book adaptations: *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* (2013), first in a highly anticipated action fantasy franchise; and *3,096 Days*, based on the autobiography of Natascha Kampusch, who was held captive for eight years and whose escape made headlines around the world. Before creating Mister Smith Entertainment, Garrett was president of Summit International and co-founder of Summit Entertainment. Whilst there he supervised international sales and co-produced titles such as *The Twilight Saga* (2008-2010), *Red* (2010), *Source Code* (2011), The Palme D'Or winner *Tree of Life* (2011), *American Pie* (1999), *Memento* (2000) and *Mrs and Mrs Smith* (2005). Garrett began his career in

1981, producing and marketing documentary films; his credits include: *Danny Collins* (2015), *The Man Who Knew Infinity* (2015), *Equals* (2015), *Brain on Fire* (2016) and *The Light between Oceans* (2016).

Pippa Harris

Harris is a film producer and co-founder of Neal Street Productions. She started as a production assistant at Jacaranda Productions in 1989. Moving rapidly from script editor at ITV and Channel 4 to development executive at BBC Films, she became executive producer of BBC drama serials, working on programmes such as *Warriors* (1999), *Care* (2000), *The Sleeper* (2000), *The Way We Live Now* (2001) and *Love in a Cold Climate* (2001). In 2001 Harris was promoted to BBC head of drama commissioning; notable signings include *Cutting It* (2002), *Flesh and Blood* (2002), *Daniel Deronda* (2002), *The Lost Prince* (2003) and *State of Play* (2003). In 2003 Harris co-founded Neal Street Productions with Caro Newling and Sam Mendes; producing such titles as *Jarhead* (2005), *Starter for Ten* (2006) and *Blood* (2012). Harris is chair of BAFTA's film committee, and an independent board member of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Andy Harries

Harries is an award-winning documentary maker, TV and film producer and CEO of Left Bank Pictures. His career spans four decades and he has produced many successful television shows, including *The*

Royle Family (BBC, 1998 -2012), *Cold Feet* (Granada, 1997-2003, 2016-present), the revivals of *Prime Suspect* (Granada, original release 1991-2006) and *Cracker* (Granada, original release 1993-2006) and *The Deal*, a BAFTA award-winning play. Harries received an Academy Award nomination as producer of *The Queen* (2006), and in 2007 the BAFTA Alan Clarke Award. In 2011 the Royal Television Society conferred a fellowship for outstanding contributions to the broadcasting industry. He has been described by *Broadcast* magazine as 'one of the UK's most outstanding drama producers'. Harries directed my *South Bank Show* in 1988 and *Lenny Live and Unleashed* in 1989. Since co-founding Left Bank Pictures with Marigo Kehoe, he has overseen productions of *Wallander* (BBC, 2008-2010), *The Damned United* (2009) and *The Special Relationship* (HBO/BBC, 2010). In 2010 Harries was ranked number two as an executive produced in *Broadcast's* 'Top 100' list of important influencers in the TV and film industry.

David Heyman

Heyman is a film producer and the founder of Heyday Films (production company, founded 1997). He began his career as a production assistant on David Lean's *A Passage to India* (1984), and towards the end of the 1980s he became a creative executive at Warner Brothers, then vice president of United Artists. In 1999 he obtained the film rights to the *Harry Potter* series, producing all eight movies. In

2013 *Gravity*, the second of his projects overseen by director Alfonso Cuarón after *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), garnered the Academy Award for Best Picture. His other production credits include *Juice* (1992), *Blind Justice* (1994), *Ravenous* (1999), *Is Anybody There?* (2008), *Testament of Youth* (2014), *Paddington* (2014) and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016), which continues the world-creating myth-making of J. K. Rowling's Potterverse.

Damien Jones

Jones is a producer of considerable experience, working with Noel Clarke on *Adulthood* (2008), the Ian Dury biopic *Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll* (2010), as well as being co-founder of Dragon Pictures with Graham Broadbent, where they oversaw Danny Boyle's *Millions* (2004) and Peter Hewitt's *Thunderpants* (2002). Jones is an eclectic producer, choosing projects as diverse as *Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie* (2016), *A Street Cat Named Bob* (2016), *Dad's Army* (2016), sports film *Fast Girls* (2012), the Alan Bennett adaptation *The History Boys* (2006) and *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997). He has won several awards, including a BAFTA for Best Short Film for *The Candy Show* (1990). He recently supervised the filming of *Belle* (2013), directed by Amma Asante.

Christine Langan

Langan is an English film producer, and head of BBC Films 2009–2016. In 1990 she started as a script

editor in Granada Television's drama serials department, before promotion to their new comedy department, where she co-developed *Cold Feet* (1997–2003) amongst other one-off pilots. She became an independent freelance producer in 2000, going on to produce *Rescue Me* (BBC, 2002), *The Deal* (Granada, 2003) and *Dirty Filthy Love* (Granada, 2004). *Pierrepont* (2002) was her feature film debut, garnering a Carl Foreman Award nomination at the sixtieth British Academy Awards ceremony. Other production credits include *The Queen* (2006, BAFTA Best Film, Academy Best Picture nominee), *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008) and *The Duchess* (2008). Becoming head of BBC Film in 2009, Langan led the department to thirteen BAFTA nominations for films including *In the Loop* (2009), *Fish Tank* (2009) and *An Education* (2009). Langan left BBC Films in early 2016 to run production at Baby Cow Films.

Ollie Madden

Madden is an executive producer at Kudos, working in both TV and film. Before this he had run Shine Pictures, the feature film division of Endemol Shine Group. Previously he had held executive posts at Warner Brothers pictures, where he oversaw the *Sherlock Holmes* films and *Paddington*, as well as at Miramax Films, Atom Films and Intermedia. He graduated from Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in 1999.

Henry Normal

Normal began his career in show business as a comedian and poet and eventually became a television writer and producer. He was the managing director of Baby Cow Productions, which he began with character comedian Steve Coogan. Normal (real name Pete Carroll) has led a varied and interesting life, starting out as a performance poet alongside such luminaries as Steven 'Seething' Wells and Joolz Denby. He became a 'face' on the local Chesterfield scene, becoming a regular fixture at local shows. He toured with the rock band Pulp, and, with Mark Atwood helped to form the Live Poets Society, whose motto was 'Poetry so good you can actually understand it'. He featured in Channel 4's late night comedy series *Packet of Three* (1991), an odd sitcom about the staff working at a venue called the Crumpsall Palladium; Normal played a depressed theatre owner, Frank Skinner the stage manager and Jenny Eclair the kiosk attendant. Establishing connections with talent such as Steve Coogan and engendering a reputation for being 'good in the room' led Normal to co-establishing Baby Cow TV productions, where he went on to produce award-winning comedy shows as *Human Remains* (2000), *The Sketch Show* (2001-2002), *I am Not an Animal* (2004), *Gavin and Stacey* (2007), *Sensitive Skin* (2005), *Nighty Night* (2004) and *The Mighty Boosh* (1998-2009, 2013). He has written on *The Royle Family* with the late Caroline Aherne and Craig Cash and co-wrote *The Parole Officer* (2001) for Steve Coogan. Since

this interview Henry Normal has departed from Baby Cow for pastures new.

Nik Powell

Powell was co-founder of Virgin Group with Richard Branson and a former film producer with Steve Woolley at Palace Pictures. He then went on to co-found Scala Productions and has since become the director of the National Film and Television School, with specific interest in the diverse nature of his students. He is known for productions such as *Absolute Beginners* (1986), *Scandal* (1989), *The Crying Game* (1992), *Fever Pitch* (1997), *Little Voice* (1998) and *Ladies in Lavender* (2004). Powell was a member of the dramatic jury at the Sundance Film Festival in 1999.

Bradley Quirk

Quirk is head of development at Altitude Films and has made two films: *Big Game* and *Kill Your Friends*. Altitude Films distributed the brilliant documentary *Amy*, directed by Asif Kapadia, which won both a BAFTA and an Academy Award. At the time of this interview Altitude Films were in post-production with *The Girl with All the Gifts* (see <http://screenplayscripts.com/bradley-quirk>).

Tim Richards

Richards is the founder and CEO of VUE Cinemas. He was previously at Universal and Warner, largely in the cinema chain division. He is now responsible

for the Vue Cinema chain and is opening picture houses in large and small towns throughout the UK. A Canadian by birth, Richards has vowed to stay with the company and step up its expansion across Europe, as well as exploring new areas in the UK such as screening church services in Vue's multiplexes. Vue Cinema as an organisation is also exploring the idea of hosting video game days, where players can participate in FIFA contests and other simulations on a big screen. Vue originated in 1998 with a screen in the loft of a Greek restaurant in Chiswick, west London. Since 2010, however, Vue has doubled the number of picture houses it operates, to 146, mainly by its efforts at expansion in Europe. Last year it bought the second largest cinema chain in Germany, Cinema X.

The interview questions

Thirty-five questions were originally generated, which were condensed into nine to enable a more efficient and focused interview process. These questions aimed to cover a key range of topics considered vital to the research: commercial considerations and funding; barriers to BAME employment; commitment issues by industry professionals; and educational and mentoring matters. The questions are as follows.

1. What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive policy in relation to the employment of a more inclusive

- workforce, both behind and in front of the camera?
2. If funding bodies were obliged by government (through tax or other fiscally related matters) to enhance the proportion of the BAME population employed within the industry, what measure might you adopt to do this?
 3. What difficulties stand in the way of greater employment of individuals from the BAME populations?
 4. Would you support ring-fenced money (i.e. funding specifically introduced) that existed to give financial backing solely to BAME actors or other production staff?
 5. How committed are you to the notion of acquiring greater diversity (i.e. black, ethnic minority, disadvantaged and gender diversity) in the film and television industry?
 6. To what degree has the loss of appetite for social realism in film-making affected the industry's inclination to recruit BAME individuals and populations?
 7. How monocultural do you consider the film and television industry to be, and how should this be challenged?
 8. Could the situation be improved by the development and fast-tracking of new gatekeepers and (pickers and deciders) hired, committed and employed to select from a more diverse talent pool?
 9. Which of the following approaches to delivering BAME representation would you favour, and why?

Opportunities for mentoring.

Training initiatives specifically for aspiring BAME actors or specialists within the industry.

Bursaries at all the major acting schools and training facilities to heighten knowledge, skills and attitudes for BAME/working-class individuals wanting to break through the many 'glass ceilings' of our industry.

Following each interview, the researcher used a simple grading method to categorise interviewee responses to each question, using the following categories: strongly disagree/don't accept; partially disagree/accept only in part; partially agree/accept with reservations; agree entirely/accept without reservations. This categorisation was then used to compare and contrast, on a basic level, the different responses across all nine interviewees.

Operational matters

The interviews were conducted between October 2015 and February 2016, and each interview was approximately one hour in duration. They took place in locations chosen by the interviewees for their comfort or convenience. All respondents were sent the questions in advance to give them an opportunity to prepare for the interview, and all agreed to be quoted and named, on the condition that they could approve the researcher's selected quotes before publication of any kind.

Use of analytical models

The data collected from the interviews was analysed using the PESTLE system, which enables the creation of an investigative structure for a specific topic. PESTLE is an acronym for Political environment; Economic environment; Social and consumer trends; Technological and scientific environment; Legal and regulatory environment; Environmental and green trends. As an approach, then, it enables the exploration of a broad range of external environmental factors impacting a business or industry, both now and in the future. As such, it is regularly used by businesses as an integral part of their strategic planning. Pestleanalysis.com offers a case study of PepsiCo's use of PESTLE to better understand how the company fits into the beverage market of each country where the brand operates. The PESTLE model was considered to be apt and functional for this particular investigation, as the factors outlined above all have a key influence on the British film and television industry and its decision-making in relation to this enquiry.

Results and analysis

I set out below each of the nine questions (*italicised*), followed by interviewee responses relating directly to these questions. These responses are paraphrased where the author felt it useful to condense, or where more than one

interviewee offered a similar response, and are otherwise offered as direct quotations. Interviewee initials are used in the service of brevity; they are as follows: Tim Bevan (TB); Hilary Bevan Jones (HBJ); Graham Broadbent (GB); David Garrett (DG); Andy Harries (AH); Pippa Harris (PH); David Heyman (DH); Damian Jones (DJ); Christine Langan (CL); Ollie Madden (OM); Henry Normal (HN); Nik Powell (NP); Bradley Quirk (BQ); and Tim Richards (TR). For each question I then offer a brief analysis of the responses, before moving on to the next question.

- 1. What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive policy in relation to the employment of a more inclusive workforce, both behind and in front of the camera?*

100% of the interviewees answered this question. A number stated that they did not think there were any particular commercial considerations relevant to the success of a production. Pippa Harris suggested that commercial considerations were best advanced by working through a network of other professional film-makers, rather than any commercial advantage arising through enhanced BAME representation.

Nik Powell replied that such enhancement was a commercial consideration in that it would probably result in a product matching that of the national population. Interviewees suggested there might be

dangers, however; the quest for diversity could have negative commercial consequences, perhaps arising from a potential audience being put off by too broad a spectrum of racial and related types.

The commerciality issue is circumscribed by the fact that I'm working out of the BBC, so it doesn't leap to mind... I don't know what the commercial barriers are.

(CL)

I don't know if there is any commercial consideration. I feel that the workforce should reflect the society you live in – if, of course, everyone can do the job.

(DJ)

The commercial considerations are exemplified by something like *Empire* (Fox TV, 2015) in the States. If you continue to exclude...a broad audience or part of your audience you are increasingly going to make television the preserve of the white aging middle classes in the shires...

(AH)

It's really simple: if there's good movies there, they go onto the screens. End of story. And the game changer has been digital...; if it's going to make money we show it.

(TR)

It's very difficult to know what an audience wants to see. \$10 to \$12 million is the bottom line, because when you spend that kind of money you have a responsibility to investors on a commercial basis. To me, it's all about the film-maker and the film-maker's vision. If you can find that, and I don't care where it comes from, you need to find the right people.

(GB)

There are two discussions here. First there's an economic, and [then] there's a moral. Economic is not often moral. It's just about business. I think there's a moral obligation; behind the camera that's irrelevant. The commercial consideration – being really blunt – is.

(DH)

Overall, the replies from all respondents suggested a marked absence of sympathy for, or possibly understanding of, the significance of the issues raised in this question. A number of interviewees stated, for example, that they did not think there were any particular commercial considerations relevant to the success of a production. There was, however, a suggestion that too niche a focus on a BAME population would likely alienate the broader population, and lessen the appeal of a film or other production.

2. If funding bodies were obliged by government (through tax or other fiscally related matters) to

enhance the proportion of the BAME population employed within the industry, what measure might you adopt to do this?

75% of interviewees answered this question. Nik Powell said no to the proposal, and that it was better to build a powerbase; that aspirants needed to set out their stall, and in this way their need to get on the first rung. He also suggested that diaspora films were not thought of as making money, and a better approach would be to ensure migration to the wider world. Thus, 'starting on the edge' could apply to diaspora films.

Pippa Harris suggested that, because the industry was usually scrabbling around for what it could get, there was no muscle to put pressure on it in relation to diversity – and, anyway, shows would not be made if there was too little diversity.

Bradley Quirk suggested that distribution should be targeted with additional funding so that those with this role were prompted to distribute more BAME-influenced films, alongside incentivised employment of BAME executives, since they are the taste makers and gatekeepers.

Hilary Bevan Jones was passionately opposed to unpaid internships, since only the rich can take these. This is about social mobility too; the posh don't want to be runners.

[T]he Creative Access intern scheme...worked really well, because they came to us and said we'll sift, we'll do all the applications, we'll give you candidates, and you get to choose. Now, if you're seriously underfunded and everything's a battle and someone comes and proposes something like that, it's so easy that there's no resistance to it. So I think a database, a body, scholarships – I think filtering is fine for me; I don't think there's any political problem around that. I think bright kids who understand that there's something for them, some body they can apply through – I think it's a great idea.

(CL)

Yeah, I mean, already we do take a young graduate... Tax breaks are a huge part of what we do, and we have a lot of our films in tax break countries.

(AH)

[*You don't agree with it?*] No, I do. If you can supply the people things will change. [*What measures might you adopt to do this?*] Do a version of 'Three Ticks'. I don't think people pull against the 'Three Ticks'.

(GB)

I'm doing it because I think you've got to do it, not because I'm told to do it... Government incentives might help. Economics makes it easier.

People are driven economically most of the time...
If the government gave you a portion it makes it
cheaper to make your film.

(DH)

Whilst the suggestion contained in this question was attributed a degree of importance, other alternative processes should also be employed to enhance the BAME population within the industry. Among these alternatives were the provision of a database, scholarships, filtering, etc. There was a predominant view, however, that such was the tenuous nature of the film-makers' professional considerations of survival that other matters, such as creative access schemes such as the 'Three Ticks' procedure, seemed of equal importance in any enhancement policy.

3. What difficulties stand in the way of greater employment of individuals from the BAME populations?

92% of interviewees answered this question. It was emphasised that the difficulty is in finding BAME aspirants, and the questions were posed as to where to look and where to advertise. There was no central body and there was a huge need for a database. It was costly to secure such people, and when you did so it was likely to be a financial loss. People don't know where to look, and even when you pay for the skill set you have to do the looking yourself, and a huge levy is still taken anyway.

Bradley Quirk identified seven difficulties: for executives, a lack of exposure to arts degrees in higher education, and not enough exposure to the soft skills practised in a largely monocultural industry; for actors, a lack of roles at a younger age that allow actors to refine their skills and open themselves to a wider range of casting opportunities; for crew, a lack of support mechanisms that allow them to work on low-paid productions to raise their skill base to a sufficient level alongside their more socially mobile peers; for writers, a lack of outlets for their material and the general lack of exposure to traditional hothouses for writing, such as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

Pippa Harris observed that limitations were created by familial tradition, and even whether individuals came from the right part of London. As films involve a smaller industry, it was easier in television to reflect diversity; for example, women in television epitomise very successful representation. A quota system might be appropriate, since it might quickly become the norm, and perhaps a cultural test to ensure that the industry was able to cross the threshold.

Nik Powell considered it to be a casting problem. BAME actors don't expect a programme to include a black bank manager, though in reality this was probably more likely in the outside world. Henry Normal proposed that the notion of 'The devil

you know' is the best mechanism, and it was fine to be told just go out and get them.

Experience and exposure. You have to have worked on the bigger films. People often go back to the tried and tested. Part of it is exposure to people like myself.

(DH)

A number of obstacles were identified, and these tended to be difficulties in knowing where to find BAME aspirants, and limitations imposed by social issues such as familial tradition, preferences for other professions, and self-imposed restrictions derived from the potential BAME catchment.

4. Would you support ring-fenced money (i.e. funding specifically introduced) that existed to give financial backing solely to BAME actors or other production staff?

100% of interviewees answered this question. Responses were that putting in criteria for funding is a perfectly reasonable position, but more practical in London because there is a higher number in the talent pool. Most felt it was perfectly reasonable to have criteria to be assessed against in order to get government funding.

Yes. A ring-fenced fund and data would help the well-meaning. Tax breaks work. I would never

advertise in order to recruit. You don't, because so many would apply. However, to get on the radar you have to go to drama school.

(PH)

I support government intervention, but how would you do this? Yes, it does work, and the hope is it becomes established before this intervention is taken away.

(NP)

I would support it only if that funding was supported by quality control checks to prevent BAME actors and production staff appearing in critically inferior work. The danger exists that a mini-genre of work would appear that pays for financiers to make exploitative material for narrow audiences.

(BQ)

Yes, but how would you raise it – where would it come from? The Lottery? The BFI 'Three Tick' system would be good, but someone would have to work on this. People don't know where to look. I would be very keen on this.

(HBJ)

All the interviewees agreed that a professionally run BAME database for crew and production staff would be an excellent way to prevent the lack of contact between potentially excellent candidates and themselves.

I think, with the ring-fenced money, you need to get people like me and make sure that it's incumbent on them to make a change.

(CL)

Yes, and I actually, with a couple of my films, worked with the then UK Films Council and their diversity fund. Absolutely... [I]t gave us all more money...because it was added to the tax credits, so it was good for everybody.

(DJ)

I would support ring-fenced funding because there are times when you need to make a leap forward and I think this is one of them... You know, I think they should ring-fence their budget for BBC1, BBC2, BBC3 etc. similar to ITV, and then say: 'This is the rest of the money to run the BBC.'

(AH)

I have mixed feelings, because I think it's dangerous to ring-fence money, and I'd rather see it going into training and education and get people excited. Because, if the goal really is to get movies with different stories, then I think it's about getting a really awesome black screenplay writer.

(TR)

Yes – as an incubator. You want to mandate talent and let it come to the main table. That's why I say a database.

(GB)

I think that's a good idea. [With] BFI funding...a lot of the money they put into films...will never be seen by anybody. Should we be allowed to let these non-commercial voices express themselves?

(DH)

Overall, ring-fenced funding received a degree of support throughout the interviewee population. Some expressed mixed feelings, however, and considered it dangerous to ring-fence money, and said that it would be better to see such money going to training and education.

5. How committed are you to the notion of acquiring greater diversity (i.e. black, ethnic minority, disadvantaged and gender diversity) in the film and television industry?

42% of interviewees answered this question. Responses included the following.

Very committed – I am mixed-race and constantly aware of lack of diversity (both in terms of race and class) both in front and behind camera.

(BQ)

Yes, but it's a cultural problem. BAME actors don't expect a black bank manager.

(NP, referring to how National Film and Television Studio films are cast)

I am committed to it, and every time I raise it there is a feeling that it is very hard to find the right people, that we don't get enough kids – the right sort of kids – through the door.

(AH)

It's laziness about one's responsibilities. I am committed to changing it.

(DH)

A significant number considered themselves very committed to the notion expressed in the question, but attributed the lack of success to BAME cultural preferences, and also to gatekeepers and others being lazy about their responsibilities.

6. To what degree has the loss of appetite for social realism in film-making affected the industry's inclination to recruit, employ or engage BAME individuals and populations?

92% of interviewees answered this question. Half replied that they had no particular belief in the importance of this; indeed, the absence of films involving social realism was of no significance at all in this issue.

There seems to be less appetite for this. Not a good idea; ghettoising [is] not something to risk. And, anyway, this is saying what sort of films BAME individuals should be in.

(CL)

The loss of appetite for social realism isn't necessarily a bad thing. It forms a soft-genre ghetto, and having less social realism forces filmmakers to find different genres to express diverse stories. Audiences reward imagination. BAME writers, crew and cast didn't necessarily benefit from inclusion in the world of British social realism.

(BQ)

I think there's been a slight tendency coming out of the BFI of looking at films like *The Selfish Giant* as films that ought to be made but that people won't necessarily watch. So you need to find a way of tapping into that strand of social realism that can appeal to millions of people. It's not niche or ghetto, it's what millions of people's lives are like.

(PH)

I think people go for escapism more, but I don't think that should affect – be it behind or in front of the screen – anyone from BAME [populations] getting into the film or TV industries. I don't think the fact that...social realism [has declined is an effect in itself]. There used to be – in

community arts, for example – a sense of artistic expression, and I think that's been drilled out of television and lost. And that was a way to learn the trade and express yourself, and there wasn't as much pressure. Now there's no hiding place; on your first appearance, you're judged against the best, and nowadays it really is a sort of Americanised, over-produced industry.

(HN)

Well, I think there's a bit of infantilising of the culture anyway... I don't think you want to ghettoise people by dictating what people should write based on who they are.

(CL)

I don't know what it is. I agree we're seeing less of those films, but I also think it's cyclical.

(DJ)

People are talking about the depoliticisation of television and the generation that has grown up in the last twenty years. After Blair there's a sort of anodyne, apolitical generation. Take the Labour election; nobody gives a fuck!

(AH)

Perhaps you see more social realism on the television than you did before... Audiences don't want to watch a lot of that at the cinema, so maybe

cinema isn't the place for gritty social realism if it's going to be told in that way.

(GB)

Most certainly there has been a decrease in social realism film-making. It's diminished. [*Why?*] It shouldn't be.

D.H.

Half the respondents replied that they had no particular belief in the importance of social realist film-making, or a general public appetite for it. There was a feeling that such films ought to be made, but that no one would watch. Also, there appears to be a depoliticisation of television and the development of an apolitical generation. (Since these interviews were completed, the politicisation of the West has been exacerbated by the election of President Trump and also the reaction to Brexit—perhaps the next few years will see an increase in a more politically charged cinematic output.)

A film such as *The Full Monty* (1997), which was made for a budget of \$3.5 million and made \$285 million at the box office globally, is proof that the social realist genre is capable of punching significantly above its weight in terms of profit.

7. *How monocultural do you consider the film and television industry to be, and how should this be challenged?*

58% of interviewees answered this question.
Responses included the following.

It's very monocultural. Not a terrible culture, as personality differentiates and plenty of good people are out there, but monocultural nonetheless. To challenge this status quo, we have to reward producers who strive to employ diverse workforces in the pursuit of creatively excellent work.

(BQ)

I think the biggest challenge that you pointed out is this recruitment. Now, I think the tick-box system could actually change that.

(NP)

I don't know; I think it varies between film and TV. I think TV is actually making some headway, and that maybe, because TV has got bigger, institutions like Sky [are] trying to instigate some sort of system whereby you have to have a certain level of diversity – otherwise you don't get...things made.

(PH)

Very. There are pockets of culture...and it would be very good if the industry broadened its outreach – absolutely it would.

(DG)

It needs to go further than that, to the people behind the scenes. Directors have an obligation; often it doesn't even occur to them.

(DG)

That's a problem, yes, but I don't think that determines what's made.

(DJ)

Totally, and I think that, with every board I've been on, we've had to make a conscious effort not to bring on white middle-class people... But it's been a real effort.

(TR)

That's the most disappointing thing, because, when the ideas are commissioned and the consensus within the pool is monocultural..., they need to draw from a wider net. People don't want it not to change; reality is that businesses are struggling... People are running companies that might sink or swim on the basis of the next production.

(GB)

Lily white! It shouldn't be about colour, it shouldn't be about BAME; it should be about having people.

(DH)

There was significant agreement that the industry was monocultural, and that this was a

problem, since the industry appears 'lily white', and ideas are commissioned and the consensus within the pool that does this is also monocultural. Whilst it was a problem, though, there was some feeling that this did not in practice determine what is made. Moreover, despite the monocultural nature of the industry, this was felt to be 'not necessarily a terrible culture'.

8. Could the situation be improved by the development and fast-tracking of new gatekeepers and pickers hired, committed and employed to select from a more diverse talent pool?

50% of the interviewees answered this question. Responses included the following.

The role of support for writers is vital; yes, I would support this – as long as [someone] is found qualified to oversee this process.

(BQ)

I like your parallel with the BBC fast track for women, which has clearly worked. That's why I think hand-picking people and fast-tracking them...could also work with BAME.

(OM)

On merit, yes. If they can hack it...hack it, period. If I had been fast-tracked there would [however] be more gaps in my skill set.

(DJ)

I don't know. I'm not really aware how many BAME [heads of department] there are.

(AH)

Always good to encourage diverse groups. Gatekeepers are different. Yes, [we could improve the situation] by increasing diversity amongst commissioners.

(GB)

You would hope so... But look at the case of women directors. You don't see that many women directors. Is this going to make money? That's the discussion.

(DH)

There was significant support for this proposal, but there was also concern that any selection should be based on merit and whether those selected could be considered sufficiently resilient. There was an emphasis that such a process should be overseen and that those involved should be qualified to manage such a process.

9. Which of the following approaches to delivering BAME representation would you favour and why?

Opportunities for mentoring.

Training initiatives specifically for aspiring BAME actors or specialists within the industry.

Bursaries at all the major acting schools and training facilities to heighten knowledge, skills and attitudes for BAME/working-class individuals

wanting to break through the many glass ceilings of our industry.

66% of the interviewees answered this question. Responses included the following.

Yes, I back all three. They would reinforce each other, [and] allow access to experience and pen-to-pen development.

(BQ)

All should be encouraged. Scholarships now exist and behind the camera ones too. But how to get BAME individuals to turn up for interview? [You could] go into schools but [this] doesn't work with non-university types.

(OM)

You know what I do when I can – but, again, the way I work: there's no infrastructure. [*On speed dating and women in film and television: would you be up for this?*] Yes absolutely.

(DJ)

Yes, I think they should. I think we should invest and mandate it. Why not?

(AH)

Mentoring [is] always a good idea – happy to have people shadowing us. BAME bursaries? There needs to be a selection process. And it has to show merit.

No one is rejecting the idea. People are preoccupied. I can't spend time interviewing 50 people. Training initiatives? Not averse to this.

(GB)

Mentoring? I think – yes. Yes, I would mentor – no question. Training initiatives? I think it's about getting a foot in the door; anything that helps people get a foot in the door. There's only a job if you get work and show yourself. Training has to be sustained; not 'You're going to do this for three months and then you're done'. A trainee has to be *doing*. [You] also need people who can inspire, encourage and teach – and take the time to. Bursaries? I think desperate times call for desperate measures. I think bursaries, subsidies, profits from a percentage of whatever the cinemas were making would go back into making the next film. The French do that.

(DH)

There was broad agreement for all the approaches itemised in this question. There was a complementary view, however, that the basic ability and inclination to get 'a foot in the door' was important, and part of a process whereby recruits and joiners should showcase themselves with any job they were successful in obtaining.

Interpretation of the results

Here I focus on six major inferences and their

associated proposals as generated by the results. These inferences are categorised according to the PESTLE model, as indicated at the start of each paragraph. They are as follows.

1. **Political:** The only way to effect change in the film and television industries employment practices in relation to diversity and inclusion is to engage with political leaders and devise legal, fiscal and policy-driven change. Additionally, this should involve enlisting other initiatives, such as charter governance. This journey has begun, to a degree; hence the references within the data to current talks and initiatives such as the BFI's 'Three Tick' system (which requires applicants to demonstrate commitment to diversity across three areas of their productions, ranging from the make-up of the workforce to the stories and characters on screen, with at least one tick needed in a minimum of two areas for a project to be eligible for BFI production funding (see www.bfi.org.uk). Similarly, we have Channel 4's 360° campaign (which states that Channel 4 will 'show leadership in diversity at every level) and the BBC Charter renewal discussions (with the demand that the BBC be required to give 'greater focus to underserved audiences, in particular those from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds and from the nations and regions which are currently less well served': bbc.co.uk).

2. **Economic:** Funding remains the pivotal driver

and impetus to facilitate diversity and to generate appropriate employment for a more inclusive workforce. The data shows that these initiatives exist but in very limited form and with few consequences. Measures aimed at the sustainability of BAME careers remain markedly weak.

3. Social: The British film and television industry predominantly privileges white middle-class participants. This was a finding that dominated throughout the interviewees' responses, and the proposals made by them to change this should be implemented.

4. Technological: The proliferation of multiple platforms on the digital landscape means that the participation of a broader and more diverse group becomes more possible. Consequently, this finding is likely to enhance and provide a previously non-existent impetus that will self-generate openings and opportunities for a more democratic user group. It should definitely be regulated, however. The respondents emphasised the presence of a momentum to effect change aided by this new communication from the digital arena.

5. Legal: Whilst not greatly distant from the political issues analysed earlier, there seems to be an opportunity to harness diversity efforts via some new legally valid human rights vehicle to enshrine relevant rules and responsibilities in law.

This could, perhaps, relate to expanded involvement by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), or the development of a UK diversity statute with an additional governance oversight body as a complementary mechanism.

6. Environmental: The current television and film production environment in the West is such that senior executives have monopolised decision-making in a way likely to affect opportunities for BAME aspirants, bringing a closed dimension to the craft of production and a tendency to favour a more risk-averse approach, to the detriment of employment opportunities, subject matter and technical methodology. This environment should be the recipient of attention and interventions in order to change the predominant culture.

Significance and application to the NBNF screenplay development process

As a result of the above research I am now able to provide further insights into factors that relate to my journey as a writer on *No Blood No Foul*.

1. The changes consistently proposed by the commissioners (Revolution Films) – changes of tone, character and location – appear directly related to this risk-averse, possibly trans-Atlantic, monocultural domination, expressed through preferences that ran counter to the screenplay's original intention.

2. Politically, it appears that the nature of a rags-to-riches journey for a British-based BAME hero was perhaps viewed as redundant, having been better achieved in more civil-rights-related US sports film settings.

3. One apparent perception in the predominant culture, reflected in the responses of the interviewees, is that social realist film-making lacks commerciality. It could be argued that this is a false perception, given that social realist films created by, for example, Ken Loach (*Cathy Come Home*, 1967; *Riff-Raff*, 1991; *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, 2006, and *I, Daniel Blake*, 2016) and Andrea Arnold (*Red Road*, 2006; *Fish Tank*, 2009) did manage to make money, partly due to their success, and perhaps partly due to the fact that they cost relatively little to make. It does show, however, that the assumption persists that social realism has become a somewhat invalid subject area for feature film-makers, and something less acceptable to the broader population perhaps, sidelined in favour of the more predictable tropes of traditional genres. This study suggests that such an important genre should not be allowed to die in the face of more pragmatic and financially driven considerations.

4. The views of the interviewees reflect how they value, and are willing to embrace initiatives aimed

at, BAME inclusiveness. Responses to the NBNF screenplay showed less of a willingness to embrace, and more of a pulling away from, BAME inclusiveness, however. This may perhaps be seen as suggesting that, although in theory attitudes towards BAME inclusiveness are positive, in practice the default position remains with the status quo: a leaning towards white rather than BAME.

5. There appeared to be a disinclination to fully capitalise on having a British setting for the proposed film. This seems to make the dominance of the American cultural setting a prime determinant in terms of the presumed acceptability of a global audience.

6. The protracted nature of and the extended difficulties associated with the development of the screenplay and its acceptability seemed to ignore the option of harnessing new, faster and less complicated film-making (as was clearly evidenced in the earlier analysis of the respondents' views). This was perhaps a liability, partly imposed by the writer of the film, and an assumption that the traditional industry approach, with its continuing complications, provided the only possible framework within which this film could have been made.

Since writing *No Blood No Foul*, I have formed my own production company, Douglas Road Productions, where I am open to uncommissioned treatments and scripts from writers of all types. I am also

championing the millennial content makers, who upload short films, sketches and stories directly onto the internet via their own channels. In my opinion, the days of waiting to be 'asked to the ball' are over. Young and talented creatives are setting out their stall online, and as a result sidestepping the industry. It is my contention that collaboration is the way forward for the TV and film industry. If BAME creatives appreciate that there is a will to collaborate, they will come forward. If the industry continues to represent itself by only using the same staff/writers/execs/crews and so on, then the feeling can only grow that the door continues to be closed, as usual. BAME actors, comics and writers seem to be sidestepping the door and finding another way into the industry. It would be a terrible shame if the industry failed to latch on and benefit from this new, willing and available talent. Open the door...

Some additional findings: an addendum

When the interviewees received a summary of their replies, some felt a need to expand on their original answers. A selection of these are included below, as a separate addendum, because they were not directly generated by the questions themselves.

Additional question 1

The interviewees all agreed that the industry is monocultural (as Greg Dyke said years ago, when

Director-General of the BBC, 'The BBC is lily white').

You all said that this is problematic because the majority of commissioners, script editors and execs are white. There was also a sense that, although the TV and film industry in this country is monocultural, it isn't necessarily a terrible culture. How do you feel about this? Is it possible to make these appointments more reflective of British society?

I think it's entirely possible to make changes to the commissioning culture, and to start seeing a diverse range of commissioners, script editors, execs as the norm rather than the exception. But it needs real commitment from the broadcasters to implement change. It's the same as the lack of diversity amongst TV drama directors: at present only 8% of drama is directed by women, despite 50% of film school graduates being women. When producing TV, I now insist that we have a 50/50 ratio in terms of directors, and often (e.g. on *Call the Midwife*) we have the entire series being directed by women. Broadcasters need to take the same robust approach when they draw up shortlists for positions and there are only white men on the lists. That just isn't good enough.

(PH)

It's absolutely possible to make these executive appointments more reflective of British society. We need to encourage and enable more diversity at all levels in the industry.

(HBJ)

Additional question 2

You all ostensibly supported diversity and inclusiveness in the industry, but (and this is hilarious) no one seemed to be able to put their finger on the best way to effect change. Having had a bit of time to think about this, can you think of three things (apart from workshops, initiatives and training) that would change the face of diversity in the film and TV industry in a positive manner?

I believe that the most effective change can come from content creators, studio and network executives, and producers – the decision-makers – to encourage and push for diversity, be it in front or behind the camera, and setting a goal to hire the most qualified person for the role. And, secondly, we need to educate and nurture young talent, the creators of tomorrow, who might not grow up with the opportunity or even dream of being able to ever work in this industry.

(DG)

Two other areas I think we need to look at, and where I believe we can make positive change, is in the funding of films in the UK, and the access to

awards – e.g. BAFTA, RTS [Royal Television Society], etc. I can't see why we shouldn't link access to taxpayer funding (via the film and TV tax breaks) to fulfilment of diversity criteria, along the lines of the BFI 'Three Ticks'. Not just the BFI's own funding, but the actual tax break money, so that eventually all film and TV made in the UK had to be fulfilling diversity criteria. In the same way, I think both BAFTA and the RTS need to look at the entry criteria for their awards, so that diversity is a prerequisite for qualifying.

(PH)

Creating and publicising a forum where people can advertise jobs and find jobs – there is no standard entry, and it's really hard for people to know how to start or where to look to find the information.

(HBJ)

Long-term change is through education and access to opportunity afforded by that. Unfortunately, university fees and (potentially) grammars might make that harder. In the short term, I would strive to ensure that there is a major diverse TV show cast each year (such as *Indian Summers*). The show couldn't be a soap but would have a prestigious international outlook to enhance international TV sales. This would focus the development of material, the opportunities for diverse directors and writers. I would use ring-fenced money for the development and elements of production. Producers realise TV is

creatively and commercially rewarding, so I'd use this as a carrot *rather* than stick approach. The hope is that putting more diverse material out for audiences will encourage their appetite and so begin a virtuous cycle of demand and supply.

(BQ)

I don't see why the major film and broadcasting public funding bodies (BFI, BBC Films, Film 4, BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Sky) couldn't adjust their production grants/tariffs so producers only receive 100% if they achieve a set level of BAME representation in front of and behind the camera. If not, they get less (say, 90%). I feel the industry needs something cast iron like this to effect real change. And everyone needs to sign up to it as a good idea, so it doesn't feel 'imposed' on the industry. This is kind of an initiative, but I still think it's vital: a government-funded (or perhaps government- and industry-co-funded) fast-track training scheme for BAME applicants for roles on set and in production/development/distribution, where there is a funded, permanent role at the end for successful trainees. It should be well paid and selective, so the best applicants, most likely to have long-term success in the industry, are being picked. This has worked well for the teaching sector, where a fast-track initiative was set up to get more graduates into teaching and progressing quickly towards headships.

(OM)

Additional question 3

Could you talk about using cheaper, less complicated film-making techniques, such as mobile phones? What do you think about these techniques? Would you encourage them? And do you have access to such material, either through proactive searching or a method for film-makers to submit their work?

I am proactive in a few areas; as chairman of BAFTA I initiated the drive for BAFTA to have scholarships, mentors and new talent support and recognition, with a focus on diversity. I have remained on the Learning and New Talent Committee at BAFTA, which concentrates on these areas. I'm also a patron of Triforce Festival, which is known for recognising and supporting diverse talent. Watersprite, the International Student Film Festival that I have chaired since its inception in 2010, encourages films made with whatever the film-makers have available; many of the films are made by film-makers from developing countries and don't have access to expensive equipment. We have to let the stories speak for themselves and be open for all to enter. Entry is free. We don't ask for a DCP [Digital Cinema Package], which is an expense quite apart needing special software.

We raise bursaries so that we can fly students in from all over the world to the festival in Cambridge. There we aim at introducing the student film-makers to one another to forge relationships

for the future with no boundaries. As the festival grows so are the other opportunities expanding that we are able to offer, and so is the reach; we have had entries from over sixty countries now, and, just as examples, we have introduced film-makers from Nepal, Myanmar and Rwanda to others from Russia, China and Japan – and we provide links and support for them as their careers progress. But we want to do more.

Entries for next year's festival open on 1 November. There are categories in fiction, documentary and animation, as well as 'Filmmaker of the Future' and other acting, technical and design categories. Films have to be made by students and be less than twenty minutes long. See Watersprite.org.uk for more details. Through the festival I have just become aware of a young Nigerian/British film-maker who is starting out as a writer/producer; he's making a short film and has had problems finding a young male black actor. I am trying to help and can pass on contacts if you want to speak to him or have any suggestions other than the familiar routes.

(HBJ)

Any self-starting initiative (which doesn't harm others) is to be applauded. When the industry sees audiences developing outside of traditional confines there is always an effort to bring it into the industry. Obviously, the creatives should see the upside in this rather than being exploited.

(BQ)

Audiences want good storytelling, in whatever form. Amazing things can be done with mobile phones nowadays, and the camera technology in phones gets better and better each year. So, of course I'd encourage it. And I think it's a great idea if there were some way for people to upload films to somewhere central where industry execs/agents/commissioners etc. could see their work. A peer-reviewed set-up would be even better, so the editorial filtering work is already under way (otherwise I worry there would be so much stuff uploaded, it would be hard to separate the wheat from the chaff). Maybe there's some clever partnership to be had with YouTube or Vimeo etc. Would probably be crazy to build a platform from scratch.

(OM)

Additional question 4

Finally, could you talk about your approach to script development? What problems do you expect, how long do you expect it to take? (How many drafts before you replace the writer?!) Does length of development depend on the experience of the writer, or do you expect the same problems with whomever you work?

Script development time varies massively from project to project. When we developed *Penny*

Dreadful, John Logan had written the first episode and outlines for the remainder of the series before we were green-lit. He then managed to write all eight episodes before we began filming – i.e. the whole process from idea to filming took under a year. That is quite rare, in my experience! On an average series (e.g. *Call the Midwife*) I would say writers tend to do about six or seven drafts across a three-month period before we begin filming. These might not be full drafts, and could just be a set of amendments, but that is roughly the process. Many projects take years to get into production, and can often go through dozens of drafts. This is particularly tough on new writers, who may not have another project on the go at the same time, and will therefore not be earning any additional money.

(PH)

Script development varies enormously – with factors affecting it that are often way out of control of the writer and producer, such as execs changing seats, broadcasters' strategies changing, and fashion. I have almost never replaced a writer; more frequently the project doesn't get momentum and fizzles away or simply isn't picked up. Length of development varies enormously, and there are no templates. Generally, the more experienced writers are able to move forward faster, apart from those who are overcommitted. The shortest I have known is a green light based on one script within a week of

submitting to the controller of drama (but that was after over a year of development).

(HBJ)

Development is often the area where writers from diverse backgrounds struggle, as it is where soft skills come into play to a large degree and where traditional development executives may struggle to understand the core ideas and expressions being promoted. So, on the one side, you may have relatively inexperienced writers with fresh, authentic ideas and, on the other, experienced developers who lack cultural experience and width. The industry tends to side with experience, which makes the process painful for the writer (and director). The reality is, there is no given period of time a development should last (unless a contracted period is stipulated). The decision to replace a writer is never easily taken, and it will happen to writers of all standards and levels.

(BQ)

This is a longer conversation! But how long it takes is a 'How long is a piece of string?' question. I've been involved with films that have been in production a year after the inception of the idea – and, similarly, with films that have taken ten years to get into production. Many take much longer. TV is much the same, although arguably a little faster, as the funding process is simpler. The problems can be anything – the script not being

what the producer wants, what a director wants, what a financier wants, what an actor wants, or some combination of the above. Or everyone knowing what they want, but the writer can't quite deliver. Or nobody agreeing on what they want! Does length of development depend on the experience of the writer? Yes, it can depend on the experience level of the writer, absolutely. But an experienced writer doesn't guarantee you a quick path to production, nor does a green writer mean it will take years. It's the luck of the draw. That's why producers have to have multiple projects in development, ditto broadcasters/film financiers etc. You never quite know how things are going to work out. There's no magic formula to successful development.

(OM)

Conclusion

I have already spoken at length on my experience of script writing and development. Unfortunately, my experiences as a BAME writer are very similar to the experiences of the more mainstream and incredibly successful screenwriters. They all go through periods of self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy when it comes to producing a script of quality within or just beyond a deadline. I did find, however, that writing as a person of colour meant that my screenplay was inflected by the ideas and neutralising quality of the critique I was receiving. There is very little writing by writers of colour on the constraints and obstacles of

working within this industry. Therefore, diversity and representation is usually given scant thought in terms of mainstream image creation. Anamik saha argues that industry gatekeepers see minority projects as financially risky and as such should be avoided i.e. the only colour that's important is the green of the dollar bill. As he states,

The risk averse nature of the cultural industries invariably has a negative impact upon black and brown cultural producers, in particular, who are seen as a dangerous investment [...] Cultural industry scholars explain risk in terms of the intrinsically unpredictable nature of the cultural commodity form, whereas political economists, particularly in the Schiller-McChesney tradition (Hesmondhalgh 2013), tend to focus on how the conservative nature of cultural production is an outcome of commercialisation and media concentration.

(Saha 2017: 117)

Fascinating that Saha points out the slightly ambivalent attitude of mainstream media in their approach to creatives of colour to bame creatives: who have served and generated billions of dollars/pounds to the creative industries since they began. From 'race music' through rock n roll, Hattie McDaniel, Sidney Poitier, Eartha Kitt, Bill Cosby, Richard Pryor, Halle Berry, Eddie Murphy's virtuosic and money-making stint of the early '80s right up to present day, with creatives such as Oprah Winfrey, Will Smith, Tyler Perry, John Boyega, Lennie James, Lupita Nyong'o, and even Beyonce who, because of their ability to generate vast amounts

of income from their cultural contributions, make a nonsense of this assertion that investing in minorities is a risky business.

Chapter 10
Conclusions and Recommendations

My conclusions at the end of this PhD by practice can be grouped under two headings. These are: those issues that relate to inclusivity, diversity and talent in the UK film and television industries; and those issues that concern the development of my screenplay and decisions I took in relation to the business of learning, and the substantial insights gained regarding the issues I explored. In terms of the theoretical and empirical limitations of study, it might be pertinent to add that although the strength of my approach has been to gain insights that might not otherwise be available, the limitations of my critically reflective method has been to restrict some of the generalisability of my conclusions. My thesis has also been practical in orientation and therefore whilst it has tested and added to existing theories, it has not been primarily theoretical in orientation.

Although my research began as an enquiry into matters of exclusion in the sports film, it eventually led me to the field of diversity debates, which in turn led me to the literature of diversity – which I have sought to examine in the light of my own experiences.

Does the Coach have to be black?

Debating diversity

The argument about media diversity in British television has been raging since the 1970s, the era in which I entered the TV industry. O'Loughlin

discusses a period which ranges from the 70s to the 90s, where:

[E]ssentialised concepts of cultural diversity connected to race politics and multiculturalism coincided with mainly quantitative studies of the representation of these categories in the content and workforce of British television.

(O'Loughlin 2006: 1)

Whilst research into the dynamics of BAME cultural production is slim, Hesmondhalgh and Saha (2013) nonetheless describe the different ways in which 'general patterns of discrimination in the media industries' exist, highlighting three issues in particular: discriminatory hiring practices, media activism and advocacy, and diversity policies. What they argue is missing however, is the issue of what the lack of participation offscreen means for the representation of minorities onscreen (Hesmondhalgh and Saha 2013: 183).

This thesis helps address this absence in the field, especially in Chapter 9 where I critically reflect upon the reasons why my original script changed in the ways that it did, drawing from interviews with key industry gatekeepers. The issue of diversity in the cultural industries is not just about how many BAME individuals there are working within it, but how a lack of diversity restricts our creative practice, and the ability to tell the stories we want to tell in the way that we want to tell them.

It is this understanding that has underpinned my activist work on diversity.

Therefore, sustained attacks on the system tend to be few and far between. That is my greatest misgiving about this, as diversity activism is a full-time job, which needs persistent solution-based debate otherwise it won't get done.

In 2005, Campion, after much research, made recommendations to policy-makers, television workers, and the world at large, on how to inculcate various forms of diversity into our everyday working lives with what she calls 'cultural intelligence'. She thinks culturally intelligent programmes:

- Are inclusive in their portrayal of different groups, particularly those who are currently marginalized in society;
- Seek to represent different groups of people to each other accurately and authentically;
- Enable people to speak for themselves wherever possible;
- Find universal human truths in surprising places and are not afraid to look in culturally specific areas of British life that are outside the mainstream;
- Seek out hidden connections, reveal shared histories;
- Help us to understand ourselves and each other, our place in this country and in relation to other people around the world;
- Encourage informed debate on controversial issues by ensuring all viewpoints are thoughtfully represented;
- Recognize the subliminal messages programmes transmit are as important as the explicit ones.

(Campion 2005: 94)

Campion here produces some very powerful suggestions that would go some way to transforming the onscreen representation of minorities, women and the disadvantaged. However, I do wonder how easy it would be to implement these suggestions, even though they appear, to me anyway, to be relatively simple.

Saha (2017) draws from Tim Havens' notion of 'lore' to highlight exactly what black and brown cultural producers are up against. 'Lore' in the context of cultural production basically describes the knowledge and understandings that white gatekeepers use when dealing with minority productions. It is typically passed from person to person by word of mouth, i.e. oral storytelling, which subliminally sets those traditions and beliefs in stone. Havens (2013) uses the concept of industry 'lore' specifically in relation to the making and global circulation of African-American television. As Saha states,

Lore then is the executive's understanding of how an audience is going to react to a particular cultural good, gleaned from a combination of market research, experience and gut feeling (...) consequently, when it comes to the making of othered cultural goods industry lore has a racialised dimension, which of course is Havens' point.

(Saha 2017)

Obviously the limitation of being a diversity activist, particularly for me, is that my work

(actor, writer, comedian, etc.) precludes me from working on the project full-time.

My experience of researching sports films for this PhD has been one of constantly seeing people of colour, women, and those of alternate sexuality decentralised from the narrative, as if subconsciously, the gatekeepers work with a lore that states that although these groups may be featured in the narrative their involvement must be minimised and even silenced in most parts so as not to distract from the dominant roles. Saha says that the lore that 'black/minority ethnic products don't sell', both nationally and internationally is an idea that holds true until it is disproved, as shown brilliantly by *The Cosby Show* in the 1980s. Yet despite the huge global success of this show, the lore that productions with black leads would not go down well with international audiences remained. As Saha, drawing again from Tim Havens, says,

Executives downplayed the racial and class elements of the show, and instead chose to explain the sitcom's success in terms of its universal family themes, which supposedly transcend race.

(Saha 2017: 122)

In other words, television executives produced a lore that suggested that *The Cosby Show* was a success in spite of its blackness. What I apply from this is that the industry lore about black cultural production is hard to budge, and for this reason, a truly radical transformation of the way

in which minorities are represented is going to take so much more than a few soft recommendations.

Perhaps the only way forward for diversity activism is for all the players involved to think about the idea of social injustice rather than misrepresentation. Social injustice covers the gender pay gap, lack of ethnic representation, exclusion on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, disabilities. In terms of intersectionality it speaks for us all and yet also allows us to speak for ourselves. I would imagine that would provide a suitable subject for further researchers to explore.

My recent interventions in the diversity debate with the aid of my fellow activists have led to a rekindling of the debate and also have triggered further analysis of the issues at hand. However, the paradigm shift from ethnic diversity, through multiculturalism, to cultural diversity of which Malik (2015) speaks has meant that the initial intent of diversity activists such as Simon Albury, Ed Vaizey and Chris Smith has rendered a significant movement with regard to onscreen representation, but nowhere near enough change as far as the gatekeepers (pickers and deciders) are concerned. It is clear, as Saha points out, that we are still in an era of white patronage where BAME creatives are kept constantly on the back foot, waiting for a dominant culture hand on their shoulder to show them the way. The infantilising nature and constant industry stressing of

initiatives, workshops and training almost work counter to their intent. Saha (2017) goes as far as suggesting that, diversity initiatives, rather than failing,

Serve an ideological function that sustains the institutional whiteness of the cultural industries even while they claim (often genuinely so) to do something more inclusive. (Saha 2017: 88)

For Saha, diversity initiatives, as enacted by white gatekeepers, are a way of managing the demands of minorities whilst keeping the status quo intact.

My work within this field is focused very much on 'the movement of the needle' rather than just producing text for its own sake. My first speech was delivered at the Royal Television Society in 2008, and in it I told the audience 'I am going to be looking at ways we can change things, because I want this speech to be a catalyst, I don't want you to think that coming to this speech is just an opportunity to tick another box...' 'That's ethnicity dealt with, TICK!' There were many jokes in this speech, but there were also painful autoethnographic reminiscences, where the joke provided the feint, but the subject matter was deadly serious. Here I am speaking about Johnny Speight's *Till Death Us Do Part*, and his misogynist, racist, homophobic West Ham supporting character Alf Garnett, and his effect on my schooldays.

You might say that Speight was being brutally honest about how racist white people spoke about ethnic minorities, but it didn't stop Alf Garnett being adopted as a hero by the very people he was satirising. Speight tried to ensure that in each storyline, Alf came off the worst. But when I went to school the next morning, it was always me who came off worst. Wog, coon and Paki were just some of the words parroted back to me in the playground. I tried to explain that I was not in fact from Pakistan, but Philip Sherman decided to overlook this technicality as he repeatedly kneed me in the crotch. Context is everything; Alf Garnett was a ludicrous character, and in the right context pretty funny – but put him against the background of Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech... is he so funny then?

(Henry 2008, Royal Television Society – The Road To Diversity Is Closed: 6)

As this was my first speech, I relied heavily on jokes and personal reminiscence, to hopefully draw on the empathies of the listeners and galvanise them into action. However, nothing much seemed to happen, and it was not until 2016 that I was asked to speak again at BAFTA headquarters about the lack of diversity and representation in our industry. However, this time, I came armed with data from the Creative Skillset census which told us that:

Between 2006 and 2012, the number of BAMEs working in the UK TV industry declined by 30.9% (...) black, Asian and minority representation in the creative industries in 2012 was just 5.4% – its lowest point since they started taking the census (...) between 2009 and 2012 the total number of BAME people

in the industry has fallen by 2000, while the industry as a whole has grown by over 4000 (...) for every black and Asian person who lost their job, more than two white people were employed.

(All data Creative Skillset 2012: 17-19)

In this speech I spoke about the drain of BAME talent to the USA, where work was more plentiful. I talked about onscreen portrayal and the paucity of BAME decision-makers off camera. I also highlighted the problem of blackbookitis, whereby the technical crew of a production are recruited repeatedly from the black books of the heads of department, rather than from a more egalitarian interviewing process. Due to the data-based content of this speech, and the resulting debate it provoked, I came to the realisation that information is king. Without data, it is impossible to sway opinion. However, data collection is problematic and time-consuming. Project Diamond (formerly known as Project Silver Mouse) was mentioned in this speech as a way of collecting BAME employment statistics from ongoing television programmes being made at the time. We have only just begun (some two years later) to receive sporadic reports from the Diamond researchers which, considering how long they have had to gather this information, is a disappointing result to say the least.

Since then, I have spoken in Parliament to a Select Committee, and spoken out against the BBC's refusal to include diversity policies in their

White Paper, and also Ofcom's refusal to 'police the BBC's work-related diversity procedures'. I championed 'authentic diversity' where a multicultural host of people are allowed to 'tell our own stories from our unique perspectives'. Although Ofcom and the BBC and the industry at large are still struggling to generate an appropriate methodology for tackling issues of representation and diversity, I believe that my colleagues and I have continually and rightfully pushed the needle so that this conversation can not only be had but also be acted upon.

More recently I was invited to Mipcom (18 October 2017) in Cannes to give the keynote speech, where I advocated for a diversity tax for the film and TV industries in the UK.

While I love the fact that politicians today support the underlying idea of diversity, I actually want them to change the business model of how television (and film) is made. I want them to be like everyone else in this room and realise that television is a business, and that means we need to think about the bottom line – profits and losses. Nothing focuses the mind of a businessperson more than money (...) Britain has its own tax-relief system, encouraging investment in both film and television. In July, the British government revealed that it paid out almost £600m in tax relief last year to the makers of films and big-budget TV productions that passed a 'cultural test' that qualified them as 'British-made'.

(Henry 2017, Mipcom: 5-6)

I then asked the Mipcom audience to imagine a situation where, as a producer, instead of having to pass a cultural test of 'Britishness' they instead had to imagine that their business had to pass a 'diversity test'. After explaining how that might work, I exhorted the audience to join the diversity revolution. The idea is out there now, and just as the idea that ring-fenced money for BAME creatives and productions, as suggested by my colleagues and me, as a way of addressing the lack of BAME participation in the national cultural output, I believe that eventually these case-studies and speeches and meetings will go some way towards pushing the needle along within the national conversation.

My work has been acknowledged by Anamik Saha:

Yet one thing that has not been made apparent in this chapter is how the recognition given to racialized minorities – in public service broadcasting, in arts funding, in the calls for greater diversity in the cultural industries – is a consequence of the campaigning and activism of people of colour, from political interventions (in the UK, well-known black celebrities such as Idris Elba and Lenny Henry have both addressed parliamentary commissions on the lack of diversity in the cultural industries) to hashtag activism (e.g., #oscarssowhite).

(Saha 2017: 109)

Also the minister for the Digital economy, Ed Vaizey:

Media remains a powerful force for good in this country. To maintain its role, it has to reflect the society we live in. At the moment, it doesn't.

I became passionate about the cause two years ago, when I saw Lenny Henry perform in *The Comedy of Errors* at the National Theatre. I looked around me and saw a completely different audience. And all those abstract words such as outreach and engagement suddenly became real.

I knew Lenny was vocal on the subject so invited him in for a chat, and found someone champing at the bit to effect real change. And the more people I talked to in the BAME media community the more I discovered the frustration, and yes, anger felt by the BAME community, who felt that not only had it all just been talk for the last thirty years, we were actually going backwards.

Thanks to Lenny, Oona King and others, we are seeing change. I want to pay tribute to what has been achieved.

Ed Vaizey

Speech to the Oxford Media Convention, 4 March 2015

as Minister for the Digital Economy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/ed-vaizeys-speech-to-the-oxford-media-convention-2015>

I was mentioned by the MP for Tottenham at a House of Commons debate:

I must begin by acknowledging those who have called for many years for greater diversity in the arts, especially in television. I salute the work my good friend Lenny Henry has done. Back in 2013 he

called on me to help him as he began to think about the issues more deeply. In 2014 he laid out his plan for the BBC to set aside money for black, Asian and minority ethnic shows.

David Lammy

Hansard – House of Commons Debate on BBC Diversity,

14 April 2016

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-04-14/debates/16041436000002/BBCDiversity>

And Lord Holmes of Richmond also reacted positively to my activism:

Let us look at ring-fencing. It is possible to have ring-fenced funds for particular characteristics within organisations. This is what Lenny Henry has pushed excellently and which was so well noted at last Sunday's BAFTAs. Crucially, we need to look at 'indies'. Quite rightly, a great deal of production is happening through that sector, where there is great creativity. We are world leaders in producing this stuff but we need to help the smaller production houses to get to grips with how they can really embrace and drive inclusion.

Hansard – House of Lords Debate on Diversity in the

Media, 10 May 2016

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-05-10/debates/16B405A2-DD65-451D-8C40-0AFFC7A00256/DiversityInTheMedia>

I was fortunate to participate in a debate on Public Service Television at Goldsmith's, University of London...

We believe that Lenny Henry is right to argue that 'systemic failures' have led to a lack of diversity in the industry and we believe, therefore, that 'systemic' solutions are required alongside the provision of targets and training schemes.

(112)

A renewed commitment to diversity must be accompanied by sufficient funds. We agree with the proposal by Lenny Henry that the BBC (and in our view other public service broadcasters) should ring fence funding – taking its cue from the BBC's funding of its nations and regions output – that is specifically aimed at BAME productions (though this could apply to other minority groups in the future).

(157-8)

A Future For Public Service Television: Content and
Platforms In A Digital World

A report on the future of public service television
in the UK in the 21st century

Goldsmiths, University of London /

FutureofTV.org

(June 2106)

<http://futureoftv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FOTV-Report-Online.pdf>

The fight for true inclusion continues however, and we must continue at all costs. Ultimately words mean nothing unless they are backed up by action. Therefore the more we can bolster rhetoric with deeds, the nearer we will get to actually achieving our aims.

Martin Luther King Jr once said that 'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.' We can only hope that the noise about diversity and inclusion, the gender pay gap, the abuse of power in our industry and the out and out discrimination, will remain relentless until we reach our destination.

Recommendations for further action

1. Taxpayer funding

This appears to be an especially pragmatic recommendation that researchers may be invited to examine, and it is derived from the following contribution by Pippa Harris of Neale Street Productions:

I can't see why we shouldn't link access to taxpayer funding (via the film and TV tax breaks) to fulfilment of diversity criteria, along the lines of the BFI 'Three ticks'. Not just the BFI's own funding, but the actual tax break money, so that eventually all film and TV made in the UK has to be fulfilling diversity criteria.

2. A recruitment forum

This is a proposal from Hilary Bevan Jones of Endor Productions, and is derived from her following contribution:

Creating and publicising a forum where people can advertise jobs and find jobs – there is no standard entry, and it's really hard for people to know how to start or where to look to find the information.

3. The adjustment of production grants

This resulted from the contribution of Ollie Madden of Kudos.

I don't see why the major film and broadcasting public funding bodies (BFI, BBC Films, Film 4, BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Sky) couldn't adjust their production grants/tariffs so producers only receive 100% if they achieve a set level of BAME representation in front of and behind the camera. If not, they get less (say, 90%). I feel the industry needs something cast iron like this to effect real change. And everyone needs to sign up to it as a good idea, so it doesn't feel 'imposed' on the industry. This is kind of an initiative, but I still think it's vital: a government-funded (or perhaps government- and industry-co-funded) fast-track training scheme for BAME applicants for roles on set and in production/development/distribution, where there is a funded, permanent role at the end for successful trainees. It should be well paid and selective, so the best applicants, most likely to have long-term success in the industry, are being picked.

MORE PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON SCREENWRITING

Yet another significant discovery was consistent evidence that the process of writing and formally presenting a script to a production company creates a vulnerability in the writer that leads to him/her losing a sense of confidence in what his/her initial instincts might have been. Screenwriters also have to be aware of what is driving the criticisms offered, and whether these criticisms therefore should be acknowledged or challenged. The

learning point derived from this is the need for writers to be able to self-reflect or self-critique, and, if that proves difficult, then affiliate themselves to support groups or structures that allow them to continue their development as writers. In essence, this will enable them to navigate the endless sets of feedback notes, which, however well intentioned, are just as likely to unbalance or destroy a screenplay. A consequence of the indiscriminate acceptance of feedback may well render the writing process neutral, neutered, safe and 'middle ground' as much as it might move the writing forward.

I discovered that the producer, with the weight of marketing and accounting teams behind him/her, has final contractual choice. In essence, this means that the producer can justify his/her comments by claiming that his/her decisions are based on what the market or the next investor in the funding chain requires. I find this to be a circular argument – 'We give the audience this, they seem to like it, so we make it again the same way' – and one that should be challenged by independents and others who see the role of cinema as being to highlight new or hitherto hidden cultural tropes and challenge the existing ones.

Further, a comprehensive survey of the UK film and television industries as to who their market consists of and who finances them suggests that the latter correlates with the decision made about

BAME-sensitive content, and this would make a rewarding further study (see recommendations below). It has been noted from mainstream international film industry data that, for example, the industry has a habit of killing off all gay protagonists, as explored by Rawson (2013). Less well known is the fact that one internationally renowned cable channel actually supports this story trope – that you may write a gay protagonist into the script, but that character must die or be punished at the end – and builds this into its confidential commissioning ‘bible’.

It must be conceded, however, that it is impossible to reduce these contradictions to the simple and romantic notions of the creative writer being stymied by ‘the mean production company’.

An autoethnographic happy(?)ending.

I wanted to conclude my thesis with a story that might point the way to a more positive future for BAME creatives in our industry. My MA film *Nine Nights* (working title *Whiteface* now, because Natasha Gordon, who played my sister in *Danny and the Human Zoo* has written a play about the Nine Night funerary tradition in Jamaican culture. I’m not angry honest) is still in development almost eight and a half years after gaining a distinction in my final year. Having endured an extended development process which involved many rewrites, I finally felt that my little script might be getting

to a stage where it could be produced. Yesterday I spoke to my producer who told me that the screenplay had been read by the boss at a major broadcaster and her two assistants.

Who all happened to be white.

Their reaction was kindly but not particularly encouraging as the subject matter did not really appeal to them. However, the boss gave the script to a BAME junior executive who responded in a more positive way and recommended solutions to the script's remaining problems. I'm still in the game thanks to one BAME presence in the development process. Onward and upward.

Fin

Bibliography

- Adams, D. (2003) *The Salmon of Doubt: Hitchhiking the Galaxy One Last Time*. London: Harmony.
- Aftab, K. (2005) *Spike Lee: That's My Story and I'm Sticking to It*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Altman, R. (1999) *Film/Genre*. London: British Film Institute.
- Ardolino, F. (1990) 'Ceremonies of Innocence and Experience in: *Bull Durham, Field of Dreams, and Eight Men Out*'. *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 18, 43–51.
- August, J. (2011) 'Surviving the Director's Rewrite'. John August, 25 January [online] <https://johnaugust.com/2011/surviving-the-directors-rewrite>.
- Babington, B. (2014) *The Sports Film: Games People Play*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Back, L. and Solomos, J. (2000) 'Introduction: Theories of race and racism'. Solomos, J., and Back, L., eds. *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- Baker, A. (2003) *Contesting Identities: Sports in American Film*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Baker, N. S. (1997) *Hard Core Roadshow: A Screenwriter's Diary*. Toronto: House of Anansi.

Ballard, N. (2015) 'Heroine's Journey 1'. The Heroine Journeys Project [online] <https://heroinejourneys.com/heroines-journey>.

Banton, M. (1967) *Race Relations*. Vancouver: Tavistock Publications.

Bergan, R. (1982) *Sports in the Movies*. New York: Proteus Books.

Biskind, P. (2005) *Gods and Monsters*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Black, S. (2013) '6 Filmmaking Tips from Shane Black'. Film School Rejects, 8 May [online] <https://filmschoolrejects.com/6-filmmaking-tips-from-shane-black-9824903a5946#.q1swa9wcw>.

Blazeby, M. (2016) 'Diversity Cemented in BBC Charter'. Broadcast, 12 May [online] www.broadcastnow.co.uk/news/diversity-cemented-in-bbc-charter/5103756.article.

Bogle, D. (1994) *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*, 2nd edn. New York: Continuum.

Broadcast (2007) 'Hot 100 Producers'. Broadcast, 19 December [online] www.broadcastnow.co.uk/hot-100-producers/394257.article.

Broadly (2015) 'There Are 44 NFL Players Who Have Been Accused of Sexual or Physical Assault'.

Broadly, 8 December [online]

https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/2015-nfl-report.

Brown, D. (2001) 'A New Language of Racism in Politics.' *The Guardian*, 27 April [online]
www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/apr/27/race.world2.

Buscombe, E. (1970) 'The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema'. *Screen* 11, 33–45.

Campbell, J. (1949) *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Chang, H. (2012) *Collaborative Autoethnography (Developing Qualitative Inquiry)*. London: Routledge.

Channel 4 (2015) *360° Diversity Charter*. London: Channel 4 [online]
www.channel4.com/media/documents/corporate/diversitycharter/Channel4360DiversityCharterFINAL.pdf.

Creative Skillset (2013) *Employment Census of the Creative Media Industries 2012*. London: Creative Skillset [online]
https://creativeskillset.org/assets/0000/5070/2012_Employment_Census_of_the_Creative_Media_Industries.pdf.

Crosson, S. (2013) *Sport and Film*. London: Routledge.

Custen, G. F. (1992) *Bio/pics: How Hollywood*

Constructed Public History. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Dalton, M. M., and March, D. A. (1998) 'Rough Trade in the Gender Wars: Poetry and Character in *Bull Durham*'. *Creative Screenwriting* 5, 69–75.

Dancyger, K., and Rush, J. (2013) *Alternative Scriptwriting: Beyond the Hollywood Formula*, 5th edn. Burlington, MA: Focal Press.

Delgado, R. (1989) 'Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others: A Plea for Narrative'. *Michigan Law Review* 87, 2411–41.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2016) *A BBC for the Future: A Broadcaster of Distinction*, White Paper. London: HMSO [online] www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524863/DCMS_A_BBC_for_the_future_linked_rev1.pdf.

Dunning, E. (1986) 'Sport as a Male Preserve: Notes on the Social Sources of Masculine Identity and Its Transformations' in Elias, N., and Dunning, E. (eds.) *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 267–84.

Ebert, R. (1993) 'Review of *Rudy*'. Roger Ebert, 13 October [online] www.rogerebert.com/reviews/rudy-1993.

Eitzen, S. D. (2000) 'Slaves of Big-Time College Sports'. *USA Today*, September: 26–30.

Elba, I. (2016) 'Idris Elba's Keynote Speech to Parliament on Diversity in the Media'. Channel 4, 18 January [online]
www.channel4.com/info/press/news/idris-elba-s-keynote-speech-to-parliament-on-diversity-in-the-media.

Ellis, J. (1981) *Visible Fictions: Cinema: Television: Video*. London: Routledge.

Elmwood, V. A. (2005) 'Just Some Bum from the Neighbourhood': The Resolution of Post-Civil Rights Tension and Heavyweight Public Sphere Discourse in "Rocky"'. *Film and History* 35, 49–52.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016), 'Diversity Must Be Hardwired in BBC Charter Says Commission'. Equality and Human Rights Commission, 14 April [online]
www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/diversity-must-be-hardwired-bbc-charter-says-commission.

Eszterhas, J. (2006) *The Devil's Guide To Hollywood: The Screenwriter as God*. New York: St Martins Press.

Farley, C. J. (2000) 'That Old Black Magic: Hollywood Is Still Bamboozled When It Comes to Race'. *Time*, 27 November [online]
<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,998604,00.html>.

Field, S. (2003) *The Definitive Guide to Screenwriting*. London: Ebury Press.

Fox, A. (2008) 'Revision: From Rough to Ready', in Steele, A. (ed.) *Writing Movies: The Practical Guide to Creating Stellar Screenplays*. New York: Bloomsbury, ch. 10.

Frow, J. (2014) *Genre: The New Critical Idiom*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

FutureofTV.org (2016) A Future For Public Service Television: Content and Platforms In A Digital World: A report on the future of public service television in the UK in the 21st century. Goldsmiths, University of London
<http://futureoftv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FOTV-Report-Online.pdf>

Ganguly, S. (2011) 'One Movie, 12 Directors'. IndieWire, 20 December [online]
www.indiewire.com/2011/12/one-movie-12-directors-177792.

Gates, H. L. J. (2004) 'Breaking the Silence'. *The New York Times*, 1 August [online]
www.nytimes.com/2004/08/01/opinion/breaking-the-silence.html?_r=0.

Gilchrist, T. (2004) 'Interview: Charles Stone III'. IGN, 16 September [online]
<http://uk.ign.com/articles/2004/09/17/interview-charles-stone-iii>.

Goldman, W. (2015) '10 Screenwriting Lessons from William Goldman'. Screencraft, 19 February [online]

<https://screencraft.org/2015/02/19/10-screenwriting-lessons-william-goldman>.

Goldsman, A. (2015) 'Screenwriting 101: Akiva Goldsman'. *Go Into The Story*, 27 October [online] <https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/screenwriting-101-akiva-goldsman-c76alac47ca#.u82uldedm>.

Goldsmiths, University of London (2016) *A Future for Public Service Television: Content and Platforms in a Digital World*. London: Goldsmiths, University of London.

Good, H. (1997) *Diamonds in the Dark: America, Baseball, and the Movies*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Grant, B. K. (2007) *Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology*. London: Wallflower Press.

Guardian, The (2010) 'Ten Rules for Writing Fiction, Part One'. *The Guardian*, 20 February [online] www.theguardian.com/books/2010/feb/20/ten-rules-for-writing-fiction-part-one.

Hall, S. (1997) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE.

Hall, S. 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular' in Szeman, I. and Kaposy, T. (eds). (2010) *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hansard (2016) House of Lords Debate on Diversity in the Media, 10 May 2016

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-05-10/debates/16B405A2-DD65-451D-8C40-0AFFC7A00256/DiversityInTheMedia>

Hauge, M. (1988) *Writing Screenplays that Sell: The Complete Guide to Turning Story Concepts into Movie and Television Deals*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Henry, L. (2008) 'The Road to Diversity Is Closed: Please Seek Alternate Routes'. Speech given to Royal Television Society, 7 February [online] www.rts.org.uk/event/road-diversity-closed-please-seek-alternate-route.

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2012) *The Cultural Industries*. California: Sage Publications.

Hesmondhalgh, D. and Saha, A. 'Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Production' (2013) in *Popular Communication*.

Hicks, H. J. (2003) 'Hoodoo Economics: White Men's Work and Black Men's Magic in Contemporary American Film'. *Camera Obscura* 18, 27–55.

Hill, L. (2013) 'Spike Lee, Still Gliding to Success'. *The New York Times*, 24 November [online] www.nytimes.com/2013/11/24/movies/oldboy-reimagines-a-korean-tale-of-revenge.html.

Hill Collins, P., Bilge, S. (2016) *Intersectionality*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

- History.com (2010) 'Black Women in Sports'.
- History.com [online] www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-women-in-sports.
- Hollywood Reporter, The* (2016) 'David Oyelowo: If I'd Seen "A United Kingdom" When I Was Younger, I'd Still Be Living in the UK'. *The Hollywood Reporter*, 6 October [online]
<https://ca.movies.yahoo.com/david-oyelowo-id-seen-united-kingdom-younger-id-131517803.html>.
- Holman Jones, S., Adams, T. E. & Ellis, C. (eds.) (2016) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Holt, R. (1990) *Sport and the British: A Modern History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- hooks, bell (1992) *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Hunter, L. (2005) 'What's "Natural" about It? A Baseball Movie as Introduction to Key Concepts in Cultural Studies'. *Film and History* 34, 71-7.
- Husband, C. (1975) *White Media and Black Britain: A critical look at the role of the media in race relations today*. London: Arrow.
- Kalogeras, S. (2014) *Transmedia Storytelling and the New Era of Media Convergence in Higher Education*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kazan, N. (2013) 'Nicholas Kazan's Rewriting Process' in Morgan, B., and Perez, M. (eds.) *On Story: Screenwriters and Their Craft*. Austin, TX:

University of Texas Press, 152.

Katzman, J. (2006) 'The Enduring, Lovable Sports-Film Clichés'. Today.com, 22 August [online] www.today.com/id/14468942/ns/today-entertainment/#.WD9UxIzw9ks.

Kelly, J. (2013) 'Seven Rules Nearly Every Sports Movie Follows'. Gunaxin, 5 July [online] <http://sports.gunaxin.com/the-7-rules-every-sports-movie-lives-by/32085>.

Kibby, M. D. (1988) 'Nostalgia for the Masculine: Onward to the Past in the Sports Films of the Eighties'. *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 7, 16–28.

King, S. (2000) *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. St Louis, MO: Turtleback Books.

Lammy, D. (2016) Hansard – House of Commons Debate on BBC Diversity, 14 April 2016 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-04-14/debates/16041436000002/BBCDiversity>

Lauzen, M. M. (2016) 'Thumbs Down 2016: Top Film Critics and Gender'. San Diego: Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, San Diego State University [online] <https://wftv.org.uk/resources/thumbs-down-2016-top-film-critics-and-gender>.

Lodge, D. (2001) *Thinks*. London: Secker & Warburg.

McKee, R. (1997) *Story: Substance, Structure, Style*

and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York: HarperCollins.

Malik, S. (2004) 'Henry, Lenny (1958–)' in Newcomb, H. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Television*, 2nd edn. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 1078–9.

Martin, J. W. (2002) 'Redeeming America: Rocky as Ritual Racial Drama' in Martin, J. W., and Ostwalt, C. E. (eds.) *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth, and Ideology in Popular American Film*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 125–33.

Massood, P. J. (ed.) (2008) *The Spike Lee Reader*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Moine, R. (2008) *Cinema Genre*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Morgan, B., and Perez, M. (eds.) (2013) *On Story: Screenwriters and Their Craft*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Motley, C. (2005) 'Fighting for Manhood: Rocky and Turn-of-the-Century Antimodernism'. *Film and History* 35, 60–6.

Murdock, M. (1990) *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Murray, R. (2004a) 'Angela Bassett Talks Sports and 'Mr. 3000''. About Entertainment, 2 September [online]
<http://movies.about.com/od/mr3000/a/mr3000ab090204.htm>.

- Murray, R. (2004b) 'Brian White Discusses 'Mr. 3000''. About Entertainment, 2 September [online] <http://movies.about.com/od/mr3000/a/mr3000bw090204.htm>.
- Neale, S. (1999) *Genre and Hollywood*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Noverr, D. A. (1990) 'The Coach and the Athlete in Football Sports Films' in Loukides, P., and Fuller, L. K. (eds.) *Beyond the Stars: Studies in American Popular Film*, vol. 1, *Stock Characters in American Popular Film*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 120–30.
- Nwonka, C. J. (2015) 'Diversity pie: rethinking social exclusion and diversity policy in the British film industry'. *Journal of Media Practice*, vol. 16.
- O'Reilly, J. (2007) 'The Women's Sports Film as the New Melodrama' in O'Reilly, J., and Cahn, S. K. (eds.) *Women and Sports in the United States: A Documentary Reader*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 283–97.
- Pierson, J. (1997) *Spike, Mike, Slackers & Dykes*. London: Faber.
- Polone, G. (2012) 'Four Star Screenwriters Talk about Rewrite Hell'. *Vulture*, 29 February [online] www.vulture.com/2012/02/polone-screenwriters-rewrites-hollywood.html.
- Power, C. (2016) 'Samuel Beckett, the Maestro of

Failure'. *The Guardian*, 7 July [online]
www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2016/jul/07/samuel-beckett-the-maestro-of-failure.

Queenan, J. (2007) 'America's Great White Hope?'. *The Guardian*, 13 January [online]
www.theguardian.com/film/2007/jan/13/joequeenan.

Queenan, J. (2011) 'For Whom the Bell Tolls: Boxing on Film'. *The Guardian*, 27 January [online]
www.theguardian.com/film/2011/jan/27/boxing-hollywood-the-fighter-joe-queenan.

Raney, A. A., and Bryant, J. (eds.) (2009) *Handbook of Sports and Media*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rawson, J. (2013) 'Why Are Gay Characters at the Top of Hollywood's Kill List?'. *The Guardian*, 11 June [online]
www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2013/jun/11/gay-characters-hollywood-films.

Rex, J. (1970) *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Rich, T. (2013) 'British Basketball: The Idea of a Legacy from London 2012 Is Laughable, Says John Amaechi'. *The Independent*, 27 March [online]
www.independent.co.uk/sport/british-basketball-the-idea-of-a-legacy-from-london-2012-is-laughable-says-john-amaechi-8550718.html.

Ridgeway, C. L. (2011) *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rosenstone, R. A. (1995) *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ryall, T. (1975) 'Teaching through Genre'. *Screen Education*, 17: 27–33.

Ryall, T. (1976) *Genre in Film Criticism*. London: BFI Education.

Ryall, T. (1978) *Teachers Study Guide No. 2: The Gangster Film*. London: BFI Education.

Saha, A. (2017) *Race and the Cultural Industries*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Sarpong, J. (2017) *Diversify*. London: HarperCollins.

Schatz, T. (1981) *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schickel, R. (2010) 'Brutal Attraction: The Making of *Raging Bull*'. *Vanity Fair*, 22 February [online] www.vanityfair.com/news/2010/03/raging-bull-201003.

Sheen, T. (2016) 'Team GB Funding Cuts Are Killing British Basketball'. *The Independent*, 20 February [online] www.independent.co.uk/sport/us-sport/national-basketball-association/team-gb-funding-cuts-are-killing-british-basketball-a6886486.html.

Shrake, B., and Wittliff, B. (2013) 'Writer's Block: A Conversation with Bud Shrake and Bill Wittliff' in Morgan, B., and Perez, M. (eds.) *On Story*:

- Screenwriters and Their Craft*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 143–8.
- Sklar, R., and Modleski, T. (2005) 'Million Dollar Baby: A Split Decision'. *Cineaste* 30, 6–11.
- Smith, E. (2009) *Race, Sport and the American Dream*, 2nd edn. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Snyder, B. (2005) *Save the Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.
- Sorkin, A. (2016) 'Aaron Sorkin Teaches Screenwriting'. MasterClass [online] www.masterclass.com/classes/aaron-sorkin-teaches-screenwriting.
- Swicord, R. (2007) 'The Dialogue: Learning from the Masters – Part 2' [interview by J. Fernandez]. YouTube, 1 October [online] www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vs0Riq96b44.
- Thomson, D. (2007) 'Animal Instinct'. *The Guardian*, 10 August [online] www.theguardian.com/film/2007/aug/10/martinscorsese.robertdeniro.
- Tierno, M. (2002) *Aristotle's Poetics for Screenwriters: Storytelling Secrets from the Greatest Mind in Western Civilization*. New York: Hyperion.
- Tudor, D. V. (1997) *Hollywood's Vision of Team Sports: Heroes, Race, and Gender*. New York: Garland.

Turner, A. (2014) 'The Birth of Alternative Comedy'. Sabotage Times, 14 January [online] <http://sabotagetimes.com/tv-film/the-birth-of-alternative-comedy-2>.

Unknown Screenwriter, the (2011) 'The Odds of Selling a Spec Screenplay'. The Unknown Screenwriter, 14 July [online] www.screenwriterunknown.com/observations/odds-of-selling-a-spec-screenplay.

Vaizey, E. (2015) Speech to the Oxford Media Convention, 4 March 2015 as Minister for the Digital Economy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/ed-vaizeys-speech-to-the-oxford-media-convention-2015>

Vogler, C. (2007) *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, 3rd edn. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.

Wallace, R. (2013) 'A Conversation with Randall Wallace', in Morgan, B., and Perez, M. (eds.) *On Story: Screenwriters and Their Craft*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 7–24.

West, C. (1990) 'The New Cultural Politics of Difference'. Ferguson R., Gever, M., Minh-ha, T. T., and West, C., eds. *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. New York & Massachusetts: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press.

Whannel, G. (2008) 'Winning and Losing Respect: Narratives of Identity in Sport Films'. *Sport in Society*, 11: 195–208.

White, A. (2004) 'The Black Natural'. *New York Press*, 14 September.

Yorke, J. (2013) *Into The Woods: How Stories Work and Why We Tell Them*. London: Penguin.

Zucker, H. M., and Babich, L. J. (1987) *Sports Films: A Complete Reference*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Filmography

12 Years a Slave (2013) Directed by S. McQueen.
Summit Entertainment.

24 Hour Party People (2002) Directed by M.
Winterbottom. Film4; Revolution Films; Baby Cow
Productions; UK Film Council; the Film Consortium.

42 (2013) Directed by B. Helgeland. Warner Bros.
Pictures.

48 Hours (1982) Directed by W. Hill. Paramount
Pictures.

3096 (2013) Directed by S. Horman. Midget
Entertainment.

A Beautiful Mind (2001) Directed by R. Howard.
Universal Pictures; DreamWorks Pictures.

A Cock and Bull Story (2006) Directed by M.
Winterbottom. BBC Films; Baby Cow Productions; East
Midlands Media Initiative; Revolution Films; Scion
Films.

A Few Good Men (1992) Directed by R. Reiner.
Columbia Pictures.

A League of Their Own (1992) Directed by P.
Marshall. Columbia Pictures.

A Passage to India (1984) Directed by D. Lean. Columbia Pictures.

A Street Cat Named Bob (2016) Directed by R. Spottiswoode.

Absolute Beginners (1986) Directed by J. Temple. Palace Pictures.

Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie (2016) Directed by M. Fletcher. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

Adulthood (2008) Directed by N. Clarke. Cipher Films; Limelight.

Ali (2001) Directed by M. Mann. Columbia Pictures.

Alive and Kicking (1991).

All in the Game (2006) Directed by J. O'Hanlon. Channel Four Television.

American Pie (1999) Directed by P. Weitz, C. Weitz. Universal Pictures.

Amy (2015) Directed by A. Kapadia. Altitude Film Distribution.

An Education (2009) Directed by L. Scherfig. Sony Pictures Classics.

Any Given Sunday (1999) Directed by O. Stone. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Apollo 13 (1995) Directed by R. Howard. Imagine Entertainment.

Atonement (2007) Directed by J. Wright. Focus Features.

Bamboleho (2002) Directed by L. Prieto. Factotum Barcelona S.L.

Batman Forever (1995) Directed by J. Schumacher.
Warner Bros.

Becoming Jane (2007) Directed by J. Jarrold. Buena Vista Pictures.

Belle (2014) Directed by A. Asante. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

Bend It Like Beckham (2002) Directed by G. Chadha.
Bend It Films; British Sky Broadcasting.

Bernard and the Genie (1991) Directed by P. Weiland.
BBC.

Beverly Hills Cop (1984) Directed by M. Brest. Don Simpson/Jerry Bruckheimer Productions.

Big Fish (2003) Directed by T. Burton. Columbia Pictures.

Big Game (2014) Directed by J. Helander. Nordisk Film Distribution.

Birth of a Nation (1915) Directed by D. W. Griffith.
Epoch Producing Company.

Blazing Saddles (1974) Directed by M. Brooks.
Warner Bros.

Blind Justice (1994) Directed by R. Spence. HBO.

Blood (2012) Directed by N. Murphy.

Blue Chips (1994) Directed by W. Friedkin.
Paramount Pictures.

Brain on Fire (2016) Directed by G. Barrett. Broad Green Pictures.

Breaking Away (1979) Directed by P. Yates. 20th Century Fox.

Brewster's Millions (1985) Directed by W. Hill.
Universal Pictures.

Brian's Song (1971) Directed by B. Kulik. ABC;
Columbia Pictures.

Bridget Jones's Diary (2001) Directed by S. Maguire.
Miramax Films; Universal Pictures.

Bull Durham (1988) Directed by R. Shelton. Orion
Pictures.

Bullet Boy (2004) Directed by S. Dibb. BBC Films;
UK Film Council; Shine Ltd.

Caddyshack (1980) Directed by H. Ramis. Orion
Pictures.

Captain Corelli's Mandolin (2001) Directed by J.
Madden. Miramax Films.

Catch Me If You Can (2002) Directed by S. Spielberg.
Amblin Entertainment.

Chariots of Fire (1981) Directed by H. Hudson.
Allied Stars; Goldcrest Films.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005) Directed
by T. Burton. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Charlie Wilson's War (2007) Directed by M. Nichols.
Universal Pictures.

Cinderella Man (2005) Directed by R. Howard.
Universal Pictures; Buena Vista International
Touchstone Pictures.

Coach Carter (2005) Directed by T. Carter. MTV
Films; Tollin/Robbins Productions.

Coast to Coast (1987) Directed by S. Johnson.

Creed (2015) Directed by R. Coogler. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Dad's Army (2016) Directed by O. Parker. Universal Pictures.

Damn Yankees (1958) Directed by G. Abbott, S. Donen. Warner Bros.

Dances with Wolves (1990) Directed by K. Costner. Orion Pictures.

Dancing at the Blue Iguana (2000) Directed by M. Radford. Lionsgate.

Danny Collins (2015) Directed by D. Fogelman. Bleecker Street.

Django Unchained (2012) Directed by Q. Tarantino. The Weinstein Company; Columbia Pictures.

Do the Right Thing (1989) Directed by S. Lee. 40 Acres & A Mule Filmworks.

East Is East (1999) Directed by D. O'Donnell. Channel Four; Miramax Films.

Elizabeth: The Golden Age (2007) Directed by S. Kapur. Universal Pictures.

Elphida (1987) Directed by T. Ikoli. Working Title Films.

Equals (2015) Directed by D. Doremus. A24.

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them (2016) Directed by D. Yates. Heyday Films.

Fantastic Four (2015) Directed by J. Trank. 20th Century Fox.

Fargo (1996) Directed by J. Coen. Gramercy Pictures.

Fast Girls (2012) Directed by R. Hall.

Fever Pitch (1997) Directed by D. Evans. Phaedra Cinema.

Field of Dreams (1989) Directed by P. A. Robinson. Universal Pictures; TriStar Pictures.

Fish Tank (2009) Directed by A. Arnold. Curzon Artificial Eye.

Flesh and Bone (1993) Directed by S. Kloves. Paramount Pictures.

Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994) Directed by M. Newell. Rank Film Distributors.

Frankenweenie (2012) Directed by T. Burton. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Frost/Nixon (2008) Directed by R. Howard. Universal Pictures.

Girlfight (2000) Directed by K. Kusama. Screen Gems.

Go (1999) Directed by D. Liman. Columbia Pictures.

Gone Girl (2014) Directed by D. Fincher. 20th Century Fox.

Good Hair (2009) Directed by J. Stilson. HBO Films.

Gravity (2013) Directed by A. Cuarón. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Gridlock'd (1997) Directed by V. Curtis-Hall. Gracie Films; Vinyl Films.

Grown Ups (2010) Directed by D. Dugan. Happy Madison Productions.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967) Directed by S. Kramer. Columbia Pictures.

Hard, Fast and Beautiful! (1951) Directed by I. Lupino. RKO Radio Pictures.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004) Directed by A. Cuarón. Warner Bros. Pictures.

He Got Game (1998) Directed by S. Lee. Touchstone Pictures.

Ho Voglia di Te (2007) Directed by L. Prieto. Cattleya.

Hollywood Shuffle (1987) Directed by R. Townsend. The Samuel Goldwyn Company.

Hoop Dreams (1994) Directed by S. James. [Sports documentary] Fine Line Features.

Hoosiers (1986) Directed by D. Anspaugh. Orion Pictures.

Hurricane Season (2010) Directed by T. Story. Dimension Films.

Il Postino: The Postman (1994) Directed by M. Radford. Miramax Films.

In Bruges (2008) Directed by M. McDonagh. Universal Studios.

In the Loop (2009) Directed by A. Iannucci. IFC Films.

Is Anybody There? (2008) Directed by J. Crowley. Optimum Releasing.

Jackie Brown (1997) Directed by Q. Tarantino. A Band Apart.

Jarhead (2005) Directed by S. Mendes. Universal Pictures.

Jerry Maguire (1996) Directed by C. Crowe. Gracie Films; Vinyl Films.

Juice (1992) Directed by E. R. Dickerson. Paramount Pictures.

Jungle Fever (1991) Directed by S. Lee. 40 Acres & A Mule Filmworks.

Jurassic Park (1993) Directed by S. Spielberg. Universal Pictures.

Kidnap (2017) Directed by L. Prieto. Rumble Entertainment; Well Go USA Entertainment.

Kidulthood (2006) Directed by M. Huda. Revolver Entertainment.

Kill Your Friends (2015) Directed by O. Harris. StudioCanal.

Kramer vs. Kramer (1979) Directed by R. Benton. Columbia Pictures.

Ladies in Lavender (2004) Directed by C. Dance. Lakeshore International.

Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India (2001) Directed by A. Gowariker. Sony Entertainment Television (India).

Les Misérables (2012) Directed by T. Hooper. Universal Pictures.

Lethal Weapon (1987) Directed by R. Donner. Warner Bros.

Lethal Weapon 4 (1998) Directed by R. Donner.
Silver Pictures.

Little Voice (1998) Directed by M. Herman. Miramax
Films.

Love Actually (2003) Directed by R. Curtis.
Universal Pictures.

Love and Basketball (2000) Directed by G. Prince-
Bythewood. 40 Acres & a Mule Filmworks.

Madagascar (2005) Directed by T. Darnell Eric;
McGrath. DreamWorks Animation.

Major League (1989) Directed by D. S. Ward.
Paramount Pictures.

Memento (2000) Directed by C. Nolan. Newmarket.

Midnight Madness (2008) Directed by C.-H.
Belleville. Brotherhood Films.

Million Dollar Baby (2004) Directed by C. Eastwood.
Lakeshore Entertainment; Malpasso Productions.

Millions (2004) Directed by D. Boyle. Pathé
Distribution.

Mo' Better Blues (1990) Directed by S. Lee. 40
Acres & a Mule Filmworks.

Moneyball (2011) Directed by B. Miller. Columbia
Pictures.

Monster's Ball (2002) Directed by M. Forster.
Lionsgate.

Moonlight and Valentino (1995) Directed by D.
Anspaugh. Gramercy Pictures.

Mr. 3000 (2004) Directed by C. Stone III. Buena Vista Pictures.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith (2005) Directed by D. Liman. 20th Century Fox.

National Velvet (1944) Directed by C. Brown. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Notting Hill (1999) Directed by R. Michell. Universal Pictures.

O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000) Directed by J. Coen. Buena Vista Pictures.

Ocean's Thirteen (2007) Directed by S. Soderbergh. Jerry Weintraub Productions.

Offside (2009) Directed by G. Carlo. Urtext Film Productions.

Omagh (2004) Directed by P. Travis. A-Film Distribution.

On the Waterfront (1954) Directed by E. Kazan. Columbia Pictures.

Paddington (2014) Directed by P. King. StudioCanal.

Pat and Mike (1952) Directed by G. Cukor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Personal Best (1982) Directed by R. Towne. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Pete's Dragon (2016) Directed by D. Lowery. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Philadelphia (1993) Directed by J. Demme. Clinica Estetico.

Piccadilly Jim (2005) Directed by J. McKay. Myriad Pictures.

Pierrepont (2002) Directed by A. Shergold. Redbus Film Distribution.

Prefontaine (1997) Directed by S. James. Buena Vista Pictures.

Pride (2007) Directed by S. Gonera. Lionsgate.

Priest (1994) Directed by A. Bird. BBC; Miramax.

Pulp Fiction (1994) Directed by Q. Tarantino. A Brand Apart; Jersey Films.

Pusher (2012) Directed by L. Prieto. Vertigo Films; Embargo Films.

Raging Bull (1980) Directed by M. Scorsese. United Artists.

Ravenous (1999) Directed by A. Bird. 20th Century Fox.

Red (2010) Directed by R. Schwentke. Summit Entertainment.

Remember the Titans (2000) Directed by B. Yakin. Walt Disney Pictures; Jerry Bruckheimer Films.

Roald Dahl's Esio Trot (2015) Directed by D. Walsh. Endor Productions.

Rocky (1976) Directed by J. G. Avildsen. United Artists.

Rounders (1998) Directed by J. Dahl. Spanky Pictures.

Rudy (1993) Directed by D. Anspaugh. TriStar Pictures.

Running Scared (1986) Directed by P. Hyams. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Rush (2013) Directed by R. Howard. Universal Pictures.

Scandal (1989) Directed by M. Caton-Jones. Miramax Films.

School Daze (1988) Directed by S. Lee. 40 Acres & a Mule Filmworks.

Senna (2010) Directed by A. Kapadia. Universal Pictures.

Seven Psychopaths (2012) Directed by M. McDonagh. Momentum Pictures.

Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll (2010) Directed by M. Whitecross.

Shaft (1971) Directed by G. Parks. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Shame (2011) Directed by S. McQueen. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

She's Gotta Have It (1986) Directed by S. Lee. 40 Acres & a Mule Filmworks.

Silver Streak (1976) Directed by A. Hiller. 20th Century Fox.

Slumdog Millionaire (2008) Directed by D. Boyle. Warner Bros. Pictures; Celador Films; Film4.

Smack and Thistle (1991) Directed by T. Ikoli. Working Title Films.

Some Voices (2000) Directed by S. Cellan Jones. Film Four Distributors.

Somebody up There Likes Me (1956) Directed by R. Wise. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Source Code (2011) Directed by D. Jones. Summit Entertainment.

Southpaw (2015) Directed by A. Fuqua. The Weinstein Company.

Space Jam (1996) Directed by J. Pytka. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Spartacus (1960) Directed by S. Kubrick. Universal International.

Spider-Man (2002) Directed by S. Raimi. Columbia Pictures.

Starter for 10 (2006) Directed by T. Vaughan. Icon Film Distribution.

State of Play (2009) Directed by K. Macdonald. Universal Pictures.

Superfly (1972) Directed by G. Parks Jr. Warner Bros.

Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song (1971) Directed by M. Van Peebles. Cinemation Industries.

Testament of Youth (2014) Directed by J. Kent. Lionsgate.

The Amazing Spider-Man (2012) Directed by M. Webb. Columbia Pictures.

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2011) Directed by J. Madden. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

The Bingo Long Travelling All-Stars & Motor Kings (1976) Directed by J. Badham. Motown Productions.

The Blind Side (2009) Directed by J. L. Hancock.
Warner Bros. Pictures.

The Boat that Rocked (2009) Directed by R. Curtis.
Focus Features.

The Candy Show (1990) Directed by P. Hewitt.
National Film and Television School.

The Crying Game (1992) Directed by N. Jordan.
Miramax Films.

The Damned United (2009) Directed by T. Hooper.
Sony Pictures Entertainment.

The Deal (2003) Directed by S. Frears. Granada
Television.

The Duchess (2008) Directed by S. Dibb. Pathé
Distribution.

The Express (2008) Directed by G. Fleder. Universal
Pictures.

The Fabulous Baker Boys (1989) Directed by S.
Kloves. 20th Century Fox.

The Fan (1996) Directed by T. Scott. TriStar
Pictures.

The Fighter (2010) Directed by D. O. Russell.
Paramount Pictures.

The Flying Scotsman (2007) Directed by D. Mackinnon.
Verve Pictures.

The Full Monty (1997) Directed by P. Cattaneo. Red
Wave Films; Channel Four Films.

The Girl in the Café (2005) Directed by D. Yates.
BBC Wales; Tightrope Pictures.

The Girl with All the Gifts (2016) Directed by C. McCarthy. Warner Bros. Pictures.

The Green Mile (1999) Directed by F. Darabont. Warner Bros. Pictures.

The History Boys (2006) Directed by N. Hytner. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

The Hurricane (1999) Directed by N. Jewison. Universal Pictures.

The Hustler (1961) Directed by R. Rossen. 20th Century Fox.

The Iron Lady (2011) Directed by P. Lloyd. 20th Century Fox.

The Karate Kid (1984) Directed by J. G. Avildsen. Columbia Pictures.

The Killer inside Me (2010) Directed by M. Winterbottom. Revolution Films; Hero Entertainment; Indion Entertainment Group.

The Light between Oceans (2016) Directed by D. Cianfrance. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

The Lone Ranger (2013) Directed by G. Verbinski. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner (1962) Directed by T. Richardson. British Lion Films.

The Man Who Knew Infinity (2016) Directed by M. Brown. Warner Bros. Pictures.

The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones (2013) Directed by H. Zwart. Entertainment One.

The Natural (1984) Directed by B. Levinson. TriStar Pictures.

The Other Boleyn Girl (2008) Directed by J. Chadwick. Columbia Pictures.

The Parole Officer (2001) Directed by J. Duigan. Universal Pictures.

The Pelican Brief (1993) Directed by A. J. Pakula. Warner Bros. Pictures.

The Pride of the Yankees (1942) Directed by S. Wood. Samuel Goldwyn Productions.

The Queen (2006) Directed by S. Frears. Pathé Pictures.

The Replacements (2000) Directed by H. Deutch. Warner Bros. Pictures.

The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2015) Directed by J. Madden. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

The Social Network (2010) Directed by D. Fincher. Columbia Pictures.

The Special Relationship (2010) Directed by R. Loncraine. HBO; BBC.

The Terminal (2004) Directed by S. Spielberg. Amblin Entertainment.

The Theory of Everything (2014) Directed by J. Marsh. Universal Pictures.

The Tree of Life (2011) Directed by T. Malick. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

The Twilight Saga (2008). Summit Entertainment.

The Waterboy (1998) Directed by F. Coraci. Buena Vista Pictures.

Think Like a Man (2012) Directed by T. Story. Screen Gems.

Thunderpants (2002) Directed by P. Hewitt. Pathé Distribution.

Tin Cup (1996) Directed by R. Shelton. Regency Enterprises.

Top Five (2014) Directed by C. Rock. IAC Films.

Training Day (2001) Directed by A. Fuqua. Warner Bros. Pictures.

True Identity (1991) Directed by C. Lane. Dreamworks Pictures.

Unforgiven (1992) Directed by C. Eastwood. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Very Annie Mary (2001) Directed by S. Sugarman. Film4.

We Are Marshall (2006) Directed by McG. Warner Bros. Pictures.

Welcome to Sarajevo (1997) Directed by M. Winterbottom. Miramax.

When We Were Kings (1996) Directed by L. Gast. Gramercy Pictures.

Whip It (2009) Directed by D. Barrymore. Fox Searchlight Pictures.

White Goods (1994) Directed by A. Hunter Ashton.

Wimbledon (2004) Directed by R. Loncraine. Universal Pictures.

Wind Chill (2007) Directed by G. Jacobs. Sony Pictures Releasing.

Wonder Boys (2000) Directed by C. Hanson. Paramount Pictures.

Work Experience (1989) Directed by J. Hendrie.

TVography

- Blackadder* (1983, J. Lloyd) BBC.
- Black Silk* (1985, T. Ikoli) BBC.
- Chef!* (1993, P. Tilbury and L. Henry) BBC.
- Cold Feet* (1997, M. Bullen) ITV.
- Common* (2014, J. McGovern) BBC Films.
- Cracker* (1993, J. McGovern) Granada Television.
- Crucial Tales* (1996, Crucial Films) BBC.
- Cutting It* (2002, D. Horsfield) BBC.
- Daniel Deronda* (2002, T. Hooper) BBC.
- Different Strokes* (1978, J. Harris and B. Kukoff) NBC.
- Dirty Filthy Love* (2004, A. Shergold) Granada Television.
- EastEnders* (1985, J. Smith and T. Holland) BBC.
- Empire* (2015, L. Daniels and D. Strong) Fox.
- Family Matters* (1989, M. Bickley William and M. Warren) ABC.
- Funky Black Shorts* (1994, Crucial Films) BBC.
- Gavin & Stacey* (2003, J. Corden and R. Jones) BBC.
- Good Times* (1974, CBS) CBS.
- Hangin' with Mr. Cooper* (1992, J. Franklin) ABC.
- Hill Street Blues* (1981, S. Bochco and M. Kozoli) NBC.
- Human Remains* (2000, R. Brydon and J. Davis) BBC.
- I Am Not an Animal* (2004, Baby Cow) BBC.

I Spy (1965, D. Friedkin and M. Fine) NBC.

Ironside (1967, C. Young) NBC.

Keenan and Kel (1996, K. Bass) Nickelodeon.

Lenny Live and Unleashed (1989, dir. A. Harries) BSB.

Love in a Cold Climate (2002, T. Hooper) BBC.

Love Thy Neighbour (1972, Thames Television) ITV.

Mary and Martha (2013, P. Noyce) Working Title Television.

Moesha (1996, R. Farquhar, S. V. Finney and V. Spears) UPN.

Neverwhere (1996, N. Gaiman and L. Henry) BBC.

New Faces (1973, ATV) ITV.

Nighty Night (2004, J. Davis) BBC.

Not the Nine o'Clock News (1979, B. Wilson and G. Posner) BBC.

OTT (1982, Central Television) ITV.

Packet of Three (1991, Jon Blair Film Company) Channel Four.

Prime Suspect (1991, L. La Plante) ITV.

Red Dwarf (1988, G. Naylor) BBC.

Rescue Me (2002, D. Nicholls) BBC.

Rising Damp (1974, Yorkshire Television) ITV.

Roots (1977, A. Haley and J. Lee) ABC.

Rudy's Rare Records (2014, D. Brigstoke) BBC.

Sensitive Skin (2005, H. Blick) BBC.

Sex Traffic (2004, D. Yates) Channel 4.

Shameless (2004, P. Abbott) Channel 4.

Sister (1994, K. Bass, G. Gilbert and F. Shafferman) ABC.

Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em (1973, BBC) BBC.

Star Trek (1966, G. Roddenbery) NBC.

State of Play (2003, D. Yates) BBC.

The Bernie Mac Show (2001, L. Wilmore) Fox.

The Black and White Minstrel Show (1958, G. Mitchell) BBC.

The Cosby Show (1984, E. Weinberger, M. Leeson and B. Cosby) NBC.

The Fosters (1976, J. Watkins) ITV.

The Fresh Prince of Bel Air (1990, S. Borowitz and A. Borowitz) NBC.

The Jamie Foxx Show (1996, B. K. Evans and J. Foxx) WB.

The Lenny Henry Show (1984, BBC) BBC.

The Lost Prince (2003, S. Poliakoff) BBC.

The Mighty Boosh (1998, J. Barratt and N. Fielding) BBC.

The Mike Yarwood Show (1982, Thames Television) ITV.

The Morecambe and Wise Show (1968, BBC; 1978, Thames Television) BBC2; BBC1; ITV.

The Royle Family (1998, C. Aherne and C. Cash) BBC.

The Sketch Show (2001, L. Mack) ITV.

The South Bank Show: Lenny Henry (1988, London Weekend Television) ITV.

The Steve Harvey Show (1996, W. Hervey) WB.

The Way We Live Now (2001, D. Yates) BBC.

The Wire (2002, D. Simon) Blown Deadline Productions; HBO.

Three of a Kind (1982, BBC) BBC.

Tiswas (1974, ATV) ITV.

Wallander (2008, P. Martin, N. MacCormick and B. Caron) BBC.

Warriors (1999, P. Kosminsky) BBC.

What's Happening!! (1976, E. Monte) ABC.

Who Do You Do? (1972, LWT) ITV.

APPENDICES

1. Boaretto's Draft Assembly
2. NBNF (Initial) Draft
3. Ideal Reader Notes
4. The Bill Murray Notes
5. NBNF (Director's) Draft
6. Kay Stonham Data and Graphs
7. Long Questionnaire
8. Interview Responses
9. The Vulture Interview
10. 'The Road to Diversity Is Closed: Please Seek Alternate Routes'

APPENDIX 1: BOARETTO'S DRAFT ASSEMBLY

BOARETTO'S Draft Assembly

Here, he refers to my treatments and also some interviews he has done either on DVD or in print to inform a third, not yet written, draft.

1. 'Little' Khaled

(Treatment 2: Dad reference) We see Khaled, 10 years old, being locked up by his dad in his parents' bedroom. His dad is yelling and punishing him for running around the flat and breaking a lamp. Khaled is a big child for his age, entering a clumsy phase where he shatters everything he touches. The punishment is not watching the weekend football on TV. (Player interview – Sterling Muschett + John Ameichi book: Man in the Middle)

We see little Khaled mischievously looking through his parent's drawers and finding his dad's VHS tapes. He puts one in the VHS player and cuts the sound out. Images come up on screen: the magical colours of vintage NBA games, a classic Magic Johnson versus Michael Jordan confrontation! We see Khaled's eyes wide open staring at the screen.

2. The BBL game (Treatment 2 and 3: the initial game) (source: BBL game February 2010 – Guildford vs. Everton)

A gym in Guilford, 50 spectators. A British Basketball League game (the basketball equivalent of the football Premier League): the Guilford Heats versus the Everton Tigers. A lousy speaker with crap comments trying to get the crowd going. The crowd cheering episodically.

On court we watch an overweight player shooting well his three pointers, a player who never passes, a flashy American high flyer who turns the ball over too often, an opposing team player who has as many accessories (sweat bands, headbands, arm sleeves, etc) as humanely possible. (You know you are a British basketball player when Facebook page)

We see Khaled, 32, 6'6'', the captain of the Guilford Heats. He runs back and forth, shouts. He is out of breath after a couple of fast breaks. He really wants to win. But he seems to be the only one. He shouts at the apathetic and bored score table who didn't put up the last two-pointer for his team.

He is tired and replaced by the coach. On the side of the court he still walks back and forth screaming at players. They don't seem to follow his instructions, or just can't... He wants to go back on. He plays the last two minutes, gives everything he has, only to see his team lose. Not that the opposing team played much better.

Khaled sits on a folding chair on the side of the court, tired, down and resigned. Another lost game. A girl and her grand mother, short, kind faced, go to the hype looking American player to ask him for an autograph. Then we see them come to Khaled. Khaled is huge next to them. He kisses the grandmother hello – you can tell she’s a long-standing fan of the local team – and shakes the little girl’s hand. The grandmother says something nice to him and tells her grand daughter about Khaled being the best, most committed captain the Guildford Heats have had these last 10 years! A former England international she says (Mike Martin)! Khaled makes a derogatory comment about his achievements.

1

Everyone has gone back to the locker room. The spectators are leaving. Once Khaled has given the little girl his autograph, he goes too.

3. Locker room (Midnight Madness tournament and other British games)

Inside the locker room there is a big contrast with the empty sad and smelly gym. The players are laughing, taking a shower, joking. No one seems to mind about having lost.

Khaled is in a more sombre mood.

In the showers, a player cracks a joke "you know you play basketball in the UK when the ref denies you an And 1 opportunity because "this isn't the NBA". No, no, another adds "you know you play basketball in the UK when the ref is technically doing his community service hours". They all crack up. Another player adds "man you know you play basketball in the UK when you dream the Miami Heat cheerleaders will show up and in reality you get a man and his dog" another player "a couple of the visiting team players' mums" and another "the B team that forgot there was no practise tonight". Everyone is laughing out loud. (You know you are a British basketball player when Facebook page)

They all ask Khaled to make one. He hesitates. They cheer him on. Go go go! He gives in and cracks one. "You know you play basketball in the UK when the 3 table officials, the ref and the mascot make more money than the entire team have all season". Everyone starts laughing before realising this is too close to home to be funny.

The coach comes in and asks the players to hurry up the last train for London is about to leave. He tells Khaled he'll drive him back. Other players make a joke about it, showing not much more respect to their coach than they did to the game.

4. The car scene, Khaled gets fired (Treatment 2 and 3: getting fired)

It's an hour and half drive back to the capital. The distance between Guilford and London makes even home games feel like away games! (Groucho meeting: distance to drive to get to a game – last club in London went bankrupt in 2010)

The coach tells Khaled they have to let him go. Khaled is shell-shocked.

He asks the coach not to do this to him, tells him it's all he has. He tells him he's given everything to the club, he's never let him down. He played the last 10 years there, where would he go now? He asks him to keep him at least until the end of the season. He says he'll take a pay cut, can take a cut to his playing time. Nothing will do, the coach tells him he regrets. He tells Khaled he's been a great player, but he's 32 now. His legs are not what they used to

2

be. The general manager wants younger blood to lead the team. The club has new ambitions. (treatment 3)

Khaled asks who is replacing him. The coach says a great young prospect from the University of Illinois. Not another one of these 'great' American players who have been riding the pine for three years in a 'great' basketball team and then come to play 'overseas', take the money and leave. Don't be

like that the coach tells him. (Midnight Madness interview of Pierre Henry Fontaine)

– David's passion for the game is evident here. He uses all the correct terminology, gleaned from his time of making basketball documentaries and watching endless games. Only problem is that this stuff is research, not a script.

They stay there not talking until the coach drops him off. He tells him to take care. Khaled walks off, head down, barely managing to utter a goodbye after 10 years.

5. Neighbourhood (Treatment 1, 2 and 3)

We see Khaled's neighbourhood. Littered streets, small run down shops, the 24/7 liquor store that sells cheap booze, kids hanging out, acknowledging Khaled when he passes by and calling him 'big Man'.

6. Scene with mum at home (Treatment 1, 2 and 3)
(various UK and French players)

– Khaled's mum is based on my mum. She's warm, yet strict. In the drafts we've lost, she was married to the Algerian Limo driver: Bassem. In this version, she is single, Bassem is hardly mentioned, and she runs a Caribbean restaurant. My version is slightly more sympathetic than this one.

Khaled gets home, depressed and discouraged. He tells his mum it's over with the team, he got fired. Unexpectedly her face brightens up. She tells him

all this basketball nonsense is over now. You were no Luol Deng, get over it. It wasn't the same at the time, we didn't have the same opportunities Khaled replies. There was no scouting in the UK then, you know it. His mum cuts him off, it's over Khaled, wake up, move on!

Get a proper job now. What am I going to do, he asks? Take anything, do like everyone else, you think you are better than everyone else she asks? You are 32 and still live at home.

Just put on your suit and go to the job centre. My suit? That's what your dad would have done. Just go there. Tomorrow you hear me. I am not keeping you here if you stop contributing to the rent. It's tough for everyone, you think it's not tough for me?

Khaled leaves to go to his room. He can still hear his mother talking... and Cookie she's a good girl, you should be ashamed not to be helping her and Charlotte more.

He lies on his bed and closes his eyes. Around him basketball memorabilia everywhere.

7. We meet Clifford

Chicago. We see where Clifford works: it's got nothing to do with the streets of Harlem, it's corporate America at its worst.

We meet Clifford, 60, a mix of Jerry Maguire, who bamboozles talented young players who aspire to the big time promising them a future at a great high school or college, and Clint Eastwood in Million Dollar Baby: a real pain in the arse who complains about everything, especially the fact that in basketball, the game is not what it used to be and that players want the money and the fame rather than focus on 'the love of the game' (premise in initial document). On his desk three high school coach of the year awards are lined up together with other distinctions from back in the day.

Clifford is called into his manager's office. He is told he is to scout for Sentinel. A sport shoe company? Yeah they are setting up a tournament. It's a few weeks work. They pay well. You have to be kidding me? It's everything Clifford hates about the sport: the sponsors, shoe sales targets, money and marketing.

The manager tells him it's in London. All the other scouts are being despatched to hotbeds of basketball talents: US colleges, Spain, Greece, Lithuania, up and coming countries such as China. Is there anything such as basketball in London? And don't get Clifford started on the English either! (premise in initial document / character breakdown / treatment 3) The manager tells him they've arranged a meeting for him with the capital's team coach and that things will be quick and easy for him.

When he leaves the manager tells him the tournament is organised for Kenji! Now Clifford is really out of himself. We can tell there is history there. The manager has clearly had enough of Clifford and tells him he can either take the assignment or clear out.

When he comes out of his manager's office everyone is looking at him. From the other end of the room another scout shouts "Hey Cliff you know what they call dunking in England?" (player's facebook page) the guy next to him answers "dipping a biscuit into a cup of tea". The whole room bursts out laughing. The two colleagues high-five each other.

- Clifford's antipathy towards British basketball and everything to do with the UK remains constant throughout the drafts. However, his skin colour does change.

8. Khaled in a suit

Back in London, Khaled is walking down the street with his suit on, visibly not at ease: the suit, kept for special occasions and clearly not worn for a while, is cheap and too small for him.

He passes next to a group of men – the local pushers. He pumps fists with the oldest. The drug dealer compliments Khaled on the suit. Khaled tells him he's going to look for work. The other replies he looks like one of his guys once he's made some

money and asks him if he wants to work for him. He could use a big guy like him. (Treatment 1, 2 and 3: Samir / Groucho meeting) If it wasn't for that basketball court he tells him they could have been in business long ago. One of the pushers next to Khaled asks him, as if he's in the know, "are the Harlem Globetrotters still the best team?" (You know you are a British basketball player when Facebook page) Khaled is speechless. The older dealer slaps the pusher round the head.

- This changed because we all felt that Khaled didn't need a brother on the hustle. It would serve the film better if he were a 'man alone', albeit with a daughter to support.

Khaled turns down the offer, says it's not for him. They pump fists and he walks on.

9. Khaled at the job centre (Treatment 3) (source for the suit: various players in formal setting) Khaled is clearly not in his comfort zone. He's the only one with a suit there. He's clearly never set foot in the job centre before. Taller, he also stands out.

The woman opposite him is not impressed, and doesn't really care, Khaled is just one of a hundred who will pass in front of her that week. She asks him the routine questions. Age? 32? Qualifications? GCSE? 5 As. A Levels? No. University? No. Previous experience? Basketball.

Are you serious? Yes. For the last 12 years? Yes says Khaled. Is there a field of work you are looking into specifically? Khaled replies, not joking: something interesting, challenging that pays well. She looks at him, shakes her head in disbelief and tells him they'll look for something 'appropriate'. She does ask him if he realises that today a third of students graduate from A Levels with only As and A . Khaled leaves without totally understanding the implications of her question...

10. Local corner shop (Groucho meeting)

Khaled is buying a chocolate bar for his daughter before picking her up from school. He has been coming here all his life. The shop owner, Jamaican – 60 years old, congratulates him on the suit. Asks him if there is a special occasion. Khaled says he's looking for work and asks him jokingly if he has work for him. The man tells Khaled to be serious, times have never been tougher. After 30 years in this country, he is considering closing down and leaving to finish his days back home with his family.

11. Khaled with daughter (treatment 2: Khaled and Charlotte relationship)

Khaled's daughter, Charlotte, leaves her group of girlfriends and runs towards Khaled. She is a feisty little character, 7 years old, with a big mouth, acting older than she really is. She loves

her dad, but if you let her, she thinks she could give him a few life lessons.

She asks him what's with the suit. He tells her he's looking for a job and stopping playing basketball. She asks him if that means they will be able to spend more time together. He looks at her tenderly and says yes.

She tells him her school is going on a ski trip (Groucho meeting / treatment 3) and she needs money to pay for it. Khaled tells her things are tight at the moment. Do they expect all the parents to pay? Yes. Are all the parents paying? Charlotte says yes, that she doesn't want to be the only one not going. She has tears in her eyes as if already anticipating Khaled will not be able to pay. Khaled asks if her mum will help. Charlotte says that her mum says it's for him to pay for this for once, that her and her fiancé say Khaled should start acting like a man. Khaled is taken off guard by the remark. He tells her not to worry that he is about to get a job, that he will pay for it and that everything will be OK.

– The skiing trip became a lifeline for me as I wrote successive drafts of the script. Just as in *Raining Stones* (by Ken Roach) the central protagonist generates all his problems simply because he wants to buy a communion dress for his daughter's confirmation, all of Khaled's problems

are multiplied by the fact that he must pay for his daughter's skiing trip under direct orders from his ex-wife.

As he says that, his phone rings. He picks up. It's the woman from the job centre telling him they found something for him. Great says Khaled, he makes a thumbs up sign to Charlotte who is still looking sad opposite him. What is it? Janitor at the local gym centre (treatment 2 and 3). Khaled goes quiet. He looks Charlotte's way. The woman at the other end of the line is getting impatient and tells Khaled they can give it to someone else. Khaled resigns himself and says he'll take it. He walks on with Charlotte, trying to cheer her up, saying everything will work out.

12. We meet Cookie and her fiancé

Khaled and Charlotte arrive at her mum's – Khaled's ex, Cookie – house. It's much nicer than where Khaled and his mum live. Cookie opens the door and let's Charlotte in. She is 25, mixed race and beautiful.

She asks Khaled about the suit. Khaled says he went to look for work, that basketball is over. She is happy for him. She asks him if Charlotte mentioned the ski trip. He says yes. She tells him he has to do that for her, she and her fiancé can't be the ones paying for everything. He is the dad after all and needs to act like one. He tells her not to

worry he will take care of it. Cookie only looks half convinced.

- We dial down Cookie's fiancé. His attitude was a little hot towards Khaled and so we made him a little more sympathetic.

Cookie's fiancé, white, tie still on, passes behind her and looks at Khaled's cheap and undersized suit. He compliments him sarcastically on the suit and goes back to the living room with Charlotte. Khaled ignores the comment and leaves.

13. Clifford arrives in London

At the airport, on the way to London, at the hotel: some American hating on English humour...

(character breakdown)

Clifford has been put up in some shitty hotel.

14. We meet Kenji (Treatment 1)

- This was a big change. We decided to begin the film in America. I guess the production values and idea of starting with the antagonist i.e. Kenji were strong factors in this decision.

Khaled watches television. We see Kenji, 23 years old - three times MVP and NBA championship winner, basketball and tabloid legend - and his lawyers outside a US courthouse saying they have settled outside of court with the victim of an alleged sexual assault (treatment 1, 2 and 3). This puts an

end to months of tabloid stories and scandalous revelations. Kenji says he now looks forward to moving on with his life. Sentinel – his sponsor – announces that they are organising a tournament in which fans will have the opportunity to play him. Sentinel and Kenji say they want the world to know that Kenji is there for them, to play with them, to go back to the streets with them. Kenji thanks his fans for their support.

Kenji switches channels. A Member of Parliament hounded by journalists for using taxpayer's money to pay for personal expenses. The MP erupts and asks them to leave him alone 'he is busy putting the country back to work'. (Groucho meeting)

This is too much for Khaled who switches the TV off.

15. Khaled working hard at his janitor's job (treatment 3) We see Khaled working hard at his janitor's job, carrying boxes, etc It's physically demanding.

16. Clifford scouting (Groucho meeting, treatment 3) Clifford arrives at the Guildford Heat gym, complaining about the length of the drive to get there. He can't believe there is no pro basketball club in London! It's that bad he asks. The Guildford Heat coach replies "What do you expect, in a country where Wayne Rooney makes more money in

three months than the whole of England Basketball gets in a year?" (player's facebook page) Clifford asks "Wayne who?" Never mind.

Clifford gives the Sentinel spiel about how this is a great opportunity for a player to get noticed.

The coach's face contracts. He doesn't want to recommend one of his players who might then leave the team.

He bamboozles Clifford and gives him the details of two young prospects who are both back from US College for the holidays. He pauses before also giving him, Khaled's photo and profile.

If Clifford cared he would dig further, but he doesn't. His job's done. Let's get out of here as quickly as possible.

17. Humiliation (Groucho meeting, treatment 3)
Meanwhile, Khaled is cleaning the toilets at the local gym when his daughter, who is there with the school for their PE class, comes in with her school friends and sees him. Her friends laugh out loud, taunt her and she runs away, tears in her eyes.

Khaled tries to catch up with her but can't. He rages and punches the door next to him.

18. Khaled tries to talk to Charlotte

That afternoon, Khaled goes to Cookies' house to try to see Charlotte. Cookie asks him what happened, and says Charlotte locked herself in her room and doesn't want to see him.

Cookie's fiancé comes to the door and makes a comment about Khaled having gone from a £900 a month 'pro' basketball player to toilet cleaner. Khaled moves forward and the fiancé quickly backs up. Cookie stands in between them and tells Khaled to stop.

19. Clifford gets turned down by the first two prospects

Clifford calls the two young prospects. The first one refuses to participate in the tournament because he is on his way to Spain to play for a team. The second is still recovering from an injury.

20. Khaled and Clifford meet (Treatment 2 and 3)
Khaled on his way home, passes by the empty basketball courts next to his house. There are two basketball rims, with no nets. One rim is down. Kids are playing five-a-side football on the court.

Clifford is waiting for Khaled. When he sees him, he tells him he's been scouted to participate in the European tournament Sentinel is organising. Khaled is not in the mood. He tells him he's not interested. Clifford gives him the usual spiel,

tells him the coach in Guilford says he is a great player that this could be a great step up for his career. Khaled tells him to fuck off, tells him basketball is over, that "he was retired" a week ago. He walks on without waiting for Clifford to reply.

21. Dinner with Kenji and Sentinel

Clifford is fuming. With no players available he gets ready to take a bollocking from Kenji and Sentinel.

1 Possible alternative scene (source: Al's friend in Paris): Khaled gets a job at an outlet – Carphone warehouse type shop. Scene 15 we see Khaled doing street costume advertising – dressed up as a mascot or a phone – in front of the shop. He starts being tormented by kids who are jumping behind him and slapping him behind the head. He swears through the costume, he'll kill them if they don't stop, but he can't do much. In scene 17 kids again torment Khaled and when he takes the top of his costume off to chase them he comes face to face with Charlotte and her friends. Embarrassed to see her dad like this, her friends laughing, she runs away tears in her eyes.

He arrives in a restaurant where Kenji is sitting with his entourage and Sentinel executives – 'marketing gurus' you can tell have never touched a basketball in their lives.

(Treatment 1, 2, 3: Clifford and Kenji backstory and tension) Kenji is elated, the coach who left him two years riding the pine during his last two high school years and nearly ended his career before it even started, is working for him. He'll make him his bitch now and will enjoy every second of it... He asks him, a smile on his face, if he likes his hotel? Now Clifford knows where the shitty hotel choice comes from. Clifford tells Kenji he should stop feeling bitter about what happened, he wasn't first choice to play and he had to bench him (source: Michael Jordan, Charles Barclay. I can explain why this might work better from a basketball point of view than the draft). Kenji is furious but controls himself and asks Clifford how it feels to have gone from tough coach owning the high moral ground to a mercenary. Clifford replies better than going to jail. A Sentinel executive has to intervene.

The executives have players to suggest to Kenji from the other European countries. Kenji picks the players. He is careful to pick the ones that look like the better players: he won't play no fool in front of the cameras. (treatment 2 and 3) He asks Clifford to hand over what he's found. Clifford has to do something. A pause while he weights his options. There's no chance the two younger prospects will play and he decides to hand Kenji Khaled's report and photo. Just one player to

choose from? Kenji takes the piss out of Clifford. He opens Clifford's scouting report and reads extracts aloud. Even though Clifford has never seen Khaled play (!), it's acid... (Groucho meeting, treatment 3) He tells Clifford he recognises 'his style'. Kenji is bored and can't be bothered at this point. He says Khaled will have to do.

Sentinel tells Clifford that it's now his responsibility to make sure Khaled shows up at the tournament. Babysitting? asks Clifford. Kenji dismisses Clifford and tells him he can leave while the others finish having dinner. On the way out Clifford asks the sommelier for an expensive bottle of wine and tells him to put it on Sentinel's tab.

22. Throwing his basketball memorabilia away
Khaled is in his room, angry. He grabs a cardboard box and throws away the trophies, photos, posters and other press cuttings he had kept in his room. As he puts them in the box we read the headlines on old press cuttings next to photos of Khaled in his late teens, early twenties: "King K", "Land of the Giants", "The Future is getting closer", "Hot Property: Khaled Massy, a rising star". On the trophies we read, "Khaled Massi 1999 Most Improved Player", "Khaled Massi 2000 Most Valuable Player" (Midnight Madness outtakes: Pierre Henry Fontaine interview). The last item is a framed photo showing Khaled in his England team vest, the England flag

raised behind him. He looks at it for a second or two then throws it away with the rest (source: Mike Martin photo).

23. Khaled gets fired (Treatment 3)

The next day Khaled arrives late at the gym and changes into his janitor gear. His supervisor tells him he can't keep him. He's late and he broke the door the day before.

24. Khaled alone

Khaled walks out the gym, not looking while crossing the street. He nearly gets run over by a driver who shouts racial abuse (Revolution office meeting) at him while driving away.

Khaled alone, on a bridge overlooking the railway tracks, he looks empty. Powerless.

25. Khaled and Clifford meet again (treatment 3)

When Khaled sees Clifford waiting for him next to the court he lets go "not you again".

Clifford this time goes in strong. Listen I'm offering you a chance to play some of the best in Europe and if you can, the opportunity to take on an NBA All star in front of the whole world and you're not even going to try?

Khaled says he's been promised a lot before and that he's had enough. At 32 he stopped believing in fairy tales.

Clifford tells him that he might have had to wait longer than others for an opportunity. But at least he gets a shot to prove in front of the world he can beat those guys. Most players never get that chance, they would kill for it!!

Despite Khaled's resistance, Clifford knows all too well which buttons to press. He is not emotional, just 'delivering' the speech to try to convince Khaled to join.

What else do you have Clifford asks? The question 'stings' Khaled. They both say nothing. The silence is uncomfortable.

Khaled breaks the silence and says he would need to convince his mum first. His mum? Clifford is a little taken aback: Khaled is 32 years old... After a pause Clifford shrugs and says no problem. That's what he does for a living after all: talking to players and their families. Are you sure asks Khaled. No problem replies Clifford.

26. Clifford and Khaled's mum

They arrive at the Caribbean restaurant (treatment 1, 2 and 3) where Khaled's mum works. Clifford comes in thinking he will convince her easily. As soon as he mentions the tournament she bursts out. She asks him if he understands what he is talking about. Khaled has finally turned the page and he comes along to drag him back again into basketball?

Does he understand how much basketball has taken away from Khaled? How it feels for a mother to see her only son drift and waste his life away like he did? Playing night and day, not seeing friends, not having girlfriends or a family. For what? He was promised a US education only to come back after 6 months. The man who made these promises was just like him she says. He wasn't there when Khaled came back, to deal with the depression was he? People like you clipped my son's wings when he was just 15 years old and have been doing so ever since. Today, he's 32, still lives at home. His girlfriend has left him taking his daughter to be with another man and there's nothing he can or will do about it. He's a janitor at the gym! What good did all you people do for him? (Midnight Madness outtakes and other players' interviews / book: Heaven is a Playground)

Clifford is taken aback. He's just been served, by Khaled's mum, all the pain he's been causing, willingly/knowingly or not, to players and their families these past years. Everything he hates about what basketball and himself have become. Clifford tries to say it's just a couple of nights coming up. Khaled's mum tells him he doesn't understand, Khaled will train night and day, he'll be caught up again, it's like a magnet, a drug. Basketball took everything away from him and the worst thing is that he can't see it and he can't stop it!

She turns to Khaled and asks him to confirm he is still contributing to the rent. Khaled is in pieces. He mutters that he's been fired from his work. His mum bursts out again. She tells him to look around and see how hard it is for her. She asks him if he thinks this is normal. She tells him to choose: he either pulls out of that tournament and looks for a new job or he moves out and she doesn't want to see him at home again. (Groucho meeting: force Khaled to take a difficult, potentially life changing decision)

She tells them to leave the restaurant, it is about to open.

27. Clifford's realisation

Clifford is shaken. He now measures the implications for Khaled, how much this could affect him. For the first time we hear him talk honestly without any back thoughts. He asks Khaled to look in his heart and that maybe it's not such a good idea after all. He tells him to call him at the hotel once he's had time to think things through. Whatever his decision is, he'll respect it.

28. Khaled on his own

ACT 2

29. Khaled's mum comes home

Khaled's mum comes home. She goes straight to Khaled's room. She turns on the light. On the bed

are Khaled's keys. He's packed some clothes and belongings and has left.

She sits on the bed and breaks into tears. She's lost him.

30. Khaled at Clifford's hotel

Khaled arrives at Clifford's hotel.

Khaled tells Clifford basketball did take everything away from him. Maybe this is his chance to take it back before moving on.

He asks Clifford if he can put him up.

After all the nonsense Clifford has had to cope with in his career these past years (and past few days) from players, managers, coaches, other scouts and apparel manufacturers, he now stands in front of a player who has sacrificed everything he had for the sport he loves gaining nothing in return and who is ready to gamble the little he has left for his passion for the game. Clifford takes Khaled by the shoulder and tells him he can stay. (notes. Internal motivation rather than money for Khaled and witnessing the love of the game for Clifford) Clifford is about to put on his coaching cap again to train Khaled for the tournament. Khaled in turn becomes Clifford's one chance at doing good (premise from initial document).

31. Kenji and the shooting clinic (source: Lylia Bailey court visit by Michael Jordan in South London. Other NBA stars in London, slam magazine article) (parallel with brand, business and sport idea in treatment 2)

Kenji is 'coaching' a shooting clinic for under 10-year-old players at a brand new court in South London, renovated at Sentinel's expense as part of their "legacy program". A huge Sentinel logo features on the wall above the court where the kids are playing.

The kids are doing their best to try to shoot the ball at the rim. For some of them the ball is too heavy and falls short of touching the board or anything else. It's touching. They all look up to Kenji.

Kenji plays to perfection his part as the superstar giving back to the community. His entourage is on the side of the court, looking bored. A Sentinel executive looking at the kids and the huge logo above their heads tells his assistant "they're never too young to learn".

Sports journalists, national press and international TV crew are there to lap up the PR operation and to try to get a first interview since Kenji's settlement outside of court. They quickly find out that no questions are aloud regarding the recent scandal though; Kenji simply delivers the Sentinel spiel about the up an coming tournament. He introduces Khaled's name as the UK contender from Hackney who will participate in the Cage tournament. (treatment 3: media announcement)

- This changed significantly. We needed more conflict between Kenji and the press. Various versions were written.

At the end of the interview, Kenji walks to the kids who are all seating on the floor and whispers something to them. They all start to chant Kenji's name in front of the cameras while Kenji and his entourage leave the gym (Midnight Madness outtake at The Score basketball court). On the way out, the Sentinel executive tells Kenji 'nice touch, the kids' ...

32. Khaled talks to Charlotte

Khaled goes to meet his daughter outside school. She is alone, excluded from the group of girls she used to be with. Charlotte was expecting her mum to come and pick her up. She walks away with him quickly as if ashamed and as if she doesn't want the other girls to see him.

Khaled tells her he is no longer working at the gym. He explains to Charlotte he loves her and that she should not listen to the others. Charlotte tells him she loves him too but that she wished he was more like the other dads.

Khaled tells her he's been scouted for an important basketball tournament. Charlotte seems unmoved until Khaled tells her he will be on television if he makes it to the finals. He's got Charlotte's attention now. He hugs her and tells her he'll do everything he can to make her proud of him.

Khaled asks her if she wants to spend time with him and come training with him. She says yes.

(treatment 2: ideal that Khaled and Charlotte bond again on the basketball court)

33. First training session

Khaled is late for training, Clifford is pissed off. He can't believe Khaled brought his daughter with him. What is this, a nursery? Clifford – daughter banting. She'll give it back to Clifford!

Clifford explains to Khaled the tournament, the one-on-one qualifications in the Cage tournament in Paris, the final against Kenji being taken back to the other finalist's neighbourhood. He tells him all his European opponents are young and hungry, all play basketball in much bigger and stronger leagues than the British Basketball League. There is a Spaniard, a Lithuanian, an Italian, a Greek, a French, a German, the rest of the Eastern European contingent, etc (premise from the initial document) Clifford tells him that even if he is a good enough basketball player to win, he will need to make it through the night. He needs stamina! (Groucho meeting: obstacle) Without it, he'll never go the distance at his age: he'll be on his knees before midnight, let alone take on Kenji in the final.

Clifford tells Khaled to start running up and down the hill next to the court. And since the 'little

monster' is there too he tells Khaled he can use her as weight and carry her while running. Charlotte enjoys being carried by her dad while he runs. Khaled a little less... Later, we see Khaled jumping rope: single bounce, crossovers, front and back, alternate jump. Charlotte imitates her dad not far, training with an imaginary rope. After a while she stops, takes out a chocolate bar, seats on a bench and eats. No need for a gym. Clifford has devised a number of drills and exercises using Khaled's urban environment. [drills to come] Reference: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCdRgAQ-rwA>

There is a huge contrast between the professionalism and rigour Clifford brings Khaled, with the beginning of the film and the BBL coach. Clifford is one tough, uncompromising man. Khaled doesn't complain and pushes himself to the limit. His age shows in this first session though and he struggles.

34. Interview

A local politician and a Sentinel executive arrive at the court interrupting the training session. The Sentinel executive hardly acknowledges Clifford. It's a PR operation. They've brought a photographer, a BBC journalist and a camera crew with them.

The politician in front of the camera says he is proud someone will get to represent their neighbourhood on the international scene. They take photos and film next to the rim that hasn't been brought down. For the photo op and in front of the camera, Khaled lifts Charlotte to the rim and lets her dunk the basketball. She is elated.

Before leaving, the politician wishes Khaled good luck. The Sentinel executive gives him a folder with all the details to get to the tournament, etc The executive leaves without saying goodbye to Clifford.

Clifford on the side of the court is boiling with rage. He hates all this circus and asks Khaled if they can now move on. Charlotte comments back to Clifford and they resume training.

35. End of training

[More drills to come]

Throughout the drills, Charlotte is now sitting, looking at her dad attentively.

Soon, it is too dark to continue training. Khaled explains there are no floodlights on outside courts in the UK to avoid teenagers congregating around them or playing at night... (player's facebook page)They leave.

36. Cookie is furious

Charlotte is delighted when she arrives back home. She tells her mum she's going to be on television. But Cookie is furious, she sends her to her room. Charlotte kisses her dad goodbye and goes upstairs. Cookie asks Khaled what he thinks he's doing. She told him to bring her straight back home after school. She was really worried something had happened. Charlotte also has homework to do. Khaled tells her she came training with him and they then had to do an interview with the BBC news team. She says she thought he had quit basketball. Khaled tells her he's taking part in this last tournament. Cookie stops him, she's heard it all before. Just make sure you come up with the money to pay for her ski trip. She tells him she'll pick up Charlotte herself next week and she goes inside. When the door is locked, Khaled hears her fiancé make a comment and the two of them getting into an argument. He leaves.

37. Second meeting with Sentinel

Sentinel tells Clifford they heard he was training Khaled and even sharing his hotel room with him.

That's beyond the call of duty. They smirk.

Sentinel decides to set up the finals with Kenji the day after the winner comes back from the Cage tournament. It's logistically possible and would get Kenji back to the US quicker for some more PR there. (Groucho meeting)

Clifford protests, says it's not fair on the players who would not have time to recover after playing through the night. Sentinel ask him when he

suddenly became concerned about players. They remind Clifford all this is just a sham, a PR operation. (treatment 3: idea it's a fix) Clifford doesn't want to be a part of this anymore and resigns.

38. Clifford in his hotel room. Gets fired from his job in US

There is a message from Clifford's boss at his hotel telling him he is fired after what happened with Sentinel.

Fatherly talk between Clifford and Khaled where Khaled opens up more about his life and Clifford about his. Link this conversation to scene 43 – borrowing the money for Charlotte.

Clifford falls asleep drinking.

39. Cookie – Fiancé argument

Meanwhile Charlotte is watching television with Cookie and her fiancé. Charlotte is waiting for the news segment about her and her dad. It comes up and we see Khaled lifting her up to the rim. The commentator now praises Khaled for being a role model in his community for younger kids. Charlotte is ecstatic. Cookie's fiancé is not though. He's jealous of the attention Khaled receives and he feels betrayed by Charlotte.

He says Khaled has always been a good for nothing, that he is the one who has provided Cookie and her

daughter with everything. Cookie shouts back not to talk like that about Khaled in front of Charlotte. Charlotte goes to her room, while a violent argument ensues.

40. Khaled's mum

We see Khaled's mum alone in her flat in front of the television. A phone in her hand ready to phone Khaled. At the last minute she decides against it and puts the phone down.

41. Second training session

- This sequence is still in the script.

It's Saturday. Khaled's former teammates from the Guilford Heat unexpectedly turn up at the court to train with him and to support him. They all talk and laugh, there is a strong bond between these players, a sense of community in a country where their passion for basketball is not recognised or considered.

Cookie arrives with Charlotte who wanted to join Khaled rather than stay with her mum and fiancé for the traditional Saturday afternoon activity.

Khaled's face lightens up when he sees Cookie and Charlotte. All the Guilford Heat players know Cookie and embrace her. It's a big reunion that brings back a lot of memories for everyone. They know Charlotte too, even though they hadn't seen

her since she was a toddler. Cookie says she has to leave – reluctantly.

Clifford is on the side of the court exasperated with all these reunions and digressions. He asks if they can now start the training session. The Guilford players introduce themselves to him. Clifford looks at them and shakes his head in disbelief. He mutters that he hopes one of them doesn't die during the training session or he'll end up coaching prison basketball the rest of his life.

We see Khaled and his teammates go through new, harder drills than in the first training session. Khaled, shirt off, is pushing himself harder, spurred on by his willingness to finish the drills first. He accelerates throughout the drills. [Series of drills to come] Once the drills are over none of the players can stand on their feet properly.

Khaled, exhausted, leans against a wall out of breath.

Clifford now throws a ball at Khaled. He tells him to play one on two against his former teammates. Games in five by ones. The pair of defenders rotating.

Khaled is tired, he drags himself and misses shots. Clifford shouts at him. Where are your guts, have you nothing left? This is how it will feel at two in the morning in the Cage. And it won't be the

'Magnificent Seven' (book Man in the Middle) either, it will be a Spanish, a Italian or a Lithuanian pro contender.

Khaled tries harder but his legs are unresponsive, his feet are like rooted to the floor. His hands on his knees, he is gasping for air.

Clifford shouts some more: even if you made it through Kenji will defeat and humiliate you in front of everyone if that's all you have.

Khaled summons all the strength he has left to shake off one defender, then the second and go for the dunk. But Khaled on his way down falls to the ground with cramps.

Clifford: "maybe you don't have it in you kid. I'm too old for this." Clifford throws in the towel and leaves.

His teammates rally around Khaled. They help him stand up.

They all leave. Before they do though they each embrace with Khaled, telling him not to worry too much about that crazy old man and asking him to represent for UK basketball.

Khaled walks back with Charlotte, head down. Before she goes in the house Charlotte hugs him and reassures him things will be alright.

42. Kenji in the Claridges gym (Groucho meeting / treatment 3)

Kenji is training in all the comfort and luxury of the Claridge gym. He is handling some serious weights. A member of his entourage is there to hand him a towel, talk with him. He chats up a posh young blond woman who is exercising on machine not far from him. She flirts back.

43. Khaled borrows money (Groucho meeting)

Khaled goes to the local corner shop and asks the Jamaican owner for the 400 pounds he needs to pay for Charlotte's trip. The owner tells him they are really stretched at the moment but he will see what he can do to help.

He reminisces and asks Khaled if he remembers when he was little and used to come in everyday for a week when he thought the new Slam magazine should be out?

He tells him he saw him on television he is proud of him, that he hopes he will do well.

44. Khaled meets with Cookie and Charlotte (Groucho meeting)

Khaled goes to Charlotte's school and sees Cookie outside waiting. In the car on the other side of the street her fiancé is waiting staring at them. Khaled gives Cookie the money for Charlotte's trip. When the daughter arrives, she jumps in Khaled's arms. Cookie tells her that Khaled brought the money to pay for her trip. Charlotte kisses him. While Khaled and Cookie are talking, her fiancé honks. Khaled asks Charlotte if he's looking at

them. She says yes. Khaled moves his body in order to hide Cookie and Charlotte from the fiancé's sight. The fiancé slowly moves the car forward to try to bring them back in his sight. Khaled moves a little too and takes them out of sight again. Charlotte is laughing. Cookie 'softly' says they have to leave. She wishes him good luck in Paris. Charlotte tells him to win so she can come to see him take on Kenji in the final, in London.

45. Clifford tries to call his children

Clifford is in the hotel room. He picks up the phone and calls his ex-wife and children. We can hear the children in the background saying they don't want to talk to him. The ex-wife repeats this and hangs up.

Clifford lies on the bed immobile. He fights back tears.

46. Khaled and Clifford on their way to Paris
(Premise from the initial document, Treatment 2)

You thought the English were bad, wait for the American hate on French humour...

47. The cage tournament (Nike Battleground DVD – Los Angeles) There is an argument between Clifford and Sentinel: Sentinel doesn't let

Clifford in to be with Khaled. Clifford tells Khaled to win it and bring it back to London.

Inside all the other players have either come with their girlfriends, brothers, or friends for support. Khaled is on his own. Focused, closed.

A number of spectators are wearing Kenji's team jersey. Fans holding banners reading "Stand tall Kenji" "We believe in you".

Kenji, in plain clothes, comes in the cage. He passes next to the players , including Khaled, not taking notice. He shoots and sinks five three-pointers in a row. He makes the introductory announcement on the mike.

6pm - The cage tournament starts

Everyone wants to play Khaled. He's British, he's old. For the others, despite his size, he is the easy one to beat.

6.30pm Kenji leaves the tournament, not really interested in what will happen. He'd rather go for dinner.

It's ball till you fall. (basketball expression)
[Details to come].

Outside we see Clifford waiting, asking exhausted players coming out if Khaled is still in the competition. The English? A player asks with a Spanish accent. Yeah he is. Clifford waits on
At the end of the night the audience has nearly all left or fallen asleep on the stools.

Khaled wins. He walks out of the sports arena. The sun is rising over Paris (Midnight Madness tournament at 6am). Clifford is there, seating, waiting for him. He sees Khaled carrying a huge

trophy. He smiles and they fall in each other's arms.

Khaled calls Charlotte and Cookie to let them know. It's 5am in London but they are waiting by the phone. They are ecstatic.

ACT 3

48. Khaled and Clifford on their way back to London Khaled talks about the size of the event, about the crowd and how enthusiastic they were about basketball. He says, if only it was like that in the UK.

Clifford tells him he needs to rest and recover before the final against Kenji.

(Groucho meeting: obstacles)

46. Self doubt (Groucho meeting: obstacle)

It's the evening, Khaled looks down. Clifford asks him what is happening. Khaled asks him what's going to happen after the tournament? Once it's finished whether he wins or loses he'll go back to his life. Nothing will change.

Clifford tells him not to think about after.

Tomorrow is your day, your chance at showing the world you can do it. Everything will have changed afterwards. Whether you win or lose. He taps Khaled's heart with his hand.

49. Front page news (Groucho meeting, treatment 3: Khaled in the media)

The next morning, we see Khaled's mum buying The Voice and a national newspaper. There is a full

page picture of Khaled on the front of the Voice and on the bottom right of the national newspaper is a photo of Khaled holding the trophy in Paris. The title reads "British underdog takes on American All Star in London tonight".

50. Kenji's concerns

Kenji has the papers spread out in front of him while having breakfast at Claridges.

He complains to the Sentinel executives and his entourage that this kid is getting much more attention than he is.

The Sentinel 'marketing gurus' reassure him that that is exactly what they want. It will make him look good. They flatter him telling him not to forget Khaled 'plays basketball'... while he is 'a basketball player'. Kenji smiles, full of himself again: "no I'm a basketball star". (Midnight Madness outtakes: Jackson and Kase interview)

51. Clifford's scouting report (groucho meeting, treatment 3)

To get back at Clifford, a Sentinel executive gives Khaled the initial scouting report Clifford wrote about Khaled. It reflects how Clifford was before meeting Khaled, cynical and hurtful. On the way out, the Sentinel executive passes Clifford and tells him 'good work'.

Khaled confronts Clifford. He feels betrayed.

Clifford tells him Sentinel is trying to get back at him for resigning, to play with Khaled's mind

before the final. He asks Khaled not to let go now. But it's too late, Khaled is not listening to him anymore. He asks Clifford to leave him alone.

52. Pre game interview between Khaled and Kenji (Treatment 2)
53. Clifford goes to see Khaled's mum (Groucho meeting, Treatment 3)

Clifford goes to see Khaled's mum at her restaurant to thank her for her eye opening speech earlier. He tells her he is leaving.

He also tells her it's the most important night of her son's life tonight and that she should be there for him. She needs to understand in a way he is doing all this for Charlotte and her.

- In the final script, Khaled's daughter Charlotte becomes involved with a local drug dealer: D'Angelo. This was a relatively new strand that emerged via redrafting and gave us much more conflict between Cookie and Khaled, and Khaled and D'Angelo than we had before.

While she serves him her 'world famous' jerk chicken – something that could change Clifford's impression of London forever. She asks him why he is not going. He explains.

54. The final – the setting (Nike Battleground DVD – Cergy) An outside court in Hackney surrounded by barriers. It's night and floodlights have been installed to light up the court.

An unexpected large crowd has been gathering for hours. Thousands of individuals are standing around the court. The young ones are loud, the older ones wait in silence. A lot are locals, we recognise the local shopkeeper with his family, the boys from scene 5, , Khaled's Guildford Heat teammates and the grand mother with her grand daughter rfrom scene 2. Every basketball fan in a radius of 200 miles of London has also come down and there are thousands of them!

Khaled's former coach at the Guilford Heat is giving an interview to a UK television channel. He boasts that Khaled has played his entire career at the Guilford Heat. He squeezes in at the end of the interview that they are looking for a new sponsor, and asks any potential sponsor to contact him directly at the club.

An American network interviews Jimmy Rogers, 70 years old – legendary Brixton Topcats coach cameo, cap screwed on his head, his trademark 1970s big glasses on. They ask him about discovering Luol Deng (the Chicago Bulls franchise player who comes from Brixton). He ignores the question and goes into his usual rant in front of the cameras: 'basketball is the second team sport after football in this country in participation, three times more people over 16 play basketball every week rather than rugby (...) but it's not an English sport and we have no funding (...) no one will tell me

basketball is not popular in this country. Look at the turnout tonight, it means the world to these kids'. Journalists love him, he's the real deal, a 'great client'. (Midnight Madness outtakes: Jimmy Rogers interview / Sports England data)

54. Kenji before the final and his entourage
His entourage tells Kenji that he is a 'strong mother', that 'he's going to hurt some people tonight'. They tell him to trounce and destroy Khaled', 'to make him lose his basketball virginity'.

55. Khaled before the final
Khaled can hear the crowd roaring. He knows this could be the greatest – or worst – night of his life. He stays alone, silent before the finals. He stretches, eyes closed.

56. Khaled's mum and Clifford rushing to get to the finals
We see Clifford and Khaled's mum rushing together to get to the finals.

57. The finals – the start (Nike Battleground DVD – Cergy)
Khaled arrives on his own. The atmosphere is electric. The crowd erupts and people chant his name. Khaled can't believe the size of the crowd there and the atmosphere. It is much bigger and delirious even than Paris. He is overwhelmed.

Kenji makes his way to the court with his entourage, fronting. At first he thinks the crowd is cheering him on. Then he realises they are cheering for Khaled.

Angered by this, he arrives on the court and yells: "which one is the referee? Because I'm going to kill the other guy". (Joe Frasier / book Loose Balls)

Kenji starts warming up. We can hear boos coming from the crowd. He throws a couple of Hail Mary to taunt them... and sinks them in! His entourage is applauding him. The Sentinel executives did not expect the crowd to be hostile.

They look nervous.

Khaled is warming up, the crowd cheers each time he shoots, even if he misses.

Charlotte and Cookie arrive a few minutes before the game starts astound by the size of the turn out. They spot Khaled's mum and Clifford and they all push their way through the crowd to get to the side of the court. Charlotte calls out to her dad. He comes their way. He embraces her. Khaled asks Cookie where her fiancé is. She replies sharply 'not coming'. She looks excited and nervous for him. Khaled embraces his mum and makes a comment asking Clifford to leave. His mum puts her arms around his neck and tells him he should stop: it's not the first time someone's given him a bad report, but

it's the first time in his life someone's given him a break.

Kenji turns to Clifford and yells "Bring that kid here Clifford. You're so hot for him. I'll ruin him tonight. I'll break his heart just by talking to him." (book Heaven is a Playground)

Clifford tells Khaled Kenji will come out banging and jabbing, worked up and all. Not to let himself be intimidated.

Khaled and Kenji are facing each other, listening to the referee's instructions. Khaled's face is immobile and closed. Kenji amused, smiles, confident he will win.

The final starts. Kenji charges Khaled who falls back. The American commentator erupts "ooooh that's got to hurt the Queen!" (...) (Midnight Madness game in Los Angeles)

On the next play. Khaled charges Kenji. The tone is set. [Game details to come]

58. The end scene

(...) Khaled is down by one with one second to go. After a game of extreme intensity, Kenji now thinks it's all over and that he has won. He has his arms raised and tongue out, breathing heavily, facing the crowd.

He turns to see... Khaled suddenly jumping up, gathering all the strength he has left and 'POSTERISING' Kenji with a monstrous dunk: his chin

on the rim and his crotch in Kenji's face. Kenji falls back.

The final buzzer sounds just as Khaled sinks the dunk in. The commentator erupts "OMG! He's just served him the Full English!!" (Sam Neeter, Back British Basketball video clip)

The referee looks at the Sentinel executives who's faces have turned blue. They gesture to the referee not to count the two pointer.

The referee disallows the basket.

Kenji relieved has his arms in the air. He's won! Khaled looks down.

Neither realising that the crowd after the posterisation has pushed down the barriers behind them to invade the court.

What a dunk! What a game stopper! The crowd is going crazy!

Khaled's former teammates rush to him. Khaled's mum embraces Clifford and thanks him. Cookie and Charlotte also rush to his side. Khaled takes Charlotte in his arms. His mum tells him she's proud of him. Cookie embraces him and congratulates him. She passes her hand in his hair and looks him in the eyes. She stops just short of kissing him... she can't: the crowd is going wild, they engulf Khaled and lift him and Charlotte up. They parade them around the court. It is now clear to everyone, that notwithstanding the score, Khaled was heroic

on court and has well and truly come out a winner tonight!

- I think in the new version, Cookie comes and helps with Khaled's knee at a critical point in the game. There is no sense she should still be with Khaled – and that's probably right.

We see Kenji surrounded by his entourage leaving the court. He is arguing with the Sentinel executives, gesturing with his arms.

Khaled asks the crowd carrying him to let him come down. He walks towards an isolated figure on the side of the court who is looking on.

When he gets closer we recognise Clifford. The two men stand in front of each other before falling in each others arms.

Khaled tells Clifford "thank you", Clifford replies "no thank you".

The game, the posterisation and the celebration are on their way to You Tube and every television channel around the world.

ENDS

APPENDIX 2: NBNF (INITIAL) DRAFT

NO BLOOD NO FOUL

by

LENNY HENRY

THE INITIAL DRAFT

Peter Bennett Jones

PBJ Management

22 Rathbone Street

London W1T 1LG

Phone 0207 287 1112

"NO BLOOD NO FOUL" APRIL 14 ...

FADE IN: AGAINST BLACK:

TITLES - LUPE FIASCO'S 'SUPERSTAR'- shots of CHICAGO-and its sports history, SOLDIER FIELD : The Bears, A PHOTOGRAPH OF football legend JIM MCMAHON; WRIGLEY FIELD:The Cubs- PHOTOGRAPH of baseball legend KERRY WOOD;UNITED STADIUM-The Chicago Bulls! PHOTOGRAPHS of Basketball gods-SCOTTIE PIPPIN, MICHAEL JORDAN, AND KENJI BURTON

TITLES END : On Burton's unbeatable PHYSIQUE CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO COURTHOUSE - DAY

A September morning and TRAFFIC NOISE accompanies the SOUND OF A BASKETBALL THUMP-THUMPING as 3 BLACK TEENS toss their ball between parked cars.

BOY 1

I'ma be Lebron James - muscle yo ass all over the court...

BOY 2

James? What? I'm a be Micheal Jordan. Game over fool!

BOY 3

I'ma be Kenji Burton n' kick all ya'll's asses!

They flow past THE COURTHOUSE- CAMERAS, REPORTERS, RADIO and PAPARAZZI wait. A microphone stacked podium lingers. Suddenly, movement. The courthouse doors open and KENJI BURTON of the Chicago Bulls steps to the podium; FLASHBULBS explode! Burton stands like a god - suited ,booted, wing tipped and snake hiped. He smiles and the women get crazy.

A PAPARAZZI gets too close and BAM! POOKIE MCINTYRE Burton's P.A. shoves the guy - HARD. Kenji signals Pookie to calm down and then proceeds.

KENJI

Look man - I wanna ... pay respect to my lawyer Billy Nightingale, who fought real hard on this case - Brother Billy, thank you man.

A smartly dressed lawyer, BILLY NIGHTINGALE nods, masking disappointment like a pro.

KENJI (CONT'D)

I hope Ms Munroe feels we treated her fairly, and that this case is now ...

SUDDENLY a MAN in a balaclava RUNS at Kenji,
THROWING something as hard as he can -

MAN (O.S.)

FUCKIN' RAPIST!

Burton is SPLASHED with YELLOW PAINT! The guy runs
FAST with Pookie and the POLICE in pursuit!

BURTON

Motha...FUCKA!

CUT TO:

EXT/ INT.THE TAYLOR APARTMENT/ A PRIVATE GYM - DAY

CHICAGO...ESTABLISH- An expensive UPTOWN apartment
building- INT. PRIVATE GYM CONTINUOUS

An attractive WOMAN (White 30'S), pounds the
treadmill. This is CAMERON TAYLOR. She watches the
Burton fiasco on TV.

CAMERON

Fudge and Doody!

She stops and is WHIPPED backwards by the treadmill!

A loud THUD follows.

CUT TO:

**EXT/INT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BLOCK /CLIFFORD JAMES'S
BEDROOM - DAY**

A shitty apartment block -one step up from a motel.
LOW LIFES congregate on the corner, an old abandoned
CHEVY on blocks and a broken NEON sign...

INT.CLIFFORD'S BEDROOM CONTINUOUS

The crappy tiny TV is blasting out the Kenji Burton
case loud.

Nasty green wallpaper has peeled to reveal nasty
green damp underneath. A quart of Jack Daniels
stands on the bedside table.

A photograph of a gorgeous bikini clad BLACK WOMAN,
sitting poolside, toasting us cheekily.

This picture is taped to the wall next to the bed
so that whenever whoever is in bed awakes , the
first thing he sees is this photograph.

Watching Kenji Burton get redecorated is CLIFFORD
JAMES - a handsome, middle aged, kinda naked guy in
just socks and basketball cap; he's on the bed,
laughing and coughing so hard he TUMBLES out and
onto the floor.

BAM!

From behind the bed:

CLIFFORD

Now THAT ... is funny!

He yells at the screen

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Hey Kenji!(Sings)"They call me mellow yellow- quite rightly -they call me mellow yellow - quite rightly.."

TheHe jams his butt against the screen -

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Hey Kenji!Dig this - dig this -Kenji -it's my booty!(raps) my bum is on your lips , my bum is on your lips and if I'm lucky (forgets words so improvs) lalalalalalalalalalala a little bit-

He grabs the Jack -gargles, swallows. Wipes his mouth.

Watches TV

INSERT: On TV Kenji is completely smeared in yellow paint, helpless.

Clifford laughs and coughs supporting himself on the be of the bed

CLIFFORD (TO HIMSELF)

(CONT'D)

Fuck! I may die...

The phone rings. Clifford picks it up... caller I.D. says 'Blocked'

The phone keeps ringing. Clifford thinks - then answers.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

'Lo He listens.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Sup Dave? (listens)Yeah. I nearly coughed out my liver laughing at that shit.

Tells him he's the best illegal recruiter & will get Deshaun Moore no probs.

EXT.THE HOT SPOT NIGHTCLUB.NIGHT

Clifford is flung into the garbage bags! ENORMO the bouncer picks him up and brushes him off, turns him around

ENORMO

Mr James. You ain't welcome in the club no more. You can't be tryin' to recruit players when they

gettin' they freak on. Management says I gotta put my foot in yo' ass to show you I mean business.

BAM!

CLIFFORD

I got a pretty good idea that you do mean-

The security guy kicks Clifford in the ass.

ENORMO

Get the fuck outta here- fuckin' has been.

BAM!

WHAT THE -

Enormo kicks Clifford again- BAM!

ENORMO

If I see you round here again, I'ma git Big Charles to bus' a cap in your ass.

CLIFFORD

He's the guy who got me in this shithole in the first fuckin' place.

BAM! One more for luck. Enormo heads off into the club and Clifford walks off, lopsidedly down the street.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

I want my 20 dollars back!

Enormo shakes his head and continues.

EXT/INT: GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE.NIGHT

Establish Guildford, The Friar's shopping centre, the red and cream single decker BUSES wobbling up and down...and finally GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE - a noticeboard proclaims TONIGHT: BASKETBALL! GUILDFORD HEAT VS EVERTON TIGERS!!!

INT:THE GYM. NIGHT

The end of the first half of a basketball game -

A tall ,striking, intense man (30 BLACK) wearing a well worn but smart dark blue suit with navy shirt ,watches the game.

He makes notes... His face is a picture of passion. He loves basketball; this is KHALED MASSI..

A 12 year old mixed race girl sits next to him. This is Khaled's daughter, CHARLOTTE. She's is just as passionate about basketball as her DAD normally -but tonight she's preoccupied...she fiddles with a LETTER as her father jumps up and down with frustration

EVERTON TIGERS are dominating play and their
ATTACKER CHEATS and manages to scrape a quick basket
before the whistle blows.

Khaled stands up and bangs on a nearby pillar in
anger!

KHALED

(angry stuff about cheating)

CHARLOTTE HAS A LETTER IN HER HAND WHICH SHE IS
NERVOUS ABOUT

Khaled vaults the railing and legs it to the locker
room.

Charlotte sighs.

CUT TO:

INT.THE HEAT LOCKER ROOM. NIGHT

The TEAM sit in a semi circle ,munching oranges and
rehydrating, listening; Khal's giving a pep talk and
he really knows his stuff

MAN

Big J - their guy's all over you,man! You should have 'Welcome' tattooed on your arse!

Big J a very tall dude with an Afro's is indignant

BIG J

Khaled , he's fast man,what am I supposed to do?

KHALED

You're stronger than he is! When they're fast ,we muscle em off the court inniy? Dreadie ,am I right?

Another tall PLAYER with dreads and a lisp stops drinking water for a second

DREADIE

The the geether's are thlick though man- they're playing fatht , end to end ball!

KHALED

Well lets out think em and shut em down. Defence!

Twin behemoths both 7 foot something look a bit sheepish

KHALED (CONT'D)

Wake Up!!!!!!!!!!

The Team laugh, cheered a bit by this....

A guy REYNOLDS (40's) in a tracksuit and baseball cap enters

KHALED (CONT'D)

Anyway, man , you know what you gotta do, we say this every week - you've got the skills -you know how to use em - you can beat these guys - just go out there and show em your passion man!

The Guy clears his throat.

REYNOLDS

Khal? Can I.. have a word with you outside for a second?

KHALED

Sure.

Reynolds leads the way , Khal follows him out- The PLAYERS react ,even though we don't know why...

INT. THE CORRIDOR. CONTINUOUS

Reynolds waits for Khaled , who wishes good luck to the lads. Reynolds interrupts him.

Khaled -there's 5 minutes left before the second half- I thought I should just pop in there quickly and maybe have a quick word with the lads before they go back on? You know-cos I'm their Coach?

Khal looks sheepish.

KHALED

I know that -Coach Reynolds t's just, I've been watching and I know what-

REYNOLDS

Yeah, but you don't play for us any more do you, Khaled, remember? We let you go- you and that temper of yours...for one thing..

A beat.

Khaled reaches into his rucksack and gives Coach a tupperware container

KHALED

Mum's sent you some curry goat and rice. She says 'It hot like fire'

Coach Reynolds is disarmed, even though he's mad at Khal for usurping him.

REYNOLDS

Oh...thank you. Lovely. Look- Khaled...Don't take this the wrong way, but you can't keep talking to them like this during the games. It sends the wrong message.

Khal stares at his shoes.

KHALED

I just... miss you guys is all.

Khaled sees that Reynolds 'gets it' and then walks away towards the Arena for the second half.

A beat.

REYNOLDS

Did you tell 'em to muscle their fast geezer off the court?

KHALED

Yes

Defence?

KHALED

Wake the hell up.

And Khaled's gone- Coach Reynolds just stands there...

REYNOLDS

Yeah, yeah...good...absolutely correct.

He opens the tupperware container and smells

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Dear God that's good.

He enters the locker room.

EXT./INT. THE TRAIN TO HACKNEY NIGHT

The London train zooms through the darkness.

CHARLOTTE SHOWS KHAL THE LETTER - SKI TRIP - £800!!!

Khal and Charlotte sit opposite each other in the second class carriage staring at their reflections in the window.

Charlotte's watching her dad. She pulls a face at his reflection.

Khal sees this and pulls a similar face. Charlotte sticks out her tongue.

Khal sticks out his tongue. Charlotte crosses her eyes.

Khal falls and bangs his head on the table.
Charlotte does the same.

They both stay down - they both laugh. This is something they've done before.

He fetches the letter from his breast pocket ,
smooths it out and looks at it again.

KHALED

Eight hundred pound's a lot of money.

Charlotte looks hopeful. Beat.

KHALED (CONT'D)

There's only one thing you can do. (beat)Daddy's gonna have to rob a bank, innit?

They laugh - he puts the letter away. holds her hand.

EXT. DE BEAUVOIR ESTATE /THE GRAFFITIED BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Late night Hackney: bright lights , multi ethnic shops , BLACK CABS, LAP DANCING BARS,THE HACKNEY EMPIRE, POLICE VANS whizzing through the streets , sirens blazing.

Du Beauvoir estate; A rubbish basketball court sits at the base of two hulking tower blocks.

This is the local druggies' one stop shop. A black HUMVEE is parked to the side, and the local Prince of powders, D'ANGELO CHANG (CHINESE LATE 20'S) is serving PUNTERS

(BLACK/WHITE FEMALE). who are led away by a YOUT' (Black 14) on a skateboard. Khaled and Charlotte come to a halt , Khaled's angry.

A beat.

KHALED

Decent people live round here you know?

D'Angelo strolls across to him, swarming with attitude.

D'ANGELO

Who d'you think half my fuckin' customers are?

KHALED

Do you wanna watch your mouth around Charlotte?

D'ANGELO

Hey ! Lil Charlotte- I never saw you there - you look lovelyyou're Daddy looks very smart -in fact - if I might be so bold - you both do.

Khal takes Charlotte's hand and they begin jogging home -but D'Angelo joins him.

D'ANGELO

Where you bin then, Lion King? You never see a brotha in a suit 'less he's goin' court or to see Lion King.

D TEASES KHAL ABOUT WORKING AS A JANITOR & LIVING AT HIS MUM'S. (SO DOES D)

(THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY TO COOKIE'S)

D'ANGELO (YELLS) (CONT'D)

Khaled! Me and you need to talk soon, get me?

He gobs on the ground and then strolls back to Yout' and the others.

D'ANGELO (TO HIMSELF)

(CONT'D)

He's a fuckin' janitor now innit? Used to be a halfway decent baller -

Yout' approaches with two GEEZERS (WHITE 30'S)

D'ANGELO (CONT'D)

Fuckin' Pussy'ole.

CUT TO:

EXT. COOKIE AND GREGORY'S HOUSE NIGHT

The Cab arrives outside Cookie and Gregory's- there's a nice front lawn and flowers- it's very different from the Du Beauvoir estate.

As Khal and Charlotte reach the front door - an attractive, fit white woman COOKIE (30's) opens it, lets Charlotte in.

KHAL TRYING TO WIN COOKIE BACK, BUT SHE'S WITH GREG NOW. POSS USE DIALOGUE FROM KARATE SCENE:

HE'S NOT ACCEPTING IT.GREG'S A NERD.

COOKIE REMINDS HIM HE'S GOTTA STEP UP & TAKE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SKI TRIP.

Khal accepts that rejection for a moment and then
jogs down the path and off home.

KHALED

Where'm I gonna get eight hundred quid in ten days?
Fuck.Fuck.Fuck!

He pulls out his wallet - nothing but a five pound
note and a small square of paper that says:

"Anger dwells only in the bosom of fools" Albert
Einstein. Khal looks at it. Folds it. Breathes
deeply.

Hold on Khal as he tries to meditate his anger away.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. THE CHICAGO 'BURBS - DAY

We're back in Chi town ; traffic's moving smoothly
as we see a CAB scoot through an amber light and KA-
BONG! off a pothole.

EXT/INT. MULTI MEDIA SPORT AGENCY BUILDING - LATER

Multi Media Sports Agency is a typically modern skyscraper downtown. Glass. Steel. Space. Size.

Clifford sits near a Kenji Burton action shot. Clifford glares at Kenji's athletic physique and growls. A GUY in a Black suit (White 30's) approaches.

GUY

Mr James?

Clifford stops growling.

The GUY ushers Clifford to the elevators.

CUT TO:

INT. ROMANOFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A huge office with leather furniture, massive desk, cocktail cabinet, 50 inch wall-mounted plasma TV , and original LeRoy Neiman sports paintings.

'MOHAMMED ALI, ATHLETE OF THE CENTURY' takes pride of place. The Monarch of this particular Glen, the boss, is tiny - DAVE ROMANOFF - the CEO of Multi Media Sports.

ROMANOFF is all smooth bonhomie.

ROMANOFF

Clifford James, The Hardest Working man in
Basketball!

CLIFFORD

Dave Romanoff - 'The Pocket Rocket'.

Romanoff flinches

ROMANOFF

No one calls me that any more.

CLIFFORD

I just did. Look , about Deshaun Moore - I think
he's decided to -you know -stay with Detroit...he
figures they pay him well , he has that new Nike
deal -he doesn't feel ,you know, under represented
by his people - just wants to play ball and get a
decent pay cheque and go home and - you know ...buy
a jumbo jet or somethin'-

ROMANOFF

There's video of you being thrown into a garbage
heap for trying to 'recruit' DeShaun Moore.

CLIFFORD

Fuck outta here

ROMANOFF

Look.

He flicks his iPad on ,and there in living colour is the CCTV of Clifford being thrown into the Garbage.

Romanoff reacts to each bit.

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

Ow!Ouch! Ooh -he kicked you right in the ass - ouch!
Not just once - ouchie! But three times.
OOOHHH,that one hurt

He clicks and we see that he has frozen Clifford's pained expression.

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

That should be your Christmas card my friend. Trust me.

CLIFFORD

Hey , I was working for this fucking place , don't break my balls.

Romanoff gets all squirrely -

ROMANOFF

You? Working for this place? Illegally attempting to recruit a Baller away from his current representation? To someone here?

He goes right in close til he's nose to nose with Clifford and whispers...

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

I'll deny it til the day I die.

He eyeballs Clifford for a moment and then moves away to his desk.

CLIFFORD

Well...this has been a treat. I know my way out -

He walks to the door-

ROMANOFF

So. Pauletta called me.

Clifford stops.

Romanoff takes Clifford's arm and guides him gently to a chair...

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

And she told me you needed -no , her words 'Desperately needed some work' You're not eating right , you're drinking too much - keep calling the house...crying and hanging up , crying and hanging up. (beat) She told me you'd do anything. I told her I'd watch out for somethn' I got a gig for ya, if you want it.

All Clifford's bravado has momentarily evaporated.

CLIFFORD

I don't understand ...why would my ex wife , call you about a job for me?

ROMANOFF

She knows we go back a ways ,played ball together before your injury ...she knows you're living in that shit hole near the freeway-and you owe money.She also knows you're terrible at recruiting.

CLIFFORD

How does she know that?

ROMANOFF

She saw the video Clifford! She watched you on ESPN, TMZ, and You tube ,personally suck at recruiting in a discreet manner. Look. I wanna show you something.

The Guy in the suit presses buttons - the blinds descend - the plasma flickers into life. Images appear on the screen. The word SENTINEL SPORTS and a picture of an Old but wealthy looking MAN (White 70s).

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

SENTINEL SPORTS WEAR - ever hear of em? They were a rinky dink local Chi town firm - running wear, vests, shorts. Then old man Taylor died. His kid took over.

CAMERON TAYLOR (the woman from the gym) appears on screen

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

She's real smart -- already pushed the firm's dollar value 25% higher than when her daddy was boss - now she wants a successful basketball shoe and she's willing to sponsor a tournament in Europe to launch it. I want you on the team.

CLIFFORD

If I wanted to sell shoes I'd be working with Uncle Nat in Brooklyn. And If I'd wanted Pauletta to know where I was 24/7? I'd'a stayed married.

Romanoff writes a figure on a piece of paper. Clifford takes it - reads figure. Raises an eyebrow.

ROMANOFF

Look at that number. That would be your fee , plus per diem. Non negotiable.

Clifford licks his lips

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

Whole thing's in Europe -- Mission control in London - qualifiers in Paris; you source the European players and hold the NBA guy's dick til the final..which is at the end of this month.

CLIFFORD

Who ya got?

ROMANOFF

Kenji Burton.

Clifford is up and putting on his coat - grabbing his bags and storms to the door. Romanoff follows, oozing charm.

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

Clifford! You guys had a misunderstanding- you pushed him around on live TV and...he cold cocked you.

CLIFFORD

Fuck him- fuckin' punk -tryin' to grab my wife's ass behind my back- you try to help someone , coach says, (mocking) 'spends some time with Burton...get him acclimatized to the big leagues' meanwhile ,he's tryin' to acclimatise my WIFE!
FUCK.HIM!

Romanoff loses patience.

ROMANOFF

No, Clifford, FUCK YOU! He's our guy. You're gonna TAKE this Goddam Job! Pauletta called me and begged me -- and...I.. I can't say no to her ... alright?

Clifford looks at Romanoff quizzically- Romanoff backpedals.

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

She-She's like a Jedi, you know that. Obi Wan Pauletta. Look, idiot, you need the money. You in or not?

Clifford is torn. BEAT.

CLIFFORD

I'll do it. (BEAT) But any bullshit and I'm out.

ROMANOFF

Sure. (CASUALLY) and remember - we don't want anyone making Kenji Burton looking too bad.

Clifford raises an eyebrow.

CLIFFORD

Didn't I just say 'Any bullshit and I'm out?'

ROMANOFF

Don't you need to cash a big ass cheque soon and pay bills and shit?

Clifford accepts his fate.

CLIFFORD

London. Mother - Fuck.

Romanoff rubs his hands together.

ROMANOFF

We're gonna make crazy money. Oh and you're gonna have to watch that mouth around Cameron Taylor-she don't like cursin'

Kenji Burton's good-looking visage fills the screen.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LEISURE CENTRE HACKNEY- DAY

The main road to the Leisure centre. Khaled's on his way to work - Charlotte rides her bike alongside.

CHARLOTTE

You've got to play basketball again Daddy. Guildford Heat NEED you man! Coach Reynolds needs a firework up the arse.

KHALED

Charlotte Massi - I'll wash your mouth out with soap!

CHARLOTTE

I'm only sayin' what YOU said to D'Angelo the other day..

Khaled responds fast-

KHALED

Charlotte- do NOT mention that you and me and D'Angelo were chatting to mum cos she yank out my arms and beat me with them . Believe.

Charlotte laughs but knows he's being serious -her face grows serious...Khaled dials it down a notch.

KHALED (CONT'D)

Listen. D'Angelo's trouble... your mum really don't like him. Keep out of his way - promise?

YOUT' whizzes by on his skateboard, he checks out Charlotte. Nearly careens into a car, corrects himself. Charlotte ignores him-

CHARLOTTE

I promise...

Khaled kisses her forehead.

KHALED

Good...now g'wan... tek yu backside to school!

Charlotte smiles-then-

CHARLOTTE

Don't forget my skiing trip money.

KHALED

I know, thanks for reminding me. (BEAT) It's a done deal.

CHARLOTTE

Love you!

CHARLOTTE SEES KHAL HANGING WITH D

She rides off -Khal turns and lopes up the steps and is met at the door by a sweaty D'Angelo wearing an expensive tracksuit.

KHALED

D'Angelo... you look... exhausted..

D'Angelo's breathing heavily, doing yoga stretches and using the door for balance.

D'ANGELO

'SWEATIN' TO DUB STEP' -knackering'. Half the people in there are buyin' shit off me to keep up - it's off the hook.

Khaled starts walking away.

D'ANGELO (CONT'D)

Hey - I know you're under pressure dollars wise , now you ain't ballin' no more. You barely holdin' it together bruv..

He grabs Khaled's shoulder-but Khaled shakes him loose, keeps walking.

KHALED

I ain't doin' so bad- the money here's

D'ANGELO

You ain't built for unblockin' toilets Khal!
Look..hear what,right? Come work for me.

This stops Khaled in his tracks.

KHAL

What?

D'ANGELO

I'm settin' up my own betting shop. I want YOU,
Khal, to represent my other interests.

KHALED

A bettin' shop? Why?

D'ANGELO

Gamblin' man- Now THAT shit is addictive,and it's
legit right?

(MORE)

Geezers will bet on anything- horses,dogs-
basketball? I can bet on who does what when how in
what order -it's all gravy bruv. Come and work for
me Khal...end of problems.

Khal looks at Yout' ,hovering nearby.

KHAL

What? And be one of your boys?

(poss adjust to: You're offering me a job as a drg dealer?)

D'ANGELO

Nah, man, be the man! I reckon people'd wanna buy from you - you look good, smell good. You're still fit. I'll show you the ropes and Blaps! Money flyin' out your arsehole, man! Guaranteed.

Khal is tempted. A BEAT.

KHAL

Listen -D'Angelo...I'll think about it,yeah? Later.

He disappears into the leisure centre... YOUT' bounds up the stairs- hands a RUCKSACK to D'Angelo who unzips it, extracts a fat roll of twenties, hands a couple to Yout' and then disappears. YOUT' FLIPS his skateboard onto the railings and slides back down...a passing TRAMP applauds.

INT. THE LEISURE CENTRE'S STORE ROOM - DAY

The store room is deliberately dark and musty . Khal dons overalls and assembles his tools :a broom, a mop, gloves etc.

INT. THE GENTS TOILETS - DAY

The Gents toilet is relatively clean ---apart from the PUKE everywhere. Khal mops the floor, squirts antibacterial spray liberally.

KHLAED ASKS HIS BOSS FOR OVERTIME WORK. BOSS REBUFFS HIM & INSTRUCTS HIM TO PUT UP POSTERS

INT. FRONT RECEPTION - LATER

Boxes of posters wait at reception. The BOSS checks his watch. Khal arrives and loads the boxes onto a trolley. A POSTER is taped to the top of a box.

As Khal loads , he reads and we see his P.O.V.

SENTINEL SPORTS WEAR PRESENTS: BALL TIL YOU FALL -
A ONE-ON- ONE BASKETBALL COMPETITION! £200.000 PRIZE
MONEY! QUALIFIERS IN PARIS --- Superstar KENJI
BURTON PLAYS THE WINNER...

Despite himself , Khal's interested. His Boss has clocked the whole thing-

BOSS

Don't get any ideas in your head Khaled Massi-them days are long gone!

(You can't handle the pressure)

KHALED

I know.

BOSS

Basketball's allergic to you mate (BEAT) you're like Kryptonite to basketball!

Hold on Khaled's face as he pushes the trolley.

deleted animation scene

EXT/INT. AN IPAD SCREEN.NIGHT

Click!

An I Pad flowers into life and shows an Aardman style Claymation commercial:

GREAT MUSIC THROUGHOUT:

A Claymation rocket arcing through space.

A Claymation KENJI BURTON pilots.

Touch down 1... retro rockets blast as the ship lands.

Touchdown 2 ... Kenji's spanking new, SOLDIER (tm) basketball boots hit the planet's surface and shadows fall across them as ...

BADASS ALIENS, with cartoon weaponry aimed at Kenji.

Kenji REACHES inside a utility bag.

A HUNDRED cartoon weapons and their safety catches being RELEASED!

Kenji was just reaching for his trusty BASKETBALL. He presses a button and a hoop slides out from his rocket ten feet off the planet's surface. His shoes magically swell, becoming extra boing-y, he LEAPS many feet off the ground and dunks the ball!

The ALIENS applaud, divide into two teams and start a game where Kenji continues to SOAR and dominate.

The tag line reads: The Sentinel Soldier - TASTE THE AIR CUT TO:

INT. KENJI'S JET

On Kenji's luxury private, Jet; Kenji sits up front next to Cameron as they watch the commercial on her I Pad screen.

Kenji scowls throughout. Cameron beams at the tagline, and then notices Kenji's expression.

KENJI

Why they gotta do that?

CAMERON

What?

KENJI

Make out it's the shoe that jump NOT the nigga.

A beat as Cameron considers her reply.

CAMERON

I suppose it's the conceit of the commercial , the unique selling point? We're saying, 'Wouldn't it be terrific if new Sentinel Soldier' basketball shoe could help all ..uh.....N WORDS dunk like Kenji Burton?'. It's marketing, Kenji - all the N WORDS will want to be JUST like you ...

KENJI

I don't want any nigga watching this shit thinking they can jump like me cos of a GOT-DAMN mo'fuckin shoe!

CAMERON

Is that language really necessary?

POOKIE gets in between Cameron and Kenji so's he can talk sense to his friend.

POOKIE

Much money they payin' you nigga - I wouldlie my ass off bout some shoes.

(PRETENDS HE'S ON TV)

"Yeah, nigga, buy these shoes and you can fly to the moon." (TO Kenji) You in YO' OWN private Jet, fool! You know how much the gas costs for this mothafucka??

Kenji laughs, then pushes Pookie out the way.

He turns to Cameron a ...

KENJI

Change that shit about the jump. It's me that jumps not no motherfuckin' shoe.(beat)And what'sa matter with my language? It's English right?

Cameron nods - and backs off quickly.

She makes her way to her seat AND sits, relieved that THAT particular ordeal is over. Closes her eyes. All goes black.

PILOT (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen please take our seats for landing. We are approaching London Heathrow. Cabin Crew prepare for landing.

Then real close:

KENJI

Hey, Cameron!

Cameron jumps! Kenji is sitting next to her buckling up.

CAMERON

Fudge and Doody! You scared me!

KENJI

I wish I could see Clifford James' face when his driver pick him up, man ... somebody should be filmin' that shit.

He laughs and ...

The lights go off landing.

EXT/INT. CLIFFORD'S CAR - DAY

A hybrid cab rounds Shepherd's bush green. Clifford's in the back seat glaring out of the window, muttering.

The BLACK DRIVER (40'S) says nothing throughout.

CLIFFORD (MIMICKING)

"We got you an earlier flight, Clifford! So you can hit the ground running". Yeah- you hit the ground runnin' after 9 hours in coach, bitch- sittin' next to a morbidly obese Hells angel with halitosis and terminal flatulence. ..filthy rich, lying cow!

(beat)

England my ass - shoulda called it 'Rainland' or 'Freezin'frikkin'cold land'... What about 'Shitland?' Does the sun ever shine here??

The driver remains mute.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Shoulda bought a fuckin' canoe.

**EXT. CLIFFORD'S CAR/THE SHITTY B & B -
CONTINUOUS**

The car pulls up outside a shitty hotel. Clifford gets out, stares in disbelief at where he's expected to stay and then punches a number into his cellphone.

The driver waits expectantly; Clifford is talking.

CLIFFORD

Yeah, honey - I DO know 'what time it is out there?'
Could I speak to Dave Romanoff, please? (waits)
"No"?

Clifford mimes beating the shit out of person on the other end of the phone. The driver watches impassively. Clifford resumes the conversation

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Alright, just tell his tiny, 'Sleep in a Matchbox' GI Joe Uniform wearing ass that Clifford is at the London branch of the Bates Motel and is so mad, steam is coming out of his ears and ass.

Clifford hangs up. The driver now stands with his hand out.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry man, but would mind awfully getting the fuck outta here?

Clifford picks up his bags and enters the hotel. The driver watches this .

DRIVER

(SUBTITLED) American Asshole.

DELETED SCENE WITH COOKIE

INT. KHALED'S BEDROOM - LATER

Khal's bedroom walls are plastered with posters of

BASKETBALL PLAYERS on the walls- Charles Barclay
,Kobe Bryant , Penny Hardaway ,several of Michael
Jordan and of course , the unbeatable KENJI BURTON.

HE'S GOLDING THE LETTER IN HIS HANDS.

His basketball sits waiting on the bedroom floor and
so he picks it up and starts bouncing it gently
,finding a rhythm.

Thump-thump, thump-thump. It helps him to think.

Thump-thump,thump-thump...

WIN - HIS MUM COMES IN & TELLS HIM OFF

NO BASKET BALL ALLOWED.

SHE'S GOT A LITTLE SNACK FOR HIM.

EXT/INT. GUILDFORD /COACH REYNOLD'S OFFICE - DAY

Establishing shot of GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE.

Clifford and Reynolds sit in Reynold's tiny
office ;there are a some trophies- and a few
framed sports pages on the walls, 'Special K
signed to Guildford Heat' being one of them.

Reynolds has shelves of files and DVD's
everywhere..they are in mid conversation

CLIFFORD MOANING ABOUT LONDON TO REYNOLDS - OR
FAKING HOW MUCH HE LOVES IT. EXPLAINS WHY HE'S COME

TO REYNOLDS - FLATTERY/EVERYONE ELSE TURNED HIM
DOWN?

COACH REYNOLDS

...Amazing really that we're the nearest pro club
to London. You'd think London would have it's own
top of the line Basketball club -maybe two or
three ,but no. (beat)I'm sort of flattered Mr
James-but why do you need me?

Clifford lays it on thick for this Limey...

CLIFFORD

Coach Reynolds...I'm here to put together this ,uh,
one on one basketball tournament for Sentinel shoes.
I basically need whoever will play and wants a shot
at Kenji Burton in the final. The qualifiers are in
ten days time- I got a few calls out to some guys
in Europe ...but right now? The UK end's not lookin'
so good---Sentinel want this 'Shoe' Launch to be
faultless,which means... no amateur shit;

A beat.

CLIFFORD

(CONT'D)

I need a full squad of solid players willing to
fight for the honour of their country. We got ESPN,
I think SKY are involved, even uh-the Showtime
maybe and (he looks at his piece of paper) Radio

one Xtra...so are you with me on this journey or not?

COACH REYNOLDS

I can't give you any of my guys; before you know it, the new season'll be here. I'm not risking injuries in order to flog some poxy shoe.

CLIFFORD

When you put it like that, it hurts.I..am actually,physically hurt when you say that-

COACH REYNOLDS

You understand what I'm saying though?

CLIFFORD

You're not speaking French. I get it.

Clifford slips off his chair and gets on his knees ...he's begging...

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

You gotta have SOMEBODY? Look-if they're tall and they don't drop the ball -I'll take em -how hard can it be? (beat)You gotta help me - I got Sentinel breathin' down my neck - I got my ex wife breathin' down my neck , I got Dave Romanoff breathin down my sock - I basically got a lotta people breathin on my,on my neck - and it's ,uh- it's unpleasant,is what it is-

Reynolds thinks for a moment , then picks up a stack of DVD's on his desk and starts sifting through them.

COACH REYNOLDS

Hmmmm..(beat)I've got an ex point guard/ Janitor if you're interested?

Clifford grins, that's the ticket.

EXT. BATTERED BASKETBALL COURT - LATER

We're back in Du Beauvoir gardens; Khal jogs past the old basketball court when he sees SOMEONE throwing a ball through the hoop repeatedly. Boom-swish! Cars SHOOM, KIDS play, a TRAMP ambles by having a coughing fit, and on court , Clifford James - is shooting hoops like a pro.

CLIFFORD

Khaled Massi, right?

Boom-swish!

KHALED

What?

CLIFFORD

The media are gonna eat you up with a teensy tiny spoon!

Boom-swish!

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

"I was a professional baller, but now I'm a lowly janitor"...Damn, that's good. The action on this baby is gonna be sweet.

Boom-swish!

Khaled is getting really pissed off with this guy.

KHALED

Who are you?

CLIFFORD

Clifford James, out of Chicago. Played a little ball one time. I've seen your DVD...

Khaled watches yet another ball fall cleanly through the hoop.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

We want you for this tournament - you'd have to play tons of ball, but you if qualify? Well then, you'd get a chance to kick Kenji Burton's ass.

Khal processes this information. Boom-swish!

KHALED

I'm done with basketball. I'm a Janitor at the leisure centre.

Clifford ignores him, fishes a card and an entry form out of his pocket.

CLIFFORD

My contact details ...An entry form, right here. Come on, it's basketball ... It's gotta be better than unblocking toilets, right? Tell you what. I'll come by the Leisure Centre around quittin time? We'll go one on one -and -Oh! lets make it interesting-I'll make a bet with you: If I beat you, you enter the competition - if you beat me , I get the fuck outta your life -Deal?

KHALED

I'm done with Ballin'. I'm a Janitor.

Clifford flings the ball over his shoulder at the hoop jogs off court. The ball bounces off the rim. Khal catches the rebound, sinks it in one-does a little celebration.

Clifford's watches and then jogs off. CUT TO:

INT. LEISURE CENTER BASKETBALL GYM - NIGHT

Khaled mops the floor of the basketball court.
Up ..Down...Up ...Down....He sighs.
Looks at the clock on the wall-it Says 8pm. Then
goes to the equipment cupboard and takes out a
basketball

FANTASTIC UK MUSIC:

TIME CUT:

Khal's PRACTISING.

CROSS OVERS

TIME CUT:

SHOOTING FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COURT.

TIME CUT:

DRIBBLING.

CLIFFORD watching from the door. He's wearing
very short shorts and an old school
basketball vest bearing the legend - 'BIRD' ,he also
wears a stocking cap,which makes him look like an
under dressed burglar

KHALED

Oh, you into Larry Bird. Boston Celtics. Old school.

Clifford's got the ball , he's practising his crossover

CLIFFORD

In my book, Old school is the only school Khal.

KHALED

You don't get to call me that. Look, I'm done with ball-it's over. I don't play no more.

Clifford grins like Donald Trump on pay day and bounces the ball back and forth between his legs - he torments Khaled.

CLIFFORD

Ooh- ball's over for you? Ball damaged you? Poor Khaled..poor baby - don't play ball no more? Ahhh-shame....you want a lie down? You want-

Khal steals the ball from him - but Clifford steals the back, blocks Khal and scores a basket.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Are we gonna do this - I get the feeling it ain't gonna last too long. First to ten. If I win , you do this competition. If I lose - you do what you want-ok?

Khal nods. MUSIC BEGINS:

KHALED

Yeah, yeah. When you're done close the door on your way out.

On a mutual signal the game begins and -pow!

Clifford's scored already.

Khal rushes him , steals the ball but Clifford's pivoted on the ball of his foot, gets past Khal grabbing the ball- on his way. Clifford commentates like an enthused schoolboy-

CLIFFORD

The great Bird is all over this young Magic Johnson wanna be.

Clifford scores another basket-pushes Khal away roughly.

KHALED

Get off me!

CLIFFORD

This ain't team ball Khaled -it's one on one 86 style. You love ball I can tell.

Khaled steals the ball , scores.Clifford Claws the ball back finger rolls it , bounces it twice, scores again.

Khaled can't believe it - Clifford's got the ball again

KHALED

What the fuck?

CLIFFORD

Oh yeah baby - Bird's on the turn around -the classic duel with Dominic Wilkins in 1988 - look at you - I got you sweatin' now , don't I Khaled Massi-you're thinkin' what happens if this old asshole beats me?

Khaled tries to muscle him down...

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

You are watching what greatness is all about- Bird was a big white guy who worked his ass off - he never stopped tryin'- never gave up.

Clifford, echoing Bird's style ,

scores again.

KHALED

What? I don't believe this - Clifford bounces the ball behind Khaled , runs round him , grabs the ball , tosses it into the net. it bounces off the rim

CLIFFORD

Oh no - I'm gonna -oh my God!

Clifford catches the ball and shoots again -it goes in.

Khaled's huffing and puffing, but manages to scrabble the ball away and shoot , he scores- but Clifford's got the ball ...

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Look at you Khaled - you're actually trying - working you're little booty off -but -Oh nooooo , Bird's got the ball once more , it's an amazing steal , he runs at the basket -this crowd is going crazy - it's over the backboard-America's game ! It's fantastic.

He's scored again

KHALED

Fuck you man. This is bullshit.

CLIFFORD

Hey Khaled - I'm only six up - what you're gonna ..give up? Is that what you do Khaled? Just stop - cos you're not winning ? You just give up ?

Khal steals the ball - scores.

Clifford grabs the ball back , Khal wrestles the ball from him , scores again.

Clifford's got the ball on the rebound , dodges round Khal - Khal bumps him -Clifford slips -Khal's scored again.

Clifford manages to get the ball , score a seventh - but -he's breathing a lot heavier now ...

Khaled's scored again -and in quick succession:

-again

-again

-again

Clifford's not even trying now -he's got Khaled's blood up

9

10

Khaled is running round the court doing a victory lap.

Clifford sits at the base of the hoop smiling.
Khaled runs up to him and slaps him on the head. He's
like an eager kid.

Clifford sees this and smiles , perhaps for the
first timethis Kid could be something...

KHALED

Best of three -come on! You wanna play old
man ?Lets play.

Clifford can barely walk-his breathing laboured.

CLIFFORD

You might have been done with Basketball my friend
-but she ain't done with you. You were born to do
this Khaled. Give yourself another chance. Take
part in the competition. Show everyone what you can
do.

Khaled wants to , but is unsure... A beat.

KHALED

We're gonna have to convince my mum.

Hold on Clifford's confused reaction.

CLIFFORD THINKS IT'LL BE NO PROBLEM.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT – LATER

A tiny place on the main road; all palm trees and sunshine – despite the rain pissing down outside.

Inside there are pictures of BUJU BANTON, BOB MARLEY, GWEN STEFANI, MR VEGAS, and strangely BARRY MANILOW and the cast of THE SOPRANOS on the walls.

Clifford and Khaled and WIN sit at a table. Mum, a large, sexy, powerful and impressive woman (Black ,late 50's) is being ever so nice-dishing up food.

She turns to Khal.

A BEAT.

WIN

Wha' him want again?

Khaled glances at Clifford who shifts into serious pitch mode.

CLIFFORD

Khaled's taking part in a prestigious Basketball tournament, called 'Ball Til you Fall'. It's sponsored by Sentinel Sportswear; the qualifiers take place in Paris and if he wins that he'll-

Win SLAPS Khaled round the face!

WIN

You don't learn?

KHALED

Mum-

WIN

SHUT YOU MOUT'!

Silence.

Farrington the chef exits the kitchen with food, sees- Khaled holding his cheek and Win breathing flames. He reverses back into the kitchen.

A customer throws money on his table and is gone.
Win yells at Clifford

WIN (CONT'D)

'If he wins'?(to Khaled) You think basketball goin' take care of Charlotte? Find you a new girlfriend? Pay you rent? You give that game everything and it drag you down.

KHALED

I was doing ok with Guildford.

WIN

Only cause I come to every game to keep an eye on you. What happen if you break down again? It take a whole year to get you well after Kentucky -I'm not goin' thru that again!

CLIFFORD

If I might just ...

She turns on Clifford again

WIN

Khaled, if you go back into you lickle fantasy basketball world with this man? As God, Moses, Jesus and the lickle donkey are my witness, you don't come back. It's me or basketball. You decide.

Khaled looks at Clifford and shrugs - 'Sorry'.

Clifford gets up to leave.

CLIFFORD

Well, ma'am, it's been a pleasure not communicating with you.

Win turns on him really pissed off.

WIN

Come out a my restaurant before I give you one and two bitch licks!

Khaled glares at his mum, then gets up to escort Clifford out the door.

EXT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Clifford and Khaled walk to his hire car in silence.
CLIFFORD IS SHOCKED AT WIN - SHE'S WORSE THAN
PAULETTA.

Then on Khaled.

FLASHBACK

CLIFFORD

What happened in Kentucky?

KHALED

It wasn't just Kentucky it was everything. Kentucky ball, UK ball, home stuff.

INT UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY GYM. DAY

CAPTION: 2000

A huge ,airy gym-The Kentucky Wild Cats are playing Mississippi.

A younger, bouncier , Khaled in Kentucky colours ,is on a fast break - SUDDENLY the ball is STOLEN by his opponent, who gives Khal a rabbit punch just for being there: Khal is floored momentarily but then gets up ,chases the guy and PUNCHES HIM REPEATEDLY IN THE FACE! (CAREFUL ON TONE OF VIOLENCE)

Uproar. MISSISSIPPI players steam in and lash out at Khal, who doesn't relent ,just keeps punching and punching and punching.

The Kentucky boss ,COACH HOLLOWAY looks at a clip board HOLLOWAY'S P.O.V.

A felt tip pen puts a red line put through two words KHALED MASSI .

CUT TO:

INT.A BRITISH AIRWAYS FLIGHT

Khal sits in economy ; a basketball cap,the brim low over his eyes..tears stream down his cheeks. He's next to a KID ;

The kid watches Khal cry for a while, then takes his hand.

INT. KHAL AND COOKIE'S LITTLE FLAT. DAY

KHALED (V.O.)

Me ,Cookie and Charlotte moved back down here -I was playing for Guildford ..

Khal is giving Charlotte Spaghetti Bolognaise. Cookie is wandering around in the background. Charlotte's about 6.

Charlotte looks at the Spaghetti bolognaise with revulsion , picks up her plate and throws it at the wall- quite a lot of it hitting her dad.

KHAL THROWS HIS SPAGETTI EVERYWHERE TOO.

KHALED (V.O.)

Cookie told me that Basketball was ruining my the family. We struggled on for a bit and then I packed it all in for Charlotte's sake. But it was too late by then.

EXT.MAMA'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Clifford and Khal stand next to the hire car. Clifford pats Khal on the shoulder, then 'Bip Bips!' the car opens with the remote and he gets in. He winds the window down.

CLIFFORD

Khaled...I don't know quite how to say this without sounding like a complete imbecile , bearing in mind

how talented I think you might be- but... Your mom's right. If basketball screwed you over then maybe you should say 'Screw you' to basketball. Put your family first. if I'd done that, I'd prob'ly still be married.

He pulls away and then

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

If you change your mind, call.

Khal stuffs his hands in his pockets and pulls out Clifford's card.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAFFITTIED BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

It's later, and the court is star lit...magical. Khal leans against the fence in the darkness, deep in thought. It's a FULL MOON. Khal stares up at the constellations as if looking for a sign and then... he gets one.

ORION animates, and grabs the moon and bounces it around the sky for a while like a stellar Michael Jordan - then slam dunks it through the PLOUGH.

Khal's eyes widen in wonder. CUT TO:

INT. THE MASSI APARTMENT - LATER

The front door opens; Win's back home with a tin foil covered plate of food. She kicks off her shoes and makes her way to Khaled's room and pushes the door open.

WIN

Khaled. I know you tink say I was a lickle rough on you earlier, but I couldn't just let ...

But Khaled's gone; the bed's neatly made and his stuff's packed away.

Win sits on the bed and tries not to weep.

Deleted scene, Kenji sees Victoria at Gym

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL GRILL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The epitome of old school money-the Savoy Grill is the classiest dining location in London.

Kenji and Pookie and Malcolm and Cameron, all suited and booted and looking flush, sit at a big table,

they're all reading LION KING programmes; Kenji is fascinated

KENJI

How come the shit still runnin, though? The movie was years ago.

POOKIE

Yo, man they ain't got nothin' else up in this bitch.

KENJI

Fuckin' typical-White folks make a hit cartoon 'bout Africa, ain't no human brother's and sista's in it - we jus' animals...

Pookie and Kenji high five each other grimly. Cameron looks round to see if anyone's getting annoyed with the volume.

KENJI (CONT'D)

It's like even animated we too much for white folks...

POOKIE

Just a nigga's luck. Eddie Murphy's black ass ain't made a decent movie this century, but you put that nigga in a donkey costume in Shrek? He be makin' motherfuckers laugh all night long.

Cameron has been listening to all of this and now she has to get involved.

CAMERON

He wasn't, uh ... wearing a donkey costume in Shrek, Mr Pookie, he was animated - like Kenji in our commercial.

POOKIE

Bitch please! Nigga ain't animated in Beverly Hill's Cop, or Tradin' Places, or 48 hours ... but that shit was a loooong time ago - once a brother's sell by date happen, that shit is over - 'You a donkey bitch' and that's all she wrote.

Pookie continues his thesis but the sound tunes out as we focus on:

The BLONDE is at an adjacent table on her own, eating a Ceasar Salad. She flirts with Kenji, beautifully - it's a work of art.

Kenji smiles at her. She smiles back.

BINGO!

She raises a glass and silently asks him to join her.

Cameron watches all of this with a kind of amusement.

CAMERON

Do you have to swear quite so much Mr Pookie ...

POOKIE

It's just Pookie, like Mookie? but with a P, Right
Kenji?

But Kenji's over by the BLONDE'S table now, indicates
Pookie-

KENJI

He a little loud sometime - sorry 'bout that.

The blonde eyes Pookie and nods.

BLONDE

I've have friends like that - five martini's and
they're anyone's.

She sips her martini

KENJI

How many's that?

She fixes him with an incredibly sexy gaze

BLONDE

Five.

Kenji laughs out loud She extends a hand ,Kenji
takes it.

BLONDE (CONT'D)

Victoria Hempel, costume designer.

KENJI

Kenji Burton, baller.

VICTORIA

Lovely.

Kenji explodes a smile in her direction. She lobs one right back.

Game on.

EXT/INT. CLIFFORD'S SHITTY HOTEL - LATER

The hotel bar is dead . Clifford sits alone at the bar, drinking and staring moodily at the worn photograph of the beautiful black woman (PAULETTA?) in a bikini. He folds it up, puts it back in his wallet. Then looks around at the shitty flock wallpaper and decrepit furniture, slugs his drink and leaves.

INT. RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

In the shitty reception, he finds Khaled with a rucksack and other bags at his feet. Khal smiles, he's got his trusty basketball in hand. Clifford's over the moon.

CLIFFORD

Well alright. Good. You made a good choice.

KHALED

Yeah. So. Where am I staying?

CLIFFORD

Ok, well - now , you go home and we begin training tomorrow.

KHALED

Uh hang on - what do you mean 'Go home'

CLIFFORD

What I said. You go home and you get yourself together and we train

KHALED

There's no going home - Mum said if I do this don't come back. I can't go back - I've chosen basketball over her.

CLIFFORD

Well you can't stay here. I mean-

KHALED

Oh great. So I make the second most important decision of my life and you can't even sort me out a bed for the night

CLIFFORD

I didn't know you expected to stay with me!

KHALED

Look. If I have to go back to my mum's that's it for me. You won't see me again.

Clifford's panicking

CLIFFORD

I have a tiny hotel room ,barely room for me , let alone the Chrysler building with an afro!

KHALED

I can sleep on the floor.

CLIFFORD

You're training you sleep on the bed. I'll sleep in the bath.

KHALED

Done. See -that wasn't hard was it?

INT.CLIFFORD'S ROOM. A BIT LATER

This room's nearly as bad as Clifford's shitty hotel room in Chicago. Clifford takes some sheets and a pillow - points at the bed. He goes in the bathroom and makes up a temporary bed. He gets in.

Khaled comes in wearing vest and shorts.

KHALED

It's just a pee -yeah- no probs.

Clifford turns his back and waves at Khal to go ahead. Khaled then does the loudest, longest pee ever known to man.

Every time Clifford thinks it's over- Khaled manages to squeeze a bit more out.

This happens 4 times.

Clifford covers his head and ears with a pillow.

NEW SCENE? Clifford wakes Khal up super early & lays out training plan, but then gets a call from Sentinel & has to go. Arranges to meet Khal later.

EXT/INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL - DAY

Moved forward from act 1. A meeting in Kenji Burton's suite, a beautifully appointed room in the classic Savoy style.

Cameron Taylor is there, as are Kenji and Kenji's P.R, MALCOLM FORBES (Black 30's) and the ever present Pookie.

Cameron nibbles sushi and sips a health drink.

Kenji has a blender which is whirring.
WHIZZ! He adds a large handful of supplements.
WHIZZZ! It's done. He pours the gloop into a large
glas and takes a big drink, then wipes his mouth and
BURPS prodigiously. Lovely.

Kenji laughs.

KENJI

Man, I can't wait for Clifford James to git back
here, man.

Pookie nods.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Mothafucka hit me on my TV debut,man..just cos I
dropped some charisma on his wife an' shit.

POOKIE

Try that shit now, nigga...

He and Kenji bump fists.

KENJI

Damn right. I'm a big-ass,NBA all star. He ain't
even damn coachin' ball any more...

Clifford enters at this point. He takes a seat and
smiles at everyone.

CLIFFORD

No, my job is to fake some 'One on one' bullshit to make you look good. I hope you and your charisma appreciate it.

KENJI

Fuck you mean 'Make me look good'?

CLIFFORD

Kenji... you're a team guy, this is 'Ball til you fall' -one on one with kids so rough they'd beat they own ass to git a shot at you're mile high jumpin' NBA ass.

KENJI

You sayin' I can't handle myself against some snot nose kids?

CLIFFORD

I'm sayin' you'd be surprised how many kids out here think you're overpaid, over-rated and ...

WHOOSH!

Kenji leaps at Clifford's throat, scattering supplements, sushi and stationary! Pookie and Malcolm intercept and grab him. Clifford stands there - defiant..

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Yeah-what? Come on Kenji -hit me! One time. You know you want to...come on ...Kenji -just pop me, right here-

Clifford starts doing a weird Ali shuffle type thing..he moves his head from side to side like a cobra.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Yo Kenji - come on fool - gimme a right cross or somethin' , ahh are your boys holdin' on to you? Can't you move? -what a shame.

Clifford starts waxing on and waxing off

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Wax on /Wax off , wax on /wax off...I love waxing off in front of you Kenji - I bet you love it when I 'wax off' in front of you too..

KENJI

I'ma slap the shit outta you!

Cameron steps in between them.

CAMERON

Relax, Kenji. Mr James has total respect for your abilities, and even if he doesn't we're paying him more than enough to lie and say he does til the job's over. Isn't that right, Mr James?

There's steel in her voice.

CLIFFORD (MUMBLING)

Didn't mean anything by it.

KENJI

Fuckin' has been!

CAMERON

Gentlemen! I did not fly all this way to hear this-this-this- bad language andbull..doody!

Silence. What did she just say? Pookie mouths 'Bull Doody?'

CAMERON (CONT'D)

The qualifiers are in 10 days' time. Mr James, do we have any British competitors yet? Bearing in mind what I just said about 'paying you enough'?

CLIFFORD

The European contingent's just about ok, UK wise? Coaches don't wanna risk injuring their best players just before season starts... but I think we're gonna be fine.

She nods. Good - then she remembers something important.

CAMERON

Mr Burton must be protected from 'Gunslingers' trying to make their reputation. It's important that we make him look good.

Clifford looks at Kenji who shrugs carelessly-

KENJI

Just get me some punk wannabe baller, so I can beat his ass, get paid and get the fuck up outta here.

CLIFFORD

Well-If that's how you wanna play it, I think I got just the guy ...He's a Janitor... but he used to ball.

CAMERON

Whatever-we're selling shoes, Mr James. Remember that.

Clifford gets up and leaves.

EXT. DU BEAUVOIR ESTATE - DAY

(C&Y1 -Moved forward from act 1.) Charlotte on her bike, whizzing past pedestrians at warp speed. She's got a bag full of NEWSPAPERS over her shoulder. She screeches to a halt, drops the bike, VAULTS a fence and slots a newspaper through the letter box.

She returns to find Yout' admiring and holding her bike

YOUT'

Cool bike, yeah?

Charlotte regards Yout' warily—he offers her the bike and she takes it (pew)and fronts it out...

CHARLOTTE

What you want, man? I'm busy, yeah?

YOUT'

Just sayin' - bike's dread.Believe.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks.

YOUT'

You like deliverin' papers?

CHARLOTTE

My new job, innit? Doin' the papers for Mr Silas.

YOUT' pulls out a roll of twenties and tens thick enough to choke a horse.

YOUT'

There's other jobs... get me?

And he kick-pushes away on his skateboard.

Charlotte mounts her bike.

CHARLOTTE

Hey! Who you work for then?

And she rides off after him. CUT TO:

EXT/INT. BRIXTON RECREATION CENTRE - DAY

The Brixton recreation centre is one of the most famous basketball locations in the UK . Traffic is gridlocked. A sign proclaims: NBA star KENJI BURTON launches children's fund TODAY!

INT. BRIXTON GYM - DAY

In the main gym are Kenji, Pookie and Cameron Taylor. Victoria sits in the bleachers. There are 20 KIDS of different ages, sizes and colour, along with their CHAPERONES. A banner suspended from the wall proclaims; 'BURTON'S BALLERZ' sponsored by Sentinel Shoes'. Journalists, and TV crews are all gathered to watch Kenji give an impromptu exhibition for the kids.

KENJI EXHIBITION OF BASKETBALLS SKILLS:

Kenji struts his stuff -and, utilising various KIDS as assistants he demonstrates:

THE LAY UP

TIME CUT:

THE CROSS OVER TIME CUT : THE DUNK: TIME CUT

THE SLAM DUNK

TIME CUT :

Kenji is a HELLACIOUS baller, the gathered throng applaud SPONTANEOUSLY.

LATER:

The inevitable press conference. Cameron Taylor leads off. During the following , Kenji's eyes find Victoria Hempel and they smile secretly at each other. It's all new and lovely and flirtatious.

CAMERON

My father, Burt Taylor, was nothing if not determined. I was number 6 in his efforts to produce a male heir to the Sentinel fortune - after which my mother started blocking the bedroom door with a chair and doping his food. (BEAT)

The press laugh dutifully, a few cameras snap away. Kenji checks Victoria's reaction-she's laughing. He laughs too.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Aside from that, my dad was a great believer in encouraging young people to be the best. In that spirit, Kenji's new charity Burtons' Ballerz will contribute to the development of young British Basketball talent at this gym, for ever. Now, I think Kenji has time for just a few questions?

Kenji steps forward and waits for the barrage and sure enough-

PRESS GUY 1 (THE TIMES)

Mr Burton , I wonder if you'd care to comment about your out of settlement agreement with Renate Munroe/You were accused of sexual assault -surely -

KENJI

Yo, man, I'm here with the kids today - I ain't talkin' bout no sexual assault.

PRESS GUY 2 (THE TELEGRAPH)

You must have known that your private settlement with Ms Munroe was going to raise a few eyebrows in the media ,surely ?

PRESS GUY 3 (THE SUN)

Look,chief, what everyone wants to know is :Did you slam dunk Renate Munroe and then knock her about?

Cameron senses that Kenji is about to kick off and sure enough-

KENJI

Look ya'all, I'm out here with these kids, givin' 'em a chance to play ball someplace safe. I'm done talkin' bout Renate Munroe -it's over. Ya'all motherfuckers need to find new shit to talk about.

All the children take a SHARP INTAKE OF BREATH. The CHAPERONES react to the bad language. The press write it all down. Cameron steps in and signals to a TECHIE who presses buttons on a remote. A projection screen slides down and the lights dim. A spotlight finds Cameron smiling winningly.

CAMERON

Don't forget -heats for BALL TIL YOU FALL ,next Friday in Paris; the finale featuring Mr Burton will be a couple of days after that. Here's the brand new commercial for the Sentinel Soldier!

She smiles professionally and signals to the Techie to get on with it.

The screen reveals:

INT. A MAD SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY NIGHT

We are in Tim Burton style territory SHOT IN BLACK AND WHITE - the lab, a Gothic monstrosity, is filled with weird electrical equipment.

A monster (Kenji) lies on a slab.

A MAD scientist (DENNIS RODMAN) works feverishly, connecting electrodes to Kenji's unmoving monster.

The Scientist flicks a switch. Nothing happens.

He flicks it again - a few sparks fly but there is no response from the monster.

The Ogre (PENNY HARDAWAY) watches his master throw the switch in vain for a third time and then takes a pristine white box and indicates to his master to open it.

The box contains a pair of new Soldier basketball shoes by Sentinel.

Master places the shoes on the Monster's feet and flicks a switch.

HIP HOP KICKS IN:

The Monster leaps up from the table, ready to rock in his Brand new Soldier shoes, which swell and twitch in a toon like way.

The Ogre throws him a ball and the monster jumps like Jordan from a trampette , soars to the nearest basket and 360 dunks the ball Ka-Pow!! A flash of Lightening ends the commercial

The Logo :The Sentinel Soldier -'Taste the air'

CUT TO:

INT. BRIXTON GYM - DAY

The kids and press applaud, all is forgiven. Kenji makes a 'Shoot me now' signal and grins ruefully at Victoria Hempel who shakes her head and smiles back. Pookie notices this exchange , he whispers-

POOKIE

Oh, she wanna snack on you, son. She wanna chow down on you like you was Chicken and mash potatoes! That bitch wanna munch on yo' Hershey bar like she hongry..

Kenji hisses back.

KENJI

Shut up Pookie, shit-she aint no bitch!

Now vexed, Kenji turns to the kids

KENJI (CONT'D)

Yo, Kids - remember it's ME, not the shoe that jumps.
I ain't no Got-Damn Cartoon. Alright? Peace.

Kenji turns on his heel and leaves, with Victoria
Hempel in tow.

VICTORIA

You're a model of etiquette; Oscar Wilde would have
been proud

KENJI

Shut up man. Are you hungry? I'm starved...I could
eat a dead coyote's ass on a bagel with mayo and a
side o' slaw.

Victoria says 'Ew' and laughs -the banter continues
Pookie follows, peeved that his boss has snagged a
beautiful companion.

EXT. CANAL TOWPATH - DAY

Moved forward from act 1.

Yout' kick-pushes and Charlotte cycles hard. She's
hypnotised...

CHARLOTTE

'Bring people to him?'

YOUT'

Yeah, customers.

CHARLOTTE

And you ... drop bags off?

YOUT'

Yeah. Back at his house, his mum' house.

CHARLOTTE

And it's just you?

YOUT'

Yeah-and now he's talkin' aobut settin' up this betting shop thing? I reckon I could do with a second in command.A deputy.

CHARLOTTE

A deputy...You offering me a job?

YOUT'

Might be...

And he rattles off down the hill like he's auditioning for Jackass 3D ...Charlotte laughs and mimics him

CHARLOTTE

"Might be."

INT. SILAS'S NEWSPAPER SHOP - DAY

KHALED WAITING FOR CHARLOTTE & CHECKING OUT THE JOB ADS ON THE NOTICE BOARD. HE NEEDS WORK! SILAS HAS TO EXPLAIN THAT SOME OF THOSE JOBS AREN'T RIGHT FOR HIM.

A cluttered, but clean newsagents, with confectionary, alcohol and cigarettes near the front counter. The newspapers are laid out on the floor, the magazines are shelved, the nasty ones are in brown paper bags 8 feet off the ground.

Khaled and the news agent MR SILAS, (late 60's) an old, feisty Jamaican man -

SILAS

She workin' hard, you should be proud.

KENJI

I know Silas, I know

SILAS

Not many kids helpin' the parents out these days...they usually helpin themself to the contents of you wallet

Knaled laughs..

SILAS (CONT'D)

Khaled, I know she savin' money for the skiing trip, but she doin' it for you as well. ...So if you need any help?

Khaled is gobsmacked

KHALED

She told you about that?

SILAS

It's why I give her the job.

KHALED

Silas ,I can't take your /money,it's not right...

Silas interrupts him. Goes to a shelf and finds an old tin. He opens it with a key around his neck and takes out an envelope. He hands it to Khaled. This all done in a reverent manner.

SILAS

I bin savin for me house in Jamaica. I got just enough to pay for the doorknobs and one towel - I will prob'ly dead before I live back- a-yard.

Khaled puts the money away and shakes Silas's hand.

KHALED

You'll get it back, I promise.

Charlotte runs into the shop and dumps her paper bag on the counter.

CHARLOTTE

Boom! Finished, Mr Silas!

She turns and sees Khaled, runs to him and hugs him. He waves to Mr Silas as he leaves.

SILAS

Good luck you know - 8 days to go...

Khaled nods. YOUT' passes them and enters the shop. We hear Silas.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Keep you hands where my eyeballs can see them, you hear me, you teefin' lickle raas, you?

EXT. SILAS'S NEWSAGENT - DAY

Khaled and Charlotte laugh.

CHARLOTTE

Nan says that word when she burns her finger on the stove.

KHALED (MOCK HORRIFIED)

No.

Charlotte nods.

KHALED (CONT'D)

It can't be that bad then ... I've got basketball training in a minute - do you want to come and watch?

CHARLOTTE

What? I thought you wasn't playin' any more , on account of Basketball givin' you the right hump?

Khal rubs his temples.

KHALED

Do you want to come and watch me train or not?

CHARLOTTE

Mum says I've got to be back on time for my tea.

KHALED

Let's just go alright?

She jumps on her bike and rides away quickly.

Khal jogs after her.

YOUT' exits the shop with an Ice lolly in one hand and his skateboard in the other. He watches them go.

EXT. THE BATTERED BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

CLIFFORD is waiting as Khal and Charlotte make their appearance. He looks at his watch.

Charlotte skids to a halt and Khaled jogs onto the court.

CLIFFORD

What's she doing here?

KHALED

'She' is my daughter, Charlotte and I invited her. If I'm gonna do this -it's for her.

Charlotte looks at her dad-can't believe he just said that.

CLIFFORD

You think this is some kinda joke? You got a 12 hour tournament next week and you bring your kid? You might have to play, Kenji Burton in the final.

Charlotte squeals with delight!

CHARLOTTE

Kenji Burton? Oh My Days!

Khal laughs.

KHALED

Mr James. Look , we all know ...

CLIFFORD

What? That 'That's not gonna happen'? What happens if it DOES happen? What? You don't think you might catch a break? Play your heart out'? There's no reason you can't go out there and kick his ass.

CHARLOTTE

Also, Dad, Burton's a knucklehead; he's all muscle, no brains and he cheats.

CLIFFORD

What you mean?

CHARLOTTE

When the ref isn't lookin' - he's a bully. He's nowhere near as good as he thinks he is, my Dad's better-mum says if Dad could control his temper he'd be up there with the best.

Oops- maybe she wasn't supposed to say that. Khaled stares at Charlotte -he hasn't heard that for a while. Clifford smiles.

Clifford puts his 'Game face' on. He's all business now.

Paris is 8 days away. The cream of Europe's ballers are comin' to kick your ass in order to get to Burton. 6 pm to 6 am ...last man standing wins.

KHALED

That's a long time.

CLIFFORD

Do you love basketball? (beat) I SAID- 'Do-you-love-basket-ball?'

Khal's got a poker face, but Charlotte knows the answer to this one.

CHARLOTTE

My christening was held at half time at Guildford Heat vs Glasgow Rocks.

Clifford's impressed.

CLIFFORD

That answers my question. (A BEAT)
Alright, she can stay. But what we gonna do with her?

Deleted dialogue:

FANTASTIC MUSIC KICKS IN:

MONTAGE:

Khal runs up and down a hill giving Charlotte a piggyback.

TIME CUT:

Put Charlotte in as resistance all these scenes.
Khal doing shuttle sprints- Clifford's timing him.

TIME CUT

Khal doing press ups:

TIME CUT

Sit ups

TIME CUT

Jumping

TIME CUT

Lunging

TIME CUT

Squats.

CUT TO:

**EXT. THE GRAFFITIED BASKETBALL COURT - EARLY
EVENING**

The sky's darker now, people are starting to make
their way home.

FANTASTIC MUSIC UNDERSCORES THIS AS:

Charlotte and her dad doing step-ups as fast as they
can, with Clifford standing by.

This suddenly becomes a rhythmic sequence -as Khal stamps out a rhythm , encourages Charlotte.

She stamps out a rhythm -he copies her

He stamps out another rhythm ,she copies him -

It's a joyous moment- they smile at each other,
Father and Daughter , loving this moment together -
Clifford lets it go on for a short while then blows
his whistle

MUSIC STOPS abruptly.

CLIFFORD

Alright.Cut it out... Khaled, I need you to run for
20 minutes and then bring your ass back here - I'll
watch Charlotte...

Charlotte chews her bottom lip.

CHARLOTTE

Um. Mr Clifford? My Dad looks half dead now and if
we don't finish soon - my mom will finish the job
cos we're late for my tea.

Khaled, all sweat and heavy breath sounds, is now
alert. He scrabbles for his sports bag, checks the
time on his phone.

KHALED

Shit. She's right. She should have been back ages ago! See you tomorrow!

And he gets on Charlotte's bike, she jumps on behind and he pedals like fury! Clifford watches them leave.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. COOKIE'S PLACE - LATER

Khaled and Charlotte SKID to a halt outside the house. They run up the front path - Cookie doesn't bother waiting for them to ring the doorbell.

COOKIE

Inside - now! I'll pick her up from from now on.

Charlotte is watching from behind Cookie - Khaled doesn't see her, he's angry.

KHALED

I was training Cook- for this tournament- Coach thinks I can beat-

COOKIE

I've heard it all before Khal - IT'S ALL BOLLOCKS. Why aren't you trying to beg ,borrow or steal the skiing trip money -you're supposed to hand it in at the end of next week! Take some

responsibility! 'Stead of fannyng around playing basketball!

In the B.G, Charlotte eases away, very upset. Khaled is furious.

KHALED

Basketball put food on the table for us...

Cookie moves in close, hisses at him.

COOKIE

Basketball changed you Khaled: always angry ,always miserable - you nearly hit our child! Don't forget that!

KHALED

I can't can I? YOU WON'T LET ME!

GREG (30's Black) Cookie's new man is standing behind in the doorway now. He's young, and dressed in Slacker-ish style.

He's got a head set on and carries an IPAD- he strokes it as if working and talking simultaneously were the easiest things in the world -which for him ,they are..

GREG

You guys wanna bring it inside, Charlotte's crying?(to Headset) --- No, I'm talking to my

missus and her ex. ---No-it's private. Barry will
you be quiet for a sec please

COOKIE

GREG! Please?

Greg looks contrite- listens to his headset, says a
quiet shhhh under his breath.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Khaled was just leaving.

She slams the door on Khaled who stands there very
angry. He walks away and then turns his head to the
sky.

KHALED

Fuck!

He kicks a divot out of the front lawn. Above, at
the window, Charlotte frightened.

INT. COOKIE'S PLACE - LATER

Charlotte, Greg and Cookie arguing.

The living room door is open a snatch and we see
snatches of them as they move back and forth.

CHARLOTTE(O.S.)

You guys stayed in touch because you wanted him to be close to me - well he is and you don't like it!

COOKIE (O.S.)

It's not that.

CHARLOTTE

It IS! You hate that he cares about me

GREG

Don't shout at your mother Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE

Leave me alone Geek!

COOKIE

You do not talk to Greg like that Charlotte Massi!
He's here for us 24/7

CHARLOTTE(O.S.)

You never give Dad a break - at least he hasn't run away like some of these other guys!

GREG

Why don't we all play nice game of scrabble.

CHARLOTTE & COOKIE

SHUT UP GREG!

GREG

Calm down will you-

COOKIE

No-I've had enough...

The argument continues

CUT TO

Khal looks puzzled but Clifford claps him on the shoulder conspiratorially

CLIFFORD

You're gonna love tomorrow.

He counts out the money from Khaled's envelope.

Khaled watches him.

FADE OUT:

Against black:

A caption reads :The Next Day... FADE UP

INT. THE GYM - A BIT LATER

Clifford's got Khaled doing shuttle runs , very fast. Finally Khal crashes onto the floor , in a heap of sweat Clifford stands over him, looking at his watch.

CLIFFORD

You think we're done, right? You think, 'Ah that's it, Clifford won't make me do any more because that would be crazy- that's what you're thinkin' right?

He turns towards the door. Khal's eyes follow and widen as they see The GUILDFORD HEAT basketball team walk enter the gym

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Wrong! Told you you were gonna love today.

Khal gets up and jogs over to the guys-hugs and high fives all round.

KHALED

What are you guys doin here?

Big J hugs Khaled.

BIG J

We look after our own... S'what family's all about Khal.

DREADIE hugs Khal too.

DREADY

Th...thith ith the high clath training
ethtablithment you're uthing. Thought you'd be at
the Thavoy.

The rest of the guys crack up as they get ready to
ball. Khal stares at Big J and holds his gaze.

Flashback:

INT.GUILDFORD HEAT GYM NIGHT

CAPTION: one year ago -

Khal's approaching the basket , Big J is running
parallel with the ball. Khal shouts , Big J doesn't
pass.

Big J jinks , and twists and turns and makes a shot
at the basket. He misses.

While the OPPOSITION steal the ball and attack
Guildford's basket - Khal is in Big J's face ,
yelling.Suddenly Big J punches Khal ,who retaliates.
Now the whole TEAM wades in - Khal takes on everyone
- his face contorted in a berserker fury. The
Referee runs in to break things up. Khal
accidentally punches the Ref!. The whole team
recoil-that's bad...

Coach Reynold's watches helplessly. Flashback ends.

INT. THE LEISURE CENTRE GYM.

Khal nods at Big J.

KHALED

Thank you.

BIG J

Coach Reynolds said to say have you still got his bit of paper?

Khal rushes to his bag , pulls out his wallet , and shows Big J the Einstein quote. Big J smiles.

Clifford blows a whistle to get their attention... Big J unzips his tracksuit top and drops his trackie bottoms - he's in vest and shorts ready to rock.

CLIFFORD

You can all chit chat when you hit the showers ladies. Let's work.

The lads, all ready now, jog over to Clifford and form a circle.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Alright. Good...I wanna tell you a story - now - back in the day, the king,

Suddenly we are in a STORY BOOK WORLD - Micheal is portrayed as a MANGA SUPERHERO type figure -wearing an exaggerated bejewelled crown

CLIFFORD (V.O) (CONT'D)

Michael Jordan retired -at the top of his game- forever..... but he was unhappy in retirement...smoking big ass cigars,chillin' with Spike Lee, flying on his own private jet and playing ball with Bugs Bunny

Manga ILLUSTRATIONS of Mike bored in retirement- yawning at a golf game, sleep in front of the TV - hanging out with Spike Lee , piloting a jet with Bugs Bunny by his side.

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

so after a break-he came back- that's right - thought he could just pick up where he left off- well that's where he was wrong....he got his ass kick- I don't know- arrogance , ring rust -whatever it was , he wasn't ready...

Manga illustrations of Jordan's return -the audience cheer - but his opponent dances rings round him and dunks repeatedly.

CLIFFORD (V.0) (CONT'D)

So in the off season to avoid further embarrassment, Jordan did an amazing thing ; he invited the best college players from around the country -paid for their round trip tickets..business class.... so they could come and kick his ass daily -help him iron out his weaknesses..It worked.

Further illustrations- Jordan on the phone to black /white and hispanic players/ same players on the plane drinking champagne and watching movies / same players playing against Jordan- Jordan gives thumbs up and grin to his team mates.

CLIFFORD (V.0) (CONT'D)

You guys know Khal better than anyone else. Kick his ass. expose his weaknesses, no mercy. He's here to learn. Are ya ready for this?

The players nod, and they place their hands together ...AND KHAL places his hand down too.

ALL OF THEM 1-2-3 Team! HOO HAH!

At the window, Cookie arrives with her students. She watches Khal and the Guildford mob warming up. Khal catches her eye.

She nods then takes her pupils into their training space.

Khal stands on court alone -faced by Guildford Heat.

TIME CUTS as Clifford brutally pushes Khal and his team mates to the extreme.

Khal plays against Dready and Big J and has to use every ounce of energy to beat them.

It's a real beasting.

TIME CUT

Big J - pushing Khal. Trying to wind him up. Khal outwitting Big J.

Clifford is talking to D'Angelo - D'Angelo's talking ten to the dozen, waving his arms around. Clifford takes out a bit of paper , writes something down. D'Angelo crosses that out , writes something else down....

TIME CUT

MUM's at the window looking in-she watches as Dready bounces Khal away from a shooting position. Khal skids along the floor but keeps his composure.

TIME CUT

TWO REALLY BIG GUYS put pressure on Khal-he yells at one of them- starts pushing back. Clifford blows the whistle!

TIME CUT

Cookie and Charlotte watching KHAL leaping up to basket against major opposition from a BADASS GUILDFORD DEFENDER who SWATS Khal away like a flea. Khal gets up to have a go - but Big J and Dreadie rush him and pin him on the floor. Clifford laughs - can't blow the whistle for laughing.

MONTAGE ENDS.

The guys drip with sweat. Khaled lies on the floor, one massive ,exhausted bruise. Clifford still looks chipper. He delivers his exhortation almost like a rapper or a preacher...

CLIFFORD

This is how it's gonna be in Paris in a couple days time- at 2 in the morning - you're gonna feel like this and still have 4 hours to go. How'd your knees feel?How'd your hips feel How's temperament o' yours right now - you ready to lash out yet? Smack the shit outta somebody?

Khal listens intently as he is rotates his ankle, trying to stretch his calf out. He breathes heavily...

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

You ain't gonna have time to catch your breath in Paris brother - if it's your name they callin, that's it baby you ballin' - and you won't be playing these guys either. it's gonna be some Spanish dude, or a good-looking eye-talian or a Lithuanian homie with young ass legs - All of whom, hate your British ass- just like in Eurovision! So what you gonna do bout it? We're gonna run again...lets pick it up this time.

They all get up and do shuttle runs. Khaled, refusing to rest, sweating a river.

TIME CUT

Charlotte watches ,looks concerned; Cookie sees Charlotte's anxiety for her dad, gets her phone out and sends a text.

Cookie and Charlotte leave.

TIME CUT

The session is over. Khal's so tired he just lays there on the ground. Clifford walks over to him with a towel.

He throws the towel over Khal.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Go take a shower and rest. We're gonna do this every day til we hit Paris. I invited London Pioneers over for a session tomorrow. You gotta step up Khal , or no skiing trip for Charlotte...that is why you're doing this right?

Clifford wanders off...The guys help Khal up and embrace him.

BIG J

Your gonna kill it man, don't listen to Clifford, man. You got it in you. You can win. We're all puttin money on you.

DREADY

If you can thurvive thith? You can thurvive anything.
I'm theriouth man!

Khal hugs them back and then goes towards his bags. His mobile pings - he picks it up and reads the message.

**INT. COOKIE'S HOUSE KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM/BACK
CONSERVATORY- LATE AFTERNOON**

The front door opens to reveal Khal standing there. Cookie ushers him in. They go inside the house -

down the hallway, through the living room into the kitchen.

COOKIE

I'm only doing this because Charlotte's worried about you.

KHALED

Where's Charlotte?

He takes off his shirt.

COOKIE

Paper round. Greg's at work. We've got at least an hour and a half.

KHALED

Good.

Khal's in just his pants; his body long ,lean and lightly muscled. They're at the back of the house , in the conservatory which is curtained off and contains a massage table.

Cookie draws the blinds ,lights candles. Khaled lies face down on the table and Cookie takes off her jacket. She's wearing a vest. She begins stretching Khal's legs.

Massaging his shoulders. It's a very emotionally charged atmosphere— both Khal and Cookie are aware, but ignore it and continue as she's ...

Kneading his calves Pushing at his hamstrings
She takes his left foot in her hands and starts rotating. Khal yells out in pain.

COOKIE

Christ, how long have you been hiding that?

KHALED

I can play with it.

COOKIE

Khal. This needs an MRI, it's like you've had a terrible sprain and it's not healed properly.

Khal grimaces as she works on it.

TIME CUT.

COOKIE'S PHYSIO ROOM. LATER

Khal is now facing up ,which means he can look at Cookie and around the room--We've been fairly tight up til now, but now as Khal looks around Cookie's work space, we see at least two dozen trophies, lots of framed press clippings. Karate pennants. Several gold medals are framed. A couple of silvers.

She's massaging his sternocleidomastoid
(neck/shoulder) muscles and he's looking directly
into her eyes as she does so. He speaks softly

KHALED

Cookie. Why'd you stop? I mean - You were a champ.
God, if I'd achieved what you had - I would
have ...

Beat

COOKIE

I know.

She continues to massage him.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

I got tired of watching you lose it out there...
Khal. Basketball was driving you crazy. I Couldn't
watch you fall apart any more.

Cookie starts crying. Khaled reaches up to her face
and strokes her cheek .

Adjust so its clear to audience (but not to Khal)
that Cookie doesn't return his feelings.

He puts a stray lock of hair behind her ear and then
smiles at her. She leans in, very close- they're
almost kissing. The sexual tension is almost

unbearable -And then the HOUSE PHONE RINGS and breaks the spell.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Aaaand relax.

She answers the phone.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Hi Greg- uh huh. Uh Huh? Ok yeah ,no problem

Khal gets up and starts to make himself scarce, but she waves at him to stay.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Hi, sweetie. Yeah. Ok, ok, no problem (listens) --
-stew ..don't know ---- I just chucked everything
in as usual----- (listns) Well you would say
that.(listens) She's doing her paper round,
back in a bit.... Oh, Khal's here - I think I just
sorted his ankle for Paris ... yes, he should pay
me. I know, it's a joke. He can't afford me ...
yep. Yep. Love you, too. Love you. Bye.

Khal's eyes as he watches her. It's so clear to him now... She's moved on.

She's hung up - smiles and refers to Greg -

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Lovely man. You're a lovely man too. But we had our turn, didn't we?

Khal makes a decision. Adjust - he thinks he might be winning her back.

KHALED

Thanks for the Physio Cookie, yeah?(BEAT) And don't worry-I'm gonna sort out the skiing money.I'll find a way.

COOKIE

You've made your bed Khaled. It was either borrow the money , or steal it , or take a big risk on the basketball. We all know what's more important in your life ..just be careful out there , that's all. We'll work something out- needs you. God bless her.

She nods- he leaves. The door slams. Cookie leans against the wall,flushed ; she touches her face where Khaled touched her and exhales ... that was close.

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL CAMERON'S SUITE - LATER

(moved forward from earlier - this is now time clock starts)

Cameron Taylor has various supplements laid out in front of her on the table, plus her green drink. She takes a handful of supplements and palms them into her mouth and then drinks the liquid. Clifford sits opposite her, watching incredulously. Cameron ignores him-takes her time drinking her potion.

CAMERON

Ok, well, we've decided that the big shoot out between whoever wins Paris and Kenji, should happen the day after Paris. They finish at six and boom, at 8 that night they battle again!

CLIFFORD

What?

CAMERON

It will shake things up. Give the contender a real obstacle to overcome.

CLIFFORD

All due respect Ms Taylor ,but are you fuckin' nuts? Whoever the winner is,they're gonna need recovery time from playing twelve hours of almost non stop basketball! You can't DO this!

Her stomach boils noisily again. She ignores it and continues.

CAMERON

Firstly , I don't appreciate that kind of language around me- and secondly -It was Kenji's idea, he said the real SOLDIERS would treat it as a badge of honour to show up ready for battle.

CLIFFORD

I'm calling Dave Romanoff, this is some bullshit.

CAMERON

Mr Romanoff is well aware of what we're doing and signed off on it last night.

Clifford is overwhelmed.

CLIFFORD

I resign.

Cameron is ice cold.

CAMERON

Alright then. Take care, Mr James. You're on your own dime now.

Clifford storms out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CANAL TOWPATH - DAY

Moved forward from earlier.

P.O.V Seen from above.

The water's up, fumes rising from it. Old supermarket trolleys float and odd shoes, bin bags and dog shit line the path. It's pretty grim.

Yout' on his skateboard kick pushes along the towpath and meets Charlotte on her bike. He stops and she pulls in next to him.

This is an alternate point of view ... someone's watching this.

An exchange of words and Yout' hands her a rucksack and a £20 note. She takes it and cycles off .

Yout' kick-pushes off in the other direction. On the bridge above:

Two COPS (white and black) in plain clothes exchange a 'Gotcha' look.

INT. CLIFFORD'S CRAPPY HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Clifford sits on the edge of the bed bellowing into the phone. Khaled is just visible doing press-ups in the bathroom.

CLIFFORD

Dave! how was I to know you agreed with that insane bitch? She holds more than the purse strings, right? She got your dick in her purse too, right ? Well, in the words of that great song ,Dave- Fuck you, - And I know all about you and Pauletta, you can keep her!

He slams the phone down.

Khaled continues his press-ups. Clifford gets up and starts pacing up and down.

A BEAT.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Lying, two-faced, little assed, fit in my wallet, babygro wearin' asshole! Fire ME?

KHALED

Anything I can do?

Clifford sits on the bed.

CLIFFORD

I'll tell you what you can do, Khaled Massi. You can win this tournament - you're better than all these sons-a-bitches!

Khaled is beside himself with joy.

KHALED

You, you think I can win this?

Clifford nods.

Clifford explains they have expenses now & he has no money. Persuades Khaled to invest his savings from ski trip - swears to him he'll get it back ten fold.

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL KENJI'S SUITE - DAY

It's the best room in the Savoy. Beautifully decorated with works of art complimenting the decor. A king size bed takes centre stage; pristine white sheets, a mountain of pillows, and within, Kenji Burton and VICTORIA, are clearly coming to the end of some vigorous and lovely naughtiness.

VICTORIA

Whooh! Damn! That was ...

KENJI

I know.

He grins , grabs some bottled water from the bedside table. Chugalugs it.

A beat

VICTORIA

That's a bit presumptuous.

KENJI

What, baby?

VICTORIA

Well, you don't know what I was going to say. I could have said, 'Terrible' 'Mediocre' 'Middling' 'Ok-ish' 'Like having root Canal surgery without anaesthetic'.

KENJI

I hope you wasn't gonna say any of that shit - I'd have to throw yo' ass out.

VICTORIA

Joke Kenneth....

KENJI

Kenji. I like Kenji.

VICTORIA

Why? Sounds like a Japanese sex doll.

KENJI

Kenji is what my friends call me. Kenneth is what they called me at school, at the police station. In court,

Victoria laughs.

VICTORIA

Yes-you've spent a lot of time in the courthouse
haven't you?

KENJI

I got my own parking spot down there!

Victoria doesn't crack a smile -just looks at him
carefully. A beat.

Kenji knows something's coming.

KENJI (CONT'D)

What?

VICTORIA

You never talk about it, do you?

KENJI

What?

VICTORIA

The case. You hate talking about it.

KENJI

I don't hate it. I'm just tryin' to forget it ... I
ain't never had to take no pussy, not at school, not
at college, never.

VICTORIA

That's horrible.

KENJI

Sorry. It's how the guys ...

VICTORIA

Well, I'd rather you didn't say things like that .If that's alright with you.

He nods. All Ice Cool.He likes her..wants to talk.
He pours more champagne - They snuggle up under the covers.

Beat.

Kenji wants this moment to be about something other than the sex..he wants to talk to her -can't help himself.

KENJI

You know...I mean...Some ballers are like , 'Get The money, the pussy and the weed,!' ... I ain't never paid for the thang ..ain't never had to take the thang... never needed to.

VICTORIA

But Renate Munroe said you did take the 'thang'- is she lying? Come on - you can tell me ..

Kenji looks at her -she pulls a 'Who Me?' type face.

KENJI

Look, I settled, alright. End of story.

VICTORIA

You could have pursued it further through the courts -protected your good name.

Kenji sighs - as if he's exhausted with the whole thing. BEAT.

KENJI

'Good name'-shit...(beat)Look, me and Pookie ...

VICTORIA

What's it got to do with Pookie?

KENJI

We go back, you know? Me and him ... any chick I don't want, he----

He can't even say it , he knows how it sounds.

Victoria gets up and pours herself a drink. Downs it in one. She gets back into bed.

VICTORIA

What?

Kenji relives the whole thing.

KENJI

I was tired - Pookie took over - sweet talked her into his room. Next thing I know -?BAM! Blood and scratches and shit all over her face. Pookie's tryna chill her out, but she just grab her stuff and gone. Next thing I know, I'm a rapist.

VICTORIA

Why'd she accuse you and not Pookie?

KENJI

Hey, I love Pook, but he ain't no motherfuckin' superstar NBA baller, a'ight? She followed the dollar and then hollered.

And Kenji almost breaks down with relief.

Victoria rubs his shoulder sympathetically-sighs then starts to move.

VICTORIA

I'm gonna get a shower and then you need to get ready for Paris, yeah?

Kenji nods - she leaves him be. Turns and goes to the bathroom.

She shuts the door. Sits on the toilet seat, looks at her I Phone. She presses rewind and listens.

EXT. THE CANAL TOWPATH. LATER

Moved forward from earlier.

Charlotte pedals furiously and arrives at her vantage point, a broken lamppost at a bend in the canal. She waits near some bins. It stinks. There are shopping trolleys half submerged in the water. Old bleach bottles. Grim.

Yout' arrives - gives her the rucksack. Gives her more lessons, handling yourself, what if someone tries to rob you etc.

YOUT'

You don't look in there right? It's not your business-get me? You get an envelope at the other end. You done good.

Charlotte grins

CHARLOTTE

Yeah?

YOUT'

Yeah. You better jet , yeah?

Charotte salutes and takes off.

A skinny pale ginger GUY (19), all ears, runny nose and nervy excitement watches the whole thing from behind the wheel of a dodgy V.W. As Charlotte gets on the main road - he pulls out and follows her discretely.

Watching HIM from a side street, our two undercover COPS from before...

EXT./INT. CLIFFORD'S SHITTY HOTEL. LATER

Clifford has made up a bed on the floor. Khaled is on the bed. It's still early - by the time on the wall clock - 7.15.

CLIFFORD & KHALED HAVE A GEART TO HEART ABOUT
REFINDING THEIR DREAMS/LOVE FOR BASKETBALL.
CLIFFORD TELLS HIS STORY.

THEY STAY UP LATE CHATTING

Deleted scene

EXT/INT. THE EUROSTAR TRAIN - DAY

Along the platform, Khal's feet jog to the train, Clifford following behind panting. and he just makes it before they slam the doors and blow the whistle.

INT. THE RAILWAY CARRIAGE - DAY

In a second class carriage, Khaled's on the phone, Clifford's drinking coffee and listening.

KHALED Leaves message for his mum. Asks her to pick up.

He hangs up.

KHALED (CONT'D) Explains to Clifford how she's always been with him at every game.

Khal looks sadly out the window at the whooshing scenery. Clifford tries to cheer him up

CLIFFORD

Paris man- huh. Hey..make sure your phone's good and charged - you're gonna want to take pictures.

CUT TO:

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS OF PARIS - LUNCHTIME

Khal and Clifford are in a van being shuttled around Paris, having a whirlwind tour of the big city. Khal's taking pictures on his phone.

STILLS OF:

ARC DE TRIOMPH

THE EIFFEL TOWER MONT MARTRE NOTRE DAME.

Clifford takes pictures on his phone too.

STILLS OF:

Pizza Express Mcdonalds Subway Starbucks

Clifford laughs maniacally.

EXT/INT. THE TOURNAMENT VENUE - LATER

It's a little later and we're in the big Ball til you Fall venue. A huge SENTINEL SHOES LOGO dominates along with a massive poster of Kenji holding the Soldier shoe.

BALLERS from all over Europe are practising on court. GREEK PLAYERS, SPANISH PLAYERS, LITHUANIANS, TURKISH, SCOTS,

WELSH, ENGLISH (teens to late 20's). All file past Khal and mutter to each other. They all give Khal the stink eye. Khal gives it right back.

KHALED

Wish my mum was here - she'd be cussing these guys man. She used to come to every home game - calm me down... One time, this bumbo hole-

CLIFFORD

What's a 'Bumbo Hole'?

KHALED

Jamaican for 'Dick head' Anyway this guy fouled me- really hurt, man. Mum comes down-onto the court you know?(marvels at the memory) told him about his backside right there in front a the crowd. He was shamed, man! I was laughing so much, I couldn't help but play good man..

Clifford laughs.

CLIFFORD

You're mom's good people Khal. Don't forget that. I'll see ya before we go.

Clifford leaves Khal to get into his zone.

**EXT/INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT - MID
AFTERNOON**

DELETED DIALOGUE:

Win notices a copy of the local paper which has on it's back page a picture of Khal with the headline , 'Not so Special K takes one last shot'.

Win picks it up and shoves it in the bin, then looks at her watch and drinks her tea.

EXT/INT. THE TOURNAMENT VENUE - LATER

Moved down from earlier - possibly wrong place.

Clifford walks over to a GREEK contestant - gives him the stink eye.

TIME CUT

CLIFFORD standing next to an ITALIAN - gives him the stink eye

TIME CUT

Clifford standing next to some Scottish PLAYERS - gives them the stink eye. A HUGE JOCK PLAYER (20's) picks him up and draws him very close and gives him the stink eye back.

SCOTTISH BALLER

Yew got a fukken problem pal?

CLIFFORD

No,no ,not at all ..

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. KENJI'S PRIVATE JET - MID AFTERNOON

Kenji and Victoria, Pookie and Malcolm the P.R. Guy, Cameron and Dave Romanoff sit in their various positions on the luxury Jet.

Kenji is pensive. Victoria squeezes his hand.

VICTORIA

Alright?

Kenji sighs, glances at Pookie who also sighs,rather theatrically....

KENJI

Sure. We just gonna watch some shitty European Ball is all ... s'like surgery but without the general anaesthetic.

POOKIE

S'like Lauryn Hill without the Fugees.

KENJI

It's like hoe cake without no bacon grease,.....let me tell you somethin'

POOKIE /KENJI

They just can't ball like we do.

CAMERON

You might be surprised.

Kenji and Pookie look at her askance.

KENJI/POOKIE

Bitch, please!

They crack up.

Cameron exchanges a look with Victoria - Jesus Christ. Romanoff looks sheepish.

ROMANOFF

Come on, guys, there are ladies here?

BEAT.

KENJI

Sure, man.(to the ladies) Sorry ya'all. Uh, Dave? Could you get me some coffee here? Pookie, would you like some coffee?

POOKIE

I'd LOVE some coffee!

KENJI

Cameron? Victoria?

Cameron and Victoria shake their heads. Romanoff is terribly embarrassed.

KENJI (CONT'D)

That's just two coffees then. Dave ... Now!

Romanoff hesitates and then gets up to see about the coffees. Pookie and Kenji exchange a look. Cameron's reading the Evening Standard, Kenji's picture is on the back page along with Khaled's sad, but determined face - the Hackney underdog.

The jet taxis along and takes its spot for take off....

**EXT/INT. THE BALL TIL YOU FALL VENUE LOCKER ROOMS
- LATER**

Queues are thinning out as FANS take their seats. Excitement everywhere; the clock reads 5.40 - not long to go now.

INT. THE LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Khaled sits on a bench taping up his ankle. CHECKS HIS PHONE FOR MESSAGES - NOTHING

Clifford enters, TAKES the phone from Khal.

CLIFFORD

Get your mind on the game.

Khal continues to tape his ankle up, put his socks on, get his basketball boots on ... the ritual.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

I took a look at some a your competition out there; you might think ...

CUT TO:

KHALED

(ADJUST THIS? He's not doing it for Charlotte yet)Clifford. I don't need the big speech. Blah blah blah blah. Just let me play? Let me do my job. I'm doing this for Charlotte, yeah? Gonna do my best not to let her down. I'll do my best not to let HER DOWN - That's all I've got.

CLIFFORD

Now we got ourselves a ball game!

INT. BALL TIL YOU FALL ARENA - NIGHT

The CLOCK strikes 6.

SUDDENLY a massive FANFARE blares out -the CROWD go nuts.

Burton enters the arena to huge cheers AND boos. Cameron Taylor follows, ascends a little platform which has been erected CENTRE COURT. Kenji stands next to her at the microphones. Pookie is nearby, yelling and hyping up the crowd

Cameron speaks in flawless French, which for our purpose is subtitled.

CAMERON (SUBTITLED)

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, it is my honour to present this extraordinary Sentinel Sports Promotion, here in the most beautiful arena I've EVER seen ... puts many of our American playing spaces to shame.

Kenji pulls a face. Pookie laughs. The Soldier Basketball shoe appears on the screen, with the logo 'Taste the Air'.

CUT TO:

EXT. D'ANGELO'S STREET - EVENING

Moved forward from ealier...place somewhere in tournament.

This is a middle class street, with reasonably nice houses.

Charlotte ZOOMS down the pavement - a rucksack on her back and bag full of papers slung over shoulder.

She SCREECHES to a halt outside one of the houses drops the bike and walks up the path -but SUDDENLY-BAM!

The Skinny Ginger Kid driving the V.W mounts the pavement and KNOCKS her down!

Charlotte goes flying and lands hard. She lies still , unmoving.

The Ginger kid gets out of the V.W. which is parked on D'Angelo's mum's lawn - he jogs over to where Charlotte landed; yanks the rucksack off her back.

He unzips it and a flask and a Tupperware container fall out. Ginger kid's puzzled.

He reaches inside the rucksack again, and finds more Tupperware, a spork??

He kneels and punches Charlotte in the face ,
slapping her , gets up , goes through the rucksack
again - nothing. He kicks her hard in the ribs.
Charlotte doesn't move.

GINGER SKINNY KID

Where's the fuckin' gear??

But then - WHAM!

A big plain clothes guy BODY SLAMS the teenager
hard- The kid goes DOWN.

The other plain clothes guy runs up, and drops the
cuffs on him.

PLAIN CLOTHES GUY

Fuckin' traffic ! Get this twat in the car. Call an
ambulance.

Skinny Ginger is led away , as the plain clothes guy
kneels down , feels for Charlotte's pulse, takes his
jacket off and covers her gently.

PLAIN CLOTHES GUY (CONT'D) DID YOU CALL THAT FUCKIN'
AMBULANCE YET? THIS GIRL'S BADLY HURT!

We hear the squawk of a radio and a muffled voice

Fade out.

INT. BALL TIL YOU FALL ARENA – NIGHT

It's a little later now.

Kenji is now at the podium. He has an enormous AIR HORN in his hands. He BLASTS it!.

KENJI

SHALL WE PLAY SOME BASKETBALL PARIS FRANCE?

The crowd cheer!

KENJI (CONT'D)

LETS GET READY TO RUMMMMMMBLLLLLEEEE!

HE BLASTS THE HORN AGAIN.

The crowd cheer, the podium is moved swiftly away from Centre court and out. The clock strikes 6 and the games begin.

Fast and furious playing on both ends of the court. Khal watches his fellow COMPETITORS preparing for battle.

One on One basketball - fast and furious, slick and wicked, exiting and energetic, executed with maximum force!

And we keep our eye on the CLOCK because time is going to pass very quickly here. The point being that Khal is on court virtually non stop - time will slow, time will speed impossibly fast:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

Quick cuts of : CLOCK - 6.45PM

Khal VS A GREEK PLAYER (TEENS) who muscles his way to the basket, knocking Khal down.

Sweat pouring from a BALLER'S head.

TIME CUT

A REF is booed by a section of the crowd.

Cameron Taylor, Dave Romanoff, Kenji and Victoria and crew watch the games on a 50 inch plasma in their CORPORATE BOX.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 7.45PM

Two White Players (teens), fighting - the referee blows the whistle this game's done. They are escorted from the court.

A knee being manipulated back into place -POP!

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 930PM

Khal limps off court, exhausted. Clifford makes him plug water, lays him down, stretches out his hamstrings. The whistle blows. Khal has to return to the court.

Clifford rapping on the phone.

Some CHEEKY GIRLS showing their bosoms to the Camera

EXT/INT.COOKIE AND GREG'S HOUSE.LATER

Moved from earlier - place somewhere in middle of game.

The phone in the hallway rings.

Greg comes out talking into an ear piece, carrying his I Pad.

GREG

Alan.Alan -you've got to stop panicking. You live in an area where blackouts happen all the time- you need a surge protector - it's so simple - that way -hang on gotta get the house phone.

He gets the phone , places it to his ear

GREG (CONT'D)

Y'ellow? (listens) What? Ok -we're on our way.

Greg looks grave.

GREG (CONT'D)

Shut up Alan! Buy a new computer it's cheaper than calling me!

He runs to the bottom of the stairs.

GREG (CONT'D)

Cookie...COOKIE!

Greg reaches for his coat , gets his car keys -
Cookie runs down stairs, hair wet from the shower

COOKIE

What?

GREG

Charlotte's in hospital.

Cookie just stands there, dripping

GREG (CONT'D)

Come on!

They rush out the door.

CUT TO:

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 10.25PM

IN THE CORPORATE AREA

Cameron and Romanoff watch the game, Pookie drinks coke zero from the bottle, Kenji and Victoria kiss.

ON THE 50 INCH PLASMA TV :TWO GIRLS show their bosoms to camera.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 1.AM

A Spaniard (20's)battles it out with a lanky Scot. The Scot triumphs and does a mini highland fling to celebrate!

Clifford imitates him. Khal laughs.

TIME CUT

A FAT BLOKE is asleep in the audience, but everyone else is on their feet.

PLAYERS lunge and parry at each other on both ends of the court, meanwhile, Khal rests. Clifford rubs him down.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 2.50AM

SLOW MOTION: Khal is EVERYWHERE....MULTIPLE IMAGES OF KHAL ON COURT -HE'S ALMOST PLAYING HIMSELF

TIME CUT:

CLOCK -3.AM

Kenji Burton, Victoria, Pookie and crew leave in the midst of a game. The crowd boo him. Kenji turns and grabs his crotch. Lovely.

SPEEDED UP TO MC SOLAR STYLE HIP HOP

Khal, on the floor, awash in sweat. Clifford TALKING fast on his cell phone.

Clifford makes Khaled eat a banana, The Whistle blows. Khal runs onto the court - Clifford eats a banana too. Then another one.

PLAY BEGINS--SUPERFAST - A BLUR - KHAL TRIUMPHS. TIME CUT

CLOCK - 5.AM CORPORATE AREA.

Cameron drinks water. Romanoff drinks from a hip flask.

Clifford drinks coffee. Khal POURS water over his head, trying to stay awake..COLLEAGUES (players now out of the competition) pat him on the shoulder.

A FEW PLAYERS are still on court playing like there's no tomorrow. The End Games.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 5.50 AM SLOW MOTION ...

Khal vs a HUGE ITALIAN Player - last men standing - The Italian is strong,tall and fit.

Scores are neck and neck. Then with a burst of last ditch energy Khaled, twists, turns, feints and then flings the ball backwards over his head and it goes into the basket!

The whole crowd goes crazy-ape-batshit! The clock strikes 6 AM.

GAME OVER!

CLIFFORD ON THE PHONE, YELLING HIMSELF HOARSE ...
KHALED WON! HE WON! HE WON.

Khaled, exhausted, sweaty, hobbling a little, is led up the podium. The exhausted crowd cheer themselves silly.

He is handed a trophy by Cameron Taylor. The PRESS crew snap away.

CAMERON TAYLOR (SUBTITLED)

The winner of this year's 'Ball til you fall' is, from Hackney in London, his name is Khaled Massi! So The Battle Royale of Kenji Burton vs Khaled Massi will happen in Hackney, east London -TONIGHT. Congratulations!!!

Huge respect from the crowd! Cameron shakes Khal's hand. Clifford grins HUGELY. Khal is genuinely happy.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

(Might not need this)

Cookie & Greg at Charlotte's bedside, distraught. Charlotte's leg is in a cast.

EXT/INT. EURO STAR - EARLY MORNING

The Euro Star express train yomps all the way back to the UK - like a matt black motorised python on skates.

In the First class carriage, Clifford and Khal sit and celebrate over continental breakfast.

Clifford holds up the sports pages of the local newspaper, there is a picture of Khal triumphantly hoisting silverware - the same trophy that sits on the table next to him.

CLIFFORD

You took on the best of Europe ... kicked they ass. Greece - Shish kabobbed; Spain? Adios Amigo! Italy-Berlusconi THIS motherfucker! Them other Brits? You were like 'I say old pal, toodle oo'

Khal's laughing though he's very tired.

CLIFFORD

I'm already gettin' phone calls from people, man ... You get through tonight? Europe wise - play for whoever the hell you want; I'm talkin' sponsorship! Damn ... send Charlotte skiing on the moon! Doesn't matter what happens with Burton tonight! I'M proud a you. You made me love this game all over again.

KHALED

Just hope Charlotte's feeling better today that's all.

CLIFFORD

She'll be fine. Now get some sleep- you can bet Kenji Burton's chillin in his hotel suite right now....

GIVES HIM BACK HIS MOBILE PHONE - KHAL TURNS IT ON -
A DELUGE OF MESSAGES.

EXT/INT. HACKNEY HOSPITAL. LATER

MOVED FORWARD TO END ACT 2.

Greg stands outside one of the private rooms in A. and E talking to Plain Clothes cop. Khaled and Clifford run in -

Greg turns and looks gravely at Khaled, stopping him in his tracks. Khaled goes to go in , but the Plain clothes cop flashes a badge and stops him.

GREG

He's her father let him through!

Greg nods and the cop allows Khaled to go in.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOSPITAL ROOM. SIMULTANEOUS

Khaled enters to find Cookie sitting by Charlotte's bed.

Charlotte is all bandages and bruises. Her leg in a plaster cast. Khaled starts to cry.

Cookie looks up at him -she speaks very quietly.

COOKIE

She won't wake up.

Khaled stands by the bed.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Why won't she wake up?

Khaled reaches down and holds Charlotte's hand.

KHALED

What happened?

A beat - Cookie looks vexed.

COOKIE

Do you really want to know Khal? Really?

Khal is aware of Cookie's state change.

KHALED

Of course I want to know -what happened.

COOKIE

She was dropping off a package at D'Angelo's yard. Something she's been doing for a while according to that policeman outside.

KHALED

What?

COOKIE

She was running errands for D'Angelo, Khal. Dropping off packages. She's lucky it was his packed lunch otherwise she'd be looking at jail time.

KHALED

She's only 12

COOKIE

So! She could have been moving coke or speed or money or anything. She was doing it to help you.

KHALED

Oh God.

COOKIE

You better pray she's alright ,cos if she don't recover from this.....

Don't have her exit - (She gets up and leaves Khaled alone with Charlotte.)

Khaled sits down. Strokes Charlotte's arm. He tries to talk to her but he can barely get out the words.

KHALED

Charlotte, I am so sorry.... thought I was gonna to make everything alright....Get the money to pay for the skiing..I was doing it all for you. You didn't have to do this. I was gonna get the money for you- I told you not to get involved with D'Angelo. I told you. I told you. I'm gonna kill him.

Adjust so that he's realising he is to blame.

Charlotte's eyes flicker and then open

CHARLOTTE

Daddy?

Charlotte starts crying. Cookie rushes over and sees that Charlotte is awake.

COOKIE

Oh thank God.

CHARLOTTE

Mum...I'm so sorry.

COOKIE

Well - lets get you better now. The police man is satisfied that you had no idea what you were doing.

Or who you were doing it for. You need to rest now
Charlotte..

Clifford hovering, they can still make it.

Khaled barks at him, tells him he isn't going to go -
Angry with Clifford for making him put himself
before his daughter.

KHALED

Charlotte's more important than Basketball , she
always has been. I'm staying here.

Deleted dialogue ...

Clifford leaves, devastated.

Charlotte realises that her dad has won in Paris and
is thrilled. Tells him he has to go.

Deleted lines ...

Gives her dad a talisman for luck.

CHARLOTTE

Because you love it. You've always loved it and
you'll never stop loving it. Daddy you've got to
go the final and beat Kenji Burton and get his
autograph for me. I love you. Now go and play.

Khal is convinced - he leaves, overcoming the pain of seeing Cookie Greg & Charlotte together as a unit.

Cookie nuzzling into Greg's shoulder.

EXT/INT. THE PURPOSE BUILT ARENA - LATER

A domed affair with the Sentinel Logo displayed everywhere. Like Cirque Du Soleil's performance tent, but for 3000 fans tops. There are food stands, bookies, merchandise hawkers, and a MASSIVE queue at the box office.

Clifford approaches, summoning up the strength to tell them the game is off.

Khaled arrives just in time. Clifford is thrilled.

INT. BACKSTAGE KENJI'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Which is, of course, huge, beautifully appointed, with its own physio table, three piece suite, day-bed, flowers everywhere, and a mini gym. Kenji is on the physio bed being massaged by his GUY (BLACK 50'S). POOKIE watches a video of Khaled at Ball til you Fall in Paris.

There's a shot of Khal limping

POOKIE

Yo, Kenji - your boy be limpin' like Long John Silver up in this bitch-on the left. Ya'all need to cancel that shit out ... he can ball tho'

Kenji lies there being pummelled. Thoughtful. He signals to the physio to stop and leave -he does , and now it's just Pookie and Kenji...

Kenji sits up, looks at his old friend -

KENJI

Yo, Pookie. We need to talk, man.

Pookie turns the DVD off.

CUT TO:

POOKIE

'Bout what?

INT. KHALED'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

He's got a table and a day-bed and a portaloo, but it's all much ... smaller. Khal lies on a day bed, he's got Charlotte's Talisman.

Clifford tries to give him pep talk but Khaled just repeats that he's doing it for his daughter. But he's clearly exhausted.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. THE PURPOSE BUILT ARENA - NIGHT

The CROWD surge into the arena, hundreds of them.
Silas is here, as are ALL of Guildford heat.

D'Angelo's taking bets, counting money in the open.
He's brazen. Highlight this a bit more.

Big J and Dready are being interviewed by local
radio. The other guys are there too. Dready holds
court.

DREADY

'What will Khaled Mathi be thinking at this
pre-thie moment?' I should think he'd be using the
lavatory ... that's what I'd be doing ... I'd
be on the lavatory.

PRESENTER

Why are you all here? He used to ball for Guildford
heat, but not any more.

BIG J

We're here to show our support. Khaled's family to
us, yeah?

The HEAT cheer

CUT TO:

INT. PUNDIT/NEWS CREW AREA – CONTINUOUS

A SPORTS CABLE PUNDIT'S got Coach Reynolds on camera pontificating about Khaled.

COACH REYNOLDS

Khaled's living proof that we've got ballers in the UK with great talent.

CUT TO:

PUNDIT

But you guys let him go, what was the thinking behind that?

COACH REYNOLDS

We love Khal at Guildford, he's a one off - he's got a lot of spirit, a lot of heart and he's a maverick. Sometimes these things cause conflict, you know - I wish him luck tonight. Go get him Khal!

INT. KENJI'S DRESSING ROOM – NIGHT

Kenji sits, oiled to perfection, hair cane rowed. Muscles rippling. Outfit fresh out the box. One-Of-

kind, personally monogrammed Sentinel Soldiers on his feet.

Pookie stands by, looking as if he's just taken a direct hit from a stray space shuttle.

Romanoff and Cameron enter the locker room.

Panicked, Pookie looks at Kenji - who shakes his head ... 'Say nothing'.

CAMERON

Good luck, Kenji.

Romanoff gets into Kenji's personal space, all 'we're all jock's here, right?'

ROMANOFF

Outstanding crowd tonight - twitter's goin' berserk, the news feeds say 'It's the event of the year', the bookies say the action tonight is mental...and if any more Brit celebrities call me asking for tickets I'm gonna barf right here...

Cameron turns sharply - Romanoff's fake bonhomie drops off him in chunks.

Cameron takes the lead.

CAMERON

This is going to be a great game. Enjoy.

They leave.

Kenji gets up and starts pacing the room. He flexes his foot.

KENJI

You sure these are the right size- motherfucker's pinch...

He leaves the room.

Pookie left with his own thoughts , and looks thunderstruck.

CUT TO:

INT. KHALED'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

ADJUST: CLIFFORD PRESENT OR ENTERS DURING.- KENJI PSYCHES KHALED OUT AND REALLY PISSES OFF CLIFFORD. CLIFFORD TELLS THE FREAKED OUT KHALED TO WAIT THERE, HE'S GOING TO SORT IT OUT.

The door opens but he doesn't hear it. Kenji walks in, alone, looking like fresh minted money..

Khal sits up immediately; What's this?

Deleted dialogue ...

KENJI

Let's show these people somethin', right?

Khal gets up, nods at Kenji ... and they walk out together.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Get yo' game face on fool, we ain't friends an' shit. I'ma still crush yo' ass out there.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Greg, Cookie & Charlotte watching on Greg's ipad with tiny speakers.

Kenji & a not too confident looking Khaled enter the arena and the crowd go absolutely BAT SHIT!

Charlotte looks at her mum - they're worried.

INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN - DAY

Mama sits at the counter with the tills' cash float in notes and change in front of her. Farrington scurries back and forth in the Kitchen. It's pre tea time ,so it's quiet.

Suddenly , Clifford BURSTS in through the front door, on a mission from God! FARRINGDON listens at the hatch. Win is enraged at this invasion.

CLIFFORD

Mrs Massi, I want to talk to you, we don't have much time.

WIN

Take you backside outta a my place! I tell Khaled 'Basketball or Me -him mek him choice. Farrington, you make the cornmeal porridge?

CHEF

You deal with out deh so and me will deal with back yah so.

WIN

You cheeky raas, you.

The Chef laughs and continues working and listening.

CLIFFORD

Mrs Massi, I want you to come down to that arena to night. I want you to come and watch your son and calm him with your presence the way you used to. He's played his heart out all night long. He needs a boost!

Win looks as though she might crumble -but she turns - maintains her steel.

WIN

I have work fe do.

She turns her back on him, starts counting out change. Clifford grabs her wrist. Win turns, reaches for a nearby machete, grabs it

WIN (CONT'D)

Unless you wan' them call you 'Stumpy' from this day forward you better let go my raas hand! You tell Khaled -

Clifford interrupts

CLIFFORD

Kenji Burton's been massaged and oiled ,pampered and trained to perfection. Khaled Massi just wants his mama courtside it's my job to get her there!

WIN

I don't know ...

CLIFFORD

Khaled didn't ask me to come here Mrs Massi.I'm here because within the brief time I've known Khaled it has become very clear to me that he loves and respects and needs you very much. Win. Khaled isn't just representing himself tonight. Khal's

representing Hackney. Not just Hackney. ALL of Britain! Mrs Massi, you've GOT to be there tonight ... Your son- Dammit your country needs you.

Win is entranced by Clifford's rhetoric. She rises to her feet.

Farrington has already made up a Tupperware dish of food for the journey.

FARRINGTON

One and two pattie, some plantain, lickle jerk chicken and some dumpling. Wish Khal luck from me.

Clifford takes the dish and is surprised by its WEIGHT.

CLIFFORD

Get your coat - and a forklift for this - we're going to a goddamn ball game.

WIN

If you blaspheme in this house once more, I will chop off you seed bag.

CLIFFORD

Amen.

He hustles her out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PURPOSE BUILT ARENA - NIGHT

DELETED LINES ...

CAMERON

Our new shoe, 'The Soldier' needed a Unique athlete; a powerhouse. I give you - one of the greatest players basketball has ever seen. Wearing the Soldier shoe for the first time, Mr. Kenji. Burton!

Kenji flashes a million dollar smile at Khal. Then runs out to wave at the fans. Suddenly, every single mobile phone camera in the place goes NUTS.

Screens display his stats: three times Most valuable player in the NBA; best dunk; most baskets. Lots of cheers - which eventually die down. Kenji is stretching and begins yelling at Khal.

KENJI

You, Clifford James! I'ma CRUSH yo'boy!

Khaled tries to steel himself.

KENJI (CONT'D)

I'ma pound and pound and pound him so hard they gonna change his name to 'Pound Stirling! Yo' mama'll be able to keep you in her purse!

Kenji plays to the gallery, musing aloud.

KENJI (CONT'D)

What kinda name is Khaled Massi anyway? Soun' like some kinda Middle eastern shit. You a terrorist Khaled? I'ma beat yo' ass for makin' a motherfucka take off his shoes at security at the airport every goddam time...

Suddenly a voice interrupts, indistinct at first but getting closer and closer. It's Win.

She glides like a Jamaican battleship towards Khal and Kenji, in full voice - the crowd react accordingly ...

WIN

Kenji Burton? Kenji Burton? Is who tell you to talk to my son this way? You see you? You're not even worth the dirt on his shoes. I've watched you Burton, you're a liar, a cheat and a BULLY. My son is none of these things -that's why he'll ALWAYS be better than you, you wretch!

Kenji flinches at the barrage of insults.

Khal hugs his mum. Heartbreaking moment!

Clifford appears and looks on proudly - he made it!

The crowd CHEER and laugh -SECURITY guys have now caught up with WIN and she is given mighty ovation as she is dragged off court.

The MEDIA are loving this.

UK PUNDIT

Khaled's MUM there giving Burton a well deserved earful. Not quite the done thing, bringing your mum to the game.....but apparently she's done it before.

Shots of Win telling Kenji off. Shots of Khaled and Clifford reacting.

USA PUNDIT

....Massi seems embarrassed but happy. We'll see how happy he is when Brutal Burton breaks out the heavy artillery.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Watching the TV.

Cookie & Charlotte cheer as Win returns to her seat; Charlotte's eyes twinkle - 'That's my Gran'

CUT TO:

INT. ON COURT - CONTINUOUS

Kenji and Khaled walk at the court's centre centre; the Referee talks to them but neither listen. They know how to play this game.

US PUNDIT

The Ref's layin' the law down out there - best of five games, first to ten points in each game.

On Kenji: moving his shoulders, bouncing on his toes, moving his head from side to side.

On Khal: flexing his ankle, bending his arms behind his back - staring at Kenji.

UK PUNDIT

In case of a tie, obviously there'll be a sudden death play off to decide the winner.

The ball is tossed up into the air and seems to stay there for the longest time. It hangs and in SLOW MOTION we see:

91.

Khal's eyes watching Kenji's eyes focussed.

And then..... BAM!

Kenji has the ball, spins , runs , dominates ;Khal tries to keep up but Burton's on Fire

SCOREBOARD: GAME 1:

We're in amongst them, jostled, hustled - this is real.

The game begins and it's brutal; Kenji doesn't take any prisoners.

TIME CUT: GAME 2:

US PUNDIT

Massi's got a pretty good all round game here.

Burton's skilful and uses everything he knows to dismantle Khal's game but Khal pushes back! Forcing Burton away

UK PUNDIT

Burton's getting the measure of this UK Ball player - he ain't just gonna lie down here.

TIME CUT:

Game 3: Burton 6 Massi 8

Khal's muscled away from the ball - pushed and stamped on. Burton sends the ball arcing into the basket-Boom-Swish!

IN THE CROWD WIN screams her disapproval! COOKIE has her hand over her mouth.

Charlotte holds Greg's hand. He looks at her.

TIME CUT:

GAME 4:

UK PUNDIT (CONT'D)

You know, I think Burton's surprised by how good Massi is. He's a decent player. He's not NBA but he's holding his own out there.

Burton gets mad and pushes Khal to the floor and almost says 'Stay down.'

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Big J and Dready are on their feet yelling 'Foul'.

ON COURT:

The referee's warning Kenji continually for gangster tactics. Khal surprises Kenji with a couple of fast

turnarounds, He sends a ball thundering into the basket! Burton's sweating. He shoots a look over at courtside.

Cameron and Romanoff are watching. Burton looks worried.

US PUNDIT

You're not telling me a guy of Burton's class can't put Khaled Massi away? What's this kid ever done?

TIME CUT:

MUSIC BEGINS. GAME 7:

UK PUNDIT

Massi's found his form-this is real basketball!
Come on Special K!!!

IN THE CROWD

Charlotte and Greg and Cookie and Win are dancing with Joy! Cameron and Romanoff are in heated discussions

ON COURT

Kenji shows his class - there's a reason why he's an MVP. This guy's superb. It's almost mercurial the way he moves on the court. Khal is limping, favouring

his left ... his ankle's playing up ,but he's getting by. Kenji is once again surprised by Khal's turn of speed and skill. After a particularly tough basket, Kenji STAMPS on Khal's LEFT foot and pushes - Khal's ankle makes a horrible GRINDING sound.

Clifford calls for a time out. The Ref blows his whistle. Khal is down.

Show Khaled overcoming his anger.

COURTSIDE.

UK PUNDIT (CONT'D)

Massi's down. This isn't good at all.

(Change this to Clifford?)

Cookie vaults over the barrier and runs to him. She flexes his foot, sprays it with something cool and RE BANDAGES it during the following.

COOKIE

Wanna stop?

KHALED

No. No blood no foul. I'm gonna keep on.

COOKIE

Bloody fool.

KHALED

I know. What you doing here?

CUT TO:

COOKIE

Greg sent me. Anyway, we've got time. Your mate's arguing with the Ref.

INT. MID COURT — CONTINUOUS

Clifford is in the midst of an enormous battle with the REFEREE.

CLIFFORD

Well you can kiss the whole of my hairy nutsack then!

REF

Get off my basketball court, Mr James, you're irritating me.

CLIFFORD

What are you, Henry the 8th? Burton's running his usual gangster bullshit, so let's get Stevie Wonder to referee cos even he'd notice what was goin' down here!

REF

Sit down, Mr James.

The Ref is serious.

CLIFFORD

Come on now, Ref. Just asking you to keep your eyes open.

UK PUNDIT

That's Clifford James, Massi's coach- there's a bit of history between James and Burton -something to do with the Coach's wife , we won't go into that here... Burton hates James' guts and wants to cripple Massi to prove it.

INT. TEAM KENJI - CONTINUOUS

Kenji and his ENTOURAGE; He's being rubbed, stretched, massaged, rehydrated - a superstar athlete's pit stop. Burton is breathing heavily.

Pookie glances at Kenji. A wall of silence between them.

INT. TEAM KHAL - CONTINUOUS

Clifford has taped up Khal's ankle.

CLIFFORD

Go easy on him, Khal. He's only a Yank.

The whistle blows and the crowd erupt into a huge cheer. Clifford gets Khal to his feet and he slowly jogs back onto the court.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

They're still watching on tv. Greg kisses Cookie. Charlotte's watching ...

CHARLOTTE

Ew. Get a room you two.

They look at her, then at each other. FADE OUT

INT. ON COURT- LATER

Khal in slow motion ,defends against Burton,winning the ball and getting away to the basket! Khal's face is riven with effort.

TIME CUT:

INT.ON COURT -LATER TIME CUT:

Burton, in slow motion, head down, sweat pouring off him, he's worried. What the hell is going on?

FADE UP

CUT TO:

INT. ON COURT - LATER

It's GAME 10 - The Final Game. The pundits are on fire about Khaled Massi!

UK PUNDIT

If you've just tuned in , do not go any where -this is where you wanna be!

Burton and Massi tussle for the ball. Burton wins this point.

USA PUNDIT

UK underdog has taken Kenji Burton to the hole and they are now neck and neck-the referee has signalled a sudden death play off -first to ten points.

The Crowd Roar as Khal fights back!

UK PUNDIT

This is one of the best one-on-one battles I've EVER seen time. First to ten baskets wins. Hang on to your hat.

INT. COURTSIDE - NIGHT

CUT BETWEEN TEAM KENJI AND TEAM KHAL.

KENJI is drinking water. KHAL is drinking water. CLIFFORD hunkers down and hisses into Khal's ear

CLIFFORD

This is some life changing shit right here. Do you want this? Cos it ain't gonna happen if you don't want this?

KHAL

I think I ...

Clifford slaps him round the face!

KHAL (CONT'D)

What?

CLIFFORD

I saw your mama do it, thought it might work for me

KHAL

DONT-DO-THAT!

CLIFFORD

There's no 'I think' now. There's only 'I will' or 'I won't'. Your whole family is here waiting for you to show 'em something. That you got heart. That you will stand up for yourself. This is your time Khaled.

KHAL

Don't ever slap me again.

CLIFFORD

You're right, it was uncalled for.

The Ref Blows.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Go.

Khaled jogs out to the court's center and Kenji Burton follows. FROM ABOVE: The ball SOARS in Slow Motion and Kenji and Khal's faces describe the determination within. Neither of them want to lose tonight: Continuing in Slow Motion -a series of shots ala ZIDANE-it's all about these two Titans now: Kenji outwits Khal and steals a basket- once, twice, three times! Khal is distraught. Clifford yells his head off!

TIME CUT:

Khal twisting and turning his way past Kenji's defence, three, four , five times!

Kenji body slams Khal and gets a basket! Khal pushes BACK - and gets a basket !

TIME CUT:

SCORE BOARD: BURTON 8 MASSI 8

It's the last few moments of the game.

CAMERON AND DAVE watching intently - their eyes constantly on the REF who flicks them the odd glance. BURTON playing rough, taking no prisoners. KHAL slipping, sliding, hustling - working incredibly hard Kenji has the advantage

UK PUNDIT

If Massi is to win, he must score now ...

AND SUDDENLY- ALL SOUND IS TUNED OUT - EXCEPT FOR THE THUMP THUMP of the basketball and the Ba-BUMP Ba-UMP OF a heartbeat.

IN CROWD SHOTS:ALL IN SLOW MO-

MUM frightened.CLIFFORD calm. POOKIE shouting and gesticulating.

Charlotte - yelling . D'ANGELO, coolly on the phone.

SNAP into REAL TIME!

ON COURT :

The next bit happens real fast: Kenji's got the ball -but then Khal STEALS it and B'DOING!!!! LEAP FROGS OVER KENJI'S HEAD FOR THE DUNK!

A zillion flashes go off!

US PUNDIT

I think BURTON has just been served what is known as a 'Full English'! Massi wins -But only just - what a game!

It's a FREEZE FRAME moment - almost posed. Khaled Massi has beaten the NBA superstar ... it's almost like a Nike Poster.

Clifford is beside himself with joy. D'Angelo is furious. KENJI glares at Cameron and Romanoff in the Corporate area.

What the fuck? Cameron Taylor and Dave Romanoff stand - they signal to the Ref - it's a no go. Cameron makes a 'throat cutting' sign with her hands. The Ref speaks to both players.

Khal's face falls. 'What?'

Clifford kicks a whole tub of drinks over! The basket is disallowed!

US PUNDIT (CONT'D)

What? I think the ref is gonna make them play the point over.

in SLOW MOTION - the point is replayed, Khal working doubly hard, Kenji elbowing, pushing and shoving, and eventually ...

KENJI gets the basket-the whistle blows; now the Game's over. SCOREBOARD: BURTON 10 MASSI 8

The crowd go absolutely NUTS! Kenji's entourage STORM the court and SLAP their leader on the back.

BUT Khaled is being CHAIRED round the court. No one cares that he lost - to the rhythm of WE WILL ROCK YOU'S boom boom - clap , they chant:

CROWD

PEOPLE'S CHAMP! PEOPLE'S CHAMP! PEOPLE'S CHAMP!

US PUNDIT

The wrongfully disallowed Massi Dunk is already uploaded onto You tube - it really is sensational, let's look at it again.

UK PUNDIT

Khaled Massi, definitely won that -- we've got a shot of Cameron Taylor from Sentinel shoes.

The shot of Cameron giving the 'Rollover' signal.

UK PUNDIT (CONT'D)

You could argue that she's actually telling the Ref to disallow the basket ... we all know who the real winner is here.

All throughout this we hear PEOPLE'S CHAMP!
Clifford strolls over to Cameron and Dave, gives them the finger and walks away.

Khal is dropped off by the barrier where Charlotte and Cookie and Greg are: THEY'VE MADE IT FROM THE HOSPITAL? They congratulate him.

KHALED GETS AUTOGRAPH FROM KENJI FOR HIS DAUGHTER.

The PRESS SNAP AWAY.

Clifford stands by Mum - she smiles at him and gives him a dumpling. Clifford eats some of it. His phone rings.

CLIFFORD

What? Yeah s'me, who's this - Nike? You like Khal? Well yeah, he just kinda kicked Wonder boy's ass here. Let's talk, Monday.

The crowd chant 'PEOPLE'S CHAMP' and sing 'Special K' to the tune of Amazing Grace ... it's joyous.

CUT TO:

INT. KHAL'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Khal is lying on the day-bed D'Angelo eases into the room like a ninja -Khal sees him and sits up.

D'ANGELO

Easy superstar! Nice one..look - you're boy , Clifford, yeah - he come and check me about how you guys should bet on Paris and tonight -and I told him but he never listened.

D'Angelo gets out a wad of notes thick enough to choke a horse.

D'ANGELO (CONT'D)

Shame he never let me hold the money for you guys.

Khaled isn't violent.

KHALED

I like you you know D'Angelo. I've always liked you- you're funny, you're stylish. But see- you're a drug dealer now?

You don't get to hang out with me any more? And if you get any where near my Charlotte again-- I will kill you and no one will care. See. That's why you should quit dealin'- no one cares if you live or die. Now get out- tell your little mate what I said too.

D'Angelo gets up.

D'ANGELO

Fuckin' hell Khaled - just tryin' to help ,that's all. I was gonna- you fuckin' mental case...

Yout' comes and helps D'Angelo away

KHALED

I don't care. Get out.

D'Angelo leaves. Clifford comes in.

Adjust: Clifford - I did a bad thing.

CLIFFORD

He gone?

KHALED

Yes. How did we do?

CLIFFORD

Let's count it.

Clifford puts a chair against the door and then empties a big fat envelope out onto the day bed.

There's a lot of money there. He and Khaled look at each other.

KHALED

So this was a 'I bet Khaled loses by one point in the final ,but wins everything else' kinda bet.

CLIFFORD

I know they'd try some shit..I just bet with my nose. Most times it doesn't work

KHALED

This is a lot of skiing trips....

They both laugh. CUT TO:

FADE OUT:

Caption AGAINST BLACK

6 months later. FADE UP:

EXT/INT. CHARLOTTE'S MASSI'S SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Change to Charlotte skiing?

The KIDS are all writing essays, heads down, pens moving. Charlotte's on fire, writing up a storm.

CHARLOTTE (V.0)

It's funny how life can change in the blink of an eye. Kenji Burton's mate Pookie got done for hurting that girl.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO COURTHOUSE - DAY

Pookie is being led away to a prison truck. Kenji stands nearby, dressed to the nines, looking sad. Victoria stands next to a smiling Renate Munroe.

Suddenly , Pookie is splashed with YELLOW PAINT- and everyone chases after the perp. Kenji has managed to escape this time.

CUT TO:

INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN - DAY

The place has relocated to smarter surroundings. There's a two man STEEL BAND in the corner and CLIFFORD AND MAMA are served massive cocktails by

FARRINGDON, who wears sparkling whites. Clifford is having a ball.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Nan upgraded her restaurant with Dad's help. Uncle Clifford's there all the time.

CUT TO:

INT. A KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP - DAY

COOKIE steps up to her OPPONENT, a big WOMAN (White 20's) radiating powerful. They bow to each other and then swiftly, Cookie takes her down for the game.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Mum started competing again.

Charlotte is snapped, getting a massive trophy. Greg kisses her full on the lips in celebration. She's number one again!

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

And Greg, well ... he sort of grows on you, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. COOKIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Greg and Charlotte are playing scrabble. Charlotte lays down the word XERXES on a triple word score- Greg upends the board in mock prima donna fashion.

GREG

Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

Charlotte laughs fit to burst.

CUT TO:

INT. A SPORTS SHOE SHOP - DAY

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Cameron Taylor lost her job.

INT. CNN TYPE TV STUDIO

A Logo reading - RUINED HEIRESS runs in a strap line along the bottom of the screen. CAMERON TAYLOR sits in the hot seat as a BUSINESS REPORTER harangues her

INSERT: The now notorious clip of Cameron signalling to the Referee-

CAMERON

Well -first of all, Sentinel Sports wear is not on it's knees -let's say we're a little winded -I am

no longer the CEO as it were -my younger sister
Lucy has taken that role

A shot of Lucy - blonde , power suited, driven ...
exactly like Cameron.

BUSINESS REPORTER

Are you happy to relinquish your position like that?

CAMERON

Bitch please.

The Reporter is shocked.

CUT TO:

INT. LEISURE CENTRE - DAY

Khaled is sitting in the gym on the floor with 40
kids (Black/White/Asian, all between 8 and 10). He's
talking earnestly to them.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

And my dad, he never had to worry anything ever
again.

Khal gets the kids up and gets them running round
the court. He leans up against a wall. Pull back to

reveal that next to him is a huge poster... which says simply ...

THE PEOPLE'S CHAMP! An Annie Liebowitz photograph: Khaled sits a throne of gold. In an expensive black track suit and UNIQUE ,GOLD BASKETBALL BOOTS! MICHEAL JORDAN! That's right-

THE MICHEAL JORDAN

places a big diamond encrusted crown on Khaled's head.

Logo: The Nike 'SPECIAL K'...Just Do it! Khal realises what he's standing next to, smiles and then jogs off to work with the kids - he gets a ball and starts bouncing it - Thump- thump; Thump thump

And it mixes in with his heartbeat ... and we FADE OUT.

APPENDIX 3: IDEAL READER NOTES

Notes on No Blood No Foul (initial) 29/3/11

Ideal Readers :HBJ for Hilary Bevan Jones NG Neil
GaimanMH Mark HurdleJP Jan Pearson

SB Steve Bergson

1. Plot

MH:

Built a dramatic family story around drama and sport, but at the moment I don't think the two overlap enough. If you've got an 'A' story (Khaled trying to win the basketball tournament) and a 'B' story (his connection with Charlotte and Cookie) at some point the two have to overlap with dire consequences.

HBJ:

WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED WITH COOKIE AND
CHARLOTTE

HBJ:

A SERIOUS PRUNE — GET 15 PAGES OUT AND NOT HURT IT..

HBJ:

TAKE TRIMS FROM THE SET UP — OPENING..

JP:

Quite dense with info in the dialogue so far.
You're throwing it all in a bit of a rush in
duologue after duologue all in a row and there all

quite long.

Try trimming down to essence or holding back some cards for later. We don't have to know absolutely everything in one gulp.

NG:

It needs to start faster, and get everyone on stage. I'd start with the Big Important People in the story and then go to Guildford, where they are huddled around an ipad or a telly finding out that Kenji's been let off.

MH:

In terms of structure, I think you need to get Khaled and Clifford together much sooner. At the moment it's around page 50. This is your inciting incident, the moment of no return, it should come around page 35. I think you could easily do this by stripping back on some of the dialogue and exposition and coming into scenes later.... for example, there's a scene on Kenji's jet where they show him the commercial, but before they show it to him there's a minute long conversation about how they're going to show him the commercial. My advice? Just start with the commercial, it's funny and visually interesting, while his reaction to it tells us everything we need to know about him, much more than the dialogue that preceded it.

NG:

Some plots seem to hang: the revelation from Kenji

to the blonde from the gym -- I kept expecting them to be the thing that set up for the finish of the story, the big Kenji vs Pookie showdown or the Tabloid expose of Pookie as the girl was a journo or something, but instead it sort of went flat.

NG:

learning later about Charlotte taking D'angelo's mum her lunch was a bit odd. Why not make it either a drug delivery, or if it was nothing, have that as the punch line in the police station, where it would be satisfying?

NG:

Would have liked one of those wrap-up things where we saw a few of the bad guys sort of get theirs. I'd like the Soldier shoe to fail and Cameron be reduced to a reality show Bankrupt Heiress, for Pookie to be arrested by the family of the girl he raped (who had settled with Kenji, but with the tapes from the blonde private investigator are now accusing the right person) etc...

SB:

There should be less emphasis on Khaled's age - and back story about Kentucky held back more. We understand his passion for the game which comes across all the way through but should have more about his showboating

on court rather than age or star status. He should also be more suspicious of Charlotte's skiing

ambitions - possibly a kind of class-based sense of it being a middle class sport that shouldn't really be encouraged. This could be re-inforced by Greg's aspirations which could be more of a point of conflict between Khaled and him. I agree Greg is too nice a character at the moment and a bit of a sneer about basketball on his part could help tip the audience sympathy against him. He's suspicious of Khaled from the beginning because he's not into sport to such an extent and K dislikes him because he's pinched his woman. This should be played up a bit more. Then when Greg disappears at the end, the audience doesn't feel guilty about wanting K and Cookie to get back together. He could retire with grace and reluctant understanding but also because we sense - along with Khaled - that he sneers a bit at basketball in favour of skiing say, it's not a downer to see him move on.

MH:

In terms of the actual basketball itself, I think you're missing a huge opportunity. Firstly, a staple of sports films are the training scenes: Rocky hits raw meat, chases chickens and charges up those famous steps in Philly. I feel you need something like this... that iconic moment. I filmed a motivational talk one time, where this guy was talking about why he thinks Michael Jordan is the greatest sportsman ever. Basically, the story goes that by the time Jordan reached age 30, he'd already won everything there was to win in the game

and was widely regarded as the greatest basketball player ever... so he retired. A year later he came back and although he helped the Bulls to a championship and was in high on all the stats reports, he knew within himself that he wasn't the out-and-out greatest player anymore. Maybe in the top three, but not undisputed. So during the close-season, when all the other players were on holiday resting their legs, Jordan locked himself away in a private mansion with a secluded basketball court. He then invited all the greatest college ball players in the country to come and play him one-on-one... players that were young, fit, hungry, skilful and all dying to kick his ass. He basically wanted them to expose every fault in his game, so he could correct it, steal all of their best moves and come back greater than ever. Apparently, the following season he finished top of every leaderboard... most points/assists/mvp etc. My thought is that if Clifford used to train Jordan, what if he uses that same technique with Khaled? Puts him up against player after player... all designed to test him in different ways- pace, trickery, brute strength, defence. And what if there's one problem with Khaled's game that they just can't correct? No matter how hard they try? What if there's a certain type of player that Khaled just can't cope with? Or a move he's got no answer for... like a blind side, or something? That's an interesting seed to sew and one that could rear its head again during the tournament.

SB:

I'm not sure about the ending. The two sporting climaxes dissipate the dramatic tension too much. I wonder if the first tournament in Paris shouldn't be covered more remotely - with coverage on TV, say Eurosport, being shown in glimpses remotely, so we see Kenji watching from his hotel room or the game on in the police station canteen when Cookie and Greg go to see Charlotte after she's been picked up. This way the Hackney game becomes the action climax far more prominently that we see in realtime on the spot.

I'm not sure about the final scene either - I wonder whether we shouldn't finish on the night at the tournament, perhaps with Khaled and Cookie obviously bonding again but the question of skiing left hanging. It could be a throwback to the old set-up where Greg was prominent. It would leave a note of ambiguity about the new domestic scene that might be intriguing for the audience. On a practical point, I couldn't see how Khaled knew about Charlotte's police pick-up at the end of the tournament because news of this has obviously been kept from him because he has been in Paris and the zone preparing for the game. This seemed to jar - and only be necessary to explain K's attack on D'Angelo. Could this dismissal of Yout and D'Angelo be teed up in another way, perhaps as the culmination of Cookie's hostility towards them or by Charlotte's gran Win. Could she not come up and

handbag D'Angelo after K has settled the payment on the bet? Or possibly have Cookie confront them with Khaled's amazement and support. K would be out of the loop on all this - and still high on the restoration of his sporting prowess.

Another payoff which could work would be a note of revenge on Kenji in the form of the yellow press. If there were a redtop hack hanging around in his press conference asking the hard questions about what happened in the sex case, he could snoop around Khaled when he's training and be ejected by Clifford, someone we definitely do not like. Then a nice pay-off at the end would be a little scene of our blonde simply seen talking to him in a cafe. He may be a swaggering US star used to the National Enquirer but he underestimates the power of the tabloids in Britain! No need for a Max Clifford type character, just a subtle chat between the two with nothing stated or heard. Could be a nice sardonic pay-off....

NG:

How much was the Skiing holiday? I started out thinking it was a few hundred (Ryan air etc) and then started wondering if it was thousands, and why Cookie and Greg weren't paying for it?

HBJ

MUDDLE- NEAR THE END, AT THE SCHOOL - PICTURES OF THE SKIING

LOOK AT THE SCHOOL TRIP — IT MUSTN'T FEEL LIKE
CHARLOTTE WENT

MH:

At the moment, Charlotte falling into drug-dealing is a nice story-thread, but it's resolved with no involvement from Khaled and with no consequence to him either. My suggestion would be that upon hearing that D'Angelo's crew tried to recruit Charlotte, Cookie would completely blame Khaled and not want him to have anything to do with them anymore; firstly, if he could provide for his child properly in the first place, Charlotte wouldn't be trying to earn money anyway. Secondly, if Khaled insists on associating with people like D'Angelo, that's not a safe environment for a child. If Cookie threatens to take Charlotte away from him on the eve of the Kenji showdown, Khaled will have to choose between his family and his dream... and inevitably he'll pick his family.... this will be your hero's darkest moment, when the audience are convinced that there's no way everything will work out for the best. It's gonna need some very clever writing from you to resolve how your hero straps his boots back on for the final showdown.

MH:

For the tournament itself, the one-on-one situation really gives you a great opportunity for some classic matches, but it's kind of skimmed over in a montage. There's scope here for these to be akin to

boxing matches, where certain styles/tactics etc are going to be thrown up against one another... you want Clifford calling 'time-out' so he can tell Khaled how to change his game accordingly, so the audience gets the enjoyment seeing the plan come off. I think at the moment, you've got it as a sudden-death knock-out tournament, but I think it would be more exciting if it were a 'points' system, whereby everyone plays everyone and whoever's top of the leaderboard by the end wins. That way, you could have Khaled lose a couple of matches early on and then slowly creep up the table as the tournament continues... then maybe at the end he's tied at top with someone who's already spanked him earlier in the tournament and he has to do something drastic to turn his fortunes around. The final showdown with Kenji is great... the way you stack the odds against him with injury/fatigue and the way Khaled uses his childhood move to beat him is great.

2. Inciting incidentMH:See plot point above - already covered.

3. Dialogue MH:

There's A LOT of talking. I think you had the same issue with your first draft of Jamaica Farewell and I know it's something I do as well because we both love dialogue. But wherever possible, SHOW don't TELL...

NG:

Everyone needs to talk less. Any time you could start any statement with "As you know..." either delete it entirely or rethink it. Or SHOW it. I loved having Orion come to life - would love to see more of this kind of instant odd cut to something that shows what you're talking about. he had a bad time in Kentucky? HOW? In 3 5-second scenes?

MH:

It's fine to have the odd moment where a character spills their inner thoughts, or makes a rousing speech, but in general I'd look at making each line shorter and snappier.

JP:

Remember also that a lot is said in people's silence. Not all duologues should be so consistently well balanced -back and forth- not everyone is ready to talk to the same extent, or to listen to what the other has to say or has to rationalize a piece of news as soon as they hear it.

4. Scenes MH:

I think the early scene with Khaled races around his house with the basketball is great and tells me so much more about his character than a big monologue ever could. And there a tons of big monologues in here.

SB:

Pg 1:

Note: it's Guildford Heat - not the plural Heats. Keeping it singular is more accurate and would also differentiate the word from the reference to heats in Paris. That also means the reference from the schoolmate should be the Guildford Shit which also has the implication that Guildford is a middle class haven - not like the London Warriors etc etc.

Leave out the bit about Greg by Charlotte as something we'll find out later.

MH:

And don't feel like you have to play all your cards out in the open. Within the first 10/15 pages about three different people mention that Khaled went to America, flunked and came back with his tail between his legs. I'd keep that information back... characters can make reference to him "having his shot and screwing it up" but the actuality of what happened would make a nice reveal at the end of act three. It can be something that Clifford quizzes him about a few times, but Khaled's pride/embarrassment won't permit him to talk about it.

JP:

Re: the letter from Mrs .A. Rahman

Again a lot of info here. Audiences pick up no visual cues very well without the need to lay it on heavy with letters and VO .We just need to glimpse the odd word here and there , 'School trip' ,

'Charlotte' etc

SB:

Pg 6:

Miss out Big J's last line about the US - hold that back. This is a showboating issue, not age or US stardom.

SB:

Pg 8:

Miss out the dialogue about age which isn't relevant here.

SB:

Pg 9:

Leave line about "you had your chance and blew it". Too pointed a reference.

Pg 10:

Leave out the reference to K in the US and go for "big star quality", thinking K superior to team mates.

Pg 12:

Take out age ref to Khaled.

K seems here too willing to play the game with D'Angelo who should sense K is down and talk him round with the mock commentary until K reluctantly joins in almost out of habit.

JP:

Pg 17 – Again it's just too much. We know what he's thinking about . No need to lay it on with internal dialogue being actually voiced.

JP:

Pg 18

This radio VO is just kind of stuck there. More info without character perspective . What about if we got to know Clifford a bit under this V.O. as well as establishing we're in Chicago which will take seconds . Let's see him on the move. Struggle to choose a tie , spill his coffee , get stuck in traffic , late for his meeting etc, tell us where his head's at in action (see opening sequence of Sideways (see opening sequence of Sideways as a good example of this) Make all YOUR SCREEN TIME COUNT AND FEEL SIGNIFICANT TO THE CHARACTERS.

SB:

Pg 19:

Reference to GBS seems jarring? Would Clifford be more likely to invoke Tennessee Williams or Arthur Miller?

BTW if we're looking at US and Britain divided by a common culture, keep in mind that Americans often use terms strange to us such as "transportate" and even "we can transportate into the backside of the building". This could add unintentional colour to

the character of Clifford at this early point.

JP:

PG 24

GENERALLY PUSHING the number and waywardness of gags a little hard here, so tonally it suddenly feels like a slightly different film –played for laughs. While the character may have this trait-making funnies- you don't want it to feel incongruous to the rest (Jerry Maguire might be a good ref for this balance) or have the pressure of having to keep that up. Given the way you set out – bittersweet, lighthearted , second bite of the cherry, sports movie , I'd try to be as cohesive and faithful to that tone and allow the comedy to arise more naturally out of the situation.

JP:

Clifford slumps in his chair pg 24

Think you need another beat of persuasion here, Clifford needs to be allowed to want to turn it down at least. Let us know and remind him in the next beat that its an offer he can't refuse.

Let the scene go back and forth a bit more in the will he won't he ? it's just a bit too easy otherwise and less interesting makes Cliff look a bit like a soft touch.

SB:

Pg 31:

too much explanation to Cookie at this point. Khaled can be more surly about what's happened - we know and Cookie doesn't care that much at this juncture.

JP:

Pg 32

Would be a lot more amusing if you had let the pictures do the talking on this janitor info a few scenes back . Coltrane gusing about K one moment and in the next scene handing him a broom.

SB:

Pg 32:

Greg gives too much back story on his relationship with Cookie in the phone call - establishes him as upwardly mobile too quickly. He could be more of a mystery to the audience who gradually see him as a stopgap for Cookie who's despaired of Khaled ever amounting too much. Shouldn't overdo the middle class angle because we need it for the implication about skiing and his rejection by Cookie later.

NG:

Not the hugest fan of the clearing out poo with the hand scene -- or rather, the amount of importance that seemed to get afterwards. Might have done more good if we felt that Charlotte needed to be taken down a peg, but we didn't...

SB:

Pg 37:

Watching the TV by K should be included in another scene as an incidental - snatched info given to the audience. It could be playing on CNN or Skynews in the shop where K talks to Silas or even be on the radio in the taxi when Clifford is coming into London - in between his self-pitying tirades against Britain. This would counterpoint this comedy and establish something about the US which has implications for the coming action in Britain; it could even have a Home Office implication (like Tyson) where there's some doubt whether Kenji will be allowed to come to Britain for the promotion. Just a bit of local colour more than key action and something that would stoke up redtop interest in Kenji as a victim for them.

JP:

Pg 42

This scene is amusing but doesn't move the story on any . We've seen K turn D'Angelo down already . What's different about this scene?

JP:

Pg 43

Get a feel for getting out of scenes early - knowing where to cut naturally on the raised question - you got anyone in mind? Let the audience fill in the gaps they enjoy doing it and being pulled through by their own speculation. It gets boring for them

otherwise. So you don't even have to mention K's name here. We know what's going to happen. Think more lean like this and it will also help you to develop a sense of getting into scenes later. Develop your editing skills and it will make for a more gripping read.

SB:

Pg 49:

This comes across as a bit melodramatic even with the pay-off. Not sure K should even hint that he's suicidal whatever the downturn in his fortunes, though this could be used to establish that he's basically a very positive driven guy despite what's happened to him. Might need a bit of tweaking to make this scene work.

Could contact with Clifford not be made by a phone call from his old Heat coach Reynolds, perhaps when he's up on the bridge? K could initially tell Reynolds where to go but be persuaded later by Cookie to give the opportunity a shot. Then on the court on the De Beavoir estate, K could be approached by a car which rolls down a rear window to reveal Clifford bigging his status up. Could be an opportunity for comedy dig at Clifford with his pretensions of Don King-type grandeur. Cigar and limo.

JP:

Pg 53 : It's all a bit of a convenient set up to

put K against Burton . I wouldn't make it look so 'likely ' otherwise the outcome begins to feel a bit predictable. A matter of time . Keep the cards back.

JP:

Pg 59

Ultimately, you're probably looking to get the draft down to 90 odd pages for a sports movie, so I would have thought you should be at this point at around the turn of the first act into the second . So some real economizing to do in the scenes preceding this point.

SB:

Pg 73:

This is too long - an unnecessary conversation - we just need snatches of what the plan is here.

JP:

Pg 74

Charlotte and Yout'

This feels repetitive and a bit late. Throughout she followed him already and got involved. Did she refuse first time and goes for it now? Or would this be better placed just after K's toilet bust up - she thinks she can't rely on her dad, so accepts the offer? I think it's better if Charlotte isn't quite so naïve about what's being asked of her.

Maybe she doesn't know the full story but she knows it's wrong.

JP:

Pg 88

Not quite buying greg's sudden return. Does he really need to be in this scene? Has he really had enough time to blow off steam? Makes him seem v. subservient.

SB:

Pg 88:

Is K jumping the gun in paying for Charlotte's trip at this point? I suppose it has implications for the later rejection of D'Angelo but seems a bit precipitous here.

SB:

Pg 102:

Here's where it can be hinted that the blonde may be looking to entrap Kenji for a kiss and tell where his vanity and unsureness about the viciousness of the British press blinds him to the danger. This would also explain his later vulnerability in talking candidly with her about what happened. Must be careful not to make Kenji over-sympathetic in this dialogue - he's still a shit.

Pg 125:Plot point: how does K know about Charlotte

and the police?

Pg 128:

Greg should disappear right at the end of the tournament, so throughout the excitement he becomes more detached from Charlotte and Cookie, caught up in the thrill of the action but increasingly distant as he sees the love they are beaming K's way. So once it's all over and everyone's going mad, they could turn round to see he's gone, then we see him walking away from the arena before the crowds emerge, a lonely figure but someone we now know as he does, is wrong for Cookie who's rediscovered her true mate. The audience mustn't feel too sorry for him, perhaps he disappears off with his gadgets - moby and ipad - in tow. Meanwhile, the audience just wants to celebrate the moral win, see Kenji get his delayed comeuppance (the journo) and feel K has returned to domestic stability in the light of getting his spurs back. Any over-the-top glibness is countered by the irony of the bedroom betrayal of Kenji by

the blonde, D'Angelo's ejection and Greg's ever so slightly smug move into other more "lofty" zones (I think he could be a bit of a snob so we don't mind if he's heading off the scene now).

5. Character

MH:

[Clifford] has some great moments by the way...

trying to sign the autograph for the child/announcing that it's the player who jumps, not the shoes etc... he's a truly funny and despicable character!

MH:

There are two characters in here that really jump off the page... Kenji and Charlotte. I think you've nailed their way of speaking and they're the type of protagonists an audience 'get' straight away.

HBJ:

HAVE A LOOK AT EACH OF THE CHARACTERS AND MAKE SURE THAT EACH OF THEM IS — INDIVIDUAL

HACKNEY / AMERICAN — DON'T HAVE EVERYONE TALK THE SAME. RELATIONSHIP

HBJ:

THE PERSON WHO SHE GREW TO REALLY LIKE — CLIFFORD JAMES — COULDN'T WORK OUT WHERE HE WAS COMING FROM — HE USED TO BE A SUCCESSFUL GUY , ESTABLISH WHERE HE'S COMING FORM / WHAT HE'S AFTER — MAYBE HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING — HE'S A PIVOTAL ROLE — (BECOMES CLEARER LATER ON)

NG:

Not the hugest fan of the clearing out poo with the hand scene -- or rather, the amount of importance that seemed to get afterwards. Might have done more good if we felt that Charlotte needed to be taken down a peg, but we didn't...

JP:

Remember what the characters are carrying around with them emotionally from scene to scene and let that inform each scene more so we get a better sense of flow and being in the moment. For example – k doesn't 'carry' the fact that he's just been sacked into his scene with D'Angelo, so D'Angelo doesn't pick up on it, and what we're left with is just info about their back story together. You explain to us their relationship but not how their dynamic in that moment.

JP:

Film has more reflective pacing built into it so its like music, up and down . Take in a bit of info and an action that turns the plot, maybe a bit of quiet watching the protag doing something in between talking , reflecting on what's happened or worrying about what will. If you don't let it breathe like this then it becomes episodic feeling and the protag starts to feel functional like a puppet being moved through scenes.

MH:

I find Clifford's Brit-Bashing very amusing, but his dialogue reads a little mid- atlantic at the moment... there are times when you can tell he's definitely American and other times where it wavers. My suggestion is to think of American actor you'd like to play him and imagine how he'd deliver his dialogue, is he deep-south? New-yawk? Baawston?

MH:

Khaled's character fluctuates a little as well... at first he's a selfish hot-head and you think that it's something he's going to have to conquer in order to succeed, then this kind of dissipates as the film continues without any particular reason why. Somehow, Clifford needs to do something to make him fall in love with basketball again... remember why he started playing in the first place.

MH:

Also, something about Cookie breaking up with Greg didn't sit right with me, it's either because he's such a nice guy that I feel didn't deserve it, or that I didn't feel that Khaled changed enough as a person to warrant 'getting the girl.' As far as I can tell, Khaled's pretty much the same person at the end of

the film, except now he's won a basketball match... which makes Cookie a bit of a superficial hussy in my opinion! I think the scene where she's massaging him is great... lots of sexual tension, as is the fact that it drives a wedge between her and Greg, but right now I still think she makes the wrong decision. Either give us more reasons as to why Greg's not right for her, or work on Khaled's development as a character. Maybe both?

MH?:

KENJI STORY —ACCUSED OF RAPE — IT WAS POOKIE WHAT

DONE IT. HE SETTLES TO SAVE HIS FRIEND...BUT IS INVESTIGATED BY A JOURNO. STORY COMES OUT AT WORST POSS TIME. HE LOSES CONTRACT WITH SOLDIER SHOES

KHALED STORY —HAD A SHIT TIME IN KENTUCKY.

STRUGGLED SINCE. LOST SELF ESTEEM. LOST HIS MISSUS. BUT —WINS HEATS , FAMOUSLY LOSES IN LONDON — IS HIRED BY NIKE TO SELL SHOES — DOES REALLY WELL — STARTS A BALL TEAM ...GETS HIS MISSUS BACK .

CLIFFORD STORY —KENJI BURTON FUCKED UP HIS LIFE. NEEDS SOMETHING TO GET HIM GOING — BELIEVES IN KHALED =PAYS OFF.

COOKIE STORY — THINKS SHE IS IN A STABLE RELATIONSHIP—BUT GREG CAN'T COMPETE WITH KHALED AND LEAVES AT THE END. SHE GOES BACK TO KHALED.

MUM STORY—BASKETBALL RUINED HER SON'S LIFE —SHE'S GLAD HE WANTS TO QUIT AT THE BEGINNING.

CHARLOTTE STORY — SHE'LL DO ANYTHING TO HELP HER DAD PAY FOR THE SKIING TRIP — EVEN IF IT MEANS DEALING WITH ERRANDS FOR D'ANGELO

D'ANGELO STORY— IS A DRUG DEALER, BUT WANTS TO QUIT AND OPEN A BETTING SHOP. THINKS KHALED WOULD BE A GREAT DOPE SELLER..BUT IS COOL WITH KHAL'S REFUSAL. CAN'T BELIEVE YOUT HAS BEEN USING CHARLOTTE TO MAKE DELIVERIES...IT'S A DAMN SHAME.

CAMERON TAYLOR...FOLLOWING IN HER DAD'S FOOTSTEPS — SELLING SPORTS SHIT. IT'S HARDER THAN IT LOOKED. SHE GOES DOWN A 'BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY' ROUTE WHICH DOESN'T PAY OFF

VICTORIA HEMPEL — BLONDE , WHO PULLS KENI AND ENDS UP BEING A JOURNALIST FOR VANITY FAIR

6. Comedy

MH:

Just start with the commercial, it's funny and visually interesting, while his reaction to it tells us everything we need to know about him, much more than the dialogue that preceded it.

7. Dramatic turning points NG:

Some plots seem to hang: the revelation from Kenji to the blonde from the gym -- I kept expecting them to be the thing that set up for the finish of the story, the big Kenji vs Pookie showdown or the Tabloid expose of Pookie as the girl was a journo or something, but instead it sort of went flat.

MH:

don't forget about powershifts.... put one character in control at the start of a scene, then flip it on its head, then maybe back again.... some of these scenes play out without much at stake, physically or emotionally.

HBJ:

CLIFFORD GOING TO GET WIN... IS GREAT ..

BUT — MUDDLES — AT THE END WHEN KHAL SEES HER — THE BIG SURPRISE /MOMENT IS WHEN SHE COMES ON AND BOLLOCKS KENJI BURTON!

BIG MOMENT THAT WIN HAS COME TO THE GAME — (SAVE THAT MOMENT)

(DON'T HAVE HIM SEE HER TOO SOON)

MH:

Then your scene where he announces what happened to him at the press conference could be a real big moment for him. I think this leads into one of the key points actually... WHAT DOES KHALED WANT? In Rocky it would be easy to say he simply wants to beat Apollo... although actually he reveals that he just wants to go the distance with him... but ACTUALLY he just wants to prove that he's not a bum, that he can make something of his life. In Khaled's case, is this about exorcising the demons from his past? To prove that he can cut it with the big boys? Is it about providing for his daughter/making her proud of him? Whatever it is, you need your 'A Few Good Men' Moment, when he states: it's not about this anymore, it's about this."

8. Themes

NG:

Wished our hero had learned SOMETHING about being a team player OF SOME KIND somewhere along the way.

APPENDIX 4: THE BILL MURRAY NOTES

NO BLOOD NO FOUL (THE BILL MURRAY NOTES)

THOUGHTS FOR MEETING

I. Clifford

1. A casting idea: Bill Murray :At his team's (the Wildcats) game.



2) Clifford and Khaled coming together

Currently Clifford offers to train Khaled when he offers him to participate in the tournament. He then agrees to Khaled moving into his hotel room with him.

The two characters come from very different worlds and we could maybe make their coming together more progressive.

Questions / ideas for the meeting:

- (a) Could Clifford be more resistant to Khaled moving into his hotel room?
- (b) Why does Clifford start training Khaled?

Initially Clifford probably wouldn't care much about an English player like Khaled, he just needs a player to participate in the tournament.

Once Khaled realises he needs Clifford to

train could it be him who "tricks" Clifford into coaching him?

For example, if Clifford is a former player, could Khaled challenge him to a one on one? "I freshen up your game and you coach me (or train with me)". Clifford turns him down. He doesn't play/coach anymore. Khaled then tells him he's a pussy.

But even at his age no one calls Clifford a pussy when it comes to basketball.

Clifford the next day could show up for the one on one, dressed up the way he was dressed up the last time he played... in the seventies... (maybe we see him before that scene still watching his old game tapes or sleeping still wearing his sleeveless college basketball jersey?)



The one on one would be a hilarious contrast in style. Everything separates the two men: their dress sense (Khaled wears his XXXL baggy shorts and shirt), their age, their trash talking (old school vs. new school), their references and idols (one grew up with MJ, the other with Bob "The Cooz" Cousy / Bill Walton), their skin colour and their game (visually, Clifford could play like the stars did in the 60's / 70's, finger rolls, sky hooks and other moves popular back then, shooting

the ball using the 70s technique with two hands, Khaled would play with the more modern crossovers, etc).

Visual reference: The tall 6'6'' black Khaled and the 6'0'' "colourful" Clifford looking like Batman and Robin.



The one thing that would bring the two men together though on the court is their love of the game.

For Clifford this one on one could be like the "Proust madeleine". It's the first time in decades he plays. He rediscovers the smells, the sounds on

the court, his love of the game. It could trigger the start of a change in his character.

If we used this idea, Clifford could lose the one on one and ask for a re-match. Khaled refuses to give him the rematch, while teasing him about the loss, driving (the competitive) Clifford insane with frustration. Khaled then tells Clifford he'll give him a rematch if he trains with him / coaches him?

(c) Why would Khaled think he needs Clifford to train him?

For the moment it's because Clifford shows Khaled the photo of him giving the business to MJ.

We could maybe make it more progressive. Clifford and Khaled could hit it off on the wrong foot. Clifford could then show something to Khaled on the court that makes Khaled think he needs Clifford?

(d) What else could contribute to pull Clifford and Khaled together?

A third party "aggressing" both of them and pulling them closer together by forcing them to

"work" together to oppose this third party?

For example, badminton or football players wanting to use the basketball court to play?

Would Clifford and Khaled challenge the other players and have to work together to keep the court? (Or maybe Robin pushes Batman forward and tells him to "go fight for the court"?)

Once Khaled wins the challenge, this could be the first lesson Clifford gives Khaled: "Don't let anyone take your court" (a reference we could re-use when Kenji later comes to play Khaled in his neighbourhood).

Note: This idea could be combined with the previous idea: the badminton / football players could arrive when Clifford and Khaled are about to start their one on one.

(d) If we went with the idea in (b) of Clifford stepping back on the court to play, once he rediscovers his love of the game we could see him progressively become more and more passionate, agitated on the sideline, culminating in Paris and in the finals where he would look and sound like Rick Pittino / Bobby Knight on a bad day.

(reference: Nick Nolte at the beginning of Blue Chips)

(e) What would the relationship between Clifford and Khaled be like during training? Would it be a straight forward Mickey (coach) – Rocky (“student”) relationship? Would it be more comedic?

(f) Training themes: What would Clifford teach / bring to Khaled that would make us believe Khaled could win in Paris?

All sports films have a “training theme”. In Karate Kid it’s the “repetition makes perfect” theme, in Million \$ Baby “Break to Build”, in Rocky 1 it’s about training hard and pushing yourself to the limit, Rocky 3 it’s about training differently (dancing in the ring, swimming, running on the beach). We could pick one or two training “themes” for our story. One that comes to mind is “if you want to play with the best you have to train like the best” / train harder than ever before (UK pro players train twice a week / Americans train 2/3 times a day).

3) Clifford’s set up / back story

We could maybe establish Clifford’s character further in the first act.

Questions / ideas for the meeting:

Why did he stop playing basketball? Because of an injury? Would it make him more like Khaled if he never got a chance to play pro? He could for example have been a number one draft prospect after a great high school and college career who injured his knee just before the draft and missed out?

Could he live with the regret of not having followed through with his playing (or coaching) career? Has he never picked up a basketball since to play? Does he re-watch tapes of his past exploits (drunk) while reciting the pundits comments by heart? ("And Clifford James does it again, etc...")

What has he become since? Could Clifford, wanting to stay in touch with basketball (similarly to Khaled he could not walk away), have become a character a la "Michael Clayton"? A street smart, go to guy, who works "outside the law", with no agent licence, and who does the agent's (who need to abide by NBA and NCAA rules) dirty work?

In the basketball world there are similar characters called "runners". NBA agents use them to poach other agents' clients for example. They can't be traced back to the agents and the agents can't be sanctioned by the NBA.

Could Clifford then be sent to London to poach Kenji Burton? Get close to him and convince him to sign with the Multi Media Sports Agency? Dave Romanoff could have bribed someone at Sentinel to get Clifford in the room? Clifford is officially there to recruit one last player for the tournament – the English one. Clifford would then hit it off poorly with Kenji and instead end up getting closer to Khaled?

II. Khaled

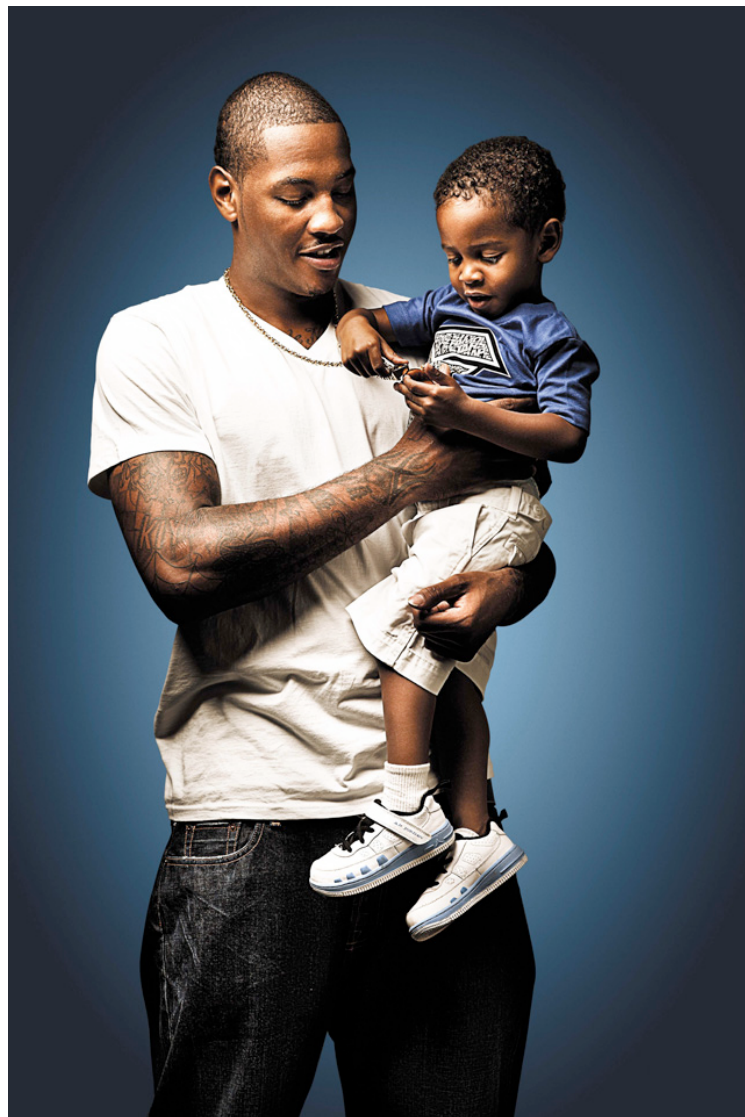
1) Linking Khaled's story/decisions to Charlotte's story/decisions

A lot of the scenes and ideas are already in the script but some of the action and some of the decisions Khaled and Charlotte take are not related yet. By "linking" Khaled and Charlotte's actions/stories more we could place the father / daughter relationship further at the heart of our story.

Khaled's story would then centre around a man who has a passion in life (basketball) and obligations as a father that are "incompatible". He needs to learn during our story to combine both in order to succeed.

This is also the area of our story where we can complement the comedic moments in the script with more emotional moments.

Visual reference for the emotion between Khaled and Charlotte



Carmelo Anthony and Kyan

Questions / ideas for the meeting:

(a) Khaled and the Guildford Heat: Keeping the same

great set up for Khaled, could Khaled instead of having been fired, have quit the Guildford Heat and given up his passion for basketball for his daughter?

Playing basketball wasn't bringing in much money and he was always on the road to games or training. Plus, at his age, things were hardly going to get better moving forward in the UK.

Working at the sports centre is not much more rewarding for the moment, but people around him think Khaled will have more opportunities for promotion if he sticks his head down and keeps on working hard.

Would something specific have triggered this decision to leave Guildford / pro basketball?

(b) If we went down that route, would Khaled still be training in the first act at night? Or would he just walk by / mop the basketball court, every day being reminded of what he has given up?

Would there be other ways to show Khaled is not over his decision to quit basketball?¹

(c) Why did Khaled and Cookie split up? Was it because

of basketball?

(d) Khaled and the ski trip: Could Charlotte mention the ski trip to Khaled in person rather than by letter?

(e) Once Khaled starts training again how can we make basketball more of an obstacle to Khaled's relationship with his daughter / his daughter become more of an obstacle to Khaled playing basketball?

Once Clifford decides to train Khaled, can he impose to Khaled that he tunes everything else out, including Charlotte? She can't come to the court anymore. Would Khaled have promised Charlotte before then that she could help him train? Rebound for him? It could be a touching / heart breaking scene when Charlotte feels rejected by her father because of basketball again.

Note: When Khaled starts training with Clifford, Charlotte could disobey her dad, come to the court and hide to watch him train. She could then see how much effort her dad puts into it, how much it means to him. She would then want him to succeed?

When Khaled starts training, how does he combine work and training sessions? Does he have to quit?

Reduce his shifts? i.e. make less money to pay for the trip. Or does he still do both: night shifts and day training?

¹ Some basketball players mention they take on jobs with night shifts in warehouses / gyms once they stop playing basketball to keep up appearances and make others believe they are still balling and training in evenings ("on their way to work, with the gym bag...").

Does Khaled start arriving late to pick Charlotte up from school? Does he forget her birthday? Etc

(e) Charlotte running drugs: Is there a way we could link Charlotte's decision to run drugs and Khaled's decision to compete in the tournament?

Would Charlotte at first refuse to do the runs and then change her mind because of Khaled's decision to start basketball again?

It could be that Charlotte is unhappy he's sidelined her to train again and decides to disobey her dad?

It could be that she feels there is no chance

he'll win the prize money and be able to pay for her trip now (especially if he's reduced his shifts or quit his job) and she takes matters into her own hands to make more money and help him?

(f) Timing of Charlotte getting in trouble because of running drugs: Could Charlotte get in trouble with the drug running not during the tournament in Paris but before Khaled goes to the tournament?

This could become one of the film's emotional climax / turning point. Step 1: Could Charlotte end up hurt in hospital instead of at the cops?

Khaled, Clifford, Cookie and Greg would then come to the hospital to see her.

Charlotte could tell Khaled she didn't mean to do bad, she just wanted to help him, because she thought he wouldn't be able to train and contribute to pay for the trip?

She would stay in hospital just enough for our protagonists to reflect on their decisions/actions: Khaled would feel responsible for what happened and would not want to participate in the tournament anymore. "Basketball is over. He can't hurt his daughter. It's all he has left." How would Clifford feel about being the

one who told Khaled to tune out everything, including Charlotte? Would Cookie, Greg and Clifford rally around Khaled and Charlotte? Would Cookie and Greg think that pushing Khaled to pay for the trip was not that important after all?

What would Khaled do to Angelo?

Step 2: When Charlotte comes round again she tells her dad she loves him and asks him to go and win the Paris tournament for her (she knows how much it means to him? So she is able to come to see him play against Kenji in London / to be proud of him? To win the prize money to pay for the trip because she can't anymore?).

For the first time in our story, both Khaled's love for his daughter and passion for basketball become one of the same: he now needs to win in Paris for his

daughter! Khaled would become in the audience's mind "unstoppable" at this stage ²

Step 3: If the tournament was on the same day as Step 2 we could have tension with Khaled and Clifford having to race to King's Cross to catch the Eurostar on time?

Trying to find a cab, stuck in traffic, getting

out of the cab and running, negotiating with the steward to get on the train, etc

(g) Khaled finding the money for the trip: Khaled finds the money for Charlotte's trip before the tournament (p65), which takes out a big obstacle in his way to the tournament and in his relationship with his daughter.

Would it be possible for Khaled to come up with the money after the Paris tournament

/ after Charlotte ends up in trouble?

Is there another way Khaled could come up with the money? Usually players competing in these tournaments receive per diem to live/eat day to day. Could Khaled be saving up his per diem while training, cutting out on everyday necessities for his daughter? We could reveal this when Khaled comes up with an envelope full of £10 bills?

2) Why does Khaled decide to participate in the tournament?

Currently there are several reasons mentioned in the draft:

- p32: Clifford convinces Khaled to

participate by saying "Burton's lazy – he's expecting to walk all over you guys" / "he doesn't think any Brit can beat him".

-p33: Clifford mentions Kenji Burton saw him play and doesn't rate him.

-p48: Khaled seems to think he will never play Kenji anyway.

- p 60: Clifford mentions that Khaled is participating in the tournament to pay for Charlotte's trip.

We would need to pick one reason why Khaled decides to come back to basketball and participate in the tournament.

Questions / ideas for the meeting:

A reason you mentioned at one of our previous meetings that relates to the love of the game and could work in this draft would be for Khaled to want to play on after the tournament. He goes to the tournament to get noticed.

² One of the things players do when they want to dedicate a game to someone (a sick child they've visited in hospital for example), is to write the person's name on the side of their game shoes. Could Khaled who would be given a free pair of Soldier shoe to wear for the tournament in Paris write Charlotte's name on the side (symbolically over the Sentinel logo)?

3) Khaled's back story in the USA.

If Khaled played in the US, we might need to expand on this important part of his life more.

Would there be another touching way to highlight the lack of opportunity Khaled suffered from because he was born in England?

It could remain a flashback, something symbolic that shows that when Khaled was growing up no one knew anything about or cared about basketball/the NBA.

Khaled wouldn't even have had the opportunity to play in the US.

For example, Khaled, 8, scoring a basket and his P.E. teacher wearing his Chelsea FC shirt yelling "great goal"? Or Khaled, 8, getting his basketball nicked by kids who want to play football with it. We then see Khaled, mimicking moves and "training" with no basket, and no ball?

III. Two scene ideas for the third act

a. Assuming Khaled participates in the tournament to get noticed and pursue his basketball career.

We could have few or no cameras in Paris to follow the tournament because Kenji is not playing yet. It would add to Khaled needing to win and to play Kenji in the finals in order to get noticed at all.

Once Khaled wins in Paris, we could have a scene similar to the scene on p27 of the draft in which Clifford drives Kenji to lash out at him.

- Kenji and Khaled are facing the journalists as part of a press conference organised ahead of the finals. The usual PR bullshit.
- Clifford steps in and starts driving Kenji insane with his comments..
- After a few exchanges, Kenji enraged starts to scream at Clifford and Khaled wanting a

piece of them right there and then.

-Kenji is dragged away by his entourage.

- Khaled complains to Clifford that because of him Kenji is now going to come after him on the court and play harder.

- Clifford replies that now at least they are sure all the media in the world will attend... if only to watch how Kenji handles his anger management issues after the trial.

Note: could Clifford give Khaled a nickname during the press conference then relayed by the media? For example "the comeback kid"?

Note: we could then see a montage of the images of the press conference travel around the world (Youtube, television, press, etc) ahead of the finals, suddenly turning this PR event into the most watched sports event in the world that night?

b. If Charlotte goes to hospital, we could have a scene where Khaled comes with Cookie and Greg to check her out.

Khaled could come up with the money for the ski trip then?

Khaled could give her the jersey (with his name on

the back) he won with in Paris for her to wear at the finals? Cookie could then complain that Khaled is starting to give her his dirty sport gear to wash again.

APPENDIX 5: NBNF (DIRECTOR'S) DRAFT

NO BLOOD NO FOUL

legend Kerry Wood; United centre - The Chicago Bulls! Photographs of basketball Gods - SCOTTIE PIPPIN, MICHAEL JORDAN, and KENJI BURTON

MAIN TITLES END : On Burton's unbeatable PHYSIQUE

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO COURTHOUSE - DAY 1

A late September morning and traffic noise accompanies the sound of a basketball thump-thumping as 3 black teens toss their ball between parked cars.

BOY 1

I'ma be LeBron James - muscle yo ass all over the court...

BOY 2

James? What? I'm a be Micheal Jordan. Game over fool!

BOY 3

I'ma be Kenji Burton n' kick all ya'll's asses!

FADE IN: AGAINST BLACK:

OPENING TITLES - LUPE FIASCO'S 'SUPERSTAR' against shots of

Chicago - and its sports history, Soldier Field : the Bears, A photograph of football legend JIM MCMAHON; WRIGLEY FIELD: The Cubs - photograph of baseball

They flow past the courthouse - cameras, reporters, radio and paparazzi are waiting. A microphone stacked podium lingers in a convenient position. Suddenly, movement. The courthouse doors open and Kenji Burton steps up to the podium; hundreds of flashbulbs explode!

A paparazzi gets too close and BAM! POOKIE MCINTYRE Burton's

P.A. shoves the guy back in place - HARD.

KENJI

Look man - I wanna ... pay respect to my lawyer
Billy Nightingale.

A smartly dressed lawyer, BILLY NIGHTINGALE nods to
Kenji. He masks disappointment like a pro.

KENJI (CONT'D)

I hope Ms Munroe feels we treated her fairly, and
that this case is now ...

SUDDENLY a man in a balaclava runs at Kenji,
carrying something and throwing whatever it is as
hard as he can -

MAN (O.S.)

FUCKIN' RAPIST!

Burton is SPLASHED with YELLOW PAINT! The guy takes
off, FAST with Pookie and the police in hot pursuit!

BURTON

Motha...FUCKA!

CUT TO:

EXT/ INT.THE TAYLOR APARTMENT/ A PRIVATE GYM - DAY

2

Still in Chicago, at an expensive uptown apartment building.

INT. PRIVATE GYM CONTINUOUS

Where we find: an attractive, toned and fit but uptight WOMAN (White 30'S), pounds the treadmill. This is CAMERON TAYLOR. She watches the Burton fiasco on TV.

CAMERON

Fudge and Doody!

She stops momentarily and is whipped backwards by the treadmill!

A loud THUD follows.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT: GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE. NIGHT 3

Establishing shots of Guildford, the Friar's shopping centre, the half timbered buildings on the main street, the red and cream single decker buses that wobble up and down... and finally Guildford Leisure Centre - a noticeboard proclaims TONIGHT : BASKETBALL! GUILDFORD HEAT VS EVERTON TIGERS!!!

INT: THE GYM. NIGHT 4

The last gasp of the first half of a basketball game.

A tall, striking MAN (30 BLACK) handsome wearing casual jacket and trousers and open necked shirt, watches the game intently. He's making notes... His face is a picture of devotion, obsession and passion. He loves basketball with his entire being; this is KHALED MASSI.

CHARLOTTE MASSI(12), his mixed race daughter, sits next to him looking bored. She fiddles with a WHITE ENVELOPE, as her father jumps up and down with frustration.

EVERTON TIGERS are dominating and their attacker manages to scrape a quick basket before the whistle blows.

Khaled stands up and bangs on a nearby pillar in anger!

KHALED

Shit! What are they doing?

Another spectator looks round, a little frightened. As the teams troop off to their lockers for half time. Khaled jumps over a barrier and follows the Guildford Team into their locker room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HEAT LOCKER ROOM. NIGHT

The team are sitting in a semi circle, munching oranges and rehydrating, listening to Khaled, no one takes an eye off him. It's a pep talk and this guy really knows his stuff.

KHALED

Big J - you gotta push up man - you're letting their guy walk all over you! You should have 'Welcome' tattooed on your arse!

Big J a very tall brother with an Afro is indignant

BIG J

Khaled , he's fast man, what am I supposed to do?

KHALED

Take him down! You're stronger than he is! When they're fast, we muscle em off the court don't we? Dreadie, am I right?

Another tall player with dreads and a lisp stops drinking water for a second

DREADIE

The the geether's are thlick though man - they're playing fatht, end to end ball!

KHALED

Well we gotta out think em and shut em down.
Defence!

Twin behemoths both 7 foot something look a bit sheepish.

KHALED (CONT'D)

Wake Up!!!!!!!!!!

The team laugh, cheered a bit by this....

A GUY (40's) in a tracksuit and baseball cap enters.

KHALED (CONT'D)

Anyway, man, you know what you gotta do, we say this every week - you've got the skills - you know how to use em - you can beat these guys - just go out there and show em your passion man!

The Guy clears his throat.

GUY

Khal? Can I have a word with you outside for a second?

KHALED

Sure.

The guy leads the way, Khal follows him out the door.
The players react, even though we don't know why...

INT. THE CORRIDOR. CONTINUOUS 6

The guy stands waiting for Khaled, who is saying
goodbyes and wishing good luck to the lads.

GUY

There's about 5 minutes left before the second half
- I thought I should talk to them before the second
half? You know-cos I'm their Coach?

Khal looks sheepish.

A beat.

KHALED

Come on Coach - It's just, I've been watching and I
know what...

GUY

Yeah, but you don't play for us any more do you,
Khaled, remember? You quit the team.

Khaled reaches into his rucksack and gives Coach a
tupperware container.

KHALED

Oh Mum's cooked some curry goat and rice.

Coach Reynolds is disarmed, even though he's mad at Khal for usurping him.

GUY

Oh... thank you. Listen... Don't take this the wrong way, but you can't keep talking to them like this during the games. It sends the wrong message.

Khal stares at his shoes.

KHALED

I just... miss you guys is all.

Khaled walks away towards the Arena for the second half. A beat.

COACH REYNOLDS.

Did you tell em to muscle their fast geezer off the court?

KHALED

Yes. Defence?

COACH KHALED

Wake the hell up.

And Khaled's gone - Coach Reynolds just stands there...

COACH REYNOLDS.

Yeah, yeah...good...absolutely correct.

He opens the tupperware container and smells.

COACH REYNOLDS. (CONT'D)

Dear God that's good.

He steps into the locker room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GUILDFORD HEAT VS EVERTON TIGERS GAME.NIGHT

EXCITING MUSIC:

Khaled watching the game - The Guildford Heat are playing well this half.

TIME CUT:

Big J. muscling an even big player off the court.
Khal laughing.

TIME CUT:

The twin defenders completely blocking Everton's Attacker - outwitting them at every turn.

Khal on his feet yelling.

TIME CUT:

The ref arguing with Dreadie. Khal shouting at all of them!

TIME CUT:

The ref blows the whistle - Big J's face disappointed. Dreadie angry.

Coach Reynolds steely.

Charlotte still bored, happy it's over.

Khaled disheartened...

The Guildford Heat have lost.

TIME CUT:

Khaled standing by the barriers, patting his ex team mates on the shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. THE TRAIN TO HACKNEY - NIGHT

The London train zooms through the darkness. Khal and Charlotte sit opposite each other in the second class carriage staring at their reflections in the window.

Khaled is still absorbed by the loss of his former team.

Charlotte's watching her dad. She pulls a face at his reflection. Khal sees this and pulls a similar face.

Charlotte sticks out her tongue. Khal sticks out his tongue.

Khal falls and bangs his head on the table. Charlotte does the same.

They both stay down until they laugh. This is something they've done before. He reaches for, and then gently squeezes her hand.

The letter remains firmly in her pocket...

CUT TO:

EXT. DE BEAUVOIR ESTATE / THE GRAFFITI'D BASKETBALL COURT – NIGHT

UK hip hop plays : we see late night Hackney, bright lights, multi ethnic shops, black cabs, lap dancing bars, rough pubs, the Hackney Empire, police vans whizzing through the streets, sirens blazing.

Mix through to the Du Beauvoir estate; there's a crappy basketball court sits at the base of two hulking tower blocks.

This is the local druggie's one stop shop. A black Humvee is parked to the side, and the local Prince of powders, D'ANGELO CHANG (Chinese late 20'S) is serving punters (black/white female). Punters leave, led away by a YOUT' (black 14), a wiry corner boy on a skateboard. Khal stops.

KHALED

Decent people live round here you know?

A beat.

D'Angelo strolls across to him, swarming with attitude.

D'ANGELO

Who d'you think half my fuckin' customers are?

He bangs fists with Khaled, they know each other.

KHALED

Do you wanna watch your mouth around Charlotte?

D'ANGELO

Hey! Lil' Charlotte - I never saw you there - you look stush... your Daddy looks very smart too. In fact, if I might be so bold, you both do.

Khal takes Charlotte's hand and they set off home - but D'Angelo joins him.

D'ANGELO (CONT'D)

Where you bin then, Lion King? You never see a brotha in a suit 'less he's goin' court or to see Lion King - Oh, I forgot, you can't afford to go West end anymore - cos you're a Janitor now innit?

KHALED

Shut up D'Angelo.

D'ANGELO

Mopping up sick and livin' with your mum. It's a natural tragedy!

KHALED

You live with your mum too!

D'Angelo's hugely affronted.

D'ANGELO

I've paid for her to be in a huge house, with a front garden and gnomes and shit - you're in that tiny flat, with them nine foot legs, every time

your mum wants to go kitchen, she's gotta hurdle
your entire body!

D'Angelo demonstrates.

Khaled gets Charlotte, who's laughing and walks
off...

KHALED

C'mon, we gotta get you home.

D'ANGELO (YELLS)

Khaled! Me and you need to talk soon, get me?

Khal's gone.

D'ANGELO (CONT'D)

Khaled Massi - a janitor? Fuckin' pussy'ole.

EXT/INT. COOKIE AND GREGORY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Khal and Charlotte walk up the front path, it's a
middle class house, close to the mean streets of De
Beauvoir - but a much nicer area.

As they reach the front door - an attractive, fit
white woman COOKIE (30's) opens it - they enter the
house...

Behind Cookie we see birthday decorations in the living room and a big "Happy 12th Birthday Charlotte"

COOKIE

Did you show him the letter?

KHALED

What?

CHARLOTTE

(sheepish)

No.

KHALED

What letter?

COOKIE

Give it to him now.

KHALED

What letter?

Charlotte gives him the white envelope, she's embarrassed.

Khaled tears the envelope open, fishes out the letter and reads.

COOKIE

There's a skiing trip at the end of the year.
(indicates Charlotte) She's going. You're paying.

KHALED

What? Eight hundred quid? Is this a joke? What's goin on man'?

COOKIE

Don't call -

KHAL

I know - Don't call you 'Man' man.

COOKIE

"Do you Khaled Massi take Susan Elizabeth Doe to be your lawful wedded wife?"

(She looks at him)

"Yeah, man!"

Khal grins at the memory. Charlotte laughs.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Charlotte Massi, bed. NOW.

Charlotte scoots upstairs.

KHALED

Happy birthday my love!

Khal blows her a kiss.

COOKIE

How you gonna pay for this skiing trip?

KHAL

Don't start, Cookie.

COOKIE

Don't start? Charlotte, God bless her, thinks you won't be able to pay. Gone and got herself a paper round! She's saving up to pull your arse out of the fire.

(Beat)

Look, Greg and I want this for her, she's good at it.

KHAL

It's £800! You and Bill Gates pay for it then!

COOKIE

No. We do everything else, Khal - this one's down to you.

KHAL

Why can't she do athletics or netball like everybody else?

GREG (Black, 30's) appears behind Cookie, he wears a hands free phone complete with face mic and carries an iPad - Greg is an on line computer consultant - always multitasking.

GREG

Hi Khal - (to mic) No not you. I'm talking to my girlfriend's ex.

KHALED

Hi Greg.

(Back to Cookie)

'Skiing', though? Really? What is she, Princess Di? I mean; what happened to games you can play in the street?

COOKIE

Don't tell me how to bring up that girl, she enjoys skiing. Get a loan, borrow it off your mum - do something! You've got to step up and be a proper dad! For once.

With that she shuts the door in his face. Khal stands there in shock, holding the letter. He bends down and shouts through the letter box

KHALED

Where am I gonna get eight hundred quid???? That's insane! D'you hear me Cookie? Insane!

CUT TO:

INT. UPMARKET HOTEL, CHICAGO - DAY.

We're back in Chi town.

CLIFFORD JAMES (50s), is walking down the corridor. Opposite him comes 6'10'', DESHAUN MOORE (20s), power forward in the NBA.

Suddenly, out of nowhere a man (JOHN) jumps in front of Deshaun.

JOHN

Deshaun Moore?

DESHAUN

What do you want?

JOHN

I hereby serve you -

Clifford jumps and tackles John to the ground.

CLIFFORD

(To Deshaun) Go! Go!

JOHN

(As he falls to the ground)

... with a -

Deshaun, without asking his due, legs it down the corridor to the elevator.

An elegant, uptight couple passes next to Clifford and John still on the floor.

CLIFFORD

(Letting go of John)

I'm sorry... I thought you were...

JOHN

You asshole!

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM, GROUND FLOOR 12

Clifford is standing in front of the urinals.

Behind him, we hear a toilet flush in one of the cubicles and out comes Deshaun Moore, who sees Clifford.

DESHAUN

Thanks bruv. What was all that about?

CLIFFORD

(Casually)

Something to do with serving you with a court ordered paternity test.

DESHAUN

Damn. You can't trust anybody anymore...

(Beat)

I owe you. Come to the game tomorrow.

CLIFFORD

I don't...

DESHAUN

Here's two tickets and a VIP pass.

Deshaun takes two tickets and a pass out of his jacket pocket and gives them to Clifford.

CLIFFORD

(smiling)

Thanks.

A member of Deshaun's entourage enters the bathroom and clocks Clifford.

ENTOURAGE MEMBER

We're going to be late D.

DESHAUN

I'm coming.

(To Clifford)

Enjoy the game. Holla at me.

CLIFFORD

I will!

INT. CAR - DAY13

Clifford drives off and stops a block away from the hotel where John is standing at a street corner.

Clifford pulls his car window down. He puts his hand inside his jacket pocket and pulls out \$200.

CLIFFORD

Here's for you.

JOHN

(Counting)

Thanks... Don't go so hard on the tackle next time.

CLIFFORD

It's got to look real.

Clifford drives off.

CUT TO:

**EXT/INT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BLOCK /CLIFFORD JAMES'S
BEDROOM 14- DAY**

In a shitty apartment block downtown - one step up from a motel. Low life characters hang out on the corner nearby, banged up old chevy on blocks on the parking lot and a broken neon sign saying Apartments - with missing P, M and T...

INT. CLIFFORD'S FLAT - EVENING

Nasty green wallpaper has peeled to reveal nasty green damp underneath.

A half emptied bottle of Jack Daniels stands on the table. Taped to the wall by the bed: a photograph of a buxom bikini-clad woman, sitting poolside, next to a younger better-looking Clifford in a basketball cap, who has a hand on her knee. They toast us with cheeky grins.

Clifford is on the couch watching a vintage game tape on the VCR, drunk. He is wearing his vintage college basketball shirt and cap.

Clifford knows the commentary by heart.

CLIFFORD

With one second left on the clock surely this is the end for this small team from Okhlaoma. What an incredible achievement for them to have come so far.

(Beat)

Oh! It's Clifford James with the steal! He runs the ball across court... and shoots from the half way line... (Lowder)

Surely it can't... HE SCORES! They've WON! They've WON!

What an upset. The crowd is going crazy! He's done it again! Clifford James takes his team to the Final Four!

CLIFFORD

(Changes voice)

Yes Dick this player's relentless drive and competitiveness will become

COMMENTATOR

With one second left on the clock surely this is the end for this small team from Okhlaoma. What an incredible achievement for them to have come so far.

(Beat)

Oh! It's Clifford James with the steal! He runs the ball across court... and shoots from the half way line...

(Louder)

Surely it can't... HE SCORES! They've WON! They've WON! What an upset. The crowd is going crazy! He's done it again! Clifford James takes his team to the Final Four!

COMMENTATOR 2

Yes Dick this player's relentless drive and competitiveness will become legendary! Legendary!

Images of Clifford exulting in victory, jumping arms up in the air, hugging his teammates and his coach.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLIFFORD'S BUILDING - CHICAGO 16

Clifford comes out of the building to throw out a garbage bag.

THREE THUGS move towards him looking for a fight.

CLIFFORD

(Taking a couple of steps back)

It's OK boys. I'm sure we can talk through...

The three thugs start hitting Clifford.

Clifford manages to land a couple of punches but is rapidly beat to the ground where he is hit and kicked repeatedly.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

(On the ground)

That's all you've got?

The thugs kick him some more.

THUG #1

If you ever come anywhere close to Deshaun Moore again, or if any of Multi Media Sport Agency's recruiters ever solicit one of our clients again we'll kill you.

THUG #2

Scum.

The thugs gone, Clifford picks himself up.

CLIFFORD

(To himself)

I'm getting too old for this.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. MULTI MEDIA SPORT AGENCY BUILDING - DAY

Multi Media Sports Agency is a typically modern skyscraper downtown. Glass. Steel. Space. Size.

Clifford walks past a secretary desk without stopping.

SECRETARY

Mr. Romanoff cannot be...

Clifford opens the door to Dave Romanoff's office and goes in.

INT. ROMANOFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A huge office with leather furniture, massive desk, cocktail cabinet, 50 inch wall-mounted plasma TV, and original LeRoy Neiman sports paintings.

'MOHAMMED ALI, ATHLETE OF THE CENTURY' takes pride of place.

The Monarch of this particular Glen, the boss, is tiny - DAVE ROMANOFF (40's) a determined, tenacious, dog-with-a-bone kinda guy. Dave's the CEO of Multi Media Sports.

ROMANOFF is all smooth bonhomie.

ROMANOFF

Clifford! For god's sake. I told you not to show up here. Did anyone...

(He notices Clifford's face)

Jesus! What happened to your face?

CLIFFORD

Deshaun's people don't agree, you know, that he's under represented. He just wants to play ball and get a decent pay cheque and go home and - you know... buy a jumbo jet or somethin' -

ROMANOFF

They really kicked your ass - ouch!

CLIFFORD

Hey, I'm working for this fucking place, don't gimme a hard time. If people knew what we get up to there'd-

Romanoff cuts Clifford off. He's outraged, but real quiet.

ROMANOFF

You? Working for this place? Illegally attempting to recruit ballers away from their current representation? To someone here?

He goes right in close til he's nose to nose with Clifford and whispers...

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

I'll deny it til the day I die.

He eyeballs Clifford for a moment and then moves away to his desk.

A beat.

CLIFFORD

Well... this has been a treat. Don't bother - I know my way out -

Romanoff steps to Clifford and puts a hand on his shoulder gently and sits him back down.

ROMANOFF

Calm down. You're the best we've got... You just need a break... I wanna show you something.

The guy in the suit presses buttons - the blinds descend - the plasma flickers into life.

Images appear on the screen. The word SENTINEL SPORTS and a picture of an old but wealthy looking MAN (White 70s).

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

SENTINEL SPORTS WEAR - ever hear of em? They were a rinky dink local Chi town firm - running wear, vests, shorts. Then old man Taylor died. His kid took over.

CAMERON TAYLOR (Woman from the gym) appears on screen - power dressed, austere, intelligent eyes.

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

Cameron Taylor. She's smart, she's tough, she-she's like a Jedi - already pushed the firm's dollar value 25% higher than when her daddy was boss - now she wants a successful basketball shoe and she's willing to sponsor a tournament to launch it. I want you on the team.

CLIFFORD

No, no, Dave. If I wanted to sell shoes I'd be working with uncle Nat in Brooklyn.

Romanoff writes a figure on a piece of paper. Clifford takes it - reads the figure. Raises an eyebrow.

ROMANOFF

Look at that number. That could be your fee.

Clifford licks his lips

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

(Oozing charm)

We got you in. Whole things in Europe -- Mission control in London - qualifier in Paris; there missing a UK baller, you source him and then hold the NBA guy's dick til the finals... Show him what WE can do for HIS four per cent.

CLIFFORD

Who ya got?

ROMANOFF

Kenji Burton.

Clifford is torn.

ROMANOFF (CONT'D)

Don't you need to cash a big ass cheque soon and pay bills?

CLIFFORD

You're such an asshole Dave.

ROMANOFF

You're welcome.

Clifford accepts his fate.

CLIFFORD

London. Mother - Fuck.

Romanoff rubs his hands together.

ROMANOFF

We're gonna make crazy money. Oh and you're gonna have to watch that mouth around Cameron Taylor - she don't like cursin'.

Kenji Burton's good-looking visage fills the screen.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LEISURE CENTRE HACKNEY - DAY

And we're back - on the main road to the Leisure centre.

Khaled is on his way to work with Charlotte riding her bike alongside.

CHARLOTTE

(REFERENCE SOMETHING KHALED'S SAID FROM PREVIOUS D'ANGELO SCENE)

KHALED

Charlotte Barclay Massi - I'll wash your mouth out with soap!

CHARLOTTE

I'm only sayin' what YOU said to D'Angelo.

Khaled responds fast and furious-

KHALED

Listen, I don't want you hanging around, listening to, or talking to D'Angelo, EVER ok? Do you understand me? Charlotte, I said 'DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME???

He's got hold of her arm now. Charlotte stops pedaling almost falls off the back - she's frightened... Khaled sees this and calms down.

YOUT' whizzes by on his skateboard, he checks out Charlotte on her bike, smiles. Nearly careens into a car, corrects himself. Charlotte ignores him; focusses on her dad.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, OK, I understand...

Khaled kisses her forehead.

KHALED

Good...now g'wan... tek yu backside to school!

Charlotte smiles - then remembers -

CHARLOTTE

Don't forget my school trip money.

KHALED

I know, thanks for reminding me. (BEAT) It's a done deal.

CHARLOTTE

Love you!

She rides off - Khal waves and then turns and lopes up the steps and is met at the door by a sweaty D'Angelo wearing in an expensive tracksuit.

KHALED

D'Angelo. What you doin' here?

D'Angelo's breathing heavily, doing yoga stretches and using the door for balance.

D'ANGELO

'SWEATIN' TO DUB STEP' - exhaustin'. Half the people in there are buyin' shit off me to keep up - it's off the hook.

Khaled starts walking away.

D'ANGELO (CONT'D)

I want you to come work for me.

This stops Khaled in his tracks.

KHAL

What be one of your boys?

D'ANGELO

Nah, man, be the man! I reckon people'd wanna buy from you - you look good, smell good. You're still fit. I'll show you the ropes and Blaps! Money flyin' out your arsehole, man! Guaranteed.

KHAL

Look, D'Angelo...I'll think about it, yeah. Later.

He disappears into the leisure centre...

YOUT' bounds up the stairs and hands a rucksack to D'Angelo who unzips it, extracts a roll of twenties, hands a couple to Yout' and then goes back inside.

YOUT' flips his skateboard onto the railings and then slides all the way back... a passing tramp applauds.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LEISURE CENTRE'S STORE ROOM - DAY

The store room is deliberately dark and musty. Khal dons overalls and assembles his tools: a broom, a mop, gloves etc.

CUT TO:

INT. LEISURE CENTRE - DAY

Khaled polishes the gym windows and watches the action within. A Renshinkai Karate class is taking place; leading the class is Cookie. She is attractive and fit and runs things efficiently. Khal watches adoringly as:

Music: NO NO NO by DAWN PENN

In slow mo: With a SENIOR STUDENT Cookie demonstrates a series of strikes, climaxing with said student flying through the air - she's ferocious! Her students applaud, glad it's not them on the floor eating mat. The class ends and Khal

watches as Cookie gives encouragement to the children as they file out.

MUSIC FADES.

INT. THE GENTS TOILETS - DAY

The Gents toilet is relatively clean - apart from the puke everywhere. Khal mops the floor, squirts antibacterial spray liberally.

The toilet flushes and COLTRANE (50's), the Leisure centre manager, a large man with a florid, guilty looking face, exits a cubicle.

COLTRANE

Use a grenade in that one, don't leave anything to chance.

He laughs at his own joke and then washes his hands. Khal watches him and then screws up his courage.

KHALED

Mr Coltrane... I was just wandering if there was any overtime to be had - I've got to -

Coltrane finishes washing and towelling himself and answers Khal as they walk to reception.

INT. HACKNEY LEISURE CENTRE, WALK TO RECEPTION

Coltrane's demeanour is damning throughout.

COLTRANE

There's no overtime, forget overtime - we're in the middle of a double dip recession... Europe's almost bankrupt! Haven't you heard?

KHALED

It's just that, I've got to find money for this ski
-

Coltrane points to some boxes of posters by reception -

COLTRANE

NO OVERTIME - OK? GOOD. These. Back room. Now.

Khal's disappointed, but loads the boxes onto a sack trolley.

CUT TO:

LEISURE CENTRE GYM - EVENING

It's later at the Leisure centre, no one's around. Khal is cleaning the basketball court with mop and

bucket. He contemplates the basketball rim for a moment...

Then looks back down and starts mopping the court again.

EXT/INT. AN IPAD SCREEN.NIGHT

Click!

An iPad screen flowers into life and shows an Aardman style Claymation style commercial:

GREAT MUSIC THROUGHOUT:

A Claymation space rocket arcing through space.
A Claymation Kenji Burton is the pilot.
Touch down ... retro rockets blasting.

Touchdown 2 ... Kenji's spanking new, SOLDIER™
basketball boots hit the planet's surface and
shadows fall across them as ...

Badass aliens, cartoon weaponry aimed at Kenji.
Kenji reaches inside a utility bag.
A hundred cartoon weapons and their safety catches
being released!

Kenji was just reaching for his trusty basketball.
He presses a button on the side of his rocket and a
hoop is revealed ten feet off the planet's surface.

His shoes magically swell, becoming extra boing-y, he leaps many feet off the ground and dunks the ball!

The aliens applaud, divide into two teams and start a game where Kenji continues to soar and dominate.

The tag line reads: The Sentinel Soldier - TASTE THE AIR.

INT. KENJI'S JET - DAY

Flying in style with Kenji Burton: the jet's all beige interiors and personalised seats. His entourage are mostly asleep but Kenji, a brooding presence in short sleeve, bicep revealing T-shirt has been watching this commercial and scowling throughout. Cameron beams at the tag-line, and then notices Kenji's depressed mug.

KENJI

Why they gotta do that?

CAMERON

What?

KENJI

Make out it's the shoe that jump NOT the nigga.

A beat as Cameron considers her reply.

CAMERON

It's an effect? We're saying, 'Wouldn't it be great if the new Soldier' shoe could help all (she hesitates)... N WORDS dunk like Kenji?'. It's marketing, Kenji - all the N WORDS are gonna want to be JUST like you ...

KENJI

I don't want any nigga watching this shit thinking they can jump like me cos of a GOT-DAMN shoe!

CAMERON

Is that language really necessary?

POOKIE gets in between Cameron and Kenji so's he can talk sense to his friend.

POOKIE

Much money they payin' you nigga - I would lie my ass off bout some shoes. (Pretends his on TV) "Yeah, nigga buy these shoes and you can fly 'zackly like me." (to Kenji) You in YO OWN private Jet, fool!

Kenji laughs, but pushes Pookie out the way. He then faces Cameron again ...

KENJI

Change that shit about the jump. It's me that jumps
not no motherfuckin' shoe.

(beat)

And what's a matter with my language? It's English
right?

Cameron nods - and backs off quickly.

She makes her way to the backseat and sits, relieved
that that particular ordeal is over. She closes her
eyes.

All goes black.

PILOT (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen please take our seats for
landing. We are approaching London Heathrow.

Then real close we hear:

KENJI

Hey, Cameron!

Cameron jumps! Kenji is sitting next to her buckling
up.

CAMERON

Fudge and Doody! You scared me!

He laughs and ...

The lights go off landing.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. CLIFFORD'S CAR - DAY

A hybrid cab rounds Shepherd's bush green slowly... Clifford sits in the back seat glaring out of the window, muttering.

The BLACK DRIVER (40'S) says nothing throughout.

CLIFFORD (MIMICKING)

"We got you an earlier flight, Clifford! So you can hit the ground running". Yeah - you hit the ground runnin' after 9 hours in coach, bitch!

(Beat)

England my ass - shoulda called it 'Rainland' or 'Freezin' frikkin' cold land'... Does the sun ever shine here?

The driver remains mute.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Shoulda bought a fuckin' canoe.

DRIVER

(Mutters. Subtitled Ghanian) American asshole.

CUT TO:

INT. SILAS'S NEWSPAPER SHOP, HACKNEY - DAY

Khaled is with the news agent Mr SILAS (late 60's), an old, feisty Jamaican man.

While waiting for Charlotte, Khal makes a note of some of the Want Ads in the window. He picks a card from the display.

KHALED

What about this one Silas? 40 quid an hour, working from home? This must be something, right?

SILAS

Don't want to be doing that particular job. Might have to change you name to Chiquita and talk nastiness on the telephone.

Khal immediately puts it back.

KHALED

I don't know what I'm going to do, man. I have got to get another job.

SILAS

I tell everybody you should never have given up basketball - look at you, tall like mango tree. Fast.

Silas gets an old tin from underneath the counter, he opens it with a key on a chain hanging round his neck.

SILAS (CONT'D)

I bin savin for me house in Jamaica. I got just enough to pay for the doorknobs and one towel - I will prob'ly dead before I live back-a-yard.

He starts counting out money.

KHALED

Hang on, I wasn't asking you to-

SILAS

How much this skiing ting cost?

Khaled is gobsmacked.

KHALED

Charlotte told you about that?

SILAS

It's why I give her the job in the first place. Not many kids helping their parents out like that these days...

KHALED

Silas, I can't take your money, it's not right...

Charlotte runs into the shop and dumps her empty paper bag on the counter.

CHARLOTTE

Boom! Finished, Mr Silas!

She turns and sees Khaled, runs to him and hugs him. He waves to Mr Silas as he leaves.

SILAS

Don't forget... all you have to do is ask

Khaled nods. YOUT' passes them and enters the shop. We hear Silas.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Keep you hands where my eyeballs can see them, you hear me, you teefin' lickle raas, you?

EXT/INT. GUILDFORD /COACH REYNOLD'S OFFICE - DAY

Establishing shot of GUILDFORD LEISURE CENTRE.

Clifford sits in Coach Reynold's office, the complete opposite of Romanoff's - it's much smaller; there are a few trophies - no art as such - just framed sports pages on the walls. Coach Reynolds listens patiently to Clifford rabbitting on and on.

CLIFFORD

(lying)

I just love London, Big Ben, Buckingham palace, Tower bridge, the rain is so... atmospheric. And it's pretty non stop, right? And Guildford is - Guildford is so... So, tell me - how come there's no big London ball team? More importantly, shouldn't you be running it?

COACH REYNOLDS

The cash incentives aren't the same here Mr James, and this is a football loving country... people are more into Wayne Rooney than they are Lebron James.

CLIFFORD

Wayne who?

A beat.

COACH REYNOLDS

(laughs)

Yanks.

COACH REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

What do you need?

CLIFFORD

I need one decent player for this one on one tournament. We got Kenji Burton. ESPN, Sky Sports - the launch of Sentinel's new signature 'Shoe'.

COACH REYNOLDS

I can't give you any of my guys. I'm not risking injuries in order to flog some poxy shoe.

CLIFFORD

When you put it like that, it hurts.

COACH REYNOLDS

You understand what I'm saying though?

CLIFFORD

You're not speaking French. I get it.

Clifford slips off his chair and gets on his knees...
he's begging.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Coach Reynolds! You gotta have SOMEBODY?

Reynolds is uncomfortable now - he gets up.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Look - if he's tall and he doesn't drop the ball -
I'll take him.

Coach Reynolds has reached the door handle - but
Clifford's grabbed his legs desperately.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

You gotta help me. Please!

Reynolds thinks for a moment.

COACH REYNOLDS

Alright, alright, alright! (beat) I know ONE guy....
Get off your knees, please!

Clifford grins, that's the ticket.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL - DAY

A meeting in Kenji Burton's suite, a beautifully appointed room in the classic Savoy style: Cameron Taylor is there, as are Kenji and the ever present Pookie.

Cameron nibbles sushi and sips something thick and green. Kenji counts out supplements and sweeps them into a 2 litre blender of pink liquid. CLICK! WHIZZ! It's done. He takes a big drink, then wipes his mouth and burps prodigiously.

Lovely.

KENJI

Yo, Cameron, forgit sushi, man -

This shit is the bomb!

He pours her a little taster into a polystyrene cup.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Not too many though, or you'll wake up one night,
fart and machine - gun the cat!

Pookie ROARS with laughter.

POOKIE

Mo'fuckin' cat be like - Sonny Corleone at the
tollbooth - Brap! Brap! Brap! Brap-brap-brap-brap-
brap-brap!

Pookie jerks like Sonny Corleone in Godfather one's
Toll booth massacre. He mimes blood gushing from
various wounds..

Clifford enters at this point. He takes a seat and
smiles at everyone.

CAMERON

Everyone, this is Clifford James, former NCAA All
American, who is scouting English players for the
tournament.

CLIFFORD

Hi.

KENJI

Uh, Cliff? While you're up could you get me some coffee here? Pookie, would you like some coffee?

POOKIE

I'd LOVE some coffee!

KENJI

Cameron?

Cameron shakes her head.

KENJI (CONT'D)

That's just two coffees then.

Clifford is fuming... But goes to get some coffee on the main table and brings a cup back to Kenji and Pookie.

KENJI (CONT'D)

NCAA All American scouting for players in London, hu? How the mighty have fallen.

CLIFFORD

(Muttering)

You'd be surprised how many kids out there actually think you're overpaid, over-rated and ...

KENJI

Wa'd you say!

CAMERON

Relax, Mr Burton. I did not fly all this way to hear this-this-this- ...bull..doody!

Silence. What did she just say? Pookie mouths 'Bull Doody?'

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Mr James, do we have a British competitor yet? Bearing in mind Mr Burton must be protected from any 'Gunslingers' trying to make their reputation. It's important that we make him look good.

Clifford looks at Kenji who shrugs carelessly.

KENJI

Just get me some punk wannabe baller, so I can beat his ass, get paid and get the fuck up outta here.

CLIFFORD

Well - I think I got just the guy you need... He's an ex pro who's a Janitor now...

CUT TO:

EXT. HACKNEY LEISURE CENTRE, GYM – EVENING

Khal is mopping the corridor outside the gym... when he suddenly becomes alert to the THUMP THUMP of a

basketball. He enters the gym and finds Clifford bouncing a ball.

KHALED

S'cuse me? You're not supposed to be here...

CLIFFORD

Khaled Massi, right?

Thump-thump!

KHALED

What?

CLIFFORD

The media are gonna eat you up with a teensy tiny spoon!

Thump-thump!

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

"I was a professional baller, but now I'm a lowly janitor"...Damn, that's good.

Thump-thump!

Khaled is getting really pissed off with this guy.

KHALED

Who are you?

CLIFFORD

Clifford James, out of Chicago. I want you for this one on one tournament we got happening - you play all night... and if you win... Well then, you'd get a chance to kick Kenji Burton's ass in the final, in your hometown. One on one..

Thump-thump!

KHALED

I'm done with basketball. I got more important responsibilities now.

Clifford ignores him, fishes a card and an entry form out of his pocket.

CLIFFORD

More important than basketball? Nothing is more important than basketball.

Khaled's rattled

KHALED

I think you should go now.

CUT TO:

EXT. HACKNEY STREET - EVENING

Clifford is walking behind Khaled trying to keep up,

CLIFFORD

Before I got injured, I made Michael Jordan do that
shit all day long.

(Beat)

In highschool...

KHALED

Bollocks. (sarky)

You made Michael Jordan!

CLIFFORD

Sounds like ya'all don't believe me.

Clifford takes out his wallet and shows Khaled a
picture of a young Clifford dunking on young Jordan
back in highschool.

Clifford grins a mighty 'Fuck you' smile at Khaled,
who can't believe the photograph.

KHALED

Get out of town!

Clifford puts the photo away.

CLIFFORD

You need to take part in this competition.
Represent. Burton's expectin' to walk all over you
guys.

CUT TO:

INT. JACUZZI IN KENJI'S BATHROOM – EVENING

Kenji is lying in a massive jacuzzi full of foam.
Hip hop Music blasts from a boombox - Kenji almost
raps in time to the music.

KENJI

No. One. Can. Beat me. Not Prince motherfuckin'
Charles, not, the Prime motherfuckin' Minister, not
Hugh motherfuckin' Grant, not David motherfuckin'
Beckham...

Reveal that POOKIE's in there on the other side of
the Jacuzzi too!

POOKIE

Not Harry motherfuckin' Potter either, nigga!

CUT TO:

EXT. HACKNEY STREET – EVENING

Khaled has slowed down and is listening to Clifford.

CLIFFORD

This is your chance to get props, to play against the best... It's basketball ... It's got to be better than unblocking toilets, right?

They are standing in front of a Caribbean restaurant, Khaled's mum restaurant...

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

What else do you have?

KHALED

(Looking down)

Nothing.

Khaled steps in the restaurant and Clifford follows.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT – LATER

A tiny place on the main road; all Caribbean yellows and greens and palm trees and sunshine – despite the rain pissing down outside.

Inside there are pictures of BUJU BANTON, BOB MARLEY, GWEN STEFANI, MR VEGAS, and strangely BARRY MANILOW and the cast of THE SOPRANOS on the walls.

CUSTOMERS sit around sucking on mutton bones, or struggling to unwrap a Roti.

Clifford and Khaled and WIN sit at a table. Mum's being ever so nice.

WIN

Mr James, you want Roti?

CLIFFORD

I don't eat British food.

WIN

Roti is Caribbean. Very tasty, like curry but wrap up warm for the winter.

Clifford laughs. Win turns to Khal.

WIN (CONT'D)

You eat?

Khal shakes his head.

WIN (CONT'D)

Farringdon!

A Chef (BLACK 60, GOLD TEETH) pokes his head through the hatch.

FARRINGDON

Yes, Winnie!

WIN

Khaled wan' rice and peas and chicken and dumplin' and yam and banana.

KHALED

I'm not that hungry, mum, actually.

WIN

Take off the banana. Sen' out drinks and lickle roti for my man as well. Him look like skinny to raas. Wha'ppen to you? Divorce?

Clifford nods.

WIN (CONT'D)

She leave you or you leave her? You a good-lookin' man, you behave like mawga dawg and cheat pon her? You grin' everything that move?

Khaled squirms.

A BEAT.

KHALED

Mum!!!!!! Please!

WIN

Wha' him want again?

Khaled glances at Clifford who shift into serious pitch mode.

CLIFFORD

Khaled's taking part in a prestigious Basketball tournament. It's sponsored by Sentinel Sportswear; the qualifiers take place in Paris and if he wins he'll-

Win SLAPS Khaled round the face!

WIN

You don't learn? You just gone off on you own and decide you goin play basketball - without chat to me first?

KHALED

Mum-

WIN

SHUT YOU MOUT'!

Silence.

Farrington exits the kitchen with food, sees - Khaled holding his cheek and Win breathing flames. He reverses back into the kitchen.

A customer throws money on his table and is gone.
Win yells at Clifford

WIN (CONT'D)

'If he wins'? (to Khaled) You think basketball goin'
take care of Charlotte? Find you a new girlfriend?
Pay you rent? And at your age where you going to
play now? The old man NBA? You give that game
everything and it give nothing back.

KHALED

I was doing ok with Guildford.

WIN

Til them start paying you only expenses. You tell
me 'Basketball done' I say 'Good'. I can't bear it...
I'm not goin' thru that again!

KHALED

(to himself)
At least on the court I went down fighting.

CLIFFORD

If I might just ...

She turns on Clifford again

WIN

Is people like you nearly kill my son.

(She turns to Khaled)

Khaled, if you leave with this man, as God, Moses, Jesus and the lickle donkey are my witness, you can leave my house and don't come back... It's me or basketball. You decide.

Khaled looks at Clifford and shrugs - 'Sorry'.

Clifford gets up to leave.

CLIFFORD

Well, ma'am, it's been a pleasure talking with you.

Win turns on him really pissed off.

WIN

Come out a my restaurant before I give you one and two bitch licks!

Khaled glares at his mum, then gets up to escort Clifford out the door.

EXT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Clifford and Khaled walk to his hire car in silence.

CLIFFORD

She's worse than Pauletta.

Khaled looks at him quizzically.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

My ex... What happened with basketball?

On Khaled. He shrugs.

KHALED

It was everything.

FLASHBACK

CAPTION: LONDON, 1988

KHALED MASSI, 7 years old, comes out of his mum's building bouncing a basketball.

A group of teens are hanging out see Khaled with the ball.

BOY #1

Let's play football!

KHALED

I don't play football. I am a basketball player and I'm going to play in the N.B.A.!

BOY #2

What's the NBA?

BOY #3

Who cares. Just give me the ball.

One of the boys takes the ball off Khaled.

The other boys laugh while walking away kicking the
basketball.

CUT TO

The group of boys are playing football.

BOY #1

(Scores a goal)

And he does it again! What a sensational goal!

A little further away, Khaled is now on his own
playing basketball without a basket and without a
ball, redoing the same moves over and over again.

Suddenly, one of the teens kicks the basketball and
it hits Khaled in the head knocking him to the
ground.

C.U. on Khaled's face, on the ground, looking up
towards the sky.

EXT. MAMA'S RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Clifford and Khal stand next to each other.

KHALED

I was born in the wrong place at the wrong time...

CLIFFORD

Khaled... I don't know how to say this without sounding like a complete imbecile -but...

(MORE)

Your mom's right. If basketball's taken so much away from you already you should maybe put your family first. If I'd done that, I'd prob'ly still be married.

Clifford pats Khal on the shoulder and walks away. Khal stuffs his hands in his pockets and pulls out Clifford's card.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAFFITTIED BASKETBALL COURT — NIGHT

It's later, but the court is star lit and somehow magical.

Khal leans against the fence in the darkness, deep in thought.

It's a FULL MOON.

Khal stares up at the constellations as if looking for a sign and then... he gets one.

ORION animates, and grabs the moon and bounces it around the sky for a while like a stellar Michael Jordan - then slam dunks it through the PLOUGH.

Khal's eyes widen in wonder.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MASSI APARTMENT - LATER

The front door opens; Win's back home with a tin foil covered plate of food. She kicks off her shoes and makes her way to Khaled's room and pushes the door open.

WIN

Khaled. I know you tink say I was a lickle rough on you earlier, but I couldn't just let ...

But Khaled's gone; the bed's neatly made and his stuff's packed away.

Win sits on the bed and weeps.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL GRILL RESTAURANT – NIGHT

The epitome of old school money - the Savoy Grill is the classiest dining location in London.

Kenji and Pookie and Malcolm and Cameron sit at a big table, they're all reading LION KING programmes; Kenji is fascinated.

KENJI

How come the shit still runnin, though? The movie was years ago.

POOKIE

Yo, man they ain't got nothin' else up in this bitch.

KENJI

Fuckin' typical - White folks make a hit cartoon 'bout Africa, ain't no human brother's and sista's in it - we jus' animals...

Pookie and Kenji laugh and high five each other. Cameron looks round to see if anyone's getting annoyed with the volume.

KENJI (CONT'D)

It's like even animated we too much for white folks...

POOKIE

Just a nigga's luck. Eddie Murphy's black ass ain't made a decent movie this century, but you put that nigga in a donkey costume in Shrek? He be makin' motherfuckers laugh all night long.

Cameron has been listening to all of this and now she has to get involved.

CAMERON

He wasn't, uh ... wearing a donkey costume in Shrek, Mr Pookie, he was animated - like Kenji in our commercial.

POOKIE

Bitch please! Nigga ain't animated in Beverly Hill's Cop, or Tradin' Places, or 48 hours ... but that shit was a loooong time ago - once a brother's sell by date happen, that shit is over - 'You a donkey bitch' and that's all she wrote.

Pookie continues his thesis but the sound tunes out as we focus on:

The BLONDE is at an adjacent table on her own, eating a Ceasar Salad. She flirts with Kenji, beautifully - it's a work of art.

Kenji smiles at her. She smiles back.

BINGO!

She raises a glass and silently asks him to join her.
Cameron watches all of this with a kind of amusement.

CAMERON

Do you have to swear quite so much Mr Pookie ...

POOKIE

It's just Pookie, like Mookie? but with a P, right
Kenji?

But Kenji's over by the BLONDE'S table now,
indicates Pookie-

KENJI

He gets a little loud sometimes - sorry about that.

The blonde eyes Pookie and nods.

BLONDE

I've got friends like that - five martini's and
they're anyone's.

She sips her martini

KENJI

How many's that?

She fixes him with an incredibly sexy gaze

BLONDE

Five.

Kenji laughs out loud She extends a hand ,Kenji takes it.

BLONDE (CONT'D)

Victoria Hempel, costume designer.

KENJI

Kenji Burton, baller.

VICTORIA

Lovely.

Kenji explodes a smile in her direction. She lobs one right back.

Game on.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. CLIFFORD'S HOTEL RECEPTION - LATER 42

Clifford walks in, drunk, to find Khaled with a rucksack and other bags at his feet. Khal smiles, he's got his trusty basketball in hand.

CLIFFORD

Go home.

Khaled gets up.

KHALED

I'll play in the tournament.

CLIFFORD

It's not worth it.

KHALED

It's all I've got.

CLIFFORD

You really are hooked on hoops.

KHALED

My daughter's Christening was held at half time at a Guildford Heat vs. Glasgow Rocks game.

Clifford is impressed.

Beat.

Clifford makes a move towards the elevator.

KHALED (CONT'D)

Yeah. (beat)

So. Where am I staying?

CLIFFORD

Ok, well - now, you go home and I'll see you tomorrow.

KHALED

There's no 'going home' anymore.

CLIFFORD

Well you can't stay here. I mean - there's no room.

KHALED

Oh great. So I make the second most important decision of my life and you can't even sort me out a bed for the night?

The receptionist standing next to them interjects while looking at his computer.

RECEPTIONIST

We do have one ... suite on the third floor ...

KHALED

That's good.

RECEPTIONIST

Ah and one double room with a king size bed on the second floor.

CLIFFORD

(In the receptionist's face)

Whose side are you on?

(To Khaled)

You... You take the couch.

CUT TO:

INT. CLIFFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Khaled squeezed on the couch, his back hurting. His eyes open, he looks at Clifford who is wearing his vintage college basketball shirt, deep asleep, snoring, on the bed.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BREAKFAST ROOM - MORNING

Clifford is sitting in front of his breakfast plate. Khaled seats opposite him in front of an empty plate.

CLIFFORD

It feels like rooming in college again.

Khaled, hungry, keeps staring at Clifford's plate.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Stop staring.

(Beat)

Go get yourself some breakfast and put it on the room.

Khaled helps himself to a huge plate of English breakfast with bacon, eggs and all.

Clifford takes an envelop from his pocket.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Here are your per diems for the week.

KHALED

(all smiles)

Thank you.

Khaled puts the money away.

Clifford looks at Khaled's plate, already emptied, bemused.

EXT. DU BEAUVOIR ESTATE - EARLY MORNING 45

Charlotte on her bike, whizzing past pedestrians at warp speed. She's got a bag full of newspapers over her shoulder.

She screeches to a halt, drops the bike, vaults a fence and slots a newspaper through the letter box.

She returns to find Yout admiring and holding her bike.

YOUT'

Cool bike, yeah?

Charlotte regards Yout' warily - he offers her the bike and she takes it (pew) and fronts it out...

CHARLOTTE

What you want, man? I'm busy, get me?

YOUT'

Just sayin' - bike's dread.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks.

YOUT'

You like deliverin' papers?

CHARLOTTE

My new job, innit? Doin' the papers for Mr Silas.

YOUT' pulls out a roll of twenties and tens thick enough to choke a horse.

YOUT'

There's other jobs... get me?

And he kick-pushes away on his skateboard. Charlotte mounts her bike and follows.

CHARLOTTE

Hey! Who you work for then?

And she rides off after him.

EXT/INT. BRIXTON RECREATION CENTRE – DAY

One of the most famous basketball locations in the UK - it's a big modern building in the middle of Brixton. Traffic is at a standstill. A sign proclaims: NBA star KENJI BURTON launches children's fund TODAY!

INT. BRIXTON GYM – DAY

In the main gym are Kenji, Pookie and Cameron Taylor. There are 20 KIDS of different ages, sizes and colour. A banner suspended from the wall proclaims; 'BURTON'S BALLERZ' sponsored by Sentinel Shoes'. The logo 'Taste the air' blings from hoardings everywhere.

Paparazzi, journalists, and TV cameras are all gathered to watch Kenji give an impromptu exhibition for the kids which could be entitled 'Being a baller actually means for real'.

KENJI EXHIBITION OF BASKETBALLS SKILLS:

Kenji struts his stuff - and, utilising various kids as assistants he demonstrates:

THE LAY UP

TIME CUT:

THE CROSS OVER

TIME CUT: THE DUNK TIME CUT :

THE SLAM DUNK

TIME CUT:

Kenji is a hellacious baller, the media, kids, leisure centre staff and gathered punters applaud spontaneously.

LATER:

The inevitable press conference. Cameron Taylor leads off, power dressed in a white trouser suit, hair tied back, glasses.

During the following, Kenji's eyes find Victoria Hempel and they smile secretly at each other. It's all new and lovely and flirtatious.

CAMERON

My father, Burt Taylor, was nothing if not determined. I was number 6 in his efforts to produce a male heir to the Sentinel fortune inheritance - after which my mother started blocking the bedroom door with a chair and doping his food. (beat)

The press laugh dutifully, a few cameras snap away. Kenji checks Victoria's reaction-she's laughing. He laughs too.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Aside from that, my dad was a great believer in encouraging young people to be the best that they can be. In that spirit, Kenji has started a fund for young people to be initiated into the mysteries of basketball; Burtons' Ballerz will contribute to the development of British Basketball, for ever. Now, I think Kenji has time for just a few questions?

Kenji steps forward and waits for the barrage and sure enough-

PRESS GUY 1 (THE TIMES)

Kenji, you settled your sexual assault case, out of court with Ms Munroe -

KENJI

Yo, man, I'm here with the kids today - I ain't talkin' bout no sexual assault.

PRESS GUY 2 (THE TELEGRAPH)

You must have known that your private settlement with Ms Munroe was going to raise a few eyebrows in the media, surely?

PRESS GUY 3 (THE SUN)

Look, chief, what everyone wants to know is... Did you... uh - slam dunk Renate Munroe ?

Cameron senses that Kenji is about to kick off and sure enough-

KENJI

Look ya'all, I'm out here with these kids, givin' 'em a chance to play ball someplace safe. I'm done talkin' bout Renate Munroe -it's over. Ya'all motherfuckers need to find new shit to talk about.

All the children take a sharp intake of breath. The press write it all down. Cameron steps in and signals to a techie looking guy who presses buttons on a remote. A projection screen slides down and the lights dim. A spotlight finds Cameron smiling winningly.

CAMERON

Don't forget - we are organising a one on one tournament in Paris to give Kenji's fans the opportunity to battle it out to take the finals back to their hometown and play against their idol. Now, here's one of our brand new commercials for the Sentinel Soldier!

She smiles professionally and signals to the Techie to get on with it.

The screen reveals:

INT. A MAD SCIENTIST'S LABORATORY - NIGHT 48

We are in Tim Burton style territory; a Mad Scientist's Laboratory, it's SHOT IN BLACK AND WHITE - the lab, a Gothic monstrosity filled with weird electrical equipment.

A monster (Kenji) lies on a slab.

A MAD scientist (DENNIS RODMAN) works feverishly, connecting electrodes to the Monster, which turns out to be Kenji.

The Scientist flicks a switch. Nothing happens.

He flicks it again - a few sparks fly but there is no response from the monster.

The Ogre (PENNY HARDAWAY) watches his master throw the switch in vain for a third time and then takes a pristine white box and indicates to his master to open it.

The box contains a pair of new Soldier basketball shoes by Sentinel.

Master places the shoes on the Monster's feet and flicks a switch.

The Monster leaps up from the table, ready to rock in his Brand new Soldier shoes, which swell and twitch in a toon like way.

The Ogre throws him a ball and the monster jumps like Jordan from a trampette, soars to the nearest basket and 360 dunks the ball Ka-Pow!! A flash of Lightening ends the commercial

The Logo: The Sentinel Soldier - 'Taste the air'

CUT TO:

INT. BRIXTON GYM - DAY

The kids and press applaud, all curse words forgiven. Kenji makes a 'Shoot me now' signal and grins

ruefully at Victoria Hempel who shakes her head and smiles back.

Pookie notices this exchange, he whispers-

POOKIE

Oh, she wanna snack on you, son. She wanna chow down on you like you was Chicken and mash potatoes! That bitch wanna munch on yo' Hershey bar.

Kenji hisses back.

KENJI

Shut up Pookie, shit-she aint no bitch!

Now vexed, Kenji turns to the kids.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Yo, kids - remember it's ME, not the shoe that jumps. Alright? Peace. I ain't no Got-Damn Cartoon.

He turns and walks towards Victoria; but a little KID (9) runs up and waves a piece of paper in his face.

Kenji takes the paper.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Where's yo' pen, Lil Man?

The Kid's unsure. Kenji's impatient -

KENJI (CONT'D)

The pen? (beat)

You gotta Pencil?

The kid's frightened now. The Kid's P.O.V. A gigantic, angry looking bear, wearing Kenji's shirt, holds the piece of paper and waves it around saying

KENJI (CONT'D)

I can't sign shit without no pen, man.

Revert to normal Kenji - who now throws his hands up in despair-the kid bursts into tears -

A paparazzi snap away - the kid tears off in search of Mum... The paps snap more pics - Kenji apocalyptically enraged

KENJI (CONT'D)

I better not see that shit in the paper tomorrow, cos if I do, I will find where ya'll live, rip out yo' spine and make gumbo from that shit. Are we clear?

The pap, scared to attention replies.

THE PRESS GUY

Yes, Kenji!

Kenji turns on his heel and leaves, with Victoria Hempel in tow.

VICTORIA

You're a model of etiquette; Oscar Wilde would have been proud.

KENJI

Shut up man. Are you hungry ? I'm starved... I could eat a dead coyote on a bagel with mayo and a side o' slaw.

Victoria says 'Ew' and laughs - the banter continues.

Pookie follows, peeved that his boss has snagged a beautiful companion.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON

Khaled runs a suicide drill, giving everything he has but clearly struggling.

CHARLOTTE

You will still be able to pay for the trip?

Khaled, out of breath, stops running.

KHALED

(Fronting, not entirely confident)
I told you I would take care of it?

FLASHBACK

CAPTION: AN HOUR EARLIER.

Khaled is facing Mr. Coltrane.

COLTRANE

From overtime to down time! You need to train? You can't make the shift? You're fired!

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON 51

We're back on the basketball court, Charlotte, bored, starts play running on the sideline following her dad.

Khaled slows down to stay just ahead of her. Charlotte runs once or twice along the court then stops and takes a chocolate bar out of her pocket to eat.

KHALED

(Laughing)
That's all you've got?

EXT. COURTSIDE52

Clifford is on the side of the court watching.
Khaled and Charlotte haven't noticed him.

MONTAGE:

FANTASTIC MUSIC KICKS IN:

Khaled physically struggling...

A: Charlotte's uncomprehending face rises up into the air, we reveal that Khal is doing bench presses with her as the weight....

B: Khal runs up a hill reveal he is giving Charlotte a piggyback.... finding it difficult.

C: Khal doing shuttle sprints - Charlotte on his shoulders... struggling.

D: Khal doing press ups, with Charlotte on his back... out of breath.

E: Charlotte and her dad doing step-ups as fast as they can.

This suddenly becomes a rhythmic sequence - as Khal stamps out a rhythm, encourages Charlotte.

She stamps out a rhythm - he copies her.

He stamps out another rhythm, she copies him.

It's a joyous moment - they smile at each other,
father and daughter, loving this moment together.

INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - MORNING

Khaled helps himself to another huge English
breakfast.

CLIFFORD

You'll be on your knees before midnight in Paris if
you keep on training like you are.

KHALED

I'll be ready.

CLIFFORD

For what? Baby-sitting?

KHALED

(Taken aback)

I spent a little time with my daughter. What's your
problem?

CLIFFORD

You want some free advice... If you don't want to get eaten up on that court in Paris tune everything else out.

KHALED

And what do you know about training?

CLIFFORD

Only that when you're a real player, you tune everything else out.

KHALED

And how did you end up in London scouting for a Sentinel tournament? You picked the short straw?

CLIFFORD

You call yourself the short straw?

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT – DAY

Khaled is wearing long red baggy shorts and a XXXL shirt.

He is doing a suicide drill, struggling. As he gets to the baseline he turns and runs back without touching the line.

CLIFFORD (O.S)

Don't fuck with perfection!

Khaled, out of breath, stops running and turns around. Clifford is walking by the court.

KHALED

Excuse me?

CLIFFORD

Don't fuck with perfection!

Khaled looks at him.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Touch the line!

Khaled goes back and touches it.

KHALED

Is that good enough for you?

CLIFFORD

That's all you've got?

Khaled looks at Clifford and starts running again as fast as he can as Clifford looks on. One suicide, two suicides ...

CUT TO.

Twenty minutes later. Khaled is in great pain, practically dragging himself across court, pushed on solely by his resilience and determination to finish.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

That's enough!

Khaled keeps dragging himself all the way to the baseline.

KHALED

I am not done yet.

He collapses as he crosses the line. Clifford turns to walk away.

KHALED (CONT'D)

You want to rebound for me man?

CLIFFORD

You serious?

KHALED

I'm serious.

CUT TO.

Khaled is all sweat, shooting mid-range while Clifford dishes the ball back to him.

CUT TO.

CLIFFORD

Dribble, step back, shoot.

Clifford dishes the ball to Khaled, Khaled dribbles, steps back and hits the shot.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Drive to the right, pull up, shoot.

Clifford dishes the ball to Khaled, Khaled drives right, pulls up and hits the shot.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Same to the left. That's it... constantly vary your game to get your shot off.

CUT TO

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

(Expertly)

You're landing too hard. You need to decelerate on your way down to rebound quicker. Come here.

CUT TO

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Good work out. Get some rest.

Clifford walks away.

KHALED

Why don't you coach me man?

CLIFFORD

I don't coach.

KHALED

I'll give you a bit of one on one action in exchange. You know, to freshen up your game?

CLIFFORD

(Brushes him off)

You freshen up my game?

(Shakes his head)

These youth.

Clifford walks away again.

KHALED

Fine.

(Coughing, his hand in front of his mouth)

Pussy.

Clifford looks back at Khaled with his "Oh no you didn't" face.

Khaled, ignores Clifford and turns to walk away.

KHALED (CONT'D)

(Absent)

Pussy, pussy, pussy...

EXT/INT. THE SAVOY GYM - EVENING

Kenji is on the running machine, Pookie next to him, sweat splashing off both.

Kenji runs fast in long, loping strides, utterly confident. Pookie keeps up, but then slows his treadmill down, then hops off.

POOKIE

Man, come on, let's hit the shower.

KENJI

Nah, man, I'm good to go for another ten or fifteen.

POOKIE

(mimicking)

'Good to go for another ten fifteen'! Fuckin' show off. I'll see you later!

And he splits. Kenji laughs.

KENJI

Weak ass chump!

And cranks the speed up. Victoria Hempel enters - looking gorgeous in running gear; I-Pod Nano strapped to her bicep, takes the treadmill next to

Kenji, she cranks it up to Kenji's speed and right away gets comfortable.

Kenji matches her speed. She turns her head momentarily, flashes a killer grin.

Kenji keeps up for a while but has to slow down - she's crazy! He hops off and walks away but not before he watches Victoria's behind as she runs.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Damn.

As he exits she gives a little smile of triumph and continues her run.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Khaled is training when from behind...

CLIFFORD (O.S.)

No one calls me a pussy!

Khaled smiles and turns.

Clifford is taking off his top and tracksuit bottom to reveal: a 70's sleeveless college basketball shirt, mint knee high white socks and (very) tight shorts, together with a pair beat up Converse.

KHALED

(Cracking up)

Wow! Pappy! No one told you the A.B.A. days were over?

FOOTBALL PLAYER (O.S.)

Bruv we're waiting to play.

A group of eight boys (aged 8 to 12) have just arrived at the court with a football to play.

Clifford turns around to face the football players.

CLIFFORD

This is a basketball court.

FOOTBALL PLAYER

Yeah, and there's eight of us waiting to play football and one and a half you playing basketball.

CLIFFORD

So what? Find yourself a football court.

FOOTBALL PLAYER #1

And why don't you move.

(Beat)

Batman and Robin.

The other kids burst out laughing.

CLIFFORD

(To Khaled)

Did he call you Robin?

Khaled looks down at Clifford

KHALED

I think I'm Batman.

Clifford pushes Khaled forward towards the football players.

CLIFFORD

Get the fuck outta here.

Khaled looks at Clifford like "what the fuck?".

FOOTBALL PLAYER

(Disgruntled)

Asshole.

The group walks away to find somewhere else to play.

CLIFFORD

Lesson number one... This is your court. Don't let anyone take your court!

(Beat)

Lesson number two... I'm going to kick your ass old school style.

The one on one is a contrast in style. Everything sets the two men apart: their age, their physique and skin colour, their clothes, basketball playing style and their basketball references.

Yet something imperceptible brings the two closer together: their love of the game.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

First to ten.

KHALED

Look man –

But the game's already begun, Clifford's stolen the ball and scored already!

KHALED (CONT'D)

You can't start like that - that's cheatin'

Clifford ignores him, crosses the ball over skillfully, commentating simultaneously-

CLIFFORD

Magic Johnson asleep at the wheel there - can he recover?...I'm not sure Dave-

On the next play as Khaled gets ready to shoot, Clifford steps on Khaled's foot throwing him off balance.

Khaled misses his shot.

KHALED

Foul!

CLIFFORD

It's the streets kid. No blood no foul.

Clifford goes for the shot but misses. Khaled grabs the rebound, goes to the top of the key and scores.

KHALED

In your face!

CLIFFORD

You trash talk like a rook.

KHALED

Play old man.

On the next play Clifford steals the ball.

CLIFFORD

(In the post)

Which way you want it rook? Left or right?

Khaled tries to muscle him down.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Come on call it rook! Left?

Clifford turns left and gets his fadeaway jump shot off. He scores!

KHALED

What the fuck?

CLIFFORD

Look at you rook! I got you sweatin' now, don't I rook? You're thinkin' "What happens if this old man beats me?"

Khaled checks the ball.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Who's guarding me rook? You guarding me rook?

Clifford commentates like an enthused schoolboy, he is intoxicated by the game - by the fact that he is playing again for the first time in decades.

He drives to the right and does an "old school" lay up passing the ball behind his back Bob Couzy style...

It goes in again!

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Call everyone the Cooz is back! The Coooooz!

KHALED

What? I don't believe this –

Clifford's in possession again... Khaled scrabbles after him.

CLIFFORD

And Bill Walton with the finger roll!

Clifford spins to his right and releases the ball with a finger roll.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

America's game! It's fantastic!

Clifford does a little victory dance.

KHALED

Fuck you man. This is bullshit.

CLIFFORD

Hey Khaled – I'm only six up – what? You're gonna... quit? Is that what you do Khaled? You just... quit?

But Clifford is breathing a lot heavier now... an old knee injury slows him down... he's hobbling.

Khaled takes the rebound.

KHALED

I'm tearing this game down now!

Khaled dribbles back to the three-point line and shoots while Clifford is running trying to contest the shot, arm stretched out in front of him.

It sinks in.

KHALED (CONT'D)

You wanna play old man? Lets play.

Clifford checks the ball and Khaled straight away shoots for three again.

KHALED (CONT'D)

10 - 6 we're done.

He's just cut Clifford's fun short. Clifford is frustrated to have lost.

CLIFFORD

I told you to vary your game more.

Khaled can't tell if Clifford is a sour loser or just giving him advice. Probably both.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Let's have a re-match.

KHALED

I don't have time for a rematch.

CLIFFORD

What kind of player doesn't give a re-match?

KHALED

The kind that needs to focus and tune everything else out...

Khaled turns his back on Clifford and walks away.

KHALED (CONT'D)

Bill Walton with the finger roll...

And Kareem gives it to Bill... again!

Khaled is singing, doing a little victory dance.

KHALED (CONT'D)

(Walking after him)

You got jokes.

KHALED

(Suddenly zen calm)

Shuuut. I'm tuning you out...

CLIFFORD

Enough!

KHALED

You start coaching me tomorrow and I give you a rematch...

CLIFFORD

You -

KHALED

Take it or leave it.

Clifford fuming, mumbles something inaudible.

INT. COOKIE AND GREGORY'S HOUSE - EVENING 57

Charlotte, Greg and Cookie are arguing in the living room.

COOKIE

You are NOT going training with your dad! You stay in your room and you finish your homework!

CHARLOTTE(O.S.)

You wanted him to be close to me - well he is and you don't like it!

COOKIE (O.S.)

It's not that.

CHARLOTTE

It IS! You hate that he cares about me.

GREG

Don't shout at your mother Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE

Leave me alone Geek!

COOKIE

You do not talk to Greg like that Charlotte Massi!
He's here for us 24/7.

CHARLOTTE

You never give Dad a break!

GREG

Why don't we all play a nice game of scrabble.

CHARLOTTE & COOKIE

SHUT UP GREG!

GREG

Calm down will you—

The argument continues.

INT. CLIFFORD'S HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY, 6 AM

Clifford is looking outside the window at the sun rising over London, a smile on his face. He is wearing his tight pair of shorts and his washed up college basketball shirt. Khaled is still sleeping.

CLIFFORD

This morning you either get better or you get older!

Khaled opens one eye and sees Clifford's shorts.

KHALED

What time is it?

CLIFFORD

(Breezy)

Six.

KHALED

Are you serious?

Clifford walks to the door.

CLIFFORD

While you stay here sleeping think about the other
contenders training hard to win this tournament.

Khaled turns to go back asleep but Clifford's words
are sinking in and make it impossible for him to do
so.

KHALED

Damn you man.

He turns and gets up, stiff from his night on the couch.

CLIFFORD

I'll wait for you downstairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Khaled and Clifford running alongside each other.

Clifford

I'll see you back at the hotel.

Clifford accelerates.

KHALED

I'm not getting beat by some crazy old man.

Khaled accelerates to catch up with him.

He catches up.

Clifford and Khaled then successively accelerate to try to edge each other out until they are both sprinting full speed.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL, CAMERON'S SUITE - DAY

Cameron Taylor has various supplements laid out in front of her on the table, plus her green drink.

She takes a handful of tablets, palms them into her mouth and then drinks the liquid. Clifford sits opposite her, watching incredulously. Cameron ignores him - takes her time drinking her potion.

CAMERON

Ok, well, uh-(glug) we've decided that the big shoot out between 'whoever-wins-in-Paris' and Kenji, should happen uh (glug) day after Paris. They finish at six am and boom, at 8 that night they battle again!

CLIFFORD

What?

CAMERON

It'll shake things up. Give the contender a real obstacle to overcome.

CLIFFORD

All due respect Ms Taylor, but are you (thinks hard - makes a choice) friggin' nuts? Whoever the winner is, they're gonna need recovery time from playing twelve hours of almost non stop... fuggin' basketball! You can't DO this!

Her stomach boils noisily again. She ignores it and continues.

CAMERON

Firstly, I don't appreciate that kind of language around me - and secondly - It was Kenji's idea, he said the real SOLDIERS would treat it as a badge of honour to show up ready for battle.

Clifford lets rip!

CLIFFORD

Well... he's a CHILD! He's SCARED! Of course he'd say something like that. Look, Cameron, You've got some sense - you're a calculator, that's what you are... you can't think this is a great idea.

CAMERON

I certainly do. We're doing it.

Clifford is shocked. He plays his ace.

CLIFFORD

If you do that - I will absolutely resign.

Cameron is ice cold.

CAMERON

Alright then. Take care, Mr James. You're on your own dime now.

Clifford just sits there - stunned. Cameron smiles, then holds her stomach and runs out fast.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Clifford's mobile phone rings.

Dave Romanoff's name is flashing and when Clifford picks up the phone, we hear Dave Romanoff screaming down the line.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

WAITRESS

Are you ready to order?

CLIFFORD

Yes. He'll have the whole menu and I'll have the meat balls, thank you.

The waitress smiles.

KHALED

I'll have the T-bone steak.

WAITRESS

Thank you.

KHALED

I waited for you at the court this afternoon.

CLIFFORD

I've been called back to the US. I'm leaving tomorrow.

Khaled is taken aback.

KHALED

That's great... You didn't have to invite me to the restaurant to tell me you were leaving.

CLIFFORD

Don't say that.

KHALED

Why would you stay with a British player whose own team thought he was worth no more than petrol money?

CLIFFORD

Listen. Sentinel moved the finals to the evening after the Paris tournament. Even if you played all night and won, you wouldn't stand a chance against Kenji.

Khaled stands up...

KHALED

(Dejected)

If there's one thing we're used to in England, it's to cope with adversity .. and he leaves without eating.

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL, KENJI'S SUITE - EVENING

Victoria and Kenji sip cognac. It's convivial - nothing overtly sexual, no bullshit. Kenji's relaxed. Victoria emanates cool.

VICTORIA

This is nice.

Beat.

KENJI

Yeah.

VICTORIA

I like you a lot, Kenji.

KENJI

Beat. I know.

VICTORIA

Um ...

And this is great - Kenji is (for the first time in his life) lost for words.

KENJI

I know. "But"... I ain't got no chance, right? You think I - that I hurt that woman... I didn't, but ... Well... that's alright. If that's who you think I am ? That's cool... that's alright..... I mean... I ain't gonna bite ya... I mean... It's cool... if you wanna leave... shit.

He gets up to escort her out.

VICTORIA

Kenji... I was... I was going to ask if you had a spare toothbrush?

And she leans in and kisses him. Long. Smouldering. Hot. Unrelenting.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Khaled wakes up and puts on his shorts, shirt and trainers.

Clifford hears him. He opens his eyes and looks at the clock: it's 5 am.

Khaled goes out.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Khaled is running on his own. He keeps looking ahead.
He keeps running, tired and numb.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM

Khaled comes back to the room. The clock reads
7.00am. Clifford has left, taking his bags with him.

On the table, Eurostar tickets, an envelop with the
rest of the per diems and a note which reads "Good
luck".

INT. CAB, HIGHWAY TO THE AIRPORT - DAY

Clifford looks out the window, disheartened.

INT. AIRPORT BAR - DAY

Clifford is drinking a glass of whisky, disheartened.

On television, the ads come up and inevitably... the
Kenji

Soldier shoe ad pops up. Clifford looks on.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Khaled is doing a shooting drill while Charlotte under the basket is running around as quickly as she can to catch the ball and pass it back to her dad.

Khaled shoots.

The ball rebounds off the rim.

CLIFFORD (O.S.)

Don't fuck with perfection!

Khaled turns around to see Clifford standing on the side of the court.

CHARLOTTE

We're not allowed to say that word. Khaled ignores Clifford and signals to Charlotte to pass him the ball.

CLIFFORD

What is this kindergarten?

KHALED

I need all the help I can get at the moment.

CLIFFORD

I came back to train you.

Khaled turns to Charlotte who passes him the ball.

KHALED

Until you have to leave again? I don't need that kind of help.

Khaled shoots.

Khaled signals for Charlotte to pass him the ball again and he shoots it again.

CLIFFORD

For God sake! There is not much time left before Paris!

(Getting angrier)

You'll need a miracle to win there training like that!

Khaled turns and passes the ball to Clifford very hard.

Clifford catches the ball and takes a step back.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

I ask only one thing from you.... You have to tune out everything else until the tournament.

Clifford looks at Charlotte. Khaled understands and looks at Charlotte who looks at him.

Charlotte keeps a straight face but is not sure what is going on and why both Khaled and Clifford are looking at her.

CUT TO:

**EXT. JUST OUTSIDE THE BASKETBALL COURT CLIFFORD'S
POV**

CHARLOTTE

(Screaming and crying)

Mum said it... your basketball will
always come first. You don't care
about me.

Charlotte runs away.

KHALED

(Running after her)

Charlotte! Stop!

CHARLOTTE

I hate you!

Clifford turns around and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. COOKIE AND GREGORY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Charlotte is looking down at her dad and her mum through her bedroom window.

COOKIE

Do you realise how much you hurt her when you say something like that?

KHALED

It's only for a short while, I promise. This is important to me man.

COOKIE

See what you're doing?

(beat)

And Mr Coltrane told me you got fired from the Leisure Centre. You'd better come up with the money for her trip Khaled or else!

Charlotte hears the conversation from the kitchen and starts to cry.

Greg is standing behind in the doorway now. His head sets on and he's glued to his iPad as usual.

GREG

You guys wanna bring it inside, Charlotte's crying?
(to headset) No- it's private. Barry will you be
quiet for a sec?

COOKIE

GREG! Please?

Greg looks contrite - listens to his headset.

GREG

(sotto) Shhhhhh.

COOKIE

(to Greg)

Khaled was just leaving.

She slams the door on Khaled.

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM WINDOW

Charlotte looks at her dad walk away.

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL KENJI'S SUITE - DAY

It's the best room in the Savoy. Beautifully
decorated with works of art complimenting the decor.

A king size bed takes centre stage; pristine white sheets, a mountain of pillows, and within, Kenji Burton and Victoria, are clearly coming to the end of some vigorous and lovely naughtiness.

VICTORIA

Whoo! Damn!

KENJI VICTORIA

That was ...

KENJI

I know.

He grins, grabs some bottled water from the bedside table. Chugalugs it.

A beat.

VICTORIA

That's a bit presumptuous.

KENJI

What, baby?

VICTORIA

Well, you don't know what I was going to say. I could have said, 'Terrible' 'Mediocre' 'Middling' 'Ok-ish' 'Like having root Canal surgery without anaesthetic'.

KENJI

I hope you wasn't gonna say any of that shit - I'd have to throw yo' ass out.

VICTORIA

Joke Kenneth....

KENJI

Kenji. I like Kenji.

VICTORIA

Why? Sounds like a Japanese sex doll.

KENJI

Kenji is what my friends call me. Kenneth is what they called me at school, at the police station. In court.

Victoria laughs.

VICTORIA

Yes - you've spent a lot of time in the courthouse over there haven't you?

KENJI

I got my own parking spot down there!

Victoria doesn't crack a smile - just looks at him carefully.

KENJI (CONT'D)

What?

VICTORIA

You never talk about it, do you?

KENJI

What?

VICTORIA

The case. You hate talking about it.

KENJI

I don't hate it. I'm just tryin' to forget it... I ain't never had to take no pussy, not at school, not at college, never.

VICTORIA

That's horrible.

KENJI

Sorry. It's how the guys...

VICTORIA

Well, I'd rather you didn't say things like that. If that's alright with you.

He nods. Cool. He likes her... wants to talk. They snuggle up under the covers.

KENJI

Some ballers are like that tho', man, they all, (like a rapper) 'The money, the weed, the ho's !' ... I ain't never paid for the thang .. ain't never had to take the thang... never needed to.

VICTORIA

But Renate Munroe said you did take the 'thang'.

KENJI

Look, I settled, alright. End of story.

VICTORIA

You could have pursued it further through the courts - protected your good name.

Kenji sighs - as if he's exhausted with the whole thing. BEAT.

KENJI

'Good name'- shit... (beat)
Look, me and Pookie ...

VICTORIA

What's it got to do with Pookie?

KENJI

We go back, you know? Me and him ... any chick I don't want, he...

He can't even say it, he knows how it sounds.

VICTORIA

What?

Kenji relives the whole thing.

KENJI

I was tired - Pookie took over - sweet talked her into his room. Next thing? BAM! There's all kindsa ruckus! She runnin' to the door, naked. Blood and scratches all over her face. Pookie's tryna chill her out, but she just grab her shit and was gone. Next thing I know, I'm a rapist.

VICTORIA

Why'd she accuse you and not Pookie?

KENJI

Hey, I love Pook, but he ain't no motherfuckin' superstar NBA baller, a'ight? She followed the dollar and then hollered.

And Kenji almost breaks down with relief. He's happy to have told someone. She gives him a strange look.

VICTORIA

I'm gonna get a shower and then you need to get ready for Paris, yeah?

Kenji nods - she leaves him be. Turns and goes to the bathroom.

EXT. PARK - DAWN

Khaled running up and down a hill. Struggling. We go into a montage in which we see Khaled progressing.

CUT TO.

Clifford is facing Khaled. He handchecks him while he does a dribbling drill.

CLIFFORD

Quicker! Quicker! QUICKER!

CUT TO.

Khaled doing a shooting drill.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Hard dribble to the basket, spin and dunk.

Khaled does a hard dribble to the basket, spins and dunks.

CUT TO.

Khaled doing pull ups.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Another ten.

KHALED

I can't anymore.

CLIFFORD

Get back on that bar!

Khaled grabs the bar and starts doing pull ups again.

INT. CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT KITCHEN - DAY 75

Win is sitting down talking to the chef.

WIN

I never asked him to help ever. He could have offered to help. He saw things were difficult. But he never offered.

FARRINGDON

What could he have done?

WIN

Anything. He could have just been there to help.

FARRINGDON

Mama, come on. He is not a restaurant manager, he is not a cook. What would he have done? I've never seen you ask for help from anyone...

WIN

A son should know when his mother needs him.

FARRINGDON

(Comforting)

Mama. Stop being so hard on yourself. You did everything right with Khaled.

MUM

You think so?

Farringdon nods.

MUM (CONT'D)

(Calmer)

You should have seen how happy he was on that court when he was little. After his father left, it's the only place he would come alive ...

MONTAGE

EXT. PARK - DAY 76

Khaled running up and down a hill. Faster now.

CUT TO:

Khaled jumping and rebounding the ball against the backboard. A rope is tied across his waist and Clifford behind him is pulling him back each time he goes up to rebound.

CUT TO.

Khaled, shirt off, is using his urban environment to "thug train".

CUT TO.

Khaled is running up a block tower stairs, London unfolding behind him. He finishes by running up two stairs at a time.

CUT TO.

Khaled doing pull ups and remaining locked once he pulls up. He then moves from left to right flexing his arms and demonstrating amazing upper body strength and determination.

CUT TO.

Khaled doing a shooting drill, fast, hitting shot after shot.

CUT TO.

Khaled running suicides, determined and fast.

CUT TO.

Clifford opposing resistance to Khaled while he dribbles forward as fast as he can. Pushing him harder.

CLIFFORD

Fourth quarter! Come on!

Khaled pushes forward so hard he nearly knocks Clifford to the ground.

EXT. HACKNEY CANAL TOWPATH - DAY 77

The water's up, fumes rising. Old supermarket trolleys float past, along with and odd shoes. Bin bags and dog shit line the path; It's pretty grim.

Charlotte pedals furiously and arrives at her vantage point, a broken lamppost at a bend in the canal.

Yout' arrives - gives her the rucksack.

YOUT'

A'ight?

CHARLOTTE

A'ight?

Charlotte laughs and then goes to unzip the rucksack.
Yout slaps her hand away.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Yow!

YOUT'

You don't business with what's inside, get me? Just
deliver the package on time, same time, every day.

CHARLOTTE

What if I get held up?

YOUT'

You don't let nothin' or nobody 'Hold you up'...
you know all the short cuts round here, use em. 'Kay?

CHARLOTTE

'Kay.

YOUT'

Yeah. You better jet, yeah?

Charlotte salutes and takes off.

EXT. D'ANGELO'S STREET - DAY 78

A middle class neighbourhood, all within throwing distance of De Beauvoir estate... but there are some reasonably nice houses here.

Charlotte zooms down the pavement - the rucksack on her back, a bag of papers slung over shoulder. She screeches to a halt outside D'Angelo's house where the front lawn is infested with Garden gnomes. She drops the bike and walks up the path - but SUDDENLY.

BAM!

The Ginger Kid in the V.W mounts the pavement at speed and KNOCKS her down!

Charlotte goes flying and lands HARD. She lies still, unmoving. The bent bike wheel spins.

A Ginger kid gets out of the V.W. and scuttles over to where Charlotte landed; he yanks the rucksack off her and unzips it only to have a flask and a Tupperware container fall out and hit the ground.

Ginger kid's puzzled. He reaches inside the rucksack again, and finds... more Tupperware... a spork??

He kneels - searches the rucksack again - nothing.
He gets up and kicks Charlotte hard in the ribs. She
doesn't move.

GINGER SKINNY KID

Where's the fuckin' gear??

But then - WHAM!

A big plain clothes guy BODY SLAMS the teenager hard
- the kid goes DOWN.

The other plain clothes guy runs up, and drops the
cuffs on him.

PLAIN CLOTHES GUY

Fuckin' traffic! Get this twat in the car. Call an
ambulance.

Skinny Ginger is led away, as the plain clothes guy
kneels down, feels for Charlotte's pulse, takes his
jacket off and covers her gently.

PLAIN CLOTHES GUY (CONT'D) DID YOU CALL THAT FUCKIN'
AMBULANCE YET? THIS GIRL'S BADLY HURT!

We hear the squawk of a radio and a muffled voice.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Khaled's phone ringing.

Khaled running up and down a hill. As fast as he can.

CLIFFORD

Come on CHAMP!

The phone keeps ringing in Khaled's pocket.

Khaled doesn't answer it.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Just answer the damn thing so we can move on.

Khaled picks it up.

KHALED

What? I'm on my way.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Greg stands outside Charlottes' room talking to one of the plain clothes cops.

Khaled and Clifford run in - Greg turns and gives Khaled such a grave look that it stops Khal in his tracks.

Khaled attempts to enter Charlotte's room, but the plain clothes cop flashes a badge and stops him.

GREG

He's her father, let him through!

Greg nods and the cop allows Khaled to go in.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY

Khaled enters to find Cookie sitting by the bed. He sees that Charlotte is in a deep sleep, all bandages and bruises with her leg in a plaster cast.

Cookie looks up at him - she speaks very quietly.

COOKIE

She was... running errands... for d'Angelo.
Dropping off packages.

This pulls Khaled up short - he is astounded.

KHALED

Why?

COOKIE

She's lucky it was his packed lunch empties -
otherwise she'd be looking at some juvie time.

Khaled can't believe it.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

She could have been moving coke or speed or money... she was doing it to help you pay for the ski trip.

KHALED

Oh my God.

A beat.

Cookie's rage now is all over her face. She gets up.

COOKIE

You better pray my little girl's alright, cos if she doesn't recover from this...

She leaves.

Through the door: Greg and Clifford looking through as Cookie leaves. Greg comforts her - she weeps; Clifford looks very concerned and then the door closes.

Khaled sits down, strokes Charlotte's arm and talks to her while she's unconscious.

KHALED

Charlotte, I am so sorry... I told you not to have anything to do with D'Angelo... but I didn't set a very good example did I?... I should have kept you away from him, but I didn't. I wasn't watching out for you. I didn't have my eye on the ball. And when

you don't keep your eye on the ball - this is what happens - everything goes wrong. This is all my fault... I am so sorry.

Khaled's eyes fill with tears.

He clenches his fist, gets up and storms out.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Clifford catches up with Khaled outside the hospital.

CLIFFORD

Don't do anything stupid now. If you injure yourself you won't be able to play in the tournament.

KHALED

There's no more basketball now, there's no more basketball ever!

CLIFFORD

Khaled...

KHALED

Look what's happened! This is my fault. Nothing is more important than my daughter. Nothing.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

HERE KHALED NEEDS TO DEAL WITH D'ANGELO.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT – EVENING

Football players are back playing four aside football on the empty court.

INT. CLIFFORD'S HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Clifford is drinking again lying in bed waiting up for Khaled.

Khaled comes back. Clifford tries to stand up and comes towards him. He is drunk.

CLIFFORD

Are you alright?

Khaled goes to lie on the couch without saying a word.

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL – NIGHT

Charlotte is fast asleep, tubes coming out of her mouth and arms.

Cookie is next to her, looking at her daughter.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Cookie is sitting next to Charlotte who is sleeping. Khaled enters the room and stands next to them.

COOKIE

All this for eight hundred pounds... I... We shouldn't have...Khaled puts his hand on Cookie's shoulder to comfort her.

There is silence... which is suddenly broken by.

CHARLOTTE

Daddy... what's going on?

Khaled looks up and sees Charlotte's eyes have opened.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE ROOM, HOSPITAL - DAY

Charlotte sits up in bed - she's eating from a tray of hospital food. It's pretty disgusting. Khaled, Cookie and Greg watch her every move.

Clifford enters the room unshaved and red-eyed.

KHALED.

You better watch out, if she doesn't like her food she throws it across the room you know.

Greg smiles, Cookie remembers... it's not such a good memory for her.

CHARLOTTE

I don't do that any more thank you.

She finishes her drink.

GREG

Come on, let's play Scrabble!! I'll grab the board from the car.

Cookie and Charlotte moan. Greg exits the room.

CHARLOTTE

Daddy?

KHALED

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

Please bring the finals back to London so I can come to see you play.

KHALED

I'm not sure I will be able to my love.

Charlotte squeezes his hand.

CHARLOTTE

Why?

KHALED

The tournament is today, in Paris.

Her tray goes flying! Khaled taken aback - starts picking things up.

CHARLOTTE

But daddy you promised!

Charlotte looks him in the eyes.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Please. You have to do it for me...

KHALED

But I'm not sure I still have time to get there.

Khaled turns to Clifford. Clifford looks at his watch.

CLIFFORD

The train leaves in forty five minutes.

Khaled and Cookie look at each other... this wasn't the plan...

COOKIE

Do it for her.

Khaled gets up and kisses Charlotte.

KHALED

I'll do everything I can.

He rushes out of the room with Clifford.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Khaled and Clifford are running to catch a cab.

They pass Greg who is walking towards the hospital with a game of scrabble.

INT. CAB - DAY

CLIFFORD

(To the driver)

We have thirty five minutes before our train leaves.

And the driver speeds up, cursing through London.

CUT TO.

The cab is stuck in traffic.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Let's get off here.

There's £20 on the meter.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Do you have £10?

KHALED

Yes, but you'll have to give them back to me.

CLIFFORD

Sure.

Clifford pays the driver.

EXT. STREET - KING'S CROSS

Khaled and Clifford running towards King's Cross
Saint Pancras.

Khaled is running like his life depends on it. He is
way ahead of Clifford now.

INT. KING'S CROSS STATION

Clifford catches up with Khaled who is negotiating with the Steward to be able to get through to the trains.

KHALED

Here he is. Please.

STEWARD

Come with me. But hurry the train is leaving in ten minutes.

INT. EUROSTAR TRAIN - DAY.

Khaled is facing Clifford.

KHALED

I found you a bit slow on the home straight

CLIFFORD

(Still out of breath)

Stop talking and keep your strength for tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. KENJI'S PRIVATE JET - MID AFTERNOON

Kenji and Victoria, Pookie, Cameron and Dave Romanoff sit in their various positions on the

luxury Jet. Kenji is pensive. Victoria squeezes his hand.

VICTORIA

Alright?

Kenji sighs, glances at Pookie who also sighs, rather theatrically....

KENJI

Sure. We just gonna watch some shitty European ball is all ... s'like surgery but without the general anaesthetic.

POOKIE

S'like Lauryn Hill without the Fugees.

KENJI

It's like hoe cake without no bacon grease let me tell you somethin'

POOKIE /KENJI

They just can't ball like we do.

VICTORIA

You might be surprised.

Kenji and Pookie look at her askance.

KENJI/POOKIE

Bitch, please!

They crack up.

Cameron exchanges a look with Victoria - Jesus Christ. Romanoff looks sheepish.

ROMANOFF

Come on, guys, there are ladies here?

Beat.

KENJI

(To the ladies)

Sorry ya'all. Uh, Dave? Could you get me some coffee here? Pookie, would you like some coffee?

POOKIE

I'd LOVE some coffee!

KENJI

Cameron? Victoria?

Cameron and Victoria shake their heads. Romanoff is terribly embarrassed.

KENJI (CONT'D)

That's just two coffees then. Dave ... Now!

Romanoff hesitates and then gets up to see about the coffees. Pookie and Kenji exchange a look.

The jet taxis along and takes its spot for take off.

CUT TO:

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS OF PARIS – LUNCHTIME

Khal and Clifford are in a van being shuttled around Paris, having a whirlwind tour of the big city. Khal's taking pictures on his phone.

STILLS OF:

ARC DE TRIOMPH THE EIFFEL TOWER MONT MARTRE NOTRE DAME.

Clifford takes pictures on his phone too.

STILLS OF:

Pizza Express Mcdonalds Subway Starbucks

CUT TO:

EXT. THE TOURNAMENT VENUE, PARIS – DAY

Queues are thinning out as FANS take their seats. Excitement everywhere; the clock reads 5.40pm – not long to go now.

INT. THE TOURNAMENT VENUE, PARIS, LOCKER ROOMS – DAY

In the centre of the venue stands a metallic cage.

The court is at the centre of the cage.

Players are wearing complementary Sentinel gear and Soldier shoes.

While Khaled has not slept much in the last 24 hours, all the other players are looking fresh, laughing and talking.

Khal focuses, tunes everything else out. He tapes his ankle up, put his socks on, get his basketball boots on ... the ritual.

INT. TOURNAMENT ARENA – EVENING

The CLOCK strikes 6.

Suddenly a massive FANFARE blares out - the CROWD go nuts. Burton enters the arena to huge cheers.

Cameron Taylor follows, ascends a little platform which has been erected CENTRE COURT. Kenji stands next to her at the microphones. Pookie is nearby, yelling and hyping up the crowd... Cameron speaks in flawless French, which for our purpose is subtitled.

CAMERON (SUBTITLED)

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, it is my honour to present this extraordinary Sentinel Sports Promotion, here in the most beautiful arena

I've EVER seen... But now... the man you've all been waiting for!

Kenji, waiting at the base of the podium, nods (it's captured on the screen) Pookie laughs.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Give it UP... fooor... KENJI !

FANTASTIC HIP HOP PLAYS.

Kenji runs up the steps and takes the mic - He has an enormous AIR HORN in his hands. He BLASTS it!.

KENJI

SHALL WE PLAY SOME BASKETBALL PARIS FRANCE?

The crowd CHEER!

KENJI (CONT'D)

LETS GET READY TO RUMMMMMMBLLLLLEEEE!

He BLASTS the air horn again. The crowd CHEER, the podium is moved swiftly away from Centre court and out. The clock strikes 6 and the games begin.

SPEAKER

First to fifteen, ten minute game, twelve second shot clock!

Khal watches his fellow COMPETITORS preparing for battle.

One on One basketball - fast and furious playing on both ends of the court, slick and wicked, exiting and energetic, executed with maximum force!

And we keep our eye on the CLOCK because time is going to pass very quickly here. The point being that Khal is on court virtually non stop - time will slow, time will speed impossibly fast:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

Quick cuts of : CLOCK - 6.45PM

Khal VS A GREEK PLAYER (teens) who muscles his way to the basket, knocking Khal down.

On the side holding on to the cage, Clifford is agitated!

CLIFFORD

(Banging on the cage)

He passed you twice on the right! Force him to go left! Take his strength away!

CUT TO:

As the Greek player tries to drive to the right again, Khaled puts his left leg forward to force him to the left.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

That's it! Now contest that shot! Contest that shot!

Sweat pouring from a BALLER'S head.

CLOCK - 7.30PM

A REF is booed by a section of the crowd.

Cameron Taylor, Dave Romanoff, Kenji and Victoria and crew watch the games on a 50 inch plasma in their CORPORATE BOX.

CLOCK - 7.45PM

Two WHITE PLAYERS (teens), fighting - the referee blows the whistle this game's done. They are escorted from the court.

Clifford manipulates Khaled's knee back into place -
POP!

CLOCK - 9.30PM

Khal vs a Lithuanian power forward. Khal misses his shot. The ball rebounds off the rim.

C.U on the players' feet as they both come back to the ground in slow motion.

Khaled imperceptibly decelerates as he comes down and bounces back a fraction of a second quicker than his opponent. He grabs the rebound and scores for the win.

Khal limps off court, exhausted. Clifford makes him plug water, lays him down, stretches out his hamstrings. The whistle blows. Khal has to return to the court.

Some CHEEKY GIRLS showing their bosoms to the Camera.

CLOCK - 10.25PM

Khaled watches the French contender destroy his opponent. IN THE CORPORATE AREA

Cameron and Romanoff watch the game, Pookie drinks coke zero from the bottle, Kenji and Victoria kiss.

CLOCK - 1.AM

A Spaniard (20's) battles it out with a lanky Scot. The Scot triumphs and does a mini highland fling to celebrate!

Clifford imitates him. Khal laughs.

CLOCK - 3.AM

Kenji, Victoria, Pookie and crew leave in the midst of a game. The crowd boo him. Kenji turns and grabs his crotch. Lovely.

Clifford makes Khaled eat a banana, The whistle blows. Khal runs onto the court - Clifford eats a banana too. Then another one.

SPEEDED UP FRENCH HIP HOP

PLAY BEGINS - SUPERFAST - A BLUR - KHAL TRIUMPHS.

TIME CUT

CLOCK - 4.30AM

Khaled faces the Italian contender.

The Italian player is faster. He shoots.

CUT TO:

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Arms up! Box him out!

Khaled boxes the Italian player out. The ball rebounds off the rim and Khaled catches the rebound.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

(Clenching his fist)

Yes!

CUT TO:

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Hustle! Hustle! ... Well played Khaled!

CUT TO:

The score board indicates 14 - 12 to Khaled. Both players are breathing heavily.

ITALIAN PLAYER

Why don't you let me win this? I need this to get noticed man. I need to do this for my girlfriend.

KHALED

What age are you?

ITALIAN PLAYER

Twenty two.

The Italian player checks the ball.

KHALED

Then wait your turn!

SLOW MOTION - Khaled dribbles hard to the basket, spins, sending the Italian player the wrong way and gathers all the strength he has left to jump and land a powerful jam.

He wins his semi final!

INT. CAGE - SEMI FINALS 98

CLOCK: 5.00 AM

Khaled looks at the French contender encouraged by the local fans destroy his opponent.

C.U. Khaled writing on the side of the Soldier shoe 'CHARLOTTE', partly covering the Sentinel logo.

CUT TO.

CLOCK: 5.30 AM

CLIFFORD

This is it. It's your time. You can do this. Stay focused. (Screaming, as Khaled gets in the cage for the last time) This is your time!

Both Khaled and the French player stare each other down before the game starts.

CLOCK - 5.50 AM

Last men standing - The French is strong, tall and fit.

Scores are neck and neck. The players exhausted hang onto each others shorts, commit more fouls.

CUT TO:

The game is tied at 14.

COMMENTATOR

Twelve seconds on the clock. If it's a tie we go to overtime!

(beat)

It's all about heart now! It's the last minute that counts!

SLOW MOTION ...

The French drives to the basket, takes a step back ... Khaled tired tries to contest the shot ... But he's too far away and the French gets his shot off ... The shot heads towards the rim...

And misses!

Then with a burst of last ditch energy Khaled grabs the rebound, runs back out of the key to shoot a three pointer, and scores.

The whole crowd goes crazy-ape-batshit! The clock strikes 6 AM.

GAME OVER!

CLIFFORD YELLING HIMSELF HOARSE ... KHALED WON! HE WON! HE WON!

The taste of victory: it hasn't tasted this sweet since his college days!

Khaled, exhausted, sweaty, hobbling a little, is led up the podium. The exhausted crowd cheer themselves silly.

He is handed a trophy by Cameron Taylor. The PRESS crew snap away.

CAMERON TAYLOR (SUBTITLED)

The winner of this year's 'Ball til you fall' is, from Hackney in London, his name is Khaled Massi! So The Battle Royale: The Sentinel Soldier tournament final with Kenji Burton vs Khaled Massi will happen in Hackney, east London - TONIGHT. Congratulations!!!

Huge respect from the crowd! Cameron shakes Khal's hand. Clifford grins HUGELY. Khal is genuinely happy.

EXT. TOURNAMENT VENUE

Khaled is limping out of the arena, Clifford walking next to him carrying the bags and the trophy.

The sun is rising over Paris.

Khaled calls Charlotte, Cookie and Greg to let them know.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAWN. 100

Cookie and Greg are up, watching over Charlotte.

Charlotte wakes up when she hears the phone.

Cookie picks up and puts the phone on loudspeaker.

COOKIE

Yes?

EXT. TOURNAMENT VENUE - DAWN. 101

KHALED

We're taking it home tonight!

CHARLOTTE, COOKIE AND GREG (O.S.)

Loud screams of excitement and joy!

EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Khaled and Clifford are standing outside the hospital.

KHALED

Do you have the ten pounds I lent you?

CLIFFORD

I'll give them back to you, don't worry.

KHALED

I need them now!

CLIFFORD

(Taken aback)

Alright. Alright

Clifford hands Khaled a ten pound note.... which he puts into his per diem envelop. The envelop is full of ten and twenty pound bills.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Don't tell me these are your per diems?!

Khaled looks at him in a way we understand means yes.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

What have you been living on these past weeks?

KHALED

Breakfast?

CLIFFORD

Geezus!

INT. THE SAVOY HOTEL RECEPTION, LONDON - DAY

The Savoy reception is one of the most quietly venerated places in the world. Until now that is.

A PORTER (TEENS) pulls a luggage trolley piled high with Louis Vuitton luggage.

Victoria Hempel follows at a clip, as fast as her Jimmy Choos can take her.

Kenji lopes behind, panicking, yelling.

KENJI

Say it again.

VICTORIA

I work for Vanity Fair. I'm on the Renate Munroe story. There's going to be a Civil Case

Kenji doesn't even hear that-

KENJI

You're a fuckin' reporter?

Victoria arrives at reception, hands in her key, waits while they find her details.

The CONCIERGE and SECURITY GUY hover, all very discreet. Kenji's an important guest after all.

VICTORIA

It's good Kenji, you'll see.

She is completely cool, signs her bill, dons her shades. Heads for the big, impressive doors.

KENJI

How is you being a reporter for Vanity Fair fuckin' GOOD? You're writing a story on me?

She exits through the revolving doors. Kenji follows.

EXT. THE SAVOY HOTEL - DAY

Taxis queue, green clad SAVOY STAFF scurry back and forth with luggage and the TRAFFIC on the Strand shooms past at regular intervals.

Victoria gets into her limo, the CONCIERGE loads her luggage. She winds the window down.

VICTORIA

I didn't believe you hurt Renate Munroe..

KENJI

But .

VICTORIA

Tell Pookie to lawyer up.

The car pulls away. Leaving a sockless Kenji B.
Frustrated, furious and frenzied on the pavement.

KENJI

FUCK!

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR – DAY

Khaled and Cookie help Charlotte out of hospital in
a wheelchair.

DOCTOR

She's recovering well.

(To Charlotte)

You're a real little fighter.

COOKIE

(Smiling at Khaled)

Like her dad.

EXT. FRONT OF HOSPITAL BUILDING.

Khaled gives Cookie the envelop with the per diems.

KHALED

There's eight hundred pounds for Charlotte's ski
trip.

COOKIE

Thank you so much for coming through. It means a lot to Charlotte.

Charlotte puts his arms up and embraces her dad.

KHALED

I also brought back my winning shirt for Charlotte to wear at the finals tonight.

Khaled gives Cookie a plastic bag with his shirt still dirty from Paris.

CHARLOTTE

Oh My days!

COOKIE

Whoa! You're starting to give me your dirty basketball gear to wash again?

KHALED

(Embarrassed)

No... I just...

COOKIE

(Laughing)

I'm playing with you.

KHALED

(Playing along)

Don't forget to wash it by hand. You know the washing machine leaves fluff on the shirt.

Cookie punches him playfully.

COOKIE

You!

Greg arrives with the car.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM

The press conference is medium sized.

Kenji and Khaled are sitting at a table facing the journalists

On Kenji's side we see Dave and Sentinel executives standing. No one is standing next to Khaled.

JOURNALIST

(To Kenji)

It's the first time tomorrow night we'll see you on the court in four months. Are you looking forward to playing again?

KENJI

(Not interested)

Yeah.

CAMERON

We've had a great Soldier tour. Kenji's European fans have been fantastic, turning up in their thousands to meet with him. It has made Kenji realise he needs to use his status more to help others.

Clifford sitting not far gets up. He has had enough of the P.R. bullshit and comes on stage.

Fear and panic pass on the Kenji camp and Dave Romanoff's face.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Who let him in?

But in front of all the journalists and cameras it's now hard to drag Clifford away without causing a stir.

CLIFFORD

The real issue is what will happen tonight when the "comeback kid" here (he points to Khaled) takes on the reigning MVP.

YOUNG JOURNALIST

I'm sorry. Who are you?

CLIFFORD

Hi I'm Clifford James, former NCAA All American. And I predict an upset tomorrow night. I think Kenji Burton might well be stripped of his MVP title tomorrow by this man.

JOURNALIST

Kenji, what do you have to say to that?

KENJI

I'm the king... I've got nothing to say or prove.

CLIFFORD

(To the journalist as if Kenji wasn't there)
He's not worried about anyone. And that's confidence. I like that... But his name's on the block. People are talking you know. Kenji... King K ... The king is about to be turned into a prince....

KENJI

No one's talking. I'll crush this wannabe tonight.

CLIFFORD

... the prince is about to be turned into a pauper!

KENJI

(Getting increasingly irritated)

Pauper yourself! I'll bury you old man.

CLIFFORD

(Calm, to the journalists)

Remember. Tonight, reputations mean nothing.

JOURNALIST

Kenji are you worried?

KENJI

(Angry and pointing at Khaled now)

Worried about him! You should have stuck to swimming or badminton you bum!

CLIFFORD

(Calm, to the journalists)

That's panic talk...

Kenji is now being dragged away by his people, screaming, wanting a piece of Khaled right now and there.

KENJI

(To Clifford and Khaled)

It's personal now! You hear me? It's personal!
Journalists are furiously taking notes and running
back to their news teams.

Clifford smiles.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

KENJI

(To Pookie)

Find me a court to train. I'm going to smoke that
motherfucker.

CAMERON

(To Dave Romanoff)

You'd better make this stop Dave or Sentinel will
never work with your agency ever again.

DAVE ROMANOFF

I'm going to make it stop now.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM

Dave Romanoff catches up with Clifford.

DAVE ROMANOFF

Clifford!

CLIFFORD

Dave! Welcome to England!

NICK

What do you think you're doing?

CLIFFORD

(All smiles)

Every newspaper and television channel will now tune in to see how Kenji Burton handles his anger management issues...

NICK

You're hurting our relationship with Sentinel!

CLIFFORD

I found this one kid, Dave. And it's the first thing I feel good about doing in years... I'm taking him all the way tonight... Clifford walks away.

NICK

(Screaming)

You're no one Clifford! You'll never work in this industry again!

Clifford turns around.

CLIFFORD

Hey Dave! What's this?

Clifford mimics one of Magic Johnson's no look passes, showing him the finger at the end of the pass.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

A no look FUCK YOU!

MONTAGE

INT. LIVING ROOM, FOREIGN COUNTRY

We see images of Kenji being dragged away on television.

TELEVISION

It's personal now! You hear me?

JOURNALIST (V.O.)

More trouble for Kenji Burton as he lost his cool today and turned on a fan in a press conference ahead of his game tonight.

INT. OFFICE, US

An man looking at a Youtube clip of Kenji losing control. The video has already gathered 6 million views.

INT. TEENAGER BEDROOM, UK

We see a computer screen with www.mvp247.com up on screen.

HEADLINE

Come and support the comeback kid vs. The All Star tonight! Buses will leave from Birmingham Manchester and Liverpool to come to London.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON

We see Kenji training.

Under the basket there is a machine - THE GUN - that spits balls at him. He shoots at least 100 jump shots a minute and sinks them all in.

POOKIE

Milk and honey baby.

EXT. THE PURPOSE BUILT ARENA, HACKNEY - DAY 114

Khaled and Clifford pass the court as it is being set up for the finals.

KHALED

Do you think anyone will come?

CLIFFORD

Stay focused.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. THE PURPOSE BUILT ARENA, HACKNEY - DAY

A domed affair with the Sentinel Logo displayed everywhere. Like Cirque Du Soleil's performance tent, but for 3000 fans tops. There are food stands being erected, merchandise being cooked and packaged, and a MASSIVE queue at the entrance.

This is gonna be huge.

The CROWD surge into the arena, hundreds of them. Silas is here, as are all of Guildford Heat.

INT. BACKSTAGE, KENJI'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Which is, of course, huge, beautifully appointed, with its own physio table, three piece suite, day-bed, flowers everywhere, and a mini gym. Kenji is on the physio bed being massaged by a MASSEUR DUDE (BLACK 50's). POOKIE watches a video of Khaled at the cage tournament in Paris. There's a shot of Khal limping.

POOKIE

Yo, Kenji - your boy be limpin' like Long John Silver up in this bitch - on the left. Ya'all need to cancel that shit out... he can ball tho'

Kenji lies there being pummelled. Thoughtful. He signals to the physio to stop and leave - he does, and now it's just Pookie and Kenji... Kenji sits up, looks at his old friend...

KENJI

Yo, Pookie. We need to talk, man.

Pookie turns the DVD off.

POOKIE

'Bout what?

INT. BACKSTAGE, KHALED'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

He's got a table and a day - bed and a portaloo, but it's all much... smaller. Khal lies on the day bed, holding the pink beanie teddy in his hand.

He's physically and emotionally exhausted. Clifford starts to rub Khaled's legs with massage oil.

CLIFFORD.

Ok so you've had no sleep, you're physically and emotionally exhausted. But let's look at the positive side...

Khal lies there waiting.

Clifford can't think of anything. He just starts rubbing vigorously.

Khal closes his eyes.

INT. PUNDIT'S INTERVIEW - NIGHT.

Big J and Dreadie are being interviewed by local radio. The other guys are there too. Dread holds court.

DREADIE

'What will Khaled Mathi be thinking at thith prethithe moment?' I thould think he'd be uthing the lavatorieth ... that'th what I'd be doing ... I'd be on the lavatory.

PRESENTER

Why are you all here? He used to ball for Guildford Heat, but not any more.

BIG J

We're here to show our support. Khaled's family to us, yeah?

The HEAT cheer.

INT. BACKSTAGE, KENJI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Kenji sits, oiled to perfection, hair cane rowed. Muscles rippling. Outfit fresh out the box.

One-of-kind, personally monogrammed Sentinel Soldiers on his feet. Pookie stands by, looking as if he's just taken a direct hit from a stray missile.

Romanoff and Cameron enter the locker room.

Panicked, Pookie looks at Kenji - who shakes his head... 'Say nothing'.

CAMERON

Good luck, Kenji.

Romanoff gets into Kenji's personal space, 'We're all jock's here, right?'

ROMANOFF

Outstanding crowd tonight - twitter's goin' berserk, the news feeds say 'it's the event of the year'...

and if any more Brit celebrities pester me for tickets I'm gonna barf right here...

Cameron turns sharply - Romanoff's fake bonhomie drops off him in chunks. Cameron takes the lead.

CAMERON

This is going to be a great game. We all know you're gonna win - but give the crowd a show, ok? Enjoy.

They leave. Kenji gets up and starts pacing the room. He flexes his foot.

KENJI

You sure these are the right size- motherfucker's pinch...

He leaves the room.

Pookie left with his own thoughts, and looks thunderstruck.

INT. BACKSTAGE, KHALED'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Khaled is in the shower, trying to wash some of the fatigue out of his bones. Suddenly there's an indistinct shape in the marbled glass. A familiar voice speaks.

KENJI

So personal hygiene play a big part in your pre game warm up?

Khal turns the shower off... Kenji hands him a towel.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Me? Personally? I like to stank like a motherfucker when I get out there - helps my focus. Scares the shit outta my opponents. Got that musk and shit.

Khal ignores him.

KENJI (CONT'D)

Don't be ignoring me son, you should make the most of this. You should be asking my advice -you know - "Mr Burton you being a NBA All Star and all- do I even stand a chance against your ass?" Well, no son, but... just try your best... because even though you got absolutely no chance - you Brits love a tryer don'tcha? Don't win nothin' - Not the world cup, not the olympics, not the golf -

Clifford's there - he's heard some of this... He paces right across the room now, nose to nose with Kenji

CLIFFORD

Out. Now.

KENJI

Tell your boy, Ima crush him.

He does a little dance involving a slam dunk action as he leaves. Clifford turns to find Khaled sitting there still wrapped in his towel. Spooked. He looks like he's lost the game already. Clifford realises he's got to do something. Something drastic. He makes a decision.

CLIFFORD

Get dressed. I'll be right back.

Clifford leaves. Khaled just sits there freaked. Nervous.

INT. PUNDIT/NEWS CREW AREA - NIGHT

A SPORTS CABLE PUNDIT'S got Coach Reynolds on camera pontificating about Khaled.

COACH REYNOLDS

Khaled's living proof that we've got ballers in the UK with great talent.

PUNDIT

But you guys let him go, what was the thinking behind that?

Reynolds laughs this off - for ten seconds longer than normal- he stops abruptly ..

COACH REYNOLDS

We love Khal at Guildford, he's a one off - he's got a lot of spirit, a lot of heart. I wish him luck tonight. Go get him Khal!

PUNDIT

Thank -

COACH REYNOLDS

(Takes the mic back)

If there are any sponsors out there tonight, we would like to ask them to get in contact with us.

INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mama sits at the counter with the tills' cash float in notes and change in front of her. Farrington scurries back and forth in the Kitchen. It's pre tea time, so it's quiet.

Suddenly, Clifford BURSTS in through the front door, on a mission from God! Farrington listens at the hatch. Win is enraged at this invasion.

CLIFFORD

Mrs Massi, I need to talk to you, we don't have much time.

WIN

Take you backside outta a my place! I tell Khaled 'Basketball or Me?' - him mek him choice. Farrington, you make the cornmeal porridge?

CHEF

You deal with out deh so and me will deal with back yah so.

WIN

You cheeky raas, you.

The Chef laughs and continues working and listening.

CLIFFORD

Mrs Massi, I want you to come down to that arena tonight. I want you to come and watch your son and be there for him. He's played his heart out all night long. He needs a boost!

Win looks as though she might crumble -but she turns - maintains her steel.

WIN

I have work fe do.

She turns her back on him, starts counting out change. Clifford grabs her wrist.

CLIFFORD

Mrs-

Win turns, reaches for a nearby machete, grabs it.

WIN

Unless you wan' them call you 'Stumpy', you better let go my raas hand! You tell Khaled--

Clifford interrupts.

CLIFFORD

Win, listen to me! Kenji Burton's been massaged and oiled, pampered and trained to perfection. He's so rich they send a separate limo for his Ego! Khaled Massi just wants his mama courtside... it's my job to get her there!

WIN

I don't know...

STIRRING, PATRIOTIC MUSIC rises during-

CLIFFORD

Khaled didn't ask me to come here Mrs Massi. I'm here because within the brief time I've known Khaled it has become very clear to me that he loves and respects and needs you very much.

(flirting)

And why not - there's a lot to love... Win. Khaled isn't just representing himself tonight. Khal's representing Hackney.

(carried away)

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

No, not just Hackney. ALL of of these United states of Britain! Mrs Massi, you've GOT to be there tonight... Your son - Dammit your country needs you!

Win is entranced by Clifford's rhetoric. She rises to her feet. Farrington has already prepared a Tupperware container of food.

FARRINGTON

One and two pattie, some plantain, lickle jerk chicken and some dumpling. Wish the boy luck from me.

Clifford takes the dish and is surprised by its WEIGHT.

CLIFFORD

Get your coat - and a forklift for this - we're going to a goddamn ball game.

WIN

If you blaspheme in this house once more, I will chop off you tings.

CLIFFORD

Amen.

He hustles her out the door.

INT. THE PURPOSE BUILT ARENA, HACKNEY - NIGHT

IN THE AUDIENCE: COOKIE, GREG AND CHARLOTTE arrive at their seats. Charlotte is wearing her dad's Parisian XXXL shirt.

WIN AND CLIFFORD make it just as Cameron Taylor takes the podium to announce the start of the game.

Once again a podium has been set up centre court. Kenji and Khaled wait courtside, just out of sight. Cameron makes a speech. The whole Arena goes nuts.

ON COURT:

CAMERON

Well. We made it.

Huge cheers!

CAMERON (CONT'D)

This finale could have been fought anywhere in Europe ... but the winner of this year's Soldier tournament comes from right here in Hackney!

Even bigger cheers - Shots of Silas jumping up and down in the crowd. Guildford Heat hugging each other.

Clifford arrives courtside. Charlotte yells.

CHARLOTTE

Daddy!

Khal sees her and jogs over to that audience section. He gives her a smile and she blows a kiss. Cookie looks at her wearily and then at Khal. Greg gives him the thumbs up.

CAMERON

Our new shoe, 'The Soldier' needed a Unique athlete; a powerhouse. I give you - one of the greatest players basketball has ever seen. Wearing the Soldier shoe for the first time, Mr. Kenji. Burton!

The crowd roars; Kenji flashes a million dollar smile then runs out to wave at the fans. Suddenly, every camera phone in the place goes NUTS.

Meanwhile the central screens display his statistics: Burton voted three times Most Valuable Player in the NBA; The ROARS increase and then eventually die down.

Kenji does stretches and begins yelling at Khal.

KENJI

Yo Khaled Massi I'ma CRUSH you'boy!

Khaled tries to steel himself.

KENJI (CONT'D)

I'ma pound and pound and pound you so hard they gonna change yo name to 'Pound Stirling! Yo' mama'll be able to keep you in her purse!

Kenji plays to the gallery, musing aloud.

KENJI (CONT'D)

What kinda name is Khaled Massi anyway? Soun' like some kinda Middle Eastern shit. You a terrorist Khaled? I'ma beat yo' ass for makin' a motherfucka take off his shoes at security at the airport every goddam time...

Suddenly a voice interrupts, indistinct at first but getting closer and closer. It's Win! She glides like a Jamaican battleship towards Khal and Kenji, in full voice - the crowd react accordingly...

WIN

Kenji Burton? Kenji Burton? Is who tell you to talk to my son this way? You see you? You're not even worth the dirt on his shoes. I've watched you

Burton, you're a liar, a cheat and a BULLY. My son is none of these things - that's why he'll ALWAYS be better than you, you wretch!

Kenji flinches at the barrage of insults.

WIN (CONT'D)

My son is doing right by his family. What did you ever do?

She approaches Khal and hugs him.

WIN (CONT'D)

I'm right here son - if this brute starts anything - I can hit him from over there with my shoe.

Khal hugs his mum as hard as he can.

Clifford appears and looks on proudly - he made it! The crowd CHEER and laugh - SECURITY GUYS have now caught up with WIN and she is given mighty ovation as she is dragged off court.

The MEDIA are loving this.

UK PUNDIT

Khaled's MUM there giving Burton a well deserved earful. Not quite the done thing, bringing your mum to the game.....

Shots of Win telling Kenji off.

Shots of Khaled and Clifford reacting.

USA PUNDIT

....Massi seems embarrassed but happy. We'll see how happy he is when Brutal Burton breaks out the heavy artillery.

CUT TO:

INT. IN THE AUDIENCE - NIGHT

Win returns to her seat; everyone cheers. Cookie sees her smiles. Charlotte's eyes twinkle - 'That's my Gran'

She turns back and finds YOUT' who is staring at her. Charlotte turns away.

CUT TO:

INT. ON COURT - CONTINUOUS

Kenji and Khaled walk at the court's centre; the Referee talks to them but neither listen. They know how to play this game.

US PUNDIT

The Ref's layin' the law down out there - first to twenty points.

On Kenji: moving his shoulders, bouncing on his toes, moving his head from side to side.

On Khal: flexing his ankle, bending his arms behind his back - staring at Kenji.

The ball is checked and seems to rebound for the longest time. It rolls in SLOW MOTION we see:

Khal's eyes watching Kenji's eyes focussed

And then..... BAM!

Kenji has the ball, spins, runs, dominates; Khal tries to keep up but Burton's on Fire.

POSSESSION 1:

We're in amongst them, jostled, hustled - this is real.

The game begins and it's brutal; Kenji doesn't take any prisoners.

TIME CUT:

POSSESSION 2:

US PUNDIT (CONT'D)

Massi's got a pretty good all round game here.

Burton's skilful and uses everything he knows to dismantle Khal's game but Khal pushes back! Forcing Burton away

UK PUNDIT

Burton's getting the measure of this UK Ball player - he ain't just gonna lie down here.

TIME CUT:

SCOREBOARD: Burton 6 Massi 8

Khal's muscled away from the ball - pushed and stamped on. Burton sends the ball arcing into the basket-Boom-Swish!

IN THE CROWD

WIN screams her disapproval! COOKIE has her hand over her mouth.

Charlotte holds Greg's hand. He looks at her.

TIME CUT:

UK PUNDIT (CONT'D)

You know, I think Burton's surprised by how good Massi is. He's a decent player. He's not NBA but he's holding his own out there.

Burton gets mad and pushes Khal to the floor and almost says 'Stay down.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Big J and Dreadie are on their feet yelling 'Foul'.

ON COURT:

The referee's warning Kenji continually for gangster tactics. Khal surprises Kenji with a couple of fast steals. He sends a ball thundering into the basket! Burton's sweating. He shoots a look over at courtside.

Cameron and Romanoff are watching. Burton looks worried.

US PUNDIT

You're not telling me a guy of Burton's class can't put Khaled Massi away? What's this kid ever done?

TIME CUT: MUSIC BEGINS. POSSESSION 7:

UK PUNDIT

Massi's found his form-this is real basketball!
Come on Special K!!!

IN THE CROWD

Charlotte and Greg and Cookie and Win are dancing with Joy! Cameron and Romanoff are in heated discussions.

ON COURT

Kenji shows his class - there's a reason why he's an MVP. This guy's superb. It's almost mercurial the way he moves on the court. Khal is limping, favouring his left ...his ankle's playing up ,but he's getting by. Kenji is once again surprised by Khal's turn of speed and skill. After a particularly tough basket, Kenji STAMPS on Khal's LEFT foot and pushes - Khal's ankle makes a horrible GRINDING sound.

Clifford calls for a time out. The Ref blows his whistle. Khal is down.

COURTSIDE.

UK PUNDIT (CONT'D)

Massi's down. This isn't good at all.

Cookie vaults over the barrier and runs to him. She flexes his foot, sprays it with something cool and RE BANDAGES it during the following.

COOKIE

Wanna stop?

KHALED

No blood no foul. I'm gonna keep on.

COOKIE

Bloody fool.

KHALED

I know.

COOKIE

Anyway, we've got time. Your mate's arguing with the Ref.

CUT TO:

INT. MID COURT - CONTINUOUS

Clifford is in the midst of an enormous battle with the REFEREE.

CLIFFORD

Well you can kiss the whole of my hairy nutsack then!

REF

Get off my basketball court, Mister, you're irritating me.

CLIFFORD

What are you, Henry the 8th? Burton's running his usual gangster bullshit, so let's get Stevie Wonder to referee cos even he'd notice what was goin' down here!

REF

Sit down, Mister.

The Ref is serious.

CLIFFORD

Come on now, Ref. Just asking you to keep your eyes open.

UK PUNDIT

That's Clifford James, Massi's coach - he discovered him.

INT. TEAM KENJI - CONTINUOUS

Kenji and his ENTOURAGE; He's being rubbed, stretched, massaged, rehydrated - a superstar athlete's pit stop. Burton is breathing heavily.

Pookie glances at Kenji. A wall of silence between them.

INT. TEAM KHAL - CONTINUOUS

Cookie has taped up Khal's ankle.

COOKIE

Go easy on him, Khal. He's only a Yank.

She pecks him on the cheek and then vaults the barrier. The whistle blows and the crowd erupt into

a huge cheer. Clifford gets Khal to his feet and he slowly jogs back onto the court.

INT. IN THE CROWD - CONTINUOUS

Cookie's back to her seat. Greg gives her a concerned 'Are you still my baby?' glance.

GREG

Alright?

Cookie takes his hand and squeezes it.

COOKIE

Best physio in Hackney. Of course he's alright.

Greg kisses her. Charlotte's watching...

CHARLOTTE

Ew.

They look at her, then at each other.

INT. ON COURT - LATER 130

Khal in slow motion, defends against Burton, winning the ball and getting away to the basket! Khal's face is riven with effort.

INT.ON COURT - LATER

Burton, in slow motion, head down, sweat pouring off him, he's worried. What The hell is going on?

CUT TO:

INT. ON COURT - LATER

The pundits are on fire about Khaled Massi!

UK PUNDIT

If you've just tuned in, do not go anywhere - this is where you wanna be!

Burton and Massi tussle for the ball. Burton wins this point.

USA PUNDIT

UK underdog has taken Kenji Burton to the hole and they are now neck and neck.

The Crowd roar as Khal fights back!

UK PUNDIT

This is one of the best one-on-one I've EVER seen time. Hang on to your hat.

INT. COURTSIDE - NIGHT

CUT BETWEEN TEAM KENJI AND TEAM KHAL.

KENJI is drinking water. KHAL is drinking water.
CLIFFORD hunkers down and hisses into Khal's ear
CLIFFORD

This is some life changing shit right here. Do you
want this? Cos it ain't gonna happen if you don't
want this?

KHAL

I think I ...

Clifford slaps him round the face!

KHAL (CONT'D)

What?

CLIFFORD

I saw your mama do it, thought it might work for me

KHAL

DONT-DO-THAT!

CLIFFORD

There's no 'I think' now. There's only 'I will' or
'I won't'. Your whole family is here waiting for
you to show 'em something. That you got heart. That
you will fight for yourself, stand up for yourself.

This is your time, kid. And this is your court.
Don't let anyone take your court!

KHAL

Don't ever slap me again.

CLIFFORD

You're right, it was uncalled for.

The Ref Blows.

Go.

Khaled jogs out to the court's center and Kenji
Burton follows.

FROM ABOVE: The ball SOARS in Slow Motion and Kenji
and Khal's faces describe the determination within.
Neither of them want to lose tonight:

Continuing in Slow Motion - a series of shots ala
ZIDANE - it's all about these two Titans now:

Kenji outwits Khal and steals a basket- once, twice!
Khal is distraught. Clifford yells his head off!

TIME CUT:

Khal twisting and turning his way past Kenji's
defence, once, twice!

Kenji body slams Khal and gets a basket! Khal pushes BACK - and gets a basket!

TIME CUT:

SCORE BOARD: BURTON 18 MASSI 18

It's the last few moments of the game.

CAMERON AND DAVE watching intently - their eyes constantly on the REF who flicks them the odd glance. BURTON playing rough, taking no prisoners. KHAL slipping, sliding, hustling - working incredibly hard Kenji has the advantage

UK PUNDIT

If Massi is to win, he must score now ...

AND SUDDENLY - ALL SOUND IS TUNED OUT - EXCEPT FOR THE THUMP THUMP of the basketball and the Ba-BUMP Ba-UMP OF a heartbeat.

IN CROWD SHOTS: ALL IN SLOW MO-

Mum frightened. Clifford calm.

Pookie shouting and gesticulating. Charlotte - yelling.

SNAP into REAL TIME!

ON COURT :

The next bit happens real fast: Kenji's got the ball, Khal's struggling to defend, Burton smiles, relaxes a little - but then.....

Khal STEALS it and B'DOING!!!! PLACES HIS HAND ON KENJI'S HEAD AND LEAP FROGS HIM FOR THE DUNK!

A zillion flashes go off!

US PUNDIT

I think BURTON has just been served what is known as a 'Full English'! Massi wins - just - what a game!

It's a FREEZE FRAME moment - almost posed. Khaled Massi has beaten the NBA superstar ... it's almost like a Nike Poster.

KENJI glares at Cameron and Romanoff in the Corporate area.

What the fuck? Cameron Taylor and Dave Romanoff stand - they signal to the Ref - it's a no go. Cameron makes a 'rollover sign' with her hands. The Ref speaks to both players.

Khal's face falls. 'What?'

Clifford kicks a whole tub of drinks over! The basket is disallowed!

US PUNDIT (CONT'D)

What? I think the ref is gonna make them play the point over.

In SLOW MOTION - the point is replayed, Khal working doubly hard, Kenji elbowing, pushing and shoving, and eventually ...

KENJI gets the basket-the whistle blows; now the Game's over. SCOREBOARD: BURTON 20 MASSI 18
The crowd go absolutely NUTS! Kenji's entourage STORM the court and SLAP their leader on the back.

But Khaled is being CHAIRED round the court. No one cares that he lost - to the rhythm of WE WILL ROCK YOU'S boom boom - clap, they chant:

CROWD

PEOPLE'S CHAMP! PEOPLE'S CHAMP! PEOPLE'S CHAMP!

US PUNDIT

The wrongfully disallowed Massi Dunk is already uploaded onto You Tube - it really is sensational, let's look at it again.

UK PUNDIT

Khaled Massi, definitely won that -- we've got a shot of Cameron Taylor from Sentinel shoes.

The shot of Cameron giving the 'Rollover' signal.

UK PUNDIT (CONT'D)

You could argue that she's actually telling the Ref to disallow the basket ... we all know who the real winner is here.

All throughout this we hear PEOPLE'S CHAMP!

Silas is on the sidelines celebrating - He catches Khaled's eye and does a little caribbean shuffle and hop step. Khaled laughs and waves his thanks...

Clifford strolls over to Cameron and Dave, gives them the finger and walks away.

Khal is dropped off by the barrier where Charlotte and Cookie and Greg are: they congratulate him.

Khaled lifts Charlotte onto his shoulders. The PRESS SNAP AWAY.

Clifford stands by Win - she smiles at him and gives him a dumpling. Clifford eats some of it. His phone rings.

CLIFFORD

What? Yeah s'me, who's this - Nike? You like Khal? Well yeah, he just kinda kicked Wonder boy's ass here. Let's talk, Monday.

He hangs up - Win feeds him some more dumpling - she's got a twinkle in her eye...

The crowd chant 'PEOPLE'S CHAMP' and sing 'Special K' to the tune of Amazing Grace ... it's joyous.

Caption AGAINST BLACK

6 months later. FADE UP:

FADE OUT:

EXT/INT. CHARLOTTE'S MASSI'S SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The KIDS are all writing essays, heads down, pens moving. Charlotte's on fire, writing up a storm.

CHARLOTTE (V.0)

It's funny how life can change in the blink of an eye. Kenji Burton's mate Pookie got done for hurting that girl.

CUT TO:

INT. CHICAGO COURTHOUSE - DAY

It's a packed courthouse.

Pookie sits at the front, his young LAWYER (40'S) is whispering in his ear. Pookie is downcast, then looks across at Kenji who is also in court. Victoria is at the witness stand about to testify.

She smiles at Kenji.

CUT TO:

INT. MAMA'S CARIBBEAN - DAY

The place has relocated to smarter surroundings. There's a two man STEEL BAND in the corner and CLIFFORD AND MAMA are served massive cocktails by FARRINGDON, who wears sparkling whites. Clifford is the happiest we've ever seen him.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Nan upgraded her restaurant with Dad's help. Uncle Clifford's there all the time.

CUT TO:

INT. A KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP - DAY

COOKIE steps up to her OPPONENT, a big WOMAN (White 20's) radiating powerful. They bow to each other and then swiftly, Cookie takes her down for the game.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Mum started competing.

Cookie is snapped, getting a massive trophy. Greg kisses her full on the lips in celebration. She's number one again!

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

And Greg, well ... he sort of grows on you, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. COOKIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Greg and Charlotte are playing scrabble. Charlotte lays down the word XERXES on a triple word score - Greg upends the board in mock prima donna fashion.

GREG

Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

Charlotte laughs fit to burst.

CUT TO:

INT. A SPORTS SHOE SHOP - DAY

A busy shoe shop in Chicago. CUSTOMERS are trying on shoes - everyone's trying to get the attention of SHOP WORKER (female).

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

The soldier shoe was a big flop - the Sentinel People had to discontinue the whole thing.

Reveal a pile of Sentinel Soldiers underneath a sign that says -DISCONTINUED -a dollar a pair.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Cameron Taylor lost her job.

INT. CNN TYPE TV STUDIO

A Logo reading - RUINED HEIRESS runs in a strap line along the bottom of the screen. A scowling CAMERON TAYLOR sits in the hot seat. A BUSINESS REPORTER harangues her with questions

BUSINESS REPORTER

Would you say this was the shot that brought the Sentinel Empire to it's knees?

Cut to shot of Cameron signalling to the Referee

CAMERON

Well -first of all, Sentinel Sports wear is not on
it's knees -let's say we're a little winded -I am
no longer the CEO as it were -my younger sister
Lucy has taken that role

A shot of Lucy - blonde , power suited , driven...
exactly like Cameron.

BUSINESS REPORTER

Are you happy to relinquish your position like that?

CAMERON

Bitch please.

The Reporter is shocked.

CUT TO:

INT. LEISURE CENTRE - DAY

Khaled is sitting in the gym on the floor with 40
kids (Black/White/Asian, all between 8 and 10). He's
talking earnestly to them.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

And my dad? He never had to worry about anything
ever again.

KHALED

Lesson number one...

Khal gets the kids up and gets them running round the court. He leans up against a wall. Pull back to reveal that next to him is a huge poster... which says simply ...

THE PEOPLE'S CHAMP!

AN Annie Liebowitz photograph: Khaled sits a throne of gold. In an expensive black track suit and UNIQUE, GOLD BASKETBALL BOOTS! MICHAEL JORDAN!

That's right - THE MICHAEL JORDAN

places a big diamond encrusted crown on Khaled's head. Logo: The Nike 'SPECIAL K'...

Just Do it!

Khal realises what he's standing next to, smiles and then jogs off to work with the kids - he gets a ball and starts bouncing it - Thump-thump; Thump thum and it mixes in with his heartbeat ... and shoots the ball.

Freeze frame of the ball in the air.

FADE OUT:

APPENDIX 6: KAY STONHAM DATA AND GRAPHS

MOONLIGHT MARAUDERS (OUTLINE) THE GRAPH OF CHANGES...

	MALE	FEMALE	BLACK	WHITE	DUAL HERITAGE	ASIAN CHINESE	CLASS	-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60
	x				x		W		x					
	x				x		W		x					
		x	x				W				x			
		x					W							
		x	x				W							
	x						W							
	x						W							
	x		x				W					x		
		x					W							
	x		x				W							

BLACK	WHITE	DUAL HERITAGE	ASIAN CHINESE	CLASS	-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60
	x			M					x		
x				M			x				
				M							
				M							
	x						x				
	x						x				
				M							
		XXX		M	XXX?						
				M							

The selling draft had changed significantly; see below.

NO BLOOD NO FOUL –SELLING DRAFT – NBNF (Selling)
(full text can be found in Chapter 6).

BLACK	WHITE	DUAL HERITAGE	HISPANIC	ASIAN CHINESE	CLASS W/M/U	-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
X					W			X				
		X			W/M		X					
X					W							
X?					W							
										X		
					M							
				X	W			X				
X	X											
X					W		X					
	X				W				X			
	X				W				X			
	X				M				X			
	X								X			

X	WHITE	DUAL HERITAGE	HISPANIC	ASIAN CHINESE	CLASS W/M/U	-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
	X?				M							
					W							
					M							
					W				X			
					W						X	
					W							
					M							
							X					
		X			W	X						
	X											
					M				X			
	X	X		X								

ACK	WHITE	DUAL HERITAGE	HISPANIC	ASIAN CHINESE	CLASS W/M/U	-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
					M							
					M							
					M							
					M							
					M							
					M							
					M							
					M							
					W							
					M							
					W							
					M							X
					M			X				
					U							

LACK	WHITE	DUAL HERITAGE	HISPANIC	ASIAN CHINESE	CLASS W/M/U	-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
					U							
			X									
					M							
	X				M							
	X						X					
	X											
	X											
	X											
	X											

WHITE	DUAL HERITAGE	HISPANIC	ASIAN CHINESE	CLASS W/M/U	-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
				M							
				M							
				W							
				M							
				M							
				W							
				W/M							
X											
				M							
X				U							
X	X		X	W/M		X					

APPENDIX 7: THE LONG QUESTIONNAIRE

The Full Length Questionnaire

What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive policy in relation to the employment of more diverse racial or other population groups?

What would you say are the other advantages of making films with a greater number of black, ethnic minority or other cultural groups?

If funding bodies were obliged by government (through tax or other fiscally related matters) to enhance the proportion of the B.A.M.E. population employed within the industry, what measure might you adopt to do this?

As a key player and decision maker in the industry, to what degree would you favour positive discrimination in favour of a more diverse and inclusive population in the industry?

Why do you think minority groups remain unrepresented in the industry?

What films can you recall whose success appeared to derive from a significant presence of a bame individual or group of individuals

What difficulties stand in the way of greater

employment of individuals from the same populations?

Would you support ring-fenced funding (ie funding specifically introduced) that existed to give financial backing solely to same actors or other production staff?

Which elements of the genre – that is film or television production – would most lend themselves to greater same representation?

Which elements of the genre work best in terms of developing greater interest in, and application for, same parts?

What cultural stereotypes within the industry would need to be modified to accommodate, encourage, or raise expectations of a greater BAME workforce?

What classic portrayals or contexts could be considered as ripe targets for changing role related expectations (for example a Black James Bond)?

How committed are you to the notion of acquiring greater diversity (i.e) black, ethnic minority, disadvantaged and gender diversity) in the film and television industry?

Who would the most significant members of the industry likely to be the best source of support and action in enhancing diversity and representation?

How do you respond to the view that one needs black / asian / physically challenged / lgbt members to make films about these groups from which they come?

To what degree has the loss of appetite for social realism in film making affected the industries inclination to recruit, employ or engage bame individuals and populations?

How could the cinema of duty be encouraged to focus on bame problems, issues or dilemma's; and would it be appropriate to do so?

Should the mono-cultural bias be challenged and how could this be done?

How mono-cultural do you consider the film and television industry to be, and how should this be challenged?

What policy and commercial procedures have you instituted to ensure greater representation by bame and other related populations?

In respect of high concept / low concept films, is there a difference between the two in relation to the likely receptivity of more diverse inclusiveness?

Could the situation be improved by the development of gatekeepers, pickers and introducers hired, committed and employed to select from the bame and related populations?

What approaches to inclusive policies might endanger the industry?

In what ways could different bame recruitment policies enhance revenue?

Would it be appropriate to make films for specific BAME populations?

What BAME stereotypes could be exploited to enhance BAME attractive / compelling productions?

Which of the following approaches to delivering BAME representation would you favour and why:

Opportunities for work shadowing;

Training initiatives specifically for aspiring BAME actors or specialists within the industry;

Specific workshops at RADA and elsewhere to heighten knowledge, skills and attitudes for those wanting to break through the glass ceilings.

Should a new academy or award category for BAME actors, promoters and others in the industry be instituted?

What characteristics dominate production culture and values that could be modified, changed or redefined to impact on current under representation?

What economic or commercial factors could be modified to change current under representation of bame populations?

Would it be feasible to fast track candidates who join the industry intending to obtain senior

executive advancement?

Could increased bame representation be enhanced by encouraging, financing or calling for BAME related scripts?

How could the industry overcome a perceived lack of bame headline stories?

Could a Bollywood dimension be developed to take, promote and enhance bame contribution to the industry?

How could the industry develop an inter-dependant relationship with a professionally aspiring BAME population

APPENDIX 8: FULL-LENGTH INTERVIEW RESPONSES

FULL LENGTH INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Conducted by Lenny Henry

With Andrew Gepp

And Ollie Watts as technicians/Transcribers



1.

[source: www.screendaily.com]

Andy started his career as an award-winning documentary maker, producing and directing films for Arena, Omnibus, The Southbank Show and the Emmy-nominated Africa for Channel 4. He later moved into the world of comedy, directing and producing Lenny Henry's feature film Lenny: Live and Unleashed.

Prior to establishing Left Bank Pictures in 2007, Andy Harries was Controller of Drama, Comedy and Film for Granada Productions. During this period

(2000–2007) he produced a huge range of dramas, comedies, and films for ITV and other broadcasters.

[source:

<https://www.leftbankpictures.co.uk/#!/team-carousel>]

LH: What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive work force both behind and in front of the camera?

AH: The commercial considerations are exemplified by something like *Empire in the States*. If you continue to exclude – not necessarily deliberately – but exclude a broad audience or part of your audience you are increasingly going to make television the preserve of the white ageing middle classes in the shires, and I think that's the BBC's and to a large extent ITV's problem. America is an interesting indicator because it's so much more commercial there, and it's always staggered me that it took TV executives in America so long to realise that it was not just the white middle-classes who were prepared to pay for cable or pay-for-television. And it amazed me that it took so long for someone to say You know what, let's just have a black American series that really reflects the culture of black Americans and their interests. And then of course you've got a huge hit. So clearly it's there. Whether it will work in the UK, I don't know.

LH: It's interesting because the BAME population in London is 40% and nationwide it's about 14% and the whole idea behind the ring-fenced money proposal is

based on the nations and regions programme. I realise this is a bit BBC-centric, but the idea was that the BBC were tasked to serve nations, regions and communities, and by missing out black and Asian minorities, which is a huge church, the BAME population weren't being served. It seemed like a natural extension for me, so would you support ring-fenced funding?

AH: I would support ring-fenced money because I think there are times when you need to make a leap forward and I think this is one of them. I think television is largely in the hands of white middle-class people, and that the recruiting policy is increasingly, sadly, middle-class families or friends of, people who can afford [to go into these industries].

LH: This social mobility thing keeps cropping up. And me and you can say to our kids The fridge is full, your bed is here, go and be a runner or go and be an intern but there are a lot of Asian and Afro-Caribbean girls aren't looking at the film and television industry, they're looking elsewhere.

AH: No, but it is typical of what happens in this industry, that a couple of months ago I was looking for a PA and an executive at Sky e-mailed me and said My god-daughter has just left university blah blah blah, would you see her? Now what I do with things at that level is say Of course, of course, of course and send her immediately to one of our production people to meet her as a potential runner, and that's what I did. But as it happens, that week

my PA decided she was definitely going, and she came in and she was brilliant. She's a judge's daughter, and she's fantastic, but there you are.

LH: That's social mobility right there, right?

AH: Ha. Yes. And I thought of that at the time, but I also thought, could we please try to – consciously – broaden out the base? There are a lot of kids who are either working class, or lower middle class who [don't get into the industry], but television's is for everybody. And I'll always remember when I went to London Weekend, in 84-85 and there was Paul Ross and Danny Baker and Jeff Pope and they were all East London, state-educated boys, ex-punks-

LH: And how did that happen?

AH: Because LWT recruited heavily into proper working class London, and that's why London Weekend was such a great station. I came from state-educated life in Peterborough, so I related to these people.

LH: LWT was the first place I saw a black make-up lady when I was doing The Fosters in 1975, and they didn't make a big deal about it. And I've never seen it since. I've never seen a black HoD or Costume Designer or Production Designer or-

AH: Well I think the class thing - sorry to go into the class thing particularly -

LH: Well no, I think here it is more about class than it is about race, and the race thing is in the background. Institutionalised racism happens, but the main reason is because of class. If funding

bodies were obliged by the government to enhance the proportion of the BAME population employed within the industry, what measures might you at Left Bank adopt to do this? For example, would you work with Creative Access?

AH: Yeah, I mean already we do take a young graduate-

LH: One?

AH: One, yeah. But she's part of a scheme.

LH: Do you have any other BAME people working for you?

AH: Our Head of Finance is black, and she's key. She's on the board, but she's always been with us and she's absolutely fantastic. But this girl who's come through Creative Access is really good.

LH: Is there a tax break involved with that?

AH: No, but they paid half her salary, because she's beyond that now, and we've kept her on.

LH: And that's really positive because a lot of these internships don't lead to a job. And that's the problem with the BBC Deputy Commissioner thing. It's great, but I don't know what it leads to. Tony Hall says that after the scheme they will be highly desirable, but why don't the BBC keep them on then? But anyway, how have other tax incentives changed your productions previously? Tax breaks for locations for example?

AH: Tax breaks are a huge part of what we do, and we base a lot of our films in tax break countries, particularly certain types of show. Shows like Strikeback – an action show – has never been filmed

anywhere but a tax break country because South Africa, Thailand, Hungary [have fantastic tax breaks].

LH: If there was a similar thing with employing BAME, would you go for it?

AH: Definitely.

LH: So if you're crewing up a show like The Crown is that through word of mouth or recommendations?

AH: Both, yes, and this is one of the challenges of the system. Everybody sort of hires their own people. There is no central hiring person, and it tends to be a band of gypsies who go from one [production to another].

LH: How do we change that?

AH: It's very hard.

LH: You miss out the guy from Peterborough. If the Indian kid or white working class kid from Peterborough, who's a really good focus-puller, is not on that list, he doesn't get that job.

AH: I don't think crew necessarily too middle class actually. I think crew generally draws from quite a broad [social spectrum].

LH: But it's quite familial, quite a closed-shop.

AH: Quite familial, yes. I think there is a tradition of families in camera operators. But training- you know the demand for crew is huge.

LH: BAME crew?

AH: Crew generally. The whole point of having tax breaks in television is to get more skilled workers in. So this is the opportunity to try to get more BAME people into the industry.

LH: I think this is the reason we talk about training and internships, because we don't want to talk about the people who have worked to a certain level and can't go any further, either because there's a glass wall or ceiling or precipice, and we don't know what that is.

AH: But maybe we should strive for something as simple as saying any crew that takes a takes a tax break must have a trainee sound plus a trainee camera person from a BAME background. Maybe it's as simple as that. It's often tried in developing countries, although not always effectively, but I think in the UK I think we could make it work well.
[...]

LH: If producers were able to access extra funding from public funding bodies by meeting certain diversity criteria, like employing a certain number of BAME actors or key staff, how would you react to this?

AH: I'd be very keen. I'm personally all in favour of positive discrimination. I absolutely am, and I think people who are funny about it are wrong. Which is why I liked your speech so much. It isn't acceptable that television doesn't reflect the country either on-screen or off-screen.

LH: Yes, and I have to say nobody wants quotas because they smack of tokenism. What I think we want is probably a target – a target that people have got to have of really qualified people who still have to jump through hoops to get their gig, but at least they're allowed the interview. So the

judge's daughter comes in, but so do another couple of people either from black or Asian or working class backgrounds. A lot of people just want a break, they don't want hand-outs. So, how committed are you to acquiring greater diversity in the film and television industry?

AH: I am committed to it, and every time I raise it, there is a feeling that it is very hard to find the right people, that we don't get enough kids – the right sort of kids – through the door.

LH: So a database?

AH: Yes, a database would be good. More Creative Access [schemes].

LH: But I think a database of people who are already at a certain level. People who have already trained, and are good, but just aren't getting the opportunities. [...] But to build on employment and increased diversity in the television industry is doable because it's growing. [...] I think Women in Film and Television have really moved the needle down the road a bit. More producers-

AH: Women dominate television. Women run television.

LH: Yes. They've done really well. And that stems from – 20 years ago now – the BBC cherry-picking maybe 15-20 women executives who they thought were the future of television and they were given a leg up, and that's what needs to happen here. A break, so that it becomes more diverse.

AH: I completely and utterly agree with you.

LH: I want to talk about social-realism. You made The Royle Family and The Damned United. I think we

used to make more socially-realist films, particularly out of the North. Ken Loach films, Mike Leigh films. Billy Elliott. We were very interested in films that reflected our society but we've kind of stopped doing that. I guess The Selfish Giant. But do you think the reduction in appetite for that kind of film has affected the presence of a more diverse workforce in front of the camera?

AH: People are talking about the de-politicisation of television and the generation that has grown up in the last 20 years. After Blair there's a sort of anodyne, apolitical generation. Take the Labour election – nobody gives a fuck. [...] But I want to go back to something. Your speech I thought was incredibly well-timed. I thought when I heard it, it's about fucking time that people were properly addressed. But change is fucking hard, but change is possible, but it will only happen with a coalition of the willing, as you said earlier.

LH: Yes, and I think there's a door open a crack, and when I talk to people like you and Christine and Nik, but with charter renewal at the BBC and the advent of the super-Indies, who are so un-diverse, it's very hard. They're making so much money that they don't want anyone coming-in and telling them about their demographic.

AH: Let's talk about the BBC. The call for programmes is obviously important, but I think the issue is that the BBC is the only place that might

not be owned by the Americans in ten years, and to lose it would be to lose a major thing.

LH: I think the BBC is a major player and even though they've got to make job cuts, and even though they're under attack, when they survive this charter renewal, they can retrench and say Look, we're doing this and the industry will have to follow. I do think the BBC need to lead.

AH: I think they are over-emotionalising the call for programmes. You know, I think they should ring-fence their budget for BBC1, BBC2, BBC3 etc. similar to ITV, and then say, this is the rest of the money to run the BBC

[...]

LH: So we've talked about social realism. I think the de-politicisation thing is brilliant. Could the situation be improved by the development and fast-tracking of new gatekeepers - pickers and deciders - committed and employed to select from a more diverse talent pool? If they took a sideways look at how they staff the commissioners and HoDs, the whole situation could be changed. But how could this work?

AH: I don't know. I'm not really aware how many BAME HoDs there are.

LH: There are some. Barbara, Anne Mensah, Lucy Pilkington. There are some people out there, but it seems to me that they're all hoeing their own row.

AH: Yeah. I mean, one's surprised that Channel 4 is so without ambition in this area.

LH: Their 360 thing is hugely ambitious, slightly unwieldy maybe. The BFI three-tick system is probably a more feasible template for something. This idea of self-declaring ethnicity or gender or make-up of crew, editorial staff, subject matter, or project – I think that's good. [The problem is] a lot of people don't know these opportunities exist. If you read Broadcast it seems to me that there's a tendency for the big jobs to be between five or six people who all know what to do, and who they need to know. It's like musical chairs, and how do you fucking break that? And I've got nothing against these people, but you're never going to see a black or Asian CEO unless something happens to break this train. How do you do that? People aren't going to give it up unless there's a bit of elbow room. This is about making elbow room. How do we do that? Are you prepared to mentor, or provide bursaries, should there be more training initiatives?

AH: Yes, I think there should. I think we should invest and mandate it, why not?

LH: My concern with training initiatives is that it infantilises the workforce. There are people between 30 and 50 who are BAME who could have been promoted but haven't. So those guys probably need a tickle. And some of them might be crap, and some of them didn't want to go to the regions, didn't want to go to Cardiff or Scotland or the North. They work in London. 40% of London is BAME; they just didn't want to go to the regions. But there's got

to be a 3rd way, and that is what this is all about. Take Julie Walters. If you're working class now, how can you afford RADA at twelve and a half grand a term? So it feels to me that the ring-fenced money thing is key here and the EHRC just said it's lawful and that to have a database is lawful. So now we need to get on with it.

2. Christine Langan



After leaving Cambridge in 1987, Christine Langan joined Granada where she developed, among others, Cold Feet and Dirty, Filthy Love. She made her feature film production debut with Pierrepont (2005), before going on to produce The Queen (2006), and then, for BBC films, a slew of multi-award winning films including The Other Boleyn Girl (2008), The Duchess (2009), In the Loop (2009) and An Education (2009). Christine has been head of BBC Films since April 2009.

[source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christine_Langan]

LH: What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive work force both behind and in front of the camera?

CL: The commerciality issue is circumscribed by the fact that I'm working out of the BBC, so it doesn't leap to mind. I read anything commercial as meaning

popular so I would love to be involved in finding the property or moment that is properly BAME, that explodes commercially as well, because I think that will come, and it's just a question of time. I don't know what the commercial barriers are. I think audiences are very, very hard to read at the moment in independent film anyway. I think you go at this knowing that it's a very precarious business. Distributors – everybody – is phased by the challenges to the model they're engaged with. How much P&A to spend, how to get your head above the thicket of stuff that's out there, get noticed, get audiences in. Even when you get five star reviews at the moment that's not translating to getting audiences into movie theatres. So I think, quite apart from television and broadcasting, film presents some unique challenges in this country. And then you need to think about it being an international business. And you don't necessarily get to control the interests of your partners across the globe, which can limit your influence. So I can have a theory about how a film should be released i.e. in America first, but that power might be taken away from me.

LH: I think that's very interesting, and we'll come back to that in a minute, but I'm also interested in the idea of encouraging BAME talent. Would you support ring-fenced funding for BAME creatives and producers if it were introduced?

CL: To be honest, I think it's a really interesting question.

LH: In the BAFTA speech we used the BBC's Nations and Regions programme because it seemed like such an obvious slam-dunk, and did increase representation of talent in those nations and regions. But part of the remit of that programme was to serve communities, and the BAME population is 14.3% nationally, but it seemed to be under-served by that remit. So ring-fenced money for the BAME community seemed like an obvious extension of that – and not just the responsibility of the BBC.

CL: In principle I agree with that and in terms of my own commissioning in even the last three years, I've constantly been told not to commission anything else because of money. But what I know I can commission are BAME projects. And so I'm mindful that in my tiny part of the BBC I'm mindful of that.

LH: What BAME projects are you doing?

CL: Just yesterday I commissioned a Nigerian writer. And there's nothing BAME about the project, but she's one of the few Nigerian writers. We're working with Chiwetel Ejiofor on a project he's writing and will direct and we've commissioned Clint Dyer, among others that I now forget. And it's also diversity across the piece. It's Asian writers, the right kind of directors, transgender and---

LH: And are you interested in how these things get made, the hiring process, the employment process? It seems to me that what invariably happens is that these things get commissioned and then [the cast and crew is almost all white]. There's a photograph

of Amma Asante on Belle and I think she's the only black person in a five-mile radius, and that really affected me. I think it's a percentage of your crew.

CL: I spoke to Polly about your Danny and the Human Zoo, and how you pushed for greater representation in the crew, and it was tricky, but it worked.

LH: It worked to an extent. We had a black editor, and a black sound man, and Destiny, and me as the writer, and that's good, but if you'd been at the read-through and looked around at the HoDs and production staff, you would have said Oh my God, there's a problem. And I think the Nations and Regions was in many respects a great thing, but one side effect was that it reduced the national impact of the BAME input, because London is 40% BAME.

CL: I have a theory about this, and a lot of it's about the well-heeled upper-middle class demographic. As, originally, a working-class kid from Tottenham, I went to Cambridge and it was like a passport, but I was really, really shocked when I got into television about the mix [or lack thereof].

LH: But I think Women In Film and Television, as an organisation, have really moved the needle in terms of representation, and people are still saying Where are the women directors and producers? So there's still work to be done, but in terms of BAME representation, we are way, way behind, and have made almost no progress since the BAFTA speech. I would love it if my daughter or grandchildren could come to work somewhere like the BBC and not feel

like they're the only person like them in a five-mile radius.

CL: Absolutely, and I think Creative Access has been helpful. We used to take an intern every month through the [centralised] BBC pool, because the clamour for this issue in BBC Films is great. So we used to have a rotating thing – unpaid – which is tricky. So when Creative Access came and offered to pay half for an intern for a year we jumped at it. And now I've got my intern and I'm hoping to keep her on because she's great, and take another intern next year. And I think that actually the experience of populating the industry with people from diverse backgrounds is very important. And I think spreading the word, training, and education are absolutely vital. Just knowing what roles exist. I went to talk at a school recently, and it was a very high-achieving, academic girls' school, and there were an awful lot of Asian girls there who said Your industry sounds really interesting, but my mum and dad wouldn't let me go anywhere near it because they want me to have a proper job and I said Well that's great, but if you want to be a lawyer or an accountant, we need those people too. So why don't you tell your parents you can go to law school and then work in film or television because there's a career path open for you. Sometimes I think it's about sharing knowledge and getting it out there.

LH: It feels to me that there's a real emphasis on learning and education, and I think that emphasis

is there because there's a real problem with positive discrimination in our industry, because it's seen as indefensible. But the EHRC have recently said that it, and a database for BAME workers, is legal. So now we can start thinking about these ideas. So if funding bodies were obliged by the government to enhance the proportion of the BAME population employed within the industry, what measures might you adopt to do this?

CL: Well, I'd like to go back to the Creative Access intern scheme for a moment, just because it's a very real programme. That worked really well because they came to us and said we'll sift, we'll do all the applications, we'll give you candidates, and you get to choose. Now, if you're seriously under-funded and everything's a battle and someone comes and proposes something like that, it's so easy that there's no resistance to it. So I think a database, a body, scholarships, I think filtering is fine for me; I don't think there's any political problem around that. I think bright kids who understand that there's something for them, somebody they can apply through – I think it's a great idea.

LH: I guess what you're saying is that the Creative Access model works, but what about the people who are already trained and in the industry, but who have hit a glass wall or ceiling?

CL: In that scenario I think you have to take it discipline by discipline and see what challenges beset what [the candidates] are doing. And, without

wanting to seem defeatist, Film is very, very, very, precarious. I've wound up working for the BBC, but, having no independent wealth, as some kids do, [working independently is difficult]. Film is really a cottage industry, as opposed to television, which is a hugely lucrative industry. I think there's a bit of a problem in the television industry with some fat cats who are not giving it back or spreading it around in the way that they used to. There's been a change in sentiment, with people setting up Indies and super-Indies to make money, and that changed the ecology. But television is a more reliable industrial base, despite also being very challenged. From an economic point of view you have to be a bit crazy or have a real passion [to go into film now]. [Film] is very reliant on America.

LH: And are we hampered sometimes with what the world wants us to give them?

CL: The Downton syndrome? Totally.

LH: The idea of holding a mirror to society with more of a social-realist bent seems to have been lost. Might the telling of stories about a kid from Tottenham or Dudley, more prevalent in the 60s, 70s and 80s have migrated to TV? Because the movies and genres I see out there don't seem that diverse, and that worries me.

CL: Well I think there's a bit of an infantilising of the culture anyway, and I think social realism is an interesting one, and as you say, there are certain exponents of it who are allowed to do it,

and who have a brand. So we now negotiate the world via the brand, so even Ken Loach, though he would hate to hear this, is a brand. Interestingly the French really get social realism, they really support it. And the French, who have a very heavily subsidised film business, are big consumers of social realism. But they would tell you that there are lots of films are being made which shouldn't be [because they're not very good], but they have a very live culture of their own, which is partly to do with language. We are cursed and blessed by sharing our language with America. But, on an individual basis, a lot of our actors and directors can make good on that relationship, especially actors.

LH: I get a sense that when BAME or transgender or other minority creatives pitch, there's a pressure to write what they know, or tell a story that is about who they are. Do you see that, and does it worry you?

CL: No, I think you have to be as intuitive about this as you can and see it as artists making work, so it's what compels them. And obviously what you know is valuable in that sphere. But no, I don't think you want to ghettoise people by dictating what people should write based on who they are. Lydia, the Nigerian writer [I mentioned earlier] is a good example of that. The piece she wants to write is driven by her fascination with the genre. But then again, I was happy that Patrick's [Patrick Neate] new novel *City of Tiny Lights* that he

adapted recently has a very strong BAME part, and it has to have it because it's set in West London. So I think it is important to tell stories where automatically you can have a lot of diverse faces on the screen, just because they're required for the piece. We're developing a piece about the beginning of the Notting Hill carnival and you know that 80%-90% of the talent will be BAME.

LH: And do you have anything to do with how these films are crewed up? Is it word of mouth?

Recommendations? Is it advertising?

CL: We have a little to do with HoDs insofar as we're supposed to be consulted. I should say that a very big proportion of what we do is in collaboration with the BFI, especially the low-budget things, which, for a movie, would be £3m and under.

LH: And they've got this three-tick policy. Have you adopted that too?

CL: We haven't but, as I say, in roughly 40% of our projects that's sort of an automatic thing going to be done anyway because of the BFI adopting it. Now the reason we haven't, and we're in talks about it, is to do with the production community with which we're working. Our business affairs chief wants to interrogate it a bit more because so many of the producers we're working with are operating on a shoe-string already, so we're just trying to take an intelligent mind-set about where we are compared to television, and how the indie ecology will work.

LH: But the film industry can cope with that. If the film industry were to adopt the three-tick policy, it would change things overnight. [...] And it's the idea of privileging alternate perspectives.

CL: And I am very much doing that in the commissioning process, and we have a huge number on the slate. Of my last say 14 commissions about 9 or 10 of them have been with that accent. We need a step-change, and we are a tiny team, but I feel sure the impact will be felt within my team soon. I think the three-tick consideration being made in business affairs means that the change in BBC Film hasn't happened yet, but it's more to do with a) the fact that if we sound complacent it's because 40% is covered by the BFI; and, b) the precarious sort of nature of engagement in the multi-party set-up where we don't control that much. That's the thing. What I control is commissioning. The power lies with the writer and director.

LH: But what's great is that it sounds like you're on the front foot, because you can commission, and base that on a variety of criteria. [...] Could the BAME situation and the lack of inclusivity in our industry be improved by implementing what the BBC did a few years ago with women in film and television, in that they cherry-picked a group of women who they thought would go far, and gave them access to green-lighting, commissioning, processes, exec production, meetings, all that kind of stuff, and said you guys are going to be our future leaders. Do you think that could work for BAME? I

know they're trying to do the Deputy Commissioner and Leadership things, but is that a way of doing it?

CL: Yes, possibly.

LH: I'm talking about pickers and deciders. So, commissioners and exec producers and script editors and editorial and all that, because that is somewhere BAME needs support – in those areas. It's about fast-tracking people already in that position, who have been overlooked for whatever reason-

CL: At the moment with charter renewal and the uncertainty faced by the BBC, I don't know. To be perfectly honest with you there's a climate of retrenchment. We're really going through a period where it feels like jobs are going to disappear, so it's quite hard, because it's almost like a parallel universe when you talk about recruitment. So forgive me if I don't have, today, an exuberant [reaction to that].

[...]

LH: So we're liking the database, but we're a bit split on the ring-fenced money.

CL: Well I think with the ring-fenced money, you need to get people like me and make sure they know that it's incumbent upon them to make a change. Obviously that's leaving a lot to trust and chance, but it shouldn't really be. If you're working at the BBC, you're a responsible person. But I think what you would be ensuring is that no-one would feel that there's a sort of tokenism, and I don't think that anyone should ever feel that they're

getting a job because they're black or Asian or transgender. But what you've had with the Nations and Regions, as successful as it has been, is a certain amount of horse-trading. Savvy London people saying we can get it out of Scotland.

LH: We don't want that. Certainly we don't want people filling positions with the bloke from the door or the woman from the canteen. One final thought: in America there was a time when it was thought the key demographic that could make or break a film was young men between the ages of 16-24 and movies reflected this accordingly. Who do you guys consider to be your key demographic both in terms of box office and critical acclaim, how diverse is the demographic and how does this demographic react to diversity in their films? Very interesting talking to a distributor the other day about what foreign markets will or will not take: urban films, sports films, Westerns, biopics, that sort of thing.

CL: Oh well I think we just have to just get over ourselves and do it. For example we've been offered a film about the bus strike in Bristol. It's a little gem of a story, and our writer on it is white, but we asked him if someone else could write it.

LH: Or collaborate on it. I think collaboration is key. The thing about fairer representation is that another voice at the table is good. And what would be nice to fade out is having to translate what BAME or gay or whatever writers are saying or what

their intentions are. If you're pitching to a straight white guy there's always a moment when he looks at you and thinks what does that mean? And I think this idea of privileging different stories and perspectives is key, because if you pitch something to someone [who understands or is from the same background, they can ask intelligent questions and work on the concept with you] and you might get a devil's advocate thing going on.

3. Pippa Harris



[source: <http://www.screendaily.com/news/pippa-harris-to-chair-bafta-film-committee/5091143.article>]

Pippa Harris started her career as a production assistant at Jacaranda Productions in 1989. She held several positions at ITV and Channel 4 before moving to the BBC where she became Head of Drama Commissioning in 2001. In 2003 she co-founded Neal Street Productions with Sam Mendes and Caro Newling. She has produced numerous films with Neal Street, including Jarhead, Revolutionary Road, and Away We Go. For television, Pippa has produced the BAFTA winning Call the Midwife and The Hollow Crown, among many others. Pippa is Chair of BAFTA's film committee and is an independent board member of The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

[source: <http://nealstreetproductions.com/about-us/pippa-harris>]

LH: What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive work force both behind and in front of the camera?

PH: It seems to me to be a no-brainer that the more diverse your workforce, and the broader the spectrum you are able to draw from, the better it is for the industry as more people will want to go and watch your films. I can't see any advantage in having a narrow workforce. It seems totally self-defeating.

LH: So how come the whole industry seems so monocultural?

PH: I don't know, I think it varies between film and TV. I think TV is actually making some headway and that may be because TV has got bigger institutions like Sky who are trying to instigate some kind of system whereby you have to have a certain level of diversity otherwise you don't get your show made.

LH: The BFI are doing the 3-tick quota thing, but I'm not sure how it will work.

PH: Exactly, because film is so fragmented in the UK and it's so difficult to get anything funded that individual producers are scrabbling around. When we did Blood we had seven funders or something. So there's no over-arching body apart from maybe BBC Films or Film4 who can say, Okay guys, and can we look at what you're doing about representation on and off screen. And I think historically, not just with BAME, but with the craft aspects, film still has this familial tradition of your dad was a

gaffer, you can be a gaffer. So certain crafts are very locked off, not just to people who are not the right colour or ethnicity, but people who are not from the right part of London.

LH: Social mobility is key here.

PH: Absolutely, and I think that is worse in film because it is such a much smaller industry, so the chances of getting in are so much smaller. But I think ultimately it will get better in the way that I think women's portrayal and representation has got better over the years.

LH: Well I think women in film and TV are actually the standard-bearers for advancement in the industry. If you look at where you guys were 20 years ago, and that organisation now, it's extraordinary. And I think there's a lot to learn from how women in film and TV have progressed. If funding bodies were obliged by the government to enhance the proportion of the BAME population employed within the industry, what measure might you or they adopt to do this?

PH: Well I think you could have a fairly simple system like the cultural test for a British film where you simply have to put down your diversity figures, and if they don't cross a threshold, you don't get the funding. I actually don't think it's rocket-science. And I think people are very nervous about it, weirdly, but I suspect, that if that came in, within a few years' time it would become par for the course.

LH: The EHRC have just said that the ideas of ring-fenced money and a database are lawful. And I think that as 14.3% of the population are BAME, it seems sensible that a pot of money is made available.

PH: Yes, and I think your database point is a really good one because there are lots of very well-meaning people who really want to encourage diversity.

LH: But there is a suggestion that to move forward we need people to be self-declaring, because we can't see what the talent base is, so we're going to have to start doing that. [...] How have other tax incentives changed your productions previously? Tax breaks for locations for example.

PH: They change them; they work. People went and shot in Prague because of the tax breaks, and a lot of the high-end TV productions came back to the UK because of the tax breaks that were re-introduced.

LH: So if there were a similar tax-break system for employing a diverse workforce, you'd abide by that?

PH: Absolutely.

LH: And when you're making a film or TV show, how do you usually recruit? Word of mouth?

Recommendations? People you have previously worked with? Advertising? You've said a couple of times now that film is basically familial.

PH: I think it depends on the level you're talking about. So, recruiting a director, I'll generally know who I'll want to direct. When you get down a level, Heads of Department say, you're looking at

show-reels, recommendations from other people, films you've admired-

LH: So you would rarely advertise?

PH: I would never advertise. Because for a Head of Department you're going to assume they'll have done a body of work which is out there for you to see. I think when you get below that, generally what happens is that those Heads of Department crew up, so I would have fairly minimal input into the choice of focus puller. Your DP will choose that team. But then again on casting, people like me have a big input with the Director and Casting Director, and then you can have quite an influence, but again none of these jobs are advertised. You don't put open calls out because so many millions of people will turn up. [...] But I think you've got to take a step back, because to even get on the Casting Director's radar you'll probably have needed to go to drama school, and to go to drama school you've now got to overcome almost another set of hurdles.

LH: Drama schools are expensive.

PH: I know, I'm on the board at Central.

LH: Right, and clearly mentoring, and bursaries and sponsorship are things that should be encouraged by all of us who are in power, on boards, or able to help in some way.

PH: Yes, well we've just done our first raft of scholarships for actors at BAFTA and they've done behind the camera scholarships before.

LH: And at Neal Street do you have a training/intern/runner situation or is it just a very small operation?

PH: Yes, so I'm on the board of Creative Access and we do a BAME training scheme, so I only let Neal Street take people through that and we've done that for the last three years and it's worked out really, really well. We can only take one intern at a time because there's only five of us, but Jennifer, who was our last intern, she's now got a job on Call the Midwife as a Production Secretary, so hopefully she'll go through the system and end up as a Producer.

LH: And what's great about that is there's training and then there's a possibility of a job at the end of it. If there's no job [it's no good], which is why the BBC Deputy Commissioner scheme is worrying, because you think what's going to happen at the end? And, is it an ongoing thing? Will it end after a year? Because the BBC's cherry-picking of women 15/20 years ago worked. So, would you back ring-fenced funding for the cherry-picking of BAME individuals? Because often there are people who need a leg-up and they won't get that unless somebody provides funding.

PH: Exactly, and I think that's why you have to do it almost at every level, because I think it's great to train people and to have intern schemes, but you then need to carry on. One of my first interns at Carlton was Anne Mensah and she went

onto the BBC and now she's at Sky and one of the few black women at that level.

LH: The first time I met Anne Mensah was the first time I had a creative meeting with someone who kind of looked like me. And the first time I met her at the BBC it was such a surprise.

PH: Yes, and she was smart enough to carry on and make a great career, but there are lots of people without the right connections, or who aren't set up properly to continue and they sort of fall away because as you say, unless you have the right support network around you, [it's actually incredibly difficult]. You need support all the way along.

LH: And if producers were able to access extra funding from the government by meeting certain diversity criteria, similar in the way the BFI three-tick system works, would this be something you would support or join in with?

PH: Absolutely. And I don't think it's that tricky either. I think it's like people say there aren't any women directors, actually, there are, but you maybe have to work slightly harder to find them, and onscreen portrayal for me, there's no excuse because there are so many talented actors coming through. Having said that I do think there are pockets within the large BAME umbrella which are poorly served. We were hiring an older Chinese actor the other day, and there isn't a deep talent pool there.

LH: There is in China. So you're committed to acquiring greater representation for BAME talent in film and television, and that's great. Do you think there has been a reduction in social realism in film? Full Monty, Cathy Come Home, Billy Elliot, these sorts of films that were about working-class people, or people of a certain class? Because a lot of BAME creatives are told write what you know and a reduction in these low-concept films might make it harder for BAME talent.

PH: Well, I don't know actually about that, I think they do get made. But whether there's been a ghettoization is another question. When Boys in the Black Stuff got made, I don't think the guys at the BBC saw that as niche, they saw it as something that could appeal across the board, and I think there's been a slight tendency coming out of the BFI of looking at films like The Selfish Giant as films that ought to be made but that people won't necessarily watch. So you need to find a way of tapping into that strand of social realism that can appeal to millions of people. It's not niche or ghetto, it's what millions of people's lives are like.

LH: But surely the way to approach it is as you would any mainstream movie? Where you look at the financial imperative of getting in a broad audience.

PH: That's right. You should be doing them because they are commercially viable, good strong stories.

LH: The film industry is quite mono-cultural, isn't it? How should we challenge that?

PH: Well I think it's difficult. You have to start bringing in some of the things you're talking about. You have to bring in an obligation on people who are making movies to employ a diverse workforce because if there's no obligation the default is to work with people with whom you've worked before, and that's human nature, to want safety.

LH: But do you think BAMEs need to do more to get into that phonebook? Because it seems that we're not in the phonebook. We do network, but not like the incumbents. Nobody comes to a BAME working class school and says Do you want to make movies? Because this is what needs to happen. And that's to do with mentoring and outreach work. So, how do you get more people to turn up for auditions, and things like that?

PH: Well, I think it's a question of going into schools. You've got to get out there and into the schools from which you're not getting any students. There's also a slight issue, where things are slightly improving for black and Asian kids coming out of university, but it's the kids who are not graduates, working class kids, where there's no sense that this is a path they might follow, because nobody's leading the way.

LH: But it felt like that forty years ago. With the advent of digital technology it feels like that should have changed, but hasn't that much. And I want to know how we change that mono-cultural thing. And it's not about punishing people, rather, we need it to change from the inside. But there's got

to be a way and I wonder whether it's to do with targets, or box-ticking. People seem not to like quotas because quotas smack of tokenism, but what is the way forward with this?

PH: I don't know. [...] I mean, we did a big thing called Inspiring Women and it's Miriam Gonzalez's charity, and we hooked up with BAFTA and we did a speed-dating event, and we did a speed-dating event in the Turbine Hall at the Tate with 800 school girls from across the country and 100 women working with the arts, and basically you just met with ten girls and talked to them about what you did, and after ten minutes you'd move round and talk to another ten. And most of these girls would just say I couldn't work in the arts and you'd say why? And they'd say well no-one in my family works in the arts, and when I told my mum I was coming to this she said, well you won't make any money in the arts and you've got to be sensible and do a sensible job.

LH: And would you talk about qualifications and what jobs you could do in the industry?

PH: Exactly. And I think it's very difficult if you don't know anyone in film or TV to get a sense that the onscreen jobs are only a part of it, and that's there's a whole range of other jobs, because it doesn't occur to you and you don't know what those jobs are. And somehow it's reaching out to kids like that, whether through events like this one, or actually going into the schools, and it feels quite fragmented at the moment. And it feels like everyone's trying to do their bit, but they're all

doing slightly different things, and there needs to be an overarching power in place.

[...]

LH: Everybody talks about training: training, runners, internships, and they're all aware of the issues with training, but it seems to me there's an infantilisation of BAME and I'm extrapolating to women in the industry too, to say you've got train. But what about the people who've been in the industry, but who've hit a ceiling, and they can't get any further because you need a leg-up or a break? Where do they go? Because as I said in the BAFTA speech, a lot of BAME people fell-away with the nations and regions thing.

PH: Well I do think, nowadays you do get the Anne Mensahs who are at the top. But I suppose there is a question to be asked about whether they feel a slight reticence when you're someone like Anne to be the sort of spokesperson. Does she feel that she's got where she is because she's got there because of tokenism, and actually she just wants to be part of the industry and not necessarily a champion?

LH: A lot of tokenism comes from the idea of quotas, and I know a lot of BAME people who reject quotas, but they forget sometimes it's those quotas that gave them a leg-up, and what about the generation beneath them? Right, my final question, which is about demographics. Back in the day it seemed that in America the key demographic that could make or break a film was young men between the ages of 16-

24 and movies reflected this accordingly. Who do producers consider to be their key demographic how diverse is the demographic, or are you just going for great stories?

PH: I think as producers we're a little tiny company, so we just go for the stuff we love, and that makes either Sam or me feel something. I think that question is more to do with studios who are really looking at demographics, because genuinely it doesn't enter my head.

LH: But one of the reasons the industry finds it difficult to engage with the diaspora is because they are not of it, they're just six geezers from Oxbridge. How do we change that?

PH: Well, it is, as you say, getting people into decision-making roles.

[...]

LH: But to me, we need a coalition of the willing to get it working, because it's going too slowly at the moment, and the feast and famine success of BAME creatives, like Steve McQueen said, is not how it should be working.

4. Henry Normal



[source: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/henry-normal-we-are-doing-very-exciting-things-with-alan-partridge-7729083.html>]

Henry Normal is an English writer and producer for TV and Film. Normal co-wrote *The Royle Family* with Caroline Aherne and *The Parole Officer*. His credits as Producer/Exec Producer include *Philomena*, *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa*, and *Gavin and Stacey*. He is the Managing Director of Baby Cow Productions, which he set-up with Steve Coogan in 1999.

[source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Normal]

LH: What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive work force both behind and in front of the camera?

HN: The way I'd start on this is to ask the question why haven't we got an inclusive situation? And what I've found from my experience on Marion and Geoff and *The Human Remains*, for example, where we had no brief from the BBC, is you go to people you know. If you look at people's CVs you look for similar work. If I'm looking for a Sound guy, I'll look for someone who's worked on comedies, because they'll know how comedies work. Not *The Bill*, comedies. So its CVs, IMDB CVs, and people's recommendations.

LH: So it's word of mouth or recommendations, not advertising? You don't advertise for the job?

HN: No we don't. And working from that I work back and say what's the problem? And the thing is you've got to be in the game to be in the game. Now I'm working class, I was brought up on a council estate, and I got in the game by going through the comedy circuit and [through] Caroline Aherne and other working class comedians; so you form your alliances, and you form a little power base, and then you get up, and you pull your mates with you. So with about a tenth of the population being BAME, you would expect that to be reflected in TV, but it's not, and I think the reason we are where we are is that you've got a situation where if you go back twenty years, there weren't even any working class people. And I think in a way, the way to grow it, is you

need those big names, people who are so talented that nothing else matters. You get in the game because you're so talented, and then you pull in other people around you. Now the only way it can work beyond that is you give incentives. And I don't think you can give penalties, I don't think you can stop people from doing things, but I think you can give incentives, so in a commercial consideration, if you've got a situation where someone says, to get a BFI funding [grant] you have to have a percentage of BAME [cast or crew] then certainly some of the smaller channels would take advantage of that, because it's a lot of money for them.

LH: But are quotas really the right thing though? They're normally more about quantity than quality.

HN: Yes, but I'm saying that in a practical sense you've either got to do it through [this] or through building power bases by getting people in who just haven't had a chance of getting into the game.

LH: But that's still about social mobility, that's still word of mouth, recommendations, and things like that. It's not reaching out.

HN: What I'm saying is, that's how I think it works, not how it should work. So you take The Mighty Boosh, we've made The Boosh and they [the creators] bring Richard Ayoade along. We realise how cool and how talented Richard is, and then he shines in the show, and goes on to have a huge career. Now he only got on television through Garth Marengi which

is part of the Boosh group, and there is that sort of sense that it works in this industry – the comedy industry particularly – you don't get placed in the centre in your first thing. And it's not so bad a thing if you give a lot of people a chance [through small parts away from the centre] to get on the first rung. If you get on the second rung it's up to you, but if you get on the first rung, you're in the game because I think that's the problem [a lot of people can't get in the game]. So when I was fourteen, I was walking along the road, and I thought, sport or comedy, that's how I, as a working class person, will get out. And I thought, the older you get in sport, the less you get, whereas the older you get in television, the more you get. So I think people have to set out a stall. Now what we can do to help, I would say is obviously you don't want any bars to that, and most of the people I've met in this business, I don't think I know anybody who would bar somebody because of their race or colour. I don't think that's the case. There is a sense that we get a little bit of pressure from the channels to get [good] people now, but then you've got to sneak people in at the lower level. And I think it works for everybody. So if we need a way through, then we need to get as many people as possible on the first rung, and the people that will rise, will rise.

LH: I guess the parallel to that is the idea of initiatives and learning programmes. If funding bodies were obliged by government by tax or other

incentives to enhance BAME employment within the industry, what measure might you adopt? And I'm talking about behind the camera as well. Would you support that?

HN: I'd absolutely support it and I'd say that obviously you would expect equal pay for everyone. We often get people like Channel 4 who say will you take this person and we'll pay half, and we'll often do these things. We offered jobs to two BAME people through something like this though they actually moved onto other things. Again, you're trying to reflect society, so you want to get about 10%, and if it's below that you need to augment it.

LH: When you look at your company, do you think it's diverse?

HN: It has its diversity, but I don't think it reflects the population. We do have people from different backgrounds who work for us. I actually paid someone about 5 years ago to just go and look at the black acts, because they weren't coming in to see us, and we tried and tried.

LH: Did you get any?

HN: We got one guy a pilot, but it didn't go to series. So I think there's a few things spotted around but-

LH: Have you got any execs? Because, one of the reasons I ask about employing people behind the scenes is that when you look around Production or Editorial staff, there are very few BAME people in that.

HN: Well we had John Rushton do Hunderby for us, and I didn't even know he was black. I looked at his CV and that was it, and he was brilliant. But in a strange way, I don't see positive discrimination going on; I don't see any selective or institutional racism. What I see is the devil you know. If I've got two people's CVs, the one that I know is going to get the job.

[...]

LH: What stands in the way?

HN: I don't think anything stands in the way. What's happened recently is that Sky have sent letters round to everybody and they've had a conference about inclusion and diversity. And they've come to us and said, you must have BAME representation in your casting. Go out and find them, it's not good enough to say you don't know any that's the message.

LH: And how do you feel about that?

HN: I feel absolutely fine about that, as long as at the end of the day they can do the role. We shouldn't get so complacent that our pool narrows and narrows. I went to Edinburgh last week, and went to about forty acts, and it's all about widening your sphere. And the BBC are doing it, and so are ITV. So everybody's saying that it's what they want.

LH: But I think that's about what's in the programmes. I have noticed a gradual change in on-screen representation, and people making specific efforts to broaden their purview, but what I

haven't seen is that same drive to greater representation behind the camera.

HN: Well Sky did actually put out a Mission Statement on that as well. But it's very difficult [in comedy] to get crews at all, they're all going to drama, because they get paid more in drama. We really struggle for crew; they're certain key-grips and certain areas where it's like trying to get a plumber, and the rates are going up because there's a shortage of supply.

LH: So a database would help?

HN: A database would be great. If we had a database, and we were looking for a Sound guy, and one of the usual people wasn't available, we'd definitely use it, and we'd look for things they've done before.

LH: And what if they'd done nothing before?

HN: Then we'd put them on a pilot, as we did with the 5-minute Muslim shorts. And then we'd go from there.

LH: What's great about what you're saying, you're being very consistent, is that there has to be an on-ramp so that people can show what they can do. [...] The thing is whoever you are, you're working. What I think is that it's the people in the middle, the execs, who need a leg-up it seems to get through the glass ceilings.

HN: You know I would say, and this is going to sound controversial, once you get in the game, the fact that you're from a different background is not going to hold you back in the least. And, more often than not, it's actually going to put you in a

great position, because everyone wants to be fair-minded. You've not really got the opportunity to be fair-minded very often because you're scrambling for speed, and scrambling to make something for less money than you've got.

LH: But in that situation, you've not really got the time to train anybody.

HN: Runners – because of the nature of the job, and the short time you're a runner for – is actually a good way to get your foot in the door. And we've taken on runners who then go through the system and become producers or writers, and we always take a leap of faith on those.

LH: I want to talk about subject matter now, because you're part of the Northern Soul thing, which I love, and Partridge is of a certain class. But if you look at some of the classic movies like Kes or Poor Cow – social realism – they purported to hold a mirror up to society, and there was a possibility that you might see someone from the immigrant community or diaspora, because in our society, a lot of it was people rubbing along or against each other. And the story came from conflict – would you like this guy to marry your daughter? Or, this guy's taken my job, but we're all in the same boat, kind of thing. And we had a fair proportion of movies like that. Do you think that's decreased and do you think that's affected what we see on our big screens now?

HN: I think it is, because I think people go for escapism more, but I don't think that should effect

– be it behind or in from to the screen – anyone from BAME [populations] getting into the film or TV industries. I don't think the fact that the social realism [has declined is an effect in itself].

There used to be – in Community Arts for example – a sense of artistic expression, and I think that's been drilled out of television and lost. And that was a way to learn the trade and express yourself, and there wasn't as much pressure. Now there's no hiding place, on your first appearance, you're judged against the best, and nowadays it really is a sort of Americanised, over-produced industry.

LH: If there was a pot of ring-fenced money for the promotion of black and Asian creatives, would you support that, and why?

HN: Yes, because, if twenty years ago the whole of television was run by black and Asian people, and we got to the situation now, and all the white people were saying but we can't get in the game, then I'd be saying, well, yeah, because the incumbent won't step down, you've got to get in. And you've either got to get in by force of talent, or you've got to find some other way. And I would say whoever is the incumbent, you've got to try and make it easy, and until it's a true representation of the country, then I think you're justified in doing that. Once we've got to a situation where it reflects, broadly, the society you get rid of it.

LH: It's about quality not quantity though, because quotas are dangerous; you can have a diverse workforce, but they work in the canteen and things.

What I'm saying is, if there's ring-fenced money for creatives, there should be gatekeepers who are responsible for allocating funds based on talent.

HN: I'd be fine with that, but you would want to make sure it's not seen as tokenistic. It would need to be seen in the same sense as people getting into university. Insofar as what you then make of it is most important. I don't know precisely who would front the money.

LH: Well I don't think it should be just the BBC-

HN: Well I don't know if you've spoken to Sky, but they've just built a huge building just dedicated to training. And they're not shouting about it, they're just doing it. Now, I would imagine, from the stuff that I've got personally from Sky, that they're going to make sure that that's representative.

LH: Well they should be representative, because if you look at their consumers, it's incredibly representative. BAME audiences can get their American stuff and their sport, and they feel they can get the packages of entertainment they actually want [from Sky].

HN: The area I think needs the most help is the writers. Because the actors and actor-writers can get through on personality, but a black or Asian writer getting their first thing on TV is hard. You're trying to sell concept, and that's more difficult, because you get it through the post or e-mail, and you're competing against maybe fifty

scripts a month – that’s how many get sent to us and we say on our website not to send material.

[...]

LH: This idea of fast-tracking execs, producers, script editors, fast-tracking people as they did with women at the BBC (about 15 years ago) by giving them access, and then propelling them afterwards. Would you support that?

HN: Well it’s very similar with what we did with the Channel 4 thing. And the two [whom we offered jobs] would have had a foot in the door and would have an advantage over those who just send in a CV.

[...]

LH: I don’t think anyone’s asking for any favours, I think what people are asking for is a chance to prove that they can do the job.

HN: And that’s the fundamental thing to all this: the fact that we’re starting from a basis of there was privilege and a closed society. And over the last 25 years we’ve been slowly widening it out, but we’re not at a stage where we can say it [the comedy industry] is representative of society. But I think if you ask any individual within the comedy industry, and they’d be all for it.

LH: What about mentoring?

HN: Yep, mentoring would be great, and mentoring can take all forms. So you take someone who wants to be a script-writer, and you either give them a script commission or you work with them. So if you said to me, I’ve got five writers, and they’re all funny, but they can’t get a gig, then anybody in

this business would say, bleeding hell, we've got five people who can write a script, and they would want to work with them. [...] There's three ways of getting into television: youth, through BBC3 or E4; then there's being famous, writing for somebody famous like Stephen Fry for example; and then you get concept stuff, like a funny Game of Thrones for example, and you get someone to do that, and it doesn't matter what colour they are. It doesn't matter who writes that, it matters that it's fun. So, if we were trying to set-up the scheme now, I would talk to them about those three ins.

LH: What you've just said seems very relevant to me for BAME writers because you need to know the audience for whom you're writing.

HN: Yes, and I think there is a sense of telling a story about your background whether you're black or Polish or whatever, but with comedy you've got to be clever. Make it about your background, but make it palatable. And unless it's germane to the moment don't mention your background at all, and that's how it will become mainstream, by playing a character [rather than a specifically black or Asian character]. It's about being true characters. To do the story of being the first black man in the village – we've gone past that I think. And if you walk down Oxford Street, you've got everyone there just bumping into each other, and if we could get that in TV, that would be great.

LH: What you're talking about is making [programmes] which represents our society but that doesn't present ethnicity as a problem.

HN: Yes. The issue is I want to fall in love or I want to break away from my parents. That's what I loved about Star Trek, there was no mention of nationality or ethnicity, it was you get on with that job, and I'll get on with this job, and the reason I say it is because it's not getting done. Most comedies are not Oxford Street. You have little pockets, [but that's it]. Most of the comedy in this country at the moment is a writer who's also a performer, and if you take Gavin and Stacey, it's about Wales and North London because they are the worlds from which [the talent] comes. [...] But it is about getting on the first rung.

5. David Heyman

23rd February 2016

David Heyman, founder of Heyday Films, is best known for acquiring the rights to the first four Harry Potter books and subsequently producing all eight films. He was also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture in 2013 for Gravity.

David was born and raised in London. He went to Harvard where he studied history of art. In the 80s he worked as a development executive at Warner Brothers then moving to United Artists. He subsequently embarked on an independent producing career with his first film Juice in 1992.

In 1997 Heyman returned to London to found Heyday Films. His films at Heyday include all of the Harry Potter movies, I am Legend, The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, Gravity and Paddington.

Interview

DH: I know you're going to laugh. I made a point of hiring a black driver because there were no black drivers. I couldn't believe it. I don't know why it took me so long to wake up to it. And I promise you it wasn't the news about this. Partly it was working on Paddington.

L: OK let's start. This is David Heyman.

D: I looked at the films I've made in this country - because most of the films I've made are in this country - but not just here. In New Zealand and Australia. It is shockingly lilly white. I found it just depressing.

L: What do you think that stems from David? Because this has been a multiracial country since, forever! Entertainment still seems very monocultural.

D: The only area where it is not monocultural, and I don't know why, is the visual effects departments where there are an awful lot of Asians in particular. It's become a bit of a thing for me to look around. Visual effects is the one department where - it's still primarily male - but women and Asians, a few blacks, but that seems to be the most racially mixed. And I don't know what the explanation of that is.

L: I could make the joke about people CGI-ing more black people into films where there weren't, but I won't.

D: So to answer your question: I think there are a couple of areas. Lack of government funding to the cost to get into the film business. It's an expensive business to work in when you're starting off because you've got to travel. So how do you

travel? You've got to get there. So it's not a working class, a lot of people are excluded. That's why Skillset who are trying to hire people across class, with no racial agenda. And Creative Access, who we're working with, trying to hire primarily BAME people. We put up 50% and the government put up 50% of the salary. We are using that when we are hiring people. Here and now on Paddington.

L: Tell me about Paddington (2014 , DIR & WR BY PAUL KING + WR HAMISH MCOLL AND EMMA THOMPSON) . The irony of it being about a Peruvian immigrant...

D: And everyone on the film is white. It's just insane. Paul, the director, and I were looking, we were conscious of it with the casting and everywhere so when we got there we said what the hell. Paul and I looked at each other and said this is ridiculous.

L: But that's every film set I've ever been on.

D: You're right but it was a light bulb moment. A call to action.

L: So a small bear from Peru made you rethink the inclusivity of the British film industry?

D: Yes. Listen, the first film I made was JUICE (1992, DIR ERNEST DICKERSON ,WR GERARD BROWN) It was Tupac before Tupac was Tupac. This sounds silly

but there was no thought about race. We just made a film about a story that I found interesting. When I was at university I was always interested in, one of my best friends was a woman called Eve Trout, she was my...

L: How did you get to make that movie? That's quite deep. That's Ernest Dickerson, post Spike Lee. That's Tupac.

D: When I finished my first proper job working as a runner on PASSAGE TO INDIA (1984 ,DIR DAVID LEAN :WR BY : LEAN, EM FORSTER ,S.RAMAU RAU) I then went to work with my dad in New York. Again that's my break because of my parents. I was talking to Alfonso Cuarón about this, one of the things he feels about this country is that, as racially diverse this country is, socially people hang out with the same people. It's not as broad and inclusive as say, even, America. When you go out to a bar there a people who are older, there are people who are younger, there are people who black, white, rich. It's a much broader... I'm not sure whether it's accurate or not, but it's certainly something he was aware of.

L: Yes, we have black book-itis. There's not a process of advertising and interviewing for a job. You say I know this guy can do the job and of you go.

D: It's expediency. You've worked with them before and you've seen their work. The responsibility goes in two directions. In part because there are very few black or asian faces on TV there aren't stories that tell the stories of BAME people, or very few. So if you're looking at that then you think about what is the place? How am I going to... Why is this an industry..?

L: Do you think there's not a market?

D: No I think there is a market for those stories, but they are not being told. I mean, how many people know about Horace Ove? I bet if you go around interviewing people in the industry, how many people have seen Pressure? I'm asking you, how many people in the white film community.

L: I wouldn't be able to say. We have a history of 'breakout' movies like Bend it like Beckham (2002) and Babylon(1980) and Kidulthood (2006), Adulthood (2008) and Attack the Block (2011) even though it was made by Joe Cornish, a white director, it was still about the endz. We have a history of movies that goes POP and then they go again.

D: It's the exception. We don't believe it's sustainable. I think also what's happened, the film industry in general is in a really strange, difficult place. My world, I try to bridge the studio and the independent worlds. The studios are

all about brands and blockbusters - a very specific remit: Harry Potter, Star Wars, Batman, Iron Man. Tent pole movies. And in this country we largely make independent films.

L: We make drama.

D: Yes and that's hard. And harder.

L: Why?

D: Because those films are becoming marginalised. It's harder to get those films going.

L: It's funny because those films are Oscar and BAFTA bait.

D: Oscar and BAFTA is less... I mean look at the ratings for the Oscars it's going down and down. And BAFTA is a nice thing but it doesn't affect the box office. And the Oscars don't really affect the box office. Especially in relation how much it costs to promote these films enough to get them to win. I went on that ride once with Gravity (2013) and it was ridiculous how much money was spent on the campaign. It was stupid!

L: Is that part of your budget?

D: Not going in. Nobody realised Gravity was going to be such a big movie.

L: So you make the movie, that's your budget done, and there's an extra budget where they decide, we're going to go for everything with this movie.

D: Yes, though the studio or financiers have that written in. They know roughly the film is costing roughly 100m we're going to spend 50. They have that in their heads.

L: I got cross watching the Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015, Dir Josh Whedon) movie because there's a scene where Iron Man and The Hulk decimate Mid-town and I just thought this sequence, you could have made 12 British films.

D: Yes, but now these big companies are run by listed companies. They are dealing with returns to increase the stock price. That's all it is. They are cutting prices, cutting fees, cutting back end, cutting the number of films they are making, they are making bigger films.

L: Your company was part of one of the most successful franchises of the last thirty years. Do you see a responsibility - I mean you've already talked about trying to change the makeup of your sets - but do you feel a sense of responsibility with that?

D: Yes, I was speaking to a work psychiatrist who

helps to get the work work for you rather than being a slave to the work. Trying to achieve that balance. The idea is you can do better but you need to be more efficient and you need to delegate. She said "What do you want your legacy to be?" I don't think about it in such grandiose terms as legacy but one needs to think about what one is leaving behind. So I said well I want my films to be good and she said think about this: one of the legacies is the people who work for you and with you and those people who will go on and create a future that goes on long beyond your films.

L: That's deep!

D: It sounds obvious but it's not something that we think about.

L: In terms of the UK film industry - the big sets like the Bonds and the Harry Potters - and period dramas. There seems to be a drop in the demand for UK period drama.

D: It'll go down and then it'll come up.

L: Globally we are known for period dramas

D: And family entertainment: Lord of the Rings (2001), Harry Potter 2001 -2011),Chronicles of Narnia (2005) Winnie the Pooh, Paddington. And you're right period. Those seem to be the things

that we are known for.

L: Interestingly there didn't seem to be any black people in Suffragette (2015) though there clearly were black people around at the time. What's fascinating in all these period dramas is you never see a black person.

D: The perception needs to be changed. I think that the lack of people working is not conscious racism, it's laziness. That is the biggest issue. There may be racism in pockets. But from people like myself it's laziness. That needs to be changed.

L: You're not lazy, you work hard.

D: But I clearly haven't been thinking about this.

L: Clearly then if diversity is something people have to think about - although recently it's become more on the agenda because of speeches people have given, #OscarsSoWhite - but for me, I worked at the BBC for 35 years, I never had a meeting with a black, brown, beige executive. Very few women. There's a few more now.

D: The other side of that, if you look at women executives, which there are in abundance in Hollywood and here. But look how few women directors there are. It's not a women thing. I try to understand why that is when there are so many

women executives. There are no, I mean no is too much, but there are probably as many black directors, in America, as there are women directors. That's ridiculous.

L: I'm all in favour of a canon of stories. I think that there are amazing stories. But it feels like there needs to be an industry wide buy in to include alternative sets of storytelling values. Because if you keep going to the same gene pool you're going to get the same stories.

D: I think it's already happening. Again part of it you are in a business which is becoming more and more conservative. And it's crazy that the business is meant to be creative but actually the really best films, no one knows they will be great. They catch you by surprise. Something magical happens. They are original, they don't fit in the box.

L: When I go to the movies I see a diverse audience which aren't reflected. When I go to a film set, the crew is very much a monocultural affair. How do we change that social mobility, black-book-itis thing?

D: I think the first thing is you need to get more people of colour working in the film industry, from the ground up. Partly it's awareness, I think that's beginning to happen because of this Oscar thing. I think the problem is much more rooted. If

you look around the crews and at the people working on these films, there are black actors, I don't know what percentage of actors working are black, but clearly actors on the whole are pretty lilly white, crews are white. Other than VFX departments, it's all white. On the last film I was working on there was one black person in hair and makeup. And one black spark. Then VFX.

L: When I had a production company, I would say at the beginning of production that it would be great if we could get a diverse crew! And because I was the exec it started to happen. It comes from the top.

D: I absolutely agree.

L: People always talk about training. But there are diverse people trained already. But you don't see them.

D: I think that's a couple of things. When you work on the big films the easy default is people who have worked on big films, because they know that scale. So it becomes self perpetuating. That's why we need to draw people in, to give them the experience and it will snowball. Once people are in and they've worked, you can't say they haven't done it. The other thing we need to get over is this notion that BAME movies don't travel. As the business has become more and more international -

this is a different strand. You can look at price points that make it viable but there's no way that the economics can't work. Second, it's about finding stories that are universal. You may be black, white, Mexican, you may be a Peruvian bear or you may be a monster but we all have our real - this sounds very corny - but we're all human beings.

L: Apart from the monster.

D: Well in order for an audience to connect with the monster you have to imbue it with certain human values.

L: Stories are stories. They are universal.

D: That's the thing. There was talk about making Harry Potter American, should we set it in America. Why?

L: More accessible to our audience!

D: Yes, but why? The fact is British stories have travelled the world. Why? Because though there may be cultural specificity there are universal themes, ideas, values, characters. Whether you are black, white, asian there are things that unite us, and those are the stories we tell. We shouldn't say "We need to tell black stories". We need to tell stories. Great stories.

L: If you're communicating with the story that's a good story!

D: Or you see two boys who want to shag a woman who is older than them and then think they are going to be friends for the rest of their life. But they realise maybe not. The film is about live now, don't live for the future, live now. Those are themes and ideas are universal even if it may be Mexican.

L: There are great stories globally. I think that because of the immigrant story in this country there are great stories that can show Britain at its best, and worst, while being moving. My MA film is about a mixed race basketball player. I did it for Revolution films and the feedback that came back was sports films don't sell and black films don't sell.

FILM SYNOPSIS.

The fact that sports films don't sell and black films don't sell was like an indelible stamp on his brain.

D: You know the film industry is full of platitudes. Things that say this is the way it is. And again it's a business and business almost by nature is conservative. It's a very conservative business for all this creativity. What it's all about is president. What are the models? What has worked before? What are the comps? A comparison. What's

the comparable to what you are proposing?

L: So they're not really looking for originality.

D: If it's original they've got to try and put it into a box. And that's depressing as all hell. And that's why I'm starting to look at TV. Because drama is now on TV. I loved British and American films of the 70s and European films of the 60s/70s. That's why I got into the business. Dealing with moral ambiguity. None of us are pure. And what's boring about most films now they are good guys that get better. Or they're great at the beginning and great at the end. Maybe you're perfect but I have my demons. And that's interesting to explore. But it's very hard to explore in commercial entertainment today.

L: I had a very well known Entertainment lawyer advise: 'Don't do movies, do television'

D: I think TV is now a place where more interesting drama, and comedy, but drama mainly can be done. Movies are about spectacle. The thing about The Revenant is the scale. It's a movie not a film. It's epic and that's why you go to the cinema. Nowadays I can see The Wire (2002) Deutschland '83 (2015), a soap opera like Empire, (2015) I can see Breaking Bad (2008) They are great stories. And high drama. You know that thing of just one more - binging.

L: It takes so much to get out of the house to go to the movie. I'm having this with Hateful Eight. It's meant to be epic but it's all in the one room so I'm not sure.

D: I've heard you wished it were epic. That's it's a waste of the 70mm format.

L: WHAT POSSIBLE COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS MIGHT THERE BE IN PROMOTING A MORE INCLUSIVE POLICY IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF A MORE INCLUSIVE WORK FORCE BOTH BEHIND AND IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA?

D: We are a celebrity driven culture. If you have a black grip or asian makeup person that's not... A director maybe, there was a period when Spike was BOOM. Steve McQueen was BOOM. There's a branding around that. And that's largely what the business and Hollywood is about.

L: It's about money right? It's about the producers.

D: You say that. I'm a producer but it's not my money. I never put up money it's the financiers who put up money. But I think where a producer like myself can make a difference is I can, like you did in the 90s, I can say I was this to reflect the society that I live in, as opposed to the one that I don't. That's not a difficult thing to encourage. Or to make happen.

L: Is there a commercial consideration?

D: It's harder to define. But in my gut I feel it's the same behind the camera as in front of the camera. If the films reflect the makeup of the world that I live in, the makeup of the world that I live in will go into those films.

L: It's to do with the audience - the eyeballs watching whatever films or programmes. If people know it was a diverse set...

D: Set doesn't mean anything. People don't care about the set.

L: But I care.

D: But that's you and me. We are not marketing the film that way.

L: I say unless the gatekeepers, it's people who finance movies, it's what they see that sells. A distributor sat me at a computer and showed me what sells where. There was a clear thing that films with black content sold better in some areas and not at all in others. But I think there are other benefits to having a more diverse makeup.

D: I think there are two discussions. First there's an economic and there's a moral. Economic is often

not moral. It's just about the business. I think there's a moral obligation that people like myself need to enforce, support, encourage, make happen a broader spectrum. Behind the camera that's irrelevant. The commercial consideration being really blunt is, if I'm telling a story - and I'm developing a story [The Long Song by Andrea Levy] for TV, about Jamaica in 18th/19th century. It was nominated for the Booker. About slavery. With that I think for commercial, for respect, you have to have a black director.

L: Who are you going for?

D: Don't know yet. Got to get the script right first.

L: Who's writing it?

D: Sarah Williams with the author very much involved.

L: Is Sarah Williams white?

D: Yes. It's a really interesting, powerful and beautiful and not miserablist...

L: Tough for a story about slavery.

D: But also to know within slavery there was rebellion and there was irreverence. Read the book!

L: Here we go then: IF FUNDING BODIES WERE OBLIGED BY GOVERNMENT (THROUGH TAX OR OTHER FISCALLY RELATED MATTERS) TO ENHANCE THE PROPORTION OF THE SAME POPULATION EMPLOYED WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, WHAT MEASURE MIGHT YOU ADOPT TO DO THIS?

D: I'm doing it because I think you've got to do it, not because I'm told to do it.

L: What measure might you adopt?

D: Government incentives might help. Economics makes it easier. People are driven economically most of the time. And actually a lot of people are... I can afford to hire an extra person.... I just think economics make it easier. If the government give you a portion of that you will be incentivised to hire people because it makes it cheaper to make your film.

L: When you were making Gravity or Harry Potter SAME inclusion wasn't on your mind, then you had a lightbulb moment when you were making Paddington.

D: I mean it's crazy, my first film the entire crew was black, the entire cast was black.

L: WHAT DIFFICULTIES STAND IN THE WAY OF GREATER EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS FROM THE SAME POPULATIONS?

D: I think there are a few things. Experience and exposure, and I think on the bigger films, you have to have worked on the bigger films. People often go back to the tried and tested. They go back to the people that they know. It's a very cliquey.

L: How do you break that cycle?

D: You need people like me to actually do something about it. People like me need to change things.

L: Nik Powell (National school of film and television) called it a coalition of the willing. Think in terms of training and internships. London is 40% BAME. The makeup creative industry pre regionalisation had a fairly good representation. But now it's gone down.

D: I'm interested by that. I had no idea because I look at the people who I've been exposed to on the crews of the 14 films I've made...

L: You found it very rare do you? As a TV producer I've been exposed to people like Remi Adefarasin and John Ignatius and various other people, the odd grip, the odd makeup person, but I've never met a black costume designer.

D: I've worked with a black costume designer, in America.

L: When you have a meeting with PACT for BAME workforce people show up and they have been working and doing stuff. But there isn't a sense of it being celebrated.

D: What's exciting, talk about directors for example, you take a director like Alfonso Cuarón who had made *Y tu Mamma Tambien* (2001) and you bring him on to do *Harry Potter*. Or you take David Yates who made *State of Play* (2003) and you put him on *Harry Potter*. Or you take Paul King who made a pretentious art film and you bring him to do *Paddington*. Because you can see something. People who haven't done it before. You give them the opportunity. And it's risky. If you're doing it with a director - the riskiest position of all - because if you f k up with the director, really as a producer, as actors, because you're following. If we can do it with that, why can't we do it with all. But with those directors it's about seeing something in their work that goes click. Part of it is exposure to people like myself.

L: So it's the film school guys.

D: Yes and it's also encouraging... Because I don't hire the grips. I hire the cameraman and the cameraman has his grip and his gaffer and they hire below them.

L: And that's a very closed shop.

D: Again it's about who can change that? It's me!

L: WOULD YOU SUPPORT RING-FENCED FUNDING (I.E. FUNDING SPECIFICALLY INTRODUCED) THAT EXISTED TO GIVE FINANCIAL BACKING SOLELY TO BAME ACTORS OR OTHER PRODUCTION STAFF?

D: When C4 started it was meant to herald a new wave

L: That's similar to what I'm talking about. C4's remit, part of it, was to represent voices in the margin. BAME, LGBT, disabled people. It was supposed to explode storytelling out from the center to the margin.

D: Do you think it did?

L: It did at first and then it became more commercially minded.

D: And that's the thing. We are in a time of commercial. Look at the BBC which is becoming more commercial. So in answer to your question. I think that's a good idea.

L: One of the things in the early days of C4 when you had the government funding the film workshops if artists such as Sankofa (set up in 1983 by five aspiring film-makers, Isaac Julien, Martina Attille,

Maureen Blackwood, Nadine Marsh Edwards and Robert Cruz) and John Akomfrah's Black Audio film collective in Birmingham. They were given a bit of money to go away and work with the equipment but they weren't given enough money to make anything commercial. So I think a newer version of that would say this money is available but you have to prove that there is a movie in there.

D: That's a thing with BFI funding in general, a lot of the money they put into films goes into things that will never be seen by anybody. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Should organisations like the BFI approach it like a business or should they approach it like an art. Should we be allowed to let these non-commercial voices express themselves. Historically someone like a Ken Loach.

L: Every so often there's a breakout Ken Loach film. Like the Full Monty, (1997) which was meant to be an all black cast until someone changed it. Bend it like Beckham proves that a story can come out of that community.

D: Another Indian film that came out before that one.

L: East is East (1999 -directed by Damien O'Donnell ,Wr by Ayub Khan Din)

D: Yes, such a well directed film.

L: I think those filmmakers and writers and creators around. Debbie Tucker Green made a film called *Second Coming* (2014) with Idris Elba and Nadine Marsh Edwards. What I love about that film is it's about normal everyday black family life. It's not about guns or crime. It's about a family. There a hundred of films about normal life wanting to be made.

D: But that's hard to get going whether it's white, black or asian.

L: Is that a class thing?

D: No, it comes back to television doing that. Why are people going to leave their house, pay a babysitter, go into London, buy popcorn, it's an expensive night out. Why are you going to do that to watch that film?

L: Because you can see that stuff on television?

D: More likely to see drama on TV.

L: I'm trying to understand this as a proto-producer. What you're saying is that BAME filmmakers have to be very aware about the story they are telling.

D: That's not a BAME issue. That's a producer's

issue now. As much as I'd like to say follow your heart. You can't do that.

L: Yes, all BAME filmmakers like to write about a small moment in life, or are very family focused. Look at Dance Hall Queen(1997 directed by Rick Elgood and Don Letts : Wr by Letts, Suzanne Fenn and Ed Wallace)

D: Yes but Dance Hall Queen had a context that was marketable. For all of us, as a producer, one must think about - and it's quite depressing - not just as a BAME issue, other than making the fantasy films that I've made in the past, if I wanted

L: Could you have got Juice made now?

D: Well you've got Top Boy. But that's TV. Noel Clarke got his made. So maybe. The thing about Juice is it's pre Tupac. There was nobody in it other than Sam Jackson that anyone knew. So how did we sell it? Spike Lee's camera man, - we sold as finished film, but I got Chris Blackwell to fund the film - hip hop soundtrack, set in a world of music, and at the time, that world, the inner city, Harlem, was marketable. A world of violence.

L: Shouldn't BAME filmmakers have the chance to make films that aren't just about violence.

D: Of course.

L: It would be great to have a transgender film that isn't about the person being transgender.

D: Transparent (2014) is more like that.

L: But that's TV.

D: That's what I'm saying. Look at Empire look at Luther look at The Wire, Breaking Bad. These are stories that could not be told nowadays in the cinema.

L: I like your thing of why are people going to leave the house.

D: We also need to think about common touch points. So I as a producer, whatever story I'm telling, I find things... I'm pretentious as all hell, I want to make films that no one will go to see, but if I want to make them, I have to do it for tiny budget. That's OK. Part of it is management of budget with the story. And what's exciting about now is both the challenges to market and be noticed, but you can also make films a lot less expensively.

L: If we did have this pot of money, Microwave is £100k per film. Films made with a TV deal tied in. It's like a play for today.

D: Also you could do competitions. I want to do

this. You put in £1m and you get 10 people to make a film. And one of those films might hit. If one hits, it's paid for itself. Government bodies like the BBC or C4, if they give a TV deal of £900,000 for an hour, which is what they are giving at the moment, and one of the films is guaranteed of that, maybe two, then 9 films are getting made a £100,000.

L: HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU TO THE NOTION OF ACQUIRING GREATER DIVERSITY (IE BLACK, ETHNIC MINORITY, DISADVANTAGED AND GENDER DIVERSITY) IN THE FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY? You've basically already answered this and I understand that having diversity is difficult.

D: But why? That's the thing.

L: Because of the gatekeepers.

D: I don't think it is. It's not conscious racism. It's laziness about one's responsibility. I am committed to changing it.

L: If I can do anything to help you, I'd love to do it.

D: Well the first thing we are doing, is on Paddington...

L: Right I'm going to be in this movie! (The Long Song)

D: I like this because it's a different story to 12 Years. Obviously it's like a venn diagram, there's crossover. Because you can see the argument, we just had 12 Years a Slave, is there room for another.

L: There are endless slave stories and slave tropes. So we've had 12 Years which seemed to be the morally acceptable slave movie of that year.

D: I actually had issues with the film. Michael Fassbender's character. By making him an alcoholic demon you dehumanise him. You know the old thing: To hate is to lack imagination. If you make him - even though he's the devil - it's like Ralph Fiennes in Schindler he was awful but there was a moment when you saw him break. If he did, for example, fall in love with that girl, if you saw a moment where.

L: You didn't think he loved that girl?

D: No

L: The wife frightened me. Throwing the glass at the woman's without even thinking about it, that chilled me to the bone.

TO WHAT DEGREE HAS THE LOSS OF APPETITE FOR SOCIAL REALISM IN FILM MAKING AFFECTED THE INDUSTRIES INCLINATION TO RECRUIT, EMPLOY OR ENGAGE BAME

INDIVIDUALS AND POPULATIONS?

D: Most certainly there has been a decrease in social realism filmmaking. Alan Clark, Mike Lee, Ken Loach, those films of the 60s and 70s in particular. That school of really powerful. It's diminished. A film like Juice isn't social realism. It's heightened. It's entertainment. That's much more the norm. Is that why we see fewer BAME people in front of camera...? I don't know. It shouldn't be.

L: HOW MONO-CULTURAL DO YOU CONSIDER THE FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY TO BE, AND HOW SHOULD THIS BE CHALLENGED?

D: Lilly white. I think it is shocking how white an industry it is. The thing is, I think it's a shame we are having this conversation. It shouldn't be about colour, it shouldn't be about BAME, it should be about hiring people, it requires a consciousness for that to happen.

L: COULD THE SITUATION BE IMPROVED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF BAME GATEKEEPERS AND COMMISSIONERS HIRED, COMMITTED AND EMPLOYED TO SELECT FROM A MORE DIVERSE TALENT POOL?

D: You'd hope so but look at the case of women directors. I don't know what the proportion of women employed in the industry is but it's fairly

significant. But you don't see that many women directors. In America it's a huge issue, I'm not sure if it's such an issue here, but there are very few women writers and directors when there are many women commissioners and producers. I don't know if that's an answer. But it won't hurt. It's one of those things where you don't know until you try it. So let's try it. See if it makes a difference. Ultimately you've got to come down to the stories being told. There will always be an economic imperative so one needs to find a model or the language with which to persuade people that the economics are viable. Because very few films are made because it's something one should do, they are made because there's a financial model.

L: My business partner always shifts from the moral imperative to the economic benefits of having a more inclusive strategy.

D: I think the employment strategy is behind the scenes. In terms of the BAME stories that gets told, that's where the money is involved, is this going to make money? That's the discussion. There's a moral, yes, but when you are putting money into a film there needs to be a sense of how you're going to get a return on that. In terms of hiring people, you want the best people, but there's also a responsibility to explore and encourage a working population that reflects the country as a whole. In terms of the stories to tell you could argue the

same thing. But I think it's harder, if I'm hiring you as a grip, that's a £1,000 per week job. If I'm paying for a film that could be a £3m commitment. It's a different thing.

L: In terms of having a BAME person on your producorial team, they would have something to add to the story. It will be tricky to retain the author's original voice for *The Long Song* because the screenwriter is white. When *The Small Island* was made for TV the focus was shifted away from the black protagonist to the white protagonist. I feel like the story was railroaded because of a predominantly white producorial voice. Having a BAME person would ensure stories focus on the right thing.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING APPROACHES TO DELIVERING BAME REPRESENTATION WOULD YOU FAVOUR AND WHY: a. OPPORTUNITIES FOR MENTORING. Would you mentor someone?

D: Yes. The nature of that mentoring is challenging. Yes I would mentor no question. What that mentoring means, there are certain things people can't be in for confidentiality, but absolutely, meetings.

L: b. TRAINING INITIATIVES SPECIFICALLY FOR ASPIRING BAME ACTORS OR SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY.

D: I think yes.

L: My worry with training initiatives is the infantilization of the work force.

D: I think it's about getting a foot in the door. For anybody, not just BAME, for people. Anything that helps people get a foot in the door. Is it ideal? No. Do we wish we didn't have it? Sure. But is it going to hurt no. Even if we got a 10%, 5% success rate would be great. Let's take the gloves off. Let's just do something.

L: Training only works for me if there's work at the end of it.

D: There's only a job if you get work and show yourself to be effective. The belief has to be, you have to have faith, that there will be a job. If you work for me and I see that you're really good at what you do, there's a job on the next film. If you don't or you're an arse hole there won't be. Again you need that coupled. Because one can't guarantee a job at the end of it.

L: In this industry there's no guarantees of a job at the end of it?

D: Nor for me! Also, if you're not good why should you be guaranteed a job?

L: That's a catch-22. How do you get good if you

haven't got a job? How do you get good if there's no sustained training.

D: Because the training has to be sustained. Not "you're going to do this for three months then you're done". We are now working with Creative Access and Creative Skillset to try and find an internship program that works here for a year, as opposed to what we also have which is a month. People come in, they work, they read, learn about what it's like to work at the company. We have those people but we also want somebody for a year. So they can see it more in depth. And rather selfishly it provides more consistency for us. It works both ways. Now how do you do that as a grip on a film?

L: I always smile when I see how people get into the industry. Most were in the right place in the right time.

D: For me the reason I'm talking to you now is because I made Harry Potter. I was in the right place at the right time. It wasn't like I'm a genius for finding it.

L: But you've got family in the business too. That's how you got started.

D: Yes that definitely helps. What I'm pointing out, even with someone like myself, good fortune and

being in the right place at the right time changes one's life. You can be Nick Rogue who is working in the editing room, to working in the camera department to directing a film. Partly he showed himself willing and he was incredibly hardworking and he had the talent to make the most of the moment. But he was in the right place at the right time.

L: For me training is two pronged. If you emphasise training too much people are kept in that bracket. They never get proper work.

D: It depends how you use a trainee. If they're just watching, a trainee has got to be doing. There was a program for ADs. You used to have to do a certain amount, 3 years working as a runner before you got your AD stripes. It was almost like a union. You were doing stuff all the time. You can't just be looking. Looking is important. The great thing about being a runner is you look a lot but you're also doing things.

L: How do you train to be a grip? Or a job like that? What is the on point?

D: I think that's true. And there's a lot of people who aren't good teachers. I'm not sure I'm a good teacher. But you need people who can inspire, encourage and teach, and take the time to. I can remember working on one of my first films and

seeing the focus puller teaching the camera assistant how to load the film and how to change the bag. I remember watching that and the time was taking, the getting it wrong, and the patience, the kindness but not in a patronising way.

L: Maybe these things cost money. A lot of those jobs you go to film school to learn.

D: But I think it's a hard jump from film school to set too. It's not just a BAME thing. It's a social mobility thing. It's who you know. But again that's where economic incentives make it a little bit easier for people. What I think is great about film school is you learn but also you experience and you get to do things and fail. Failure is really important. And the other thing that's really great is the community you begin to build. And I think that's invaluable. Because if you and I are at film school together we may make something together or you hear about a job and recommend me. So that is the real value of film school. It helps a little bit getting onto the ladder. But it's not a dead cert. And the values are the community that you build. I think Nick does a great job of getting people down. I went down and talked a while ago. This guy started emailing me. He was smart and I started returning. And it was great. The thing about it, it's a tough business. That's the thing people have to realise. It's not glamorous. It's work, it's a job.

L: What about bursaries? Because it's so expensive to go to acting school and university.

D: It's the same thing. I think desperate times call for desperate measures. I think bursaries, subsidies, profits from. At the moment if you make a film with BFI funding and the film does well, if you are making a film with BFI money and the film is profitable - hard - but it is then a portion of money, that money goes, and you don't even need approval, that money goes in for the next script. Why can't something like that also be used to encourage. There was something I think it was ED levy, a percentage of whatever the cinemas were making would go back into making the next film. The French do that.

L: This idea about what is marketable is fascinating. I want to make a movie like Slumdog.

D: Part of it is something with a sense of possibility. People to go out to the cinema want to leave with a skip. Something optimistic at the end.

L: Family movies are extraordinary. Movies the whole family can go to are so rare. I want to make that kind of movie.

D: You can do that, look at Full Monty. You don't

have to have a film on that scale with FX for it to be inspiring.

L: A punch the air type movie.

D: Yes, Bend it like Beckham.

L: But she's found it hard to maintain her mojo. Her next movie is something that could be on the television though.

D: That's the thing. It's very exciting television because there's so much of it. And different means of distribution. This is something I would recommend thinking about for all young people, not just BAME, is don't just think about movies. Think about television, think about the internet, short content, visual effects, video games, other ways of telling stories. It's not just the hour and a half, two hours of a movie. I mean I'm a dinosaur. What I do and what I've been doing, hopefully it will stay around, but there's a whole world out there that I am not a part of. It's exciting. That means that there's a whole other way to tell stories.

L: I saw a guy watching a movie on his phone, he missed his stop. But kids are now making their own films on their phones. There's a DIY thing going on.

D: But look at YouTube, look at Facebook. The shift towards short form video content is massive. It's

video. It's how you monetise that I don't know but it's happening. And I think encouraging people, BAME or other, that's more

L: So think digitally. The internet is more democratic.

D: But I think, maybe I'm naive because I'm speaking from a place of privilege, there are pockets of conscious exclusion. Racism lives today. But I would argue there's a huge portion of people working today, in my position and not just in my position, grips, camera, who are not racist.

L: Institutional racism is rarely about individuals being racist. It's usually about a status quo that has prevailed for a long time. People don't know that they are doing it.

D: I think that's absolutely right. I think people just don't think. What's good about this Oscar stuff is people are being made to think. The conversations that pop up are great.

L: Thank you for talking to us and for opening up. I love that a little brown bear made you realise that.

D: It's not even that people say "That's the way it is". People just are not thinking. "This is the way it is" suggests that there's a conscious effort to

stop it being other. I don't think it's conscious. I think it's laziness and I think it's ignorance. The other thing that you were saying, we hear of the successes British films have when they are nominated for Oscars and the like but I would also say it is getting harder and harder to get stories made here. Because we are independent, we are not mainstream, we are on the fringe. The advantage that we have is that our language works here, and in America and Australia and New Zealand but it's harder and harder to make independent films. I think. It's a problem across all cultures. But I do believe that good stories will win out.

6. Tim Richards

Tim Richards:

[source: http://www.heyuguys.com/heyuguys-spends-a-night-in-the-future-of-cinema-at-vue-westfield/vuetim_tcm21-122165/]

In 1999, Tim left Warner Bros. Studio in L.A. and founded a start-up cinema exhibition company known as SBC International Cinemas ("SBC") that developed and operated state-of-the-art multiplexes in the UK, Taiwan and Portugal. In May of 2003, SBC changed their name to 'Vue Entertainment' with the acquisition of Warner Village's 36 state-of-the-art stadium seating multiplex cinemas, over 400 screens and a market leading position in London.

The Vue Entertainment cinema circuit grew quickly through a series of strategic acquisitions complemented by organic growth and now operates as the largest cinema group outside of the U.S. and the 4th largest worldwide.

Tim has worked on the boards of a number of bodies such as BAFTA, The UK Film Council and Skillset, and was voted one of the 20 most influential people in cinema by The Independent (2008).

[source: <http://corporate.myvue.com/Home/Company/Key-executives>]

LH: Tell me about appetite. Because it seems to me as a black creative that the appetite in this country is for American products, but for our

homemade product, it's very rare that a BAME product comes through that people get behind. And, what is that? As an exhibitor you must see this, every so often there's a Bend It Like Beckham or Kidulthood, or, 12 Years a Slave, but there doesn't seem to be a sustained investment in that, and I wonder if you could talk to me about how you as an exhibitor see those films. Are we barking up the wrong tree? Should we be thinking more about TV? Is there a prejudice against those movies? If someone pitches a movie about the hood, in Hackney, about brothers putting together a DJ crew. Are you going to say we can't sell that shit? And, as a sidebar, it seems to me that the Asian/Bollywood connection with exhibitors is working very well, but perhaps BAME, particularly Afro-Caribbean or Afro-London Brits have a harder road to go down because of the in-built audience.

TR: So I think, 40,000 ft level first, and I don't speak for Vue, I speak for the industry as a whole, it's really simple: if there's good movies there, they go onto the screens. End of story. Whether they be an Asian film, an American film, a British film, a German film, or whatever. Because if there's a good movie, and customers are going to want to see it, it goes on the screen. And the game-changer has been digital. Absolute game-changer, because, in the past, with an analogue film you had a 35mm print, big bulky medium, hard to deal with, and you would be lucky to show maybe two movies a day on one projector. It was a

nightmare. Most cinemas, and this was only a few years ago, would typically show – a ten screen multiplex – 14 or 15 movies. Now with digital, we have, with most of our cinemas, 100 movies on our servers at any one time. So we can hit a button and show a film. So what that means is that we can show more movies to more people and because print costs for small, independent films would typically range from £600-£1000, they're now gone. So your distribution side in terms of digital is potentially transformational. Now, there's some other issues in terms of paying for the digital projectors via VPFs [this is the concept of paying back the cost of the digital projectors that were paid for up-front by studios [75%] via a Virtual Print Fee]. The problem that we identified through the Film Review was that some Independent films were finding it hard to get onto the screen because they were being asked to pay very, very high VPFs, but, again, the good news is that we're nearing the end of that payment term. The first projectors will have been paid in the next year or so; so we're getting very close to it being a truly, genuine, level playing field. People think this is going to be around forever and it's not, and then Independent film should be on the same footing financially when it comes to going to an operator. Because, right now, let's just say, for a small, British independent production – there's an audience for those movies that may not be that cost-efficient for them because of the VPFs, and

that will be the game-changer in the future. So I'm optimistic.

LH: I guess the unspoken question is: is the industry skewed against Black/Asian/indigenous films? Apart from the odd one that gets through, it's very feast and famine. You're more likely to get an American film – we're more likely to watch American urban life than British urban life. And I wonder if you could tell me about the appetite for that kind of thing and whether there's an appetite for that, or a block.

TR: Let's look at it a few ways. One, the difficulty about our business has always been the marriage of the artistic and the commercial, and it's always in conflict, but we are, for better or worse, commercial beings, and we have no predisposition to show anything. If it's going to make money, we show it. If there's an audience there, we'll find it. And for us, I think I do speak for the broader exhibition community. We found in Islington a small Turkish community, and started showing Turkish movies to that group, the same with Australian films in Fulham Broadway and a small Asian market in Inverness to whom we showed Asian films. We've done a lot of work into working out who our customer base is and then catering for them. Bollywood has done really well. There's a few markets that are heavily identified as being Bollywood-Asian markets, and they're catered for.

LH: Is there any cross-over? Because you're talking about something quite niche, whereas I'm talking

about indigenous film-makers who have a film which might start underground but then grows into the mainstream.

TR: That's exactly what I was getting to. I'm a governor of the BFI, and we spent a huge amount of time on that and diversity generally. And my personal belief is that you have to start early. I was also on Skillset as well and my personal belief is that you've got to find a way to engage young people to get into the industry – get them excited about screenplays, and directing, and producing – whatever it might be, and for whatever reason, that has not happened. There's a few examples like McQueen and others who have grown up and done successfully, but we need more like him. And I know he does a lot of this, but I'd even say he should do more – he should go to local communities and say This is what you can do. Look at how cool this is.

LH: I think you're right, but I think it's very tricky, because this is a guy who's won awards in nearly every artistic milieu – this is a shooting star – but I don't think this industry shouldn't just be about the shooting stars. There's a way of democratising this industry by getting everyone to go into schools saying We need accountants too, and lawyers, and painters and decorators. But that would take funding and set it up as a proper employment drive.

TR: Well you know the arts are being killed right now.

LH: Yes, but there's also a massive brick wall for BAMEs in some areas of our industry, and it needs to come down. But it won't come down until more people in our industry are hired in positions of power. Until we democratise and change the demographic of the people curating our stories, the stories that get put out there will always be the same, with the odd shooting star as the exception. My worry is that these films are very on the nose, they're the kind of film you'd expect Steve McQueen to make. And he made two great films before he made *12 Years a Slave*, but his first two films were not raced, and I think that's why he's brilliant. But I think often BAME creatives feel that they've got to tell the story of their lives and where they've come from where actually I think there's actually a need for people to learn about genre and to work out why certain films and genres work, and how they can utilise that to tell this story.

TR: But you see if anyone had the answer to that they'd bottle it and call it a day.

LH: In terms of distribution and exhibition, what are your thoughts on that? What are the things that really work?

TR: Just going back to the film-making process a second. We've just passed – at the BFI – these check-box funding requirements for diversity. Because I agree with you, it's not just directors, it's all of film-making. And with this new criteria if productions are going to get funding from the BFI, then they have to have a certain element [of

diversity and training] in there. Because I think that training is what permeates through and creates those future McQueens. Because you can't just make it happen. And I think the mistake that has often been made is to have a knee-jerk reaction and try to make a brilliant film-maker overnight. But it doesn't happen overnight, and I think the best chance of success is to take five or ten-year plans and to try to get to a certain point by education, by investing in young people. That's my personal belief. Now, from an exhibitor's standpoint, we have eight people, and all they do is watch movies, and they decide really what goes on the screen, and they're not predisposed to anything. They are real film people and they just love movies, and they are also very good at deciding what people are going to watch. And they'll find some quirky little movie and say it will work here but not there. And that's also the beauty of digital.

LH: And the big question there is: what is the demographic of the people who make those decisions?

TR: They are actually diverse, and we as a company have made a real effort. And in our cinemas we've made a real effort too. Our third most senior guy is Pakistani and he's a really good guy. He'd be a good guy to speak to as well because he could give you an inside view of how he came through the process.

LH: That stuff is interesting, because I want to know how, aside from social mobility, working in our industry can come about. Because it seems to me

that the green-light between development and shooting is so short now that HoDs go to the people they know and therefore don't advertise which means they're relying on social mobility, but actually it remains very insular.

TR: No, you're absolutely right. And directors, in my experience, will absolutely gravitate towards the crew they know and have worked with, and that will be their future crew, and that could be any kind of make-up. So it's very hard. And we had this discussion with a director, and he was very open about it, and said Look I've got this massive project, with a million things to worry about, and what I don't want to worry about is hiring people when I've got people I know I can work with.

LH: That's going to keep people back though. I mean, the social mobility aspect of our business, is going to keep us back.

TR: But that's why we've passed these new rules at the BFI – and I appreciate it's just the BFI – but it filters down to Skillset and others.

LH: How were they defining diversity at the BFI? Because people like Channel 4 have worked angles before where they do it via accountants and janitors and things like that.

TR: No, we do it properly. There are four broad categories to do with cast and crew, and you have to have sufficient coverage in all four categories to get funding. This is covering it at every level. And it's our third try at it, and I think we've got

it as close as it's going to get, and hopefully it will work.

LH: My problem often with this stuff is the people already in the industry who are BAME who have hit a glass wall. They can do the job, but they're just not getting the work. And I think we have a duty to get them back in the industry and give them a chance to strut their stuff.

TR: One other thought. There's been a lot of talk in the US about films like *Compton*, and I think there's been a bit of a wake-up call in the US market about films like that drawing big audiences, and driving a lot of money. And that's with all audiences, not just a specific audience.

LH: Do you think that could happen here? I wrote a film about a mixed-race basketball player in Hackney [DESCRIPTION OF FILM] and there was a sense that whatever Andrew Eaton did, they found it difficult to sell a film with a mixed-race protagonist and black antagonist. There was a moment when one of the producers said, with his head in his hands, You don't know how hard it is to sell a black film. Is that right?

TR: I've never heard that said. Maybe I've never heard it, because I've never thought of a black film as a black film. I don't even know what a black film is. Look at the French situation. Take *The Untouchable*. Look at that film. What kind of film is that?

LH: Well the French are quite famous for making films that surprise you like that.

TR: But I don't even think of that as a race film, as black or white, I just think of it as a great movie, and I know that people in France will say that's kind of like a black type of film, but I don't think of it like that. I just think it's a great movie.

LH: But do you think, apart from you, there's a conversation going on about black or Asian films?

TR: In 25 years I have never heard anything other than the quality of the film and black/white/Chinese/Asian, whatever ethnic make-up it might be, I've only ever heard of it being a certain kind of movie. It either works or it doesn't work. But the problem is, I don't think it's a race issue, I think it's an independent film issue, and we shouldn't underestimate how difficult it is for all independent films. And if we want to look at it in terms of money we're looking at around the £3-5m range. But I think that last year 650 movies were released at the cinema, and the challenge is, there were probably 100 that were no good at all, and there's probably another 100 or 200 that are great movies but have a really difficult time getting above the chatter. And when you've got so many movies being released, how do you actually get that out to people? And that's the real challenge for all independent film-makers.

LH: Any advice?

TR: No. All genres work here. You've got everything from 28 Days Later to the Richard Curtis films. So it's not a genre issue, as it is in some markets,

but ultimately it comes down to marketing and promoting the film, and it's easier, cheaper, and faster to reach people than it's ever been, but there's a lot of noise to go with it. Social media is a double-edged sword. The task is getting the film up and talked about, and that comes down to being either seriously bloody clever, or you throw money at it. And it is tough. It is really tough. [...]

LH: Do you think there should be ring-fenced money for BAME producers and creatives? Ans I'm talking about a pan-industry thing.

TR: I have mixed feelings. Because I always think it's dangerous to ring-fence money, and I'd rather see it go into training and education and getting people excited. Because if the goal really is to get movies with different stories then I think it's about getting a really awesome black screen-play writer.

LH: But then they'd be able to pitch for writing money, and a director would be able to pitch for producing money, and so on.

TR: But, and maybe this is my optimistic view of the world, I think if you have a great story or product, everything else will fall into place. Take Adulthood and Kidulthood. They'd been around for a while, but they found their funding and they made it.

LH: But nothing since.

TR: But nothing since.

LH: So, the reason to invest in training is to admit we've lost something and start again?

TR: I would hate to admit defeat like that.

LH: Do you think there's a difficulty standing in the way? What difficulties are standing in the way of BAME crew, BAME producers? What's going on there? Is this training? Opportunity?

TR: You know I think it's an awareness because these are cool jobs in a cool industry and I don't see any reason why there would be any blockage or opposition.

LH: You don't think there's an institutional wall up saying You can't have this job?

TR: No, no. Absolutely not.

LH: But you would agree that we're in a mono-cultural industry.

TR: Totally, and I know that with every board I've been on, that we've had to make a conscious effort not to bring on white middle-class people. And we've had some great people but it's been a real effort, and I think it's about getting young people

LH: Certainly if there was a pot of money like Microwave, £20m or £30m, for the stimulation of creativity, that people could pitch for, and if there were BAME gatekeepers – pickers and deciders – you'd have to pitch to, to create a more diverse talent pool, is that an idea you would get behind?

TR: I look at what we've done at the BFI, and we've spent a year working on this, and there are people there who are really good at identifying potential film-makers, and if you have funds tied to ensuring

you've got a broad cross-section of crew, cast and storyline – everything – if you have all that, I think that's almost a better place to have money. Because this is insuring that those films are going to start training people, and otherwise you don't get money to make your film. And if you look at the people who came up through that system – like McQueen and Hooper – there's so much talent that [it just seems to work]. And I would argue that they're [the BFI] being slashed and burned and killed right now. Film has taken a disproportionate hit at DCMS, and though the BFI is not perfect, it's making a good start.

7. Hilary

Bevan Jones



[source:

<http://www.watersprite.org.uk/about/patron-trustees>]

Hilary has worked on numerous ground-breaking and influential dramas (Cracker for ITV and Red Dwarf and State of Play for BBC) and has won a primetime Emmy for the acclaimed HBO film *The Girl in the Café*. In 1994 she co-founded Endor Productions whose recent productions include BBC mini-series *Restless* (starring Hayley Atwell, Rufus Sewell and Michelle Dockery), *The Escape Artist* (starring David Tennant), as well as *Esio Trot* (with Oscar winning actors Judi Dench and Dustin Hoffman). In 2006, Hilary was also made Chairman of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, the first woman in its 60 year history to hold this position.

[source: <http://www.redarrow.tv/companies/endor-productions.html>]

LH: What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive work force both behind and in front of the camera?

HBJ: I think that by having a more inclusive workforce both sides of the camera you must increase your own diversity of reach of films. Therefore you can appeal to more people you can make more variety in programmes and television shows and it will stop things coming out homogenous or the same because you're integrating with a much wider community. So, therefore, if you do the maths, you should then appeal to more people.

LH: The next question is about funding bodies and ring-fenced money, but it feels to me like movies got stuck a bit. There were little upsurges of movies where you got black filmmakers, Asian filmmakers, but then it felt like it came to a halt. I wonder what that was...

HBJ: I don't know what that was, I really don't. For BAFTA my drive was education and opening up the industry to BAME groups. And that section of the academy was called Education and Events when I became chair. And you have to do a big speech at the inaugural thing, and mine was about learning - learning is a two way street whereas education is I'm teaching you - and the initiatives we could do to stop this industry almost becoming inbred. One of the things I'm passionately against is unpaid internships. I think it's absolutely wrong, because

only people who have money can do it, and it's just not fair.

LH: Well that's to do with social mobility, isn't it?

HBJ: Yes, and you can't work as a runner [if you come from a working class family], and it's not fair. If the person is doing a full-time job on a film [rather than, say two weeks, where you might just pay them expenses] it's absolutely not on [to pay them nothing].

LH: The idea of promoting a more inclusive policy in relation to a broader workforce both in front of and behind the camera seems like common sense to me. It's increasing the catchment area of stories and who's making decisions about who tells those stories ...and if you broaden it you'll have a bigger choice. If funding bodies were obliged by government to enhance the proportion of BAME workers within the industry. What measure might you or they adopt to do this?

HBJ: Well, I went through a thought process on this, and my first thought, which I then discounted, because it felt wrong, was adapting some sort of policy in-line with the current tax incentives where if you spend x then you can reclaim tax [if a diverse workforce was involved with the project], but then I thought it's got to come from a deeper place than that. If it's just there for companies to make money, is it really going to change attitudes? So I wondered about some sort of matched funding, where someone like the BFI or BBC or

studios [could contribute]. If you had a target number of the proportion of a production was BAME employees (behind and in front of the camera) then for 5% or 10% or 1% of the budget, the government would give another 1% or 10% or 5%. So, you would enhance your budget a bit, but it has to be strictly for the employees employed.

LH: That sounds like a quota.

HBJ: Possibly.

LH: It's a way of thinking about it, but some people don't like quotas because they feel that it's tokenistic. One of the problems with quotas is that you can fill those places or make that percentage just by getting people from the security or canteen or IT departments. You're not matching it with skills. And you'd have to be very careful with how you filled up your percentage.

HBJ: Yes, I think you would. You might even have to have it with certain groups, and it might be that for this percentage, the money doesn't go back into that programme, but it goes back to the commissioners (the BFI or the BBC) who would use it to commission more shows and give more opportunities.

LH: How have other tax incentives changed your productions previously, tax breaks for locations, for example?

HBJ: The main tax one that's changed [my productions] is the current tax credit for programmes over £1m (an hour) and you get up to I think 20% (which, after certain deductions may end

up as 17%), and you get that back into production. One of the effects it's had on the industry is that more people are coming here to film so that's why there are so many more Americans, because they get the tax incentive too. Other countries, such as Colombia, have a fantastic tax break, and so when you're filming abroad you do look to see what tax breaks are available.

LH: What difficulties stand in the way of greater employment of individuals from the BAME population?

HBJ: Finding them. It's finding them. [...] If you look at Skillset, we had to pay £40,000 in order for them to put trainees on our show. They could not find us enough trainees. They found us two or three and then they paid 50% of these people's salaries, but obviously that didn't nearly match the £40,000 it cost us, and because I'm so passionate about training, I managed to find a few other people and get them in. But it's time finding them, and where do you look? Where do you advertise? There's no central body.

LH: It sounds to me like there should be a database.

HBJ: There's a huge need for that.

LH: But for quite a long time that was thought to be illegal. [But that is no longer the case because of the EHRC ruling]. If there were a database where it was self-declaring what you are, that would be beneficial.

HBJ: Exactly. And I feel really strongly about that.

LH: Tell me about the recruitment process. Is it word of mouth, recommendations, people you've worked with? Do you advertise?

HBJ: You don't advertise. You tend to get your HoDs, usually people you or the director have worked with before, and they choose their team, but we've managed before to get someone from Skillset as their trainee, in Sound for instance, and we did positively discriminate, and it was interesting, because I really liked him, but he and the HoD didn't get on at all. Because he didn't really want to be on Sound, but he did it so that he got a job, but he didn't keep quiet about the fact that he didn't really want to be on Sound. But that's an individual story.

LH: That's really interesting because I've never met a BAME production designer or costume designer. There are Sound people, but it's really rare to meet BAME guys behind the camera. I guess the imperative on Production companies to say we'd like it to be diverse, so how about this training, or this assistant, but it costs money, and that's a problem.

HBJ: Well it does cost money so you get your Director on board and together you get your Heads of Department and traditionally, and quite rightly I think, the Heads of each Department have a joint, mutual responsibility for choosing their crew. So the only place for any entry is at the lowest level where you get trainees in. Now in theory you're now meant to be able to go to Skillset and say I want

eleven on that day, but when we've done that we've had to find a lot of them ourselves. And though they were diverse, they weren't diverse racially, it was much more in the financial and class area.

LH: That's an issue, isn't it? Because, what's happened is the shorter the start time [of a production], the more you're relying on social mobility, right? Because you can't advertise, or go out to the events...

HBJ: We don't know where to look, so I think, if Skillset could be run better then you could go to them and say we need this. And it's frustrating because you pay them money and then have to do it yourselves.

LH: But perhaps, in the end, we, as Production Companies, we're going to have to do that anyway.

HBJ: Of course, and you can't rely on one organisation, like Skillset, that's wrong, but they are taking this huge levy in order to have this responsibility. Which is why I think a database is such a good idea. Then you need somebody, some gatekeepers, to monitor it.

LH: I agree with you. I think it's across the Production Companies, particularly the independents and super-independents, who have a lot of power now. All of them need to pool their resources to get this done. Which brings us to the next thing. Does Endor support the idea of ring-fenced money to help BAME creatives? London is 40% BAME, nationally the BAME population is 14.3%, why wouldn't there be some sort of fund for BAME producers, writers, and

directors to come and pitch? If there were, would you be supportive of that?

HBJ: Absolutely, but the questions would be, how would you raise it, and where does it come from? Does it come from lottery money, for example?

LH: If producers were able to access funding through public bodies by meeting certain diversity criteria, like the BFI three tick system, how would you react to that?

HBJ: I think it would be great, but I think again the key thing is to get somebody working on finding people who want to be part of this database. Just helping people know where to get started if they can't afford to go to uni. People just don't know where to look. And I think that's what the funding needs to concentrate on first, and I'd be really actively wanting to help in any initiative to get that going, because that's one of the things that we worked on at BAFTA. If you look at BAFTA guru, that's what we're trying there.

LH: So I think that because there are practitioners in social realist films [Ken Loach, Shane Meadows etc.], there was a small group of people who made films about working class people, movies like Dirty, Pretty Things. But the breakthroughs seem to have decreased, and so there's less opportunity to see working class black, Asian, women. But there's less of that sort of subject matter on the big screen.

HBJ: There seems to be less appetite. But I thought about this question hard and I actually think it's a good thing that that isn't one of the main

opportunities for BAME people to be involved in, because it's in a sense, not ghettoising, but saying, that's where their opportunity is. That opportunity is in Poor Cal (?) or Kes, but actually it should also be in Mad Men. Why should it only be in that sort of film? It shouldn't be.

LH: I don't want to be misunderstood here. I think the first impulse for every filmmaker or creative is to write about their life and then of course you want to make Lord of the Rings, or be in Game of Thrones. Why wouldn't you want to make Star Wars or The Good, The Bad, or The Ugly? But it seems to me that the gateway is making a film about ourselves. And you don't get to see that any more.

HBJ: I see what you mean. Yes.

LH: Have those shows migrated to television, do you think?

HBJ: I don't think so, because they used to be on television equally. Cathy Come Home, for instance. But I think there is less appetite for them at the moment. [...] I think people are chasing ratings more now, whatever they say, and I don't think [working on important subjects] happens quite as much now. But I did think, when considering how mono-cultural the film and television industry is, one of the biggest things is to try to employ more people with a voice, and the new generation of actors and writers, writers with a voice in particular, and they will do exactly what you say – write about what they know. And I think to give these writers a platform is really important and

should be pushed forward, because by them having a voice, they will bring in more people from their areas.

LH: Could this idea be implemented by fast-tracking or cherry-picking talent? It has worked with women at the BBC. They cherry-picked several women – this was several years ago – and now they practically run the industry. They were allowed access to all the major decision making areas of the BBC, and were given the experience you need to run a production company or major department.

[NOT ANSWERED]

LH: Which of the following approaches to delivering BAME representation would you favour and why?

Mentoring?

HBJ: Yes, and we now have mentoring at BAFTA. I mentor three people at the moment.

LH: Training initiatives, specifically for aspiring BAME actors or specialists within the industry?

HBJ: Yeah. I think everyone deserves the right to be trained, and I think the thing is getting the information to them. They need to know where to find it, and how to afford it. That's the hardest thing.

LH: Bursaries at all the major acting schools and training facilities to break through the glass ceilings of the industries? Because there's clearly, when you look at the power-list, a group of people that you could hassle to set-up a pot of money for minority applicants.

HBJ: I think some of them do have those [bursaries], but there needs to be more.

LH: One last thought, and this is about the financial imperative. In America there was a time when it was thought the key demographic that could make or break a film was young men between the ages of 16-24 and movies reflected this accordingly. Who do the producers consider to be their key demographic (both in terms of box office and critical acclaim), how diverse is the demographic, and how does this demographic react to diversity in their films?

HBJ: I think it's changed a lot. For example, there's the grey pound now, from the *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and everything. So there's a whole shift to pockets of audiences and I think it's about clarity. The thing I get asked most when I'm developing something is who's going to come and see this film? And you need a diverse group to come and see it, not just your 16-24s.

[...]

8.Nik Powell



[source: <http://toromagazine.com/features/talking-to/20121114/british-film-producer-nik-powell>]

In the 1970s Nik Powell set-up Virgin Records with Richard Branson. He then founded Palace Video with Stephen Woolley (1982), followed by Palace Pictures and Scala. His Producer/Exec Producer credits include Company of Wolves, The Crying Game, Last Orders, and Calendar Girls.

Nik was appointed Director of the National Film and Television School in 2005.

[source: <https://nfts.co.uk/who-we-are>]

LH: What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive work force both behind and in front of the camera?

NP: Well I think the obvious answer is that if you have a more inclusive policy you're likely to have product if I can use that word or content which is going to more closely match the market to which

it's going and that's particularly true on a national basis. When it comes to an international market that's also true of course because of all the different countries in different parts of the world and cultures. And also we're in a particularly good position to do it; I know obviously there are big migration issues at the moment, but the fact is that our film school reflects the world, London certainly to a much, much greater extent reflects the world, having just seen Birmingham reflects the world, even back when you were there, so the fact is, previously as a commercial person, you want stuff with which the audience can connect. You don't want it to be too broad, because like if you make a gay movie you kind of want to make sure that you don't miss one market because you broaden it too much so that it's no longer as appealing to the original market for which it was developed. So you want to make sure. For me and Stephen Woolley when we were developing projects or buying movies to distribute, we would make sure we got that core audience, because they're the people who will turn out on the first weekend. And then you expand beyond that because actually the content of your picture and the people in it and the characters and everything appeal to a very wide range of people. The sports movie, I suppose I could say my favourite is the Jamaican tobogganning team (Cool Runnings), I know Phil would kill me for that, but that is a movie which just

reaches everybody, with humour, and I haven't watched it in this context.

LH: But once again it's the coach's story – John Candy's story, and the actual team, usually in a sports movie, it's the coach who comes in and heals the athletes; the athletes or team are usually broken, and the coach comes in and heals them, and then they go on to win or lose...

NP: In *One Goal too Many*, or whatever's it's called, the coach comes and gets them to the next level.

LH: But it's an interesting point that it is possible to make an inclusive and broad movie. And I think you're absolutely right to nail the financial imperative. We're not just making a movie for five people. Because I think one of the problems with movies that come from a diaspora is that they're often thought of as not making any money. When Channel 4 began with its remit of representing the margins, the very way the language was couched was in this sense of it can never make any money but let's throw them a few quid and let them make whatever experimental thing they want. I'm not talking about that.

NP: See I'm a big believer in that – I can give you examples of things that start on the edge and move towards the centre. These are not racial or ethnic, but when I was at Sussex University for one term there was about five of us that would go to a particular pub and watch Python every week; I can say 100% of our friends didn't get Python. They didn't laugh at it, they didn't find it funny, it

was too slapstick, it was too weird, but of course it famously moved to the centre. I would take blues music, rhythm and blues. All of those records crossed the Atlantic and came to places like Liverpool and London, out of which we generated rhythm and blues bands in Liverpool, and blues bands in London, and they were white blues bands, but from that and those blues bands grew the big bands. So for me it's stuff that starts on the margin where you would go to the Marquee club and there'd be like 50 people there and you'd go like 3 months later and it would be full, but still there's no way they could fill 2,000 seats.

LH: So things moving from the margins to the centre, things starting small and getting big.

NP: Things starting on the edge, and appealing to a small part of the market-place, but then growing and moving towards the centre. And I see no reason why that shouldn't happen with people from minorities and the diaspora, and indeed it has happened.

...

LH: London's 40% BAME, there's a figure flying around that nationally the BAME population is 14.3%, it seems crazy not to make films that are more representative, more diverse.

NP: At the NFTS, if they're making a film which involves a bank manager, say, they just automatically - without thinking - cast white, even though you've probably got more chance these days of having an Asian or a black bank manager. And

it's more automatic, I've got to say with the non-Brit students, because of the generation they've grown up in. But I think it's casting on the one hand, and behind the camera on the other.

LH: If funding bodies were obliged by the government to enhance the proportion of the BAME population employed within the industry, what measure might you adopt to do this? Now I guess this doesn't apply to you directly, but is this something you would support.

NP: Yes. I'm on record as supporting it.

LH: Why?

NP: Because I'm a believer that things don't just happen, you have to make them happen, you have to break an unconscious [bond]. I remember getting a big lecture from a senior BBC executive on why ring-fenced money for this purpose wouldn't work and I was shocked to be honest. I was shocked because a) it had worked in other areas and he wasn't taking that on board and it was like a gut reaction that is then reinforced by logic rather than a conclusion reached by thinking through right can this, would this, how could this work. And I don't think things work without a kick up the arse, I think when you've got long established traditions like at the BBC for instance, obviously there's a strong Oxbridge tradition, then Sussex started supplying people, and Bournemouth, and Ravensbourne, Goldsmith's and so on, but I think you have to do it for a period.

LH: For a period? Not ongoing?

NP: Well I think you hope it becomes established. I'll also always say for a period because, when you take it away, after five years say, then all the hits come. Like Crying Game and Strictly Ballroom for me.

LH: We have to take into account development as well, don't we, because it takes an awfully long time?

NP: Yes. So the average development period for a feature is five years. [...] So when I say temporary, it should be at least five years, I wouldn't object to it not being temporary, but it would need to be reviewed, because one has to make sure it's working.

LH: Have there been other tax incentives that changed your productions previously?

NP: Me, I would never mix tax with this type of issue because you've already got institutions on the film side, like BFI, so you can do ring-fencing, you've already got, in TV, ITV, BBC and so on. So once you get into the tax area you motivate people from both the left and the right to come in and try to kill you. So I would keep away from the tax thing. You can still put incentives in. The BFI have got a tick-boxing scheme, and they are incentives for people to cast or crew to make sure the films reflect the society we live in. And that's great. But for production I think you have to have ring-fenced production funds. It's as simple as that. But trying to find a TV exec – you might find some film execs – but trying to find a

TV exec [who agrees with that is key]. I think you need to find a coalition of the willing, a group of people across TV who are in power, not lobbyists, who do agree. It's quite a small group who have a Leninist attitude. A small group of people who can have a big effect.

LH: Well the EHRC just stated at the Edinburgh festival that ring-fencing funds and a database [of BAME people working in the film and TV industry] are lawful. So we can actually go forward now.

NP: I remember when I first heard you proposed it at BAFTA and I thought, yeah. And you'd given parallels – fast-tracking women, for instance.

LH: And the nations and regions worked.

NP: Personally I'm not a huge supporter of regionalism in such a small country. I don't feel anywhere near as passionate about regionalism as I do about this, but it has worked.

LH: We're 14% of the country, and that's a massive community, and if it's about nations and regions and communities, then they're not serving the BAME community.

NP: It definitely worked in Wales, and it worked in Bristol with the wildlife and the BBC, and I think it's working in Manchester, though I haven't been there since [it started].

LH: How did you usually recruit for productions? Word of mouth? Recommendations? People you've previously worked with? Advertising? Because in my experience it's very rare that you see a diverse film crew.

NP: For British feature films, it's a sort of matrix. A combination of stuff. If you take Ladies in Lavender, Charles [Dance] is directing for the first time, so I need to know that I've got very established Department Heads around him. So we recruited, if memory serves, all white, and then they recruit their art departments and so on, and so the thing trickles down, and so the people who are not directly a part of the departments are recruited by the Production Manager, and as a Producer you may only get involved in 1st AD, because you need people to recruit their own people so they have total responsibility. So you always try to get people to do their own hiring, which I think is a major reason why crews are still white.

LH: This is a social-mobility thing.

NP: Yes, and I think even when you get, say, a black Production Manager, they're even more sensitive about who they hire [because they need to protect themselves against the criticism of] you only hired him because he's black, kind of stuff. So there's even more pressure.

LH: How do we get rid of that?

NP: I think in feature films it's a tick thing. What you've got is ring-fenced money, that's one method. For feature films not being funded through ring-fenced money, it seems to me it should be a big incentive. If we producers know we're going to get an extra 5 or 10% funding, we'll do it. We would work with major criminals to get our extra

money. But if there's actually a good thing to do [like this] we'll do it.

LH: So a financial sweetener would incentivise people?

NP: Yes. If you have a financial incentive or disincentive. And people will resent it, but again, I think it's the only way to make it happen. And then once it's happening and you've got people working, and it should just become a natural thing.

LH: All these questions are about a form of positive discrimination, and people are very funny about it. When you talk to BAMEs about positive discrimination, they don't want it, because nobody wants to feel like they've got a job because of what they are, they want to feel like they've got a job because of what they can do, and what they can achieve, and how good they are. But I think you're right, if, for a period there was an incentive to employ a broad demographic of people-

NP: And it fits in with the current government's programme for social mobility. So I don't think this government would be against that.

[...]

NP: People use the ghetto argument - whenever you try to do something special to promote BAME, or similar, they say you're ghettoising it. But I think, do we care? We need these events to get the profile to effect the changes.

LH: All of these cool things start in some kid's bedroom ...and the reason I think BAME creatives should be exulted and pushed and nurtured is

because they're our future, and this is why there needs to be a dedicated fund.

[...]

There's a great TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie about the plurality of story... and I think with film-making, with all of this talent that we've got, if you only focus on a narrow group of people, you've got the rest of the pie waiting to tell this story, and I think we maybe need to stop waiting to be asked. That's going to be difficult when you say, in *Ladies in Lavender*, it's Charles's first film, so we want to surround him with the right people, so we'll give him the Production Manager, and he books the Heads of Department, and then they book the people that they want. Because that kind of fucks everything up for everyone else.

NP: That's why we need to have these changes.

[...]

LH: Do you think the loss of social realism in cinema, which in the 60s and 70s was more prevalent - people making films about their families and with a strong sense of the working class - is reducing the BAME demographic in movies? And should we be promoting movies from that area more these days, do you think?

NP: It may be that we're just not seeing these movies i.e. that they're not getting out there. I would like to see if that's true at school [the NFTS], because I'm not sure that's actually the case. But if it is the case, then I could see it would have that impact...Less social realism will

mean you have less of our society reflected on screen.

[...]

LH: How mono-cultural do you consider the film and television industries to be, and how should this be challenged?

NP: I think the biggest challenge that you pointed out, is this recruitment. Now, I think the tick-box system could actually change that, and it's not like we're not used to doing it. We've been doing it with co-productions and Euro films for a zillion years, having two Frenchmen and an Italian, it's just a different way of doing it. You find the talent, and where you don't have it – and you may not find it for all the top jobs – but if you want to get it happening down the line, then you need this tick-box system for producers, so it comes with the funding.

LH: Could the situation be improved by the development and fast-tracking of new gatekeepers and pickers, hired, committed and employed to select from a more diverse talent pool? We're talking about execs here.

NP: I like your parallel with the BBC fast-track system for women, which has clearly worked. That's why I think hand-picking people and fast tracking them I think could also work with BAME.

LH: Given your teaching remit [at the NFTS], should there be opportunities for mentoring, training initiatives specifically for BAME actors or people in the industry?

NP: At the moment we've done a selection sponsored by skillset for leadership, for BAME people. And there are those things there. There are a lot of mentorship programmes: BAFTA have one, Skillset have one, we have one. How many are going to BAME people? I don't know.

LH: For people who ask where are the black and Asian film-makers or editors?

NP: I call them role-models, there are so few of them across, particularly cinematographers and directors. In television there's more, but you have to create the role models, which at a top school like ours, is our job. Because if you're looking to move out of something where it's a real challenge to realise one's ambitions then you look at where people have been successful.

LH: Would you be prepared to do an outreach to schools in certain communities?

NP: Yes, and I've done schools under the schools programme. But you have to dovetail with the BFI, and their school outreach programme. I think it's just a case of making sure it happens, because they may have difficulties delivering it or may not have prioritised schools in more difficult areas.

LH: Do you think there should be bursaries at the major acting schools to heighten knowledge?

NP: Yes. They've got a lot of scholarships at RADA-

LH: Not enough

NP: There's never enough, but we have a [BAME] specific programme, as do the BBC. Means and diversity are the two top priorities. But one of

the problems is that they [BAME students] don't know about them, which is why visits to schools and universities are very important because whenever I go and talk at a university or school, the students, first of all, half of them don't know you [or the NFTS] exist, and then think, we could never go there because you've got all these successful filmmakers and I could never do that. And when you say they all started like you, they stack up reasons why not, and this is all students, not just BAME students. [...] I think we need to get away from talking about jobs, and start talking about making a living, and that should be done via apprenticeships or getting in as runners.

LH: Last question, in America there was a time when it was thought the key demographic that could make or break a film was young men between the ages of 16-24 and movies reflected this accordingly. Who do the producers consider to be their key demographic (both in terms of box office and critical acclaim), how diverse is the demographic and how does this demographic react to diversity in their films?

NP: I think in the UK it depends on the producer, because you're also making films worldwide, but I think in the main I think it's crazy to limit yourself to one segment of the market. I've made a lot of films for older people Ladies in Lavender, Last Orders, Calendar Girls, but for me, first of all you find a story, and then work out where you have to take that story rather than looking at key demographics. [...] [In the UK it's mad to compete

with the Industrial Film Business who do aim at the broad international market, and failing that the 16-24 age bracket] So you might still make a movie for a 16-24 demographic, if you have that story, but what I always say is make sure when you tell a story, never broaden it too much so that it ceases to be of interest to the core demographic that you're trying to go to.

9. Graham Broadbent

Graham Broadbent is a producer at Blueprint Pictures, which he founded in in 2004 with Pete Czerin. He is best known for *In Bruges* (2008), *Seven Psychopaths* (2012) and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2011).

Previously he co-founded Mission Pictures with Andrew Hauptman and Damien Jones. Films produced there include *Millions* (2005) by Danny Boyle, which went on to win best screenplay at the British Independent Film Awards.

Prior to Mission, Graham worked with Damien Jones at their production company, Dragon Pictures, where they produced multiple pictures, including *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1996), by Michael Winterbottom, which was shown at Festival de Cannes in 1997 and cited by *Time* magazine as one of the ten best films of the year.

People mentioned by GB

Frank Cottrell Boyce (Writer)

Martin McDonagh (Writer/Director)

John Madden (Director)

Ritesh Batra (Writer)

Rohinton Mistry (Author)

Hany Abu-Assad (Director - working on *Homeless World Cup*)

Anthony Chen (Director)

Hong Khaou (Director)

Films mentioned by GB

The Lunchbox by Ritesh Batra

Lilting by Hong Khaou

Omar by Hany Abu-Assad

Preamble

LH: If a movie is about race it's very on the nose. Denzel Washington in Remember the Titans, Samuel L Jackson in Coach Carter, Whoopi Goldberg in whatever... So if a movie is about race they skew it to that. It's very on the nose and very didactic.

LH: Generally sports movies are about somebody coming in to try and heal something. So the coach is the father figure and heals the broken athlete or the broken team. The team is like a family and dad, the coach, brings it all together, heals whatever the rifts are and enables them to play. In a British film "it's not the winning that counts" part, but in an American film "IT'S THE WINNING". It's the coaches glory. And he usually heals the team at a cost to himself. He's usually broken but not so broken he can't fix this.

LH: "I seen this a million times."

GB: It's a Cool Runnings scenario.

LH: Yes, it's a Rocky scenario. Actually, my favourite sports film is Breaking Away.

[Description of Breaking Away] I've been obsessed with sports films.

GB: We're doing a sports film that's a bit weird. It's a sports film but it's not a sports film. When you're with financiers there's an ongoing debate about whether it is a sports film or is it not.

LH: Or is it a movie with sport.

GB: Yes. This one is about a really cool organisation called The Homeless World Cup. It's a real life charity. Every year they put together a global tournament. 60 nations select a 5-a-side street soccer team from the homeless community and bring them together. Colin Farrell - who I've made a couple of movies with - made a documentary on it. Afterwards I said to him this is really good because of the anthropology of it is about going from isolation to inclusion and how we move on with our lives. It's a very successful organization as you define it. (There's a very broad definition of homelessness e.g Afghanistan your house may have been blown up).

GB: I loved the documentary and I said to Colin "We should make a film of this." So we went to a writer, Frank Cottrell Boyce, who's got a generosity of

spirit but he's not saccharin as a writer. He's put it together and it's really simple. An Irish team go to the homeless world cup in Paris. There's a great Ugandan team, there's a great Afghan team, the Irish team is at the center. We are doing it with Fox Searchlight (I've made a few films with them already) and Film4. The discussions I've been having in LA are "It's not a sports movie, it's a comedy drama." They don't have to win. It's about them winning against themselves. The sport is merely a prism for what's going on with the characters.

LH: That's very careful positioning because I think mainstream Hollywood's perception of sport is they are the red-headed step child.

GB: That's what I was trying to pull it out of because, weirdly, it's not about winning.

LH: What I have to do with No Blood, No Foul is distance it so that it's a drama that features basketball but it's not about basketball. It's about a guy trying to do the right thing for his daughter.

GB: I feel that's an easy dramatic hook. This should be proven wrong but sports movies are seen as tricky and they don't really travel. But it seems to me that if you've got a UK set character comedy/drama I would argue in the UK - the underdog

world - that sells really well. People like that. They can engage in that. There's also a talent base which even six years ago there wasn't available.

LH: The world has changed. Breaking Away was made in 1979. [More about Breaking Away]

LH: Would you like to read No Blood, No Foul?

GB: Yes, I'd love to. Send it over!

GB: Who would you like to direct it?

LH: I know I'd like Anthony Dod Mantle to shoot it. I'd like somebody exciting. It could be somebody young. But I think you want a safe pair of hands. My instinct says let Destiny Ekaragha do it because I've worked with her but she's a bit inexperienced. And this will be also handling Yanks and dealing with all those egos. So we need someone who's solid on the ground.

GB: Love to read it!

LH: [Discussion of In Bruges]

LH: Small films that have a big thumping, central theme that is universal and connects to people's hearts is something worth having.

GB: I'd say as a producer that's exactly what you

want to do. It's the specificity of the situation and the emotional journey. So you either make Marvel movies - which I don't know how to make - or you work out that people want an emotional journey, or comedy, or entertainment. What Martin (McDonagh) does really well in his films is a good emotional journey. A flip and an entirely different audience was the Marigold films. They are emotional journeys for older people.

LH: BAME inclusion helps to find a new audience. There isn't one homogenous group of young people. [Discussion of Marvel, specifically the high cost]. What we are not doing is making things for a BAME audience which makes up 14.3% of the country, who aren't really being served by this industry. I'm not saying I want to do that because I'm not Hanif Kureishi or Gurinder Chadha. I'm a mainstream guy. But it feels there's a huge audience (and money) that's not being served.

Questions

LH: WHAT POSSIBLE COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS MIGHT THERE BE IN PROMOTING A MORE INCLUSIVE POLICY IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE BOTH BEHIND AND IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA?

GB: It's very difficult to know what audience wants to see what thing. I don't think you can define that: Old people saw Marigold, young people saw

Marigold. The audience, I think, wants good stuff. That's the argument if you go down this route.

GB: The commercial route... I'm a filmmaker led producer. I like filmmakers - writers and directors - who have a story to tell wherever they come from. If they have a great story, and it's pointing at an audience, then we want to do it. What you would say in this [the PhD] is that there is a range of stories not coming through. And there's a range of talent not coming through, because it's excluded. There is no access into it.

GB: Looking at these questions - and I wouldn't claim to be progressive or enlightened - which is why I was intrigued to talk to you. My day to day is "s how are we going to do this?" rather than the blue sky thinking. But what you really want to do is make sure that the best filmmakers / storytellers can come into the industry. If you find them, then everything follows.

LH: Side question to that is: Here's you at Blueprint. How do you ensure these filmmakers / scripts land up on your desk? Do you go out looking for filmmakers? Or wait for them to come to you.

GB: Producers in this country are very proactive, we tend to be developing. LA is competitive about manuscripts - who has it and how much is it paying. Here it is about having relationships with people

and talking to them every 3, 6, 12 months until something comes out of it. Those discussions are what elight an idea. Maybe the filmmaker has read a book or we read something they might be interested in. And from that comes a project.

GB: I think that the UK is pretty successful at making films between \$10m - \$30m, like In Bruges, Seven Psychopaths, or Tinker Tailor or Marigold, or Lady in the Van. \$10-\$12m is the bottom line because when you spend that kind of money you have a responsibility to investors on a commercial basis. Probably smaller than that you might be able to get away with it. You have to be four square with you commercial considerations and that's: Have we got enough money to cast this film properly? Proper filmmakers? Are we doing it properly? Is the set build decent enough? Is there enough money to put this film together and allow it to travel internationally?

GB: So in terms of the new filmmakers, I'm one step removed from those that are ploughing through brilliant schemes like the Microwave scheme, various short schemes, BFI schemes. They've probably made something by that point so I'm unlikely, on a commercial basis, to have a filmmaker who doesn't have experience and hasn't made a film.

LH: What about the BAME filmmakers who are

experienced, like Noel Clarke and Alrick Riley and Amma Asante?

GB: By way of example, Amma and we were talking about Homeless World Cup. Script wasn't for her and she was doing United Kingdom but to me that's that. Gurinda we talked to about The Marigold before we did it with John Madden.

LH: So the door is open.

GB: Of course. If I can see something in the work that we think is interesting and we think that they could handle the budget, yes of course. That's the talent. And then, I would argue, on BAME basis, we are more international looking. We're now working with a really nice filmmaker called Ritesh Batra, he did The Lunchbox. Indian based. I got to know him when I was out in India. I got to know him while I was out in India. He's doing an Indian set story called The Fine Balance which is a book by Rohinton Mistry.

LH: So you guys do have an overview of the world. You do think globally. It seems that my business partner, Barbara Mele, is always saying that being pro-inclusion, being pro-BAME doesn't limit your horizons as far as the financial imperative is concerned. In fact it actually makes business sense.

GB: Yep so now on the Homeless World Cup film,

we've got an Arab-Israeli filmmaker called Hany Abu-Assad. He's doing that for us with Fox and Film4. He's a brilliant filmmaker.

LH: Where did you get him from?

GB: It's weird. I saw a film he made in 2013 in Cannes (Called Omar) and then he made a film that was an Arab idol story. A kid from Gaza goes to Egypt and there's something about this journey of winning and finding a way forwards that I thought was brilliant. To me it's always about the filmmaker and the filmmaker's vision. If you can find that, and I don't care where it comes from, you need to find the people.

GB: So in response, what you'd argue in the UK, there's a white, university educated, middle class voice. (Which I am.) Sometimes it's inward looking and sometimes it's outward looking. When we put a project together we think "Who's going to excite me? Where's the take on this project that excites me?" So those two [previous examples] are great.

LH: Who is on your team?

GB: Exactly what I said to you. 6 in the company. One mixed race assistant. The rest white, university educated.

LH: That's most companies in London.

GB: One of our responsibilities as filmmakers or as producers is to say, "How can we make this talent pool more inclusive?" In front of or behind the camera. Whatever the voice is it has to be coming through. I don't think audiences are spitting the dummy. They aren't saying we don't want to watch that because we are not interested.

LH: A lot of the BAME audience want to watch what everyone else want to watch. However, a lot of the problem isn't on screen. Onscreen representation has improved over the last ten years (It could be better). My general point is, I don't see people like me on film sets.

GB: It's a freelance business, so how do you get access to it? And there's a BAME issues but, to a degree, a class issue here. I think that a lot of people who are white working in the crew are there because they know someone. If you are outside that it's a very difficult entry.

LH: Well it's like watching a magician! How do you get that job!?

GB: Big social mobility issue. And a big access issues.

LH: IF FUNDING BODIES WERE OBLIGED BY GOVERNMENT (THROUGH TAX OR OTHER FISCALLY RELATED MATTERS) TO

ENHANCE THE PROPORTION OF THE BAME POPULATION
EMPLOYED WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, WHAT MEASURE MIGHT
YOU ADOPT TO DO THIS?

GB: The three ticks thing is kind of a strange
thing...

LH: You don't agree with it?

GB: No, I do. The thing I was laughing at was that
whether your dad went to university would establish
the class you are. And my business partner is very
rich and posh but his dad didn't go to university.
So we're thinking this is ridiculous.

GB: It seems to be working. What it does is it sets
the agenda. So I'm more conscious of things than I
was, even five years ago. How has it happened? With
female writers and directors. There's a wind,
there's a tide. It's more acceptable to encourage,
or not acceptable to not encourage that current. I
think on the BAME things as well it's past the
ether, in a very good way. So in terms of
representation, I don't have the answers but you
will.

LH: If the government said we're going to make a
rule, how would that work?

GB: There's a push and pull. If you can supply the
people things will change. If you legislate to

change before the people are available then you may have a problem. (I'm thinking as I speak)

LH: You don't think that there's enough people in the business?

GB: We don't find access to them

LH: So if there was some kind of database, would that work?

GB: Yes. The danger is imposing rules before the talent base that can match that need.

LH: It could be argued that there is a talent pool that is being ignored.

GB: If there is then we should find it. How do I find it in my day to day?

LH: It's about supply and demand and a credible database.

GB: We do an intern thing and I keep saying to my assistant, why can't we find people who are different from those we keep finding.

LH: Who are those people?

GB: University educated, white middle class people.

LH: It depends on where you cast your net.

GB: The ability to make movies is being easier. Democratisation of filmmaking. Make something good on a phone and someone will notice. That wasn't the case 20 years ago.

LH: Would you support your own version of Microwave?

GB: We wouldn't do it. Because we make bigger budget films.

LH: But would you help?

GB: Yes, we all have a responsibility because it's a freelance business to bring people through. Mentorship is very important.

LH: In TV there is so much money going to regions, but they are overlooking communities like BAME. The percentage of BAME people working in the industry is far lower than would be proportional.

GB: Thinking through your original point, if you impose legislation.

LH: What measure might you adopt to do this?

GB: Do a version of 3 ticks.

LH: That works, people sometimes pull against these

things though.

GB: I don't think people pull against the 3 ticks. I think it's very good to have that as a direction of travel in everyone's mind.

LH: It took a while to get going.

GB: It sounded stricter your question. Another way of thinking about it would be to make sure the talent pool is bigger and then it becomes self fulfilling. Impose the conditions, but if you do that, you have to make sure there is a talent pool.

LH: I urge you to talk to people like PACT who would argue there is a talent pool but who don't get work because they aren't in a gang. What people are willing to do, is really push internships. But we need to encourage both. Especially outreach.

LH: WHAT DIFFICULTIES STAND IN THE WAY OF GREATER EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS FROM THE SAME POPULATIONS?

LH: We've just discussed this. Lack of social mobility.

GB: It's the introduction thing.

LH: Class is major factor - massive ignoring of shy working class people. Missing the people who feel they haven't been invited to the dance.

GB: If they feel there's a barrier to entry that's a problem - BAME and social mobility are big factors in that. Once you are in though it's dog eat dog.

LH: More encouragement from schools. Industry must be more open. It is open to people who know what to ask for.

GB: The weird thing is that the industry is remarkably liberal. All different groups would be welcome because they would bring different points of view. How great in our office to have three points of view rather than one. Everyone would welcome that. But people are too head down busy making things work in the conventional way and they don't have immediate access to the talent pool.

GB: We have interns who roll every six weeks. If I say to my assistant Morgana find an intern it's really just loads of assistants at other companies talking to each other and referring people.

LH: How much do you pay them?

GB: Just travel and food. But I would never ask them to do anything that was work. If we were getting them to do a job we would pay them to do that job. But if they are additional and they are there to learn we would not pay them.

LH: So Morgana is quite important then.

GB: Yes, she's great.

LH: The Henry plan. The regions' plan has generally worked in decentralising the industry. But there are lots of companies 'scamming' but it encourages people to think outside the M25. My argument is that if ringfenced money for regions works, why not do it for communities? Would you support ring fencing?

LH: WOULD YOU SUPPORT RING-FENCED FUNDING (I.E. FUNDING SPECIFICALLY INTRODUCED) THAT EXISTED TO GIVE FINANCIAL BACKING SOLELY TO BAME ACTORS OR OTHER PRODUCTION STAFF?

GB: Yes, as an incubator. You want to incubate talent and let it come to the main table. What I don't think is a brilliant idea is to compartmentalise talent.

LH: Do you have a sense of committing yourself to achieving greater diversity?

GB: Not enough, honest answer. We think about what's there to help me? That's why I say database.

LH: But if it was there you'd use it?

GB: Definitely. So that's mildly inadequate, in terms of our social responsibilities. We've talked to Michael Foster about his things (PACT) and intern schemes and how you widen them.

GB: On screen is a big thing, because you want to represent what contemporary Britain looks like. Slightly different, when we made Marigold, Tom Wilkinson played a gay character. We were trying really hard to not make that central to his character. Trying to throw away things so they aren't issue based.

LH: That's an editorial decision.

GB: Yes. The danger is "why does this have to be this way? Can we think of this in another way?". So casting directors open their heads.

LH: A lot of moaning about inclusion is about onscreen representation. But I think we've gone past that. People are doing it. Particularly the BBC.

GB: In terms of emerging talent, people I've met who I really like: There's an Asian-British guy called Hong Khaou who did a film called Lifting (Microwave). Anthony Chen, Singapore born British based director who is directing something for us on young Princess Elizabeth. That's the contrast but he's smart and a brilliant filmmaker. He won the

Palme d'Or for best first feature in 2013 (Ilo Ilo). So I don't care where people come from, I just want good people coming through.

LH: Not encouraged by off screen representation.

GB: I'm pointing at filmmakers and saying I'm encouraged that there's people coming through who have a different voice. I think production companies, like ours, are disappointing.

LH: Hard to marshal indies because they are so small. No one regulates it.

GB: That's the most disappointing thing because where the ideas are commissioned and the consensus within that pool is mono-cultural. So how do we change that? They need to draw from a wider net. That will bring in better ideas, and development people will have different ideas, they've read a different book. So that's the talent pool that I find frustrating.

LH: What can you do about it?

GB: Spend more time on it. Secondly, have a group of smaller companies to build that database to encourage entry and support.

LH: How can you glue the indies to make them take responsibility to inclusivity and hiring practises.

You need someone to say, we can do something.

GB: Want to encourage senior people. They come through interns become assistants, to development people to producers. I see that again and again. That's why you do the intern thing because we want to bring people in. Can we reach further? Can we change the hubs?

LH: TO WHAT DEGREE HAS THE LOSS OF APPETITE FOR SOCIAL REALISM IN FILMMAKING AFFECTED THE INDUSTRIES INCLINATION TO RECRUIT, EMPLOY OR ENGAGE BAME INDIVIDUALS AND POPULATIONS?

GB: The high concept stuff is usually American. e.g. Star Wars - which is made in Pinewood - but it's not a British story. Perhaps you see more social realism on television than you did before. Audiences don't want to watch a lot of that at the cinema. Watching habits are changing. I don't think it's a bad thing, I like films that are pointed to and find an audience. I think that in a lot of those films that didn't find audiences there was a council estate, there was drugs etc. So maybe the cinema isn't the place for gritty social realism if it's going to be told in that way. I'm sure good filmmakers could tell those stories and tell them in a slightly different way. I'm encouraged broadly that you can make films in the UK that people will watch all over the world. They don't have to be s but people are much more pointed at an audience

than they used to be.

LH: HOW MONO-CULTURAL DO YOU CONSIDER THE FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY TO BE, AND HOW SHOULD THIS BE CHALLENGED?

GB: People don't want it not to change. People are busy running companies that might sink or swim on the basis of the next production. Reality is businesses are struggling. So how do we help that change?

GB: On screen we're saying we are past green shoots. I'm arguing that I think there's diversity in the filmmaker camp but it could be better. It will improve because making films is now so easy. But I think that production companies are monocultural and a bit stuck.

LH: COULD THE SITUATION BE IMPROVED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF BAME GATEKEEPERS AND COMMISSIONERS HIRED, COMMITTED AND EMPLOYED TO SELECT FROM A MORE DIVERSE TALENT POOL?

GB: Always good to encourage diverse group. Gatekeepers are different.

LH: No that's you.

GB: I always think gatekeepers have money that we go to.

LH: But actually we go to people like you who will make it. Then you get the money. Could we improve the situation by increasing diversity amongst commissioners?

GB: Yes.

LH: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING APPROACHES TO DELIVERING BAME REPRESENTATION WOULD YOU FAVOUR AND WHY

LH: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MENTORING.

GB: Mentoring always a good idea. Happy to have people shadow us. With mentoring we have two strands. One: once a year we always have an NFTS student who comes with us throughout the year. If we're talking about diversity, how do we open that up?

LH: You have to be particular about the NFTS student.

GB: Or say, find us some different people for the scheme.

LH: Or create a bursary. Call it the BAME bursary and take one person through the year.

GB: Yes

LH: TRAINING INITIATIVES SPECIFICALLY FOR ASPIRING BAME ACTORS OR SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY.

GB: Not averse to this.

LH: BURSARIES AT ALL THE MAJOR ACTING SCHOOLS AND TRAINING

GB: There needs to be a selection process. And it has to show merit. The danger is you have a lot of indies who are not very good at working together. How do you get a collective voice? It's a very independent industry.

GB: Also hard to find the cash to put in and look to the longer term.

GB: No one is rejecting the idea, people are preoccupied. Help my peripheral vision. I can't spend time interviewing 50 people.

LH: Do you think you will start to turn your attention to this? Why aren't we thinking about diversity given the world is such a diverse place.

GB: I'm optimistic that more different stories will be told because of this democratisation. The pool is bigger. More ways to view, distribute, to find. I'm encouraged by that.

LH: I'm so glad you are encouraged.



Bradley Quirk is Head of Development at Altitude. He has previously held positions at the BFI and Pathé where he worked on a number of prestige titles including Stephen Frears' Oscar-nominated *Philomena*, Justin Chadwick's *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, Matthew Warchus's *Pride* and Sarah Gavron's upcoming Carey Mulligan drama *Suffragette*.
[source: <http://www.screendaily.com/news/bradley-quirk-to-join-altitude/5068259.article>]

LH: What possible commercial considerations might there be in promoting a more inclusive work force both behind and in front of the camera?

BQ: The greatest commercial consideration for promoting a more inclusive workforce both on screen and behind the camera is the long-term prospect of reaching new audiences through a greater range of narratives and credible characters.

LH: Would you support ring-fenced funding that existed to give financial backing solely to BAME actors or other production staff?

BQ: I would support it only if that funding was supported by quality-control checks to prevent BAME actors and production staff appearing in critically inferior work. The danger exists that a mini-genre of work would appear that pays for financiers to make exploitative material for narrow audiences.

LH: If funding bodies were obliged by the government to enhance the proportion of the BAME population employed within the industry, what measure might you adopt to do this?

BQ: Within the film industry, I would target distribution with additional so that distributors and film producers were prompted to distribute more BAME-influenced films. I would also incentivize the employment of BAME executives within the industry. They are the tastemakers and gatekeepers. A generation of BAME execs need to be trained.

LH: What difficulties stand in the way of greater employment of individuals from the BAME populations?

BQ: For execs, a lack of exposure to arts degrees in higher and further education. Also, not enough exposure to the soft skills practised in a largely mono-cultural industry. For actors, a lack of roles at a younger age that allows actors to refine their skills and open themselves to a wider range of casting opportunities. For crew, a lack of support mechanisms that allow them to work on low-paid productions bringing up their skill base to a

proficient level alongside more socially mobile peers. For writers, a lack of outlets for their material and a general lack of exposure to traditional hothouses for writing such as Oxbridge.

LH: How do you usually recruit? Word of mouth? Recommendations? People you have previously worked with? Advertising?

BQ: Word of mouth.

LH: How committed are you to the notion of acquiring greater diversity in the film and television industries?

BQ: Very committed – I am mixed-race and constantly aware of lack of diversity (both in terms of race and class) both in front and behind camera.

LH: To what degree has the loss of appetite for social realism in film-making affected the industries inclination to recruit, employ, or engage BAME individuals and populations?

BQ: The loss of appetite for social realism isn't necessarily a bad thing. It forms a soft-genre ghetto and having less social realism forces filmmakers to find different genres to express diverse stories. Audiences reward imagination. BAME writers, crew and cast didn't necessarily benefit from inclusion in the world of British social realism.

LH: How mono-cultural do you consider the TV and film industries to be, and how should this be challenged?

BQ: It's very mono-cultural. Not a terrible culture as personality differentiates and plenty of

good people are out there, but mono-cultural nonetheless. To challenge this status quo, we have to reward producers who strive to employ diverse workforces in the pursuit of creatively excellent work.

LH: Could this situation be improved by the development and fast-tracking of new gatekeepers committed and employed to select from a more diverse talent pool?

BQ: Yes, but we would have to assess who might be qualified to oversee this process.

LH: Which of the following approaches to delivering BAME representation would you favour and why:

- i) Opportunities for mentoring?
- ii) Training initiatives specifically for aspiring BAME actors or specialists within the industry?
- iii) Bursaries at the major acting school and training facilities to heighten knowledge, skills, and attitudes for BAME/working class individuals wanting to break through the many glass ceilings of our industry?

BQ: I would back all three approaches. They would reinforce each other and allow for access to experience and peer to peer development.

LH: One final thought: in America there was a time when it was thought the key demographic that could make or break a film was young men between the ages of 16-24 and movies reflected this accordingly. Who do the producers consider to be their key demographic (both in terms of box office and critical acclaim) how diverse is the demographic

and how does this demographic react to diversity in their films?

BQ: Most recently film producers have come to realise that the grey pound (50-65 and above) has been incredibly lucrative. In my experience, this audience doesn't reward diversity onscreen.

11. Ollie Madden

Kudos films producer

Ollie Madden - It does feel like the balance between being independent as a company, speaking about Kudos at this point, but then having the balance of being part of a larger group. It's a balance they are getting right.

Lenny: It feels like everyone is finding their feet still. But it does feel good to be in one place.

O: Physically in one place?

L: Yes, I like working in one place. I worked at the BBC and the National Theatre. I noticed that there's a vibe when there's lots of different creatives bumping heads with each other.

O: Do you find yourself talking to other production companies.

L: Well we walk around. We roam the building. We go on different floors and people say "Hello, what are you doing here?" "I've just come to say hello!" People don't say can you fuck off please, they tend to be very welcoming which is good.

O: There was a little bit of nervousness when Endemol merged with Shine, amongst people at Kudos,

because when it was just Shine, Kudos was really the only drama producer in the UK. It had that field to itself. Obviously that wasn't the case when the two companies merged because there was Tiger and Fathoms and House of Tomorrow. There was a little bit of nervousness about that but weirdly it's kind of cemented some confidence - not that it was lacking any confidence before - but you become more aware of your own culture and your own differences.

L: Well you can look at what you're doing and compare it. When I was doing my MA in screenwriting, what was very interesting: When you're in a room with 15 other people who are all doing the same thing as you, and you're hearing bits of their work every other day, you start to rank yourself and say "I'm doing better than him" and "he's very good, I'll watch him".

O: It keeps you on your toes. But also reminds you that it's such a subjective process and business when deciding the projects that attract you and that you feel passionate about and that you want to pursue. It's very rare that there's any kind of overlap in terms of books or writers or projects that you're going after simultaneously, which is the only point at which it could be slightly awkward.

L: Everybody's tastes are slightly difference. Somebody from Brown Eyed Boy came over and pitched a sitcom for me to be in and possibly co-produce and I didn't like it. I felt a bit weird at first but I thought they are just taking a punt. They're not going to be offended or anything. So I was brave and said I don't think this is for me. And the guy said fine we'll go somewhere else. It was cool so I think as long as everyone is like that it will be fine. I've got to have a bit of courage as far as my gut is concerned. That's all I've got really.

O: That's all any of us have got.

L: Yes, you've got your tastes, what you like. And what you like, is you. What I like is very different from Gary at Brown Eyed Boy. It's a vibe. When you're doing something like Slumdog or Sherlock Holmes is there a moment before the first draft comes in where you're all going we've paid all this money for a script, what if it's no good?

O: You get that point all the way through. When you see a first cut and you think "This is a disaster". Or you think it's great and you show it to an audience and it doesn't work or they don't respond in a way you expect them to or you get a draft of a script that you think is great but your colleagues pick loads of holes in it. That's where I think having the belief in the core idea and the core

principal and the talent you're working with is really important. Because you constantly doubt things and other people constantly doubt things. You need that belief to push it through. But also things evolve in a strange way. When we first started out talking about doing a Sherlock Holmes film - by Warner's standard low budget \$20m, gritty, younger, kind of origins story. And then we heard that Robert Downey Jr was interested in the character. He'd just done Iron Man but everyone was still trying to reposition him in their mind. And I remember we all - myself and the producer and Guy Ritchie - were thinking, oh is he right? We'd imagined him as younger... And then the head of Warner's at the time called us up and said "You're all idiots, get with the program. It may not work as you've currently conceived it but he's a massive star: re-conceive it!" So we did! And of course he was perfect. And now it's hard to imagine the films without him.

L: Has the television concept of Sherlock slightly bugged up the franchise.

O: Well interestingly the TV show - which is amazing - has really become big since the second film came out. It was out and it was running but over the years it's just grown in popularity. So they are developing a third film but it will be interesting to see what impact it has.

L: Cumberbatch rules.

O: Completely. They released the Sherlock Christmas special theatrically in Asia and it did \$30-40m of business. Number 3 in the charts. He is a massive star and that is mainly because of that show. I'm working with Paul McGuigan who directed the original Sherlock show - on a TV show - and he was wonderfully blunt and open about it. It's obviously it's its own thing but the music is very similar to Hans Zimmer's score in the films and Paul said we totally nicked that.

L: Intro about the film

L: Film is a collaborative medium. If you're with the wrong people things can go south. Have you had that experience?

O: Oh yes. First and foremost film is a director's medium so the writer has a different position in the hierarchy to television. That can be tricky for a writer and demoralising. Also sometimes the director is king and you don't necessarily agree with what the director has to say but you need to keep them happy and on board. It can be difficult.

L: What's the key thing?

O: Well when you were talking earlier I was thinking was: There's the diversity question -

which is a big one. There's also the question of knowing your audience.

L: Who is this film for?

O: Yes, and being clear of that from the outset which often isn't a conversation that is had. Or not with enough explicitness and depth. It needs to be decided very early on. It's the biggest thing. Before writing the film, before even deciding to write the film. And more and more so nowadays because it's really hard getting people out to the cinema. There's so many things for them to choose from. It's so expensive. You have to have an audience that it's not just going to appeal to but that are actively choose it over the myriad of other things they could be doing.

L: So what am I looking for then?

O: There's the statistical, empirical research you can do (all in inverted commas) where you look at 'comps'. Similar films of a similar subject matter and look at how they've done at the box office and look at who they appeal to both domestically and internationally. Any distributor when they are running their numbers on a film will always try and find comps. Which is an imperfect process by nature. Because how many giant hits had no predecessors or perfect comps? Or things that have loads of comps but for whatever reason don't succeed. And then

there's the instinctive understanding that this has elements that we believe will appeal to these kinds of people. And that could be that they want something like that but they haven't had it, they don't get it enough. They have an appetite for it.

L: So you're almost making a forecast. You're saying they're going to love this. So before they did Raiders of the Lost Arc Steven Spielberg and George Lucas sat down and said we haven't had a Saturday morning super hero guy for a long time, let's write that.

O: Completely. There are lots of things that are not good about the studio system. But because it's such a machine and has been for decades that marketing and analysis of projects from the outset is something that is completely part of the process. In the independent world much less so. Which means that you can get things that are unusual and distinctive and different - they don't fit into an easy box and are hard to define. But I think there's more and more pressure now, with everything that's happening in television, to have a defined audience. Even if that's a very small audience and if you get lucky you break out of your core demographic. And from what you were describing

L: I know sports films is a maligned genre. Creed was good.

O: Yes it was great. We haven't made as many in this country. And I don't think that there's any particular good reason for that.

L: Bend it Like Beckham, Chariots of Fire.

O: That's kind of it in the last twenty years.

L: Full Monty is kind of a sports film....

O: Underdog sports film.

L: We haven't had a massive break out sports film, and we've never had a basket ball film here.

O: All these adages - which are probably bollocks - are that football movies never work.

L: Sports films are difficult because people know what football is like. The reason we wanted to do one on one basket ball was it's a skill and it's kind of like a boxing match. The best sports films have very little sports in them. The less sport the better. I want this to be a family drama about this guy that does this particular thing to raise money. But you'll have to see some of the matches to see how good he is. Then they're working towards the final where he takes this guy on. It builds, it's exciting. But if someone took it on, they'd have to take a chance. But also I think I'd have to take a hit on how much it cost. I'm pretty sure that it

won't be a \$30m picture. It's set mostly here so you couldn't spend endless money on it because you couldn't be sure it would make that money back. I'm talking myself out of it... But I think it's funny, it made me want to ask some of these questions.

O: Well I'd love to read it.

WHAT POSSIBLE COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS MIGHT THERE BE IN PROMOTING A MORE INCLUSIVE POLICY IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF A MORE INCLUSIVE WORK FORCE BOTH BEHIND AND IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA?

L: These also stem from working at the BBC for 35 years and never having a meeting with a black person or a brown person.

O: That's astonishing.

L: Walking onto film sets and not seeing anyone who looked like me. Until I had my own production company and I could ask. I could say it would be nice if it was an ethnically diverse set - this was in the 90s - and then suddenly there would be an Asian sound man or a black DOP. These questions are all about this stuff. So I guess the word that jumps out there is commercial.

O: It's easy to forget that commercial just means that there is an audience who are willing to pay or seek out that content. And I think what's so

obvious about the whole question of diversity is you have to make things that are going to appeal to audiences. If your audience is diverse why would you not make things that reflect that diversity? What feels so fundamental about it is it's not - and I'm talking about in front of the camera - it's not like that's something to do just for moral reasons, equality reasons, societal reasons; it also is obvious business sense. Why would you not make something that's going to serve an audience that have hither to been underserved.

L: It might add revenue to the project mightn't it? If you've got someone who the BAME community recognise. Quite a few people have said it makes no difference what happens behind the camera. The thing is I care.

O: In terms of in front of camera, and the types of stories you're telling and the types of characters you're depicting. What is the percentage nationwide of BAME.

L: About 14.3%. London is 40% BAME. When the television stations did the whole nations and regions thing. BBC drama went to Cardiff etc. a lot of people didn't want to move because they live here so quite a lot of people left the industry. Now some of those people may have left because they weren't any good. But quite a lot of people left because they hit a glass wall or fell off a glass

precipice. They weren't making their way up the ladder. Between 2009 and 2012 for every one BAME person that left the industry two white people got a job. It's been really tricky in the last few years. And I think that the figures that are due for release by Skillset might reveal that it's gone down even further. So we are losing BAME from behind the camera because the opportunities aren't there. Or they are not being supported. Or not able to advance in the industry.

O: Is there any explanation for why it's bad and why it has been getting worse?

L: Institutionalization. There are some places that just don't hire BAME. Our industry is worse than banking for our employment practice. It's something that needs to be looked at. So the commercial considerations in promoting BAME in front of camera is, I guess, why wouldn't you reflect society. There's going to be a middle England thing where people don't see why you need to have a variegated cast.

O: The ideal has to be that it's a natural process where audiences will seek out things that they are interested in and there's a diverse choice of things for them to find. And there are no members of society who feel that there's nothing out there for them. It's not one type of demographic that is penalised over another - in an ideal world - there

may be some kind of adjustments, proactive steps you have to take to help promote underserved groups. But audience choice should create that diversity because the audience is by its very nature diverse. Behind the camera you can talk about London or nationwide, but if you've got 40% or 14% of the public who are BAME there are going to be huge amounts of talent in that pool. Why would you not want to have access to that talent in terms of technicians or anyone else.

L: It's trickier. David Heyman said he had an epiphany when he walked onto the set of Paddington because it was so monochromatic. He said it's changed it's whole view. It's difficult to do because punters don't care about who makes it. They just want it to be good. They won't say at the end - this was a diverse set. But for us in the industry it should matter.

O: It should. You know I've mostly spent my time on development. I have recently been spending more time on production on set. But I've thought for a long time there is a big problem with access at the entry level which is more to do with economic problems. Some steps are being taken to improve that but for years the unpaid internship.

L: That's a blight on the community.

O: So you're instantly ruling out a huge sector of society who can't afford to work for free. And also jobs - because they are unofficial and unpaid - they aren't advertised in any proper way.

L: You're talking about social mobility and closed shop.

O: Yes.

IF FUNDING BODIES WERE OBLIGED BY GOVERNMENT (THROUGH TAX OR OTHER FISCALLY RELATED MATTERS) TO ENHANCE THE PROPORTION OF THE SAME POPULATION EMPLOYED WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, WHAT MEASURE MIGHT YOU ADOPT TO DO THIS?

O: In terms of film, BFI, BBC Films, Film 4. My instinct would be that there should be a bonus - a financial incentive - for reaching certain quotas rather than it being a binary thing. ie In order to get any funding you have to do this. But it should be a significant bonus and one that could dramatically increase the chances of something getting green lit or getting closer to the way you want it to be made. You are always looking for more money from the funding bodies. Say we will give you £500k but if you qualify - in whatever way is determined to be right - then you'll get an additional £150k. Maybe there's a harder line to take. Both base level of qualification and premium level. The Skillset levy is really important. It's

like taxation. If there's a total choice and no requirement to employ in a diverse way you would hope that the majority of people would like to do it but it needs to be monitored.

L: What the industry doesn't want is have their feet held to the fire. They don't want to be told by government to do something. The main thing they want to do is entry level. You hear a lot about initiatives and training. But my question is - now I know a few tech people - what about the people already doing the jobs who don't work as much,

O: That's why I think you just have to impose something. I look at some of those crew technical departments. It's often a closed shop, a family - they pass it on. Whether that's a literal family or societal, in terms of giving those people those opportunities there has to be some kind of quota. I think the way you get round the accusation of being heavy handed, you're forcing me to choose someone who's not my first creative choice for the job, is that you do it at a funding level. You say fine you can employ in the way that you want to employ but if you want this extra £200k - which I know you want - you're going to have to reach these levels.

L: Shadowing is a good thing to do. But it still slightly infantilises the workforce.

O: Well also you want to get to a point where if people aren't being given the opportunity.... It's about credits ultimately, if you're looking for a DOP you want someone who has shot great stuff and who's work you admire. If they couldn't get a meeting on that show then it's a self defeating thing not getting the opportunities.

L: The guy who has been working will always get more gigs than the guy who hasn't been working. It's the opportunity to build your portfolio. My girlfriend who is a casting director always says you've got to hire the best person for the job. I say what if you're not seeing everyone. They need to open the door a bit.

O: If you don't force people to do it people will often take the path of least resistance. My wife is a doctor for the NHS and works as part of a diverse workforce and with diverse patient groups. Whenever I've hired just someone in the office she's always appalled and shocked that I don't directly advertise the job officially, which of course they are required to do. I always feel guilty but then my knee jerk response is if I advertised it I'd have 20,000 CVs to read, I don't have time. But on another level there's probably fantastic people out there. And it's entry level jobs, because you know the assistants become the...

L: Run the BBC!

O: Be nice to people on the way up because you'll need them on the way down.

WHAT DIFFICULTIES STAND IN THE WAY OF GREATER EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS FROM THE BAME POPULATIONS?

L: It seems to be what you just said. People not advertising the jobs, closed shop, nepotism, social mobility.

O: People want to hire people who've done something before or who they know through someone else. If that's a very closed network it's very hard for anyone to come in on.

L: I talked to the advertising industry at BAFTA. They never advertise their jobs. It's all mates ringing each other.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT RING-FENCED FUNDING (I.E. FUNDING SPECIFICALLY INTRODUCED) THAT EXISTED TO GIVE FINANCIAL BACKING SOLELY TO BAME ACTORS OR OTHER PRODUCTION STAFF?

O: Yes

L: Why, big institutions are funny about ring fenced money. They feel it might ghettoise the industry.

O: I understand that. I was thinking about it in terms of not an entirely separate pot for separate projects. But - like we were talking about with film - that there would be an extra tier available of funding if you met certain BAME requirements. So you'd have a tariff and a tariff plus if you met those requirements.

OW: Could you have something where funding bodies would pay salaries towards specific crew? You can take an extra person on because we will give you money to pay for this person's wage.

L: We are close to that because it's to do with young people. They are malleable and will work for very little money. I've got a friend whose daughter wants to do this job so much she gets paid £1.70 per hour. They can support her throughout that. So ring fenced money, big blob of money, with commissioners around it and with gatekeepers that you have to pitch to, or send a CV to.

O: I can see the potential ghettoisation which might make the problem worse. You say we're going to solve this by having a separate, smaller, self enclosed, industry. We've solved the problem speak to that person over there. They've got that money and they can worry about it. The way you effect change across the whole industry: factual, entertainment, drama, is by having across the board

funding incentives for reaching certain BAME representation.

L: So make it a 'tiving' thing. John Lennon gave a tenth of his earnings to charity. So it's like a tax. A percentage of a production fee.

O: It's like tax credits for hitting certain environmental quotes.

L: People are funny about quotas. There is a feeling amongst the beneficiaries where they feel that they are being patronised and it is tokenistic to be the recipient of a quota. It's so tricky. In America they fought for positive discrimination. And there's a real sense of whether it's legal here. Quotas can be manipulated too. You can have the guy from IT and the cleaners and the security guy and that's your 15%.

O: But as you say, so much has been done on the regional.

L: It worked for the regions why wouldn't it work for BAME.

O: We got money for the West Midlands for our Spooks film. In order to qualify for that money a certain proportion of our cast and crew had to have a West Midland address.

L: How did that film do?

O: It did alright. We did just short of £4m in the UK and it's still rolling out internationally. It's done really well. Seban and HBO released it in the US.

L: How much did it cost to make?

O: It cost about £6m.

L: That's not bad.

O: We're going to sell about 380,000 DVDs. People still buy them.

L: I do. I find streaming very difficult. Although Amazon prime is much quicker than iTunes. £1.89 to watch an episode of a show. You just click and it's instant.

O: I've got to the point where I would rather just press a button on my TV than go over to the shelves and find that DVD. I have paid to stream things I already own. It's stupid. There's no good aggregator of all the streaming services yet. If you're looking for a program you've got to think is that on Amazon, is that on Netflix, is that on iTunes? You don't want to have to close one app and open another. They are talking about iPlayer taking on ITV and C4 content because if we are not going

to completely be subsumed by the all powerful Netflix and Amazon we've got to have our own streaming service that can compete and the BBC's content alone doesn't do that. Sky can aggregate things that are on it's channels but it's not going to have stuff that's exclusive to Netflix or Amazon. Part of this goes against what the market is going to want to do because Netflix by definition wants itself to be your only destination. I work in the industry and I'm thinking when did they make that show, and who did they do a deal with and I wonder what window we are in. Young people who are illegally streaming do it partly because it's quicker to google show free stream.

L: I know lots of people who watch everything for free.

O: It's a cultural thing.

L: People want to watch everything in one go. The days of waiting to watch the end of your favorite show are over.

HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU TO THE NOTION OF ACQUIRING GREATER DIVERSITY (IE BLACK, ETHNIC MINORITY, DISADVANTAGED AND GENDER DIVERSITY) IN THE FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY?

O: I am committed. But I would embrace and welcome more institutional change and commitment to keep

that change in check. I'm not sure that individual desire in this instance.

L: Well Tim Bevan said last week, that it's going to need a gang of people to come together and agree something. Nick Powell says it's going to be a 'coalition of the willing' but we need people like you to say let's talk to those people and be together on this. It's not going to work unless everyone is together. One of the reason diversity hasn't worked in this industry is because it's usually some poor person in a room with their head in their hands trying to understand why diversity isn't working in this country. Whereas I'd rather go, OK the diversity office and the diversity person, let's put that to one side, and let's think about employment practice. Because what we're talking about is inclusivity in employment practice. We're not talking about diversity. That's an idea. Diversity is like free ice cream on a Friday. Whereas if you just say this is something we've got to do. And you either pass legislation or we all just sign a piece of paper that says we're going to do it, and we're off. But it seems to me that one person with their head in their hands trying to count everybody. You can't do that with the indies. They're like the Wild West.

O: Well when you become a bigger company or part of a bigger organisation you become more accountable. As you say, if you've got small companies that are

just trying to make a living, they're not thinking about that, they're just trying to survive.

L: You're (Ollie Watts) making a short film soon. You've got on screen diversity, but you're going to ask everyone you know to make the film.

OW: Beg!

L: You're going to beg the people you know. And that's the problem. Even from the start. I would probably ask people I know so my crew would be more diverse than yours. If this is a film school culture, where everyone gets their mates, you're going to start a practice that you won't lose.

TO WHAT DEGREE HAS THE LOSS OF APPETITE FOR SOCIAL REALISM IN FILM MAKING AFFECTED THE INDUSTRIES INCLINATION TO RECRUIT, EMPLOY OR ENGAGE BAME INDIVIDUALS AND POPULATIONS?

O: I feel that social realism is still alive. You've got Andrea Arnold and Clio Bernard and Lynne Ramsay, really good filmmakers.

L: Not as much as it used to be though. Shane Meadows.

O: Absolutely. You'd have to do a study on those films and whether they are commercially viable.

L: Do you think television has taken the place of film whether that kind of film is concerned?

O: Definitely. Television, both in terms of the drama and series, but also in terms of the availability of art house or more niche cinema on your TV. It used to be that if you wanted to see a great art house film you had to go to the cinema and there was only one good one released every month or something. Now there's a whole category for it on Netflix or Amazon and there is stuff that was in the can six months ago.

L: I went to see Deepan at the Greenwich Picture House. There was a whole bunch of adverts for movies I'd never heard of or seen like Son of Saul. They were all art house pictures. And Curzon has it's own channel, like it's own Netflix channel. You can watch an arty film on Curzon TV. I think Picture House might do it soon as well. Do you think the movie thing is going to be phased out or do you think that people will always want to be sat in a dark room with other people?

O: I think the communal experience is something people are always going to want. But I think you have to make things people want to see communally. And I also think that the pricing has to be right. I think it's a real problem if the economics of it mean that it's so expensive to go to the cinema it prices out certain audiences.

L: We want to go somewhere where there's giant snacks and a huge screen. I always think IMAX is too big.

O: The thing about IMAX is there's a bit of the auditorium where it's great but the rest of it isn't. You do not want to be sitting too close. The IMAX at the Empire Leister Square is amazing. It's probably my favorite screen in London now. So I hope that that will always exist. There's that huge debate over windowing right now.

L: What's windowing?

O: Theatrical window - how long a movie is on general release - 16 weeks before it can be released on ancillary. The exhibitors enforce that quite strictly and will boycott distributors who don't adhere to it. But that is - arguably - not in keeping with viewing patterns and consumer demand.

L: Are you saying what they are trying to do is make a movie and you release it on DVD, cable, streaming and theatrically all at the same time?

O: Well that already exists in a minor way. Spooks - I found this bizarre - but it came out first on a thing called Direct TV in America. It's a premium, subscriber cable offering and then subsequently came out theatrically. And I thought who is going

to go and see something in the cinema if it's been available on TV. But Direct TV is a premium service, it's quite an expensive subscription, not many people have it and they pay to get stuff. A bit like Sean Parker's proposed movie on demand thing.

HOW MONO-CULTURAL DO YOU CONSIDER THE FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY TO BE, AND HOW SHOULD THIS BE CHALLENGED?

O: Shockingly so. Crew. When you think about crew on set, I'm not surprised Heyman had that moment. I think that's lagging even further behind writers and directors. It's pretty bad.

COULD THE SITUATION BE IMPROVED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF BAME GATEKEEPERS AND COMMISSIONERS HIRED, COMMITTED AND EMPLOYED TO SELECT FROM A MORE DIVERSE TALENT POOL?

L: If the people who pick and decide look more like that demographic, maybe you'd see the doors opening a bit more.

O: I agree. But that's harder. I think that's why people are focussed on entry level and training because you want people to get to that job because they are good at picking things. You want the people who are picking things to be a diverse group but putting someone in that job solely because they represent a certain age, or gender or ethnic

background starts to undermine the editorial meritocracy that the business has.

L: Nobody wants people to be plucked and tell them they are the controller of BBC 1 because they are black and fit certain demographics. I think everybody wants a meritocracy. The BBC over twenty years ago had a think where they cherry picked twenty women to be part of this women in film and TV group who were fast tracked. They were the best in their class, very good executives working at the BBC. The BBC gave them access to green lighting, scheduling, editorial, producorial. All the big rooms in television where they were given a fast track on this is how TV works. Now 20 years later those women run television. So clearly when an institution decides they are going to do something it works. Like the BBC's diverse assistant commissioners scheme. That works.

O: Definitely. My sister is the head of a fantastic state primary and she was part of the first year of the fast track graduate scheme in teaching because there weren't enough university graduates going into teaching. They put funding aside to pay for it. And she benefited from it enormously.

L: She doesn't resent being picked out for that.

O: No no. She was picked out because she was good. But they weren't attracting enough university

graduates to teaching. Partly because the starting salary wasn't good enough but also there wasn't a clear enough path to a management head position. They changed that so now you've got a whole generation of young, dynamic, smart heads. That's a slightly different thing.

L: But it's a good model.

O: Coming out of university she applied for the fast track teacher training where you rose through the ranks of newly qualified teacher - you got a lot of training that allowed you to become head of subject, head of year, assistant head, head, - fast than was previously possible.

L: So what used to take a lifetime took three years or something?

O: Maybe 5/7year. But, yes, that would have taken 20/30 years. And there was funding put aside so that - certainly from a salary point of view - it was a viable choice against the other industries.

L: So it was subsidized as well. See, why wouldn't you do that as a big industry? If that was a tax initiative or a lottery thing.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING APPROACHES TO DELIVERING BAME REPRESENTATION WOULD YOU FAVOUR AND WHY: A) OPPORTUNITIES FOR MENTORING.

B) TRAINING INITIATIVES SPECIFICALLY FOR ASPIRING
BLACK ACTORS OR SPECIALISTS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY.
BURSARIES AT ALL THE MAJOR ACTING SCHOOLS AND
TRAINING

O: It probably does come down to money. And having some kind of enforcement of money which would help fund those kind of training, fast track initiatives. The fast track thing feels more like a long term more substantive solution. I worry with the training things or two week internships or shadowing, that it's a temporary measure. Where's the next step?

L: I think no training without a job at the end. That's a good rule to have.

O: It's certainly better than nothing because if you give people an opportunity to be seen and show what they can do then they've got their foot in the door. So people say you're really good, we've got this coming up I'm going to hire you for that. So it's better than nothing. But there has to be some kind of structural system in place where the opportunity for progression and advancement could exist.

L: This idea about working class actors just not getting the chance to go to acting school and to train. Should the industry put some money aside?

Dob into a fund for talented actors who don't have the money to do it. These are the stars of tomorrow.

O: They definitely should but where does that money come from? The answer is undoubtedly yes, who wouldn't support that. And yet you've got a situation where the BBC is massively having to slash its budgets, you feel that on a governmental level, even though the creative industries are a huge provider for the economy, somehow in terms of a political pledge - education, NHS, security - these things are going to feel more worthy of funding than the entertainment industry.

L: But the entertainment industry generates so much revenue.

O: I know. That's not an objective thing. It's a political thing. And that has to change because that money should be there and needs to be there but it's probably got to be state provided. The difficult thing with applying more levies to industry is that funding televisions or films as an independent producer is challenged and is only getting more challenging. So you don't want to penalise the people that you're trying to help and that you're trying to encourage to make more with more diverse programming with more diverse people in front of and behind the camera. But absolutely there needs to be scholarships, bursaries, whatever.

L: It's the people who are a bit shy or who don't have the wherewithal to write a letter to someone. They slip through the cracks. Or people who have worked in the industry for years but have hit a wall and think I've got to feed my family now, I'll do a straight job. It's supporting the industry really. So people don't fall through the cracks as much. A lot of BAME people have fallen through the cracks and all of these questions are about how do we protect the next generation of these people. Thank you so much!

APPENDIX 9: THE VULTURE SCREENWRITERS' INTERVIEW

Polone: Four Star Screenwriters Talk About Rewrite Hell

By Gavin Polone

Photo: William Perugini

Why does anyone want to be a screenwriter? It is the most difficult job in the business. Facing a blinking cursor and a blank screen is much tougher than interpreting that screenplay. And for this arduous work, the screenwriter is compensated less than the producers, director, and stars: It is pretty rare for even an A-list writer to get any kind of big-money profit participation on a film, while it is de rigueur for those in the aforementioned categories. And, unlike the other artists who work on films – and in most other art forms – it is common and even pro forma to replace a screenwriter on a studio project. While book editors probably have given notes to e.e. cummings and Norman Mailer, I doubt anyone ever rewrote them. I can't imagine that after Bruce Springsteen sent Columbia Records the songs for Born to Run, an executive said to him, "That's great Boss, or, eh, The Boss, but we think it best to hand these over to John Fogerty and let him do a pass on them." Dalí, Rodin, and Chopin would probably be aghast to learn of how motion picture scripts are developed. On a big-budget film, it is not uncommon for six or more writers to have worked on the screenplay, including the director and a friend of the star who

is brought in just to work on his character's dialogue. After 27 years working in this industry, I've heard many writers complain about unjust situations or how a movie could have been better had their work made it to the screen, but not about the actual experience of being rewritten or rewriting someone else. So in search of illumination on the topic, I decided to ask a group of four top script writers – David Koepp (Jurassic Park, Spider-Man), Brian Koppelman (Rounders, Ocean's Thirteen), Jeff Nathanson (Catch Me If You Can, The Terminal), and Andy Walker (Se7en, Sleepy Hollow) – for their thoughts on the curiously standard procedure of swapping writers on movies. How do you feel when you've been rewritten on a movie? Koepp: I try to avoid all contact with the thing afterwards – if it's worse than what I had I go nuts, and if it's better than what I had I go really nuts. It's not the other writer that I have feelings about, though, it's the people who decided to replace me.

However, there is also an undeniable feeling of righteous indignation and freedom that comes with being fired. It really is the most liberating experience you can have; not only are you justifiably enraged and terribly misunderstood, but suddenly your days are wide open. You don't usually get fired when you're on a roll, it's when you've been banging your head against something for a year and have grown to hate it. To be able to walk away from it at that point, and with a sense of

righteousness, is sort of a gift.

I was fired off one big high-pressure type movie, but I heard about it in the worst way, in a form of gossip from my agent, who'd heard the studio had hired so-and-so to work on my movie. Nobody had told me I was fired, so the hiring took me a tad by surprise. I called the studio executive I'd been working with and said, "Did you just hire so-and-so to rewrite me?" And he sighed heavily and said, "You know, Dave, this is a tough phone call to make ... " And I screamed into the phone "YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT! I HEARD IT IN THE GUTTER!" That kinda sucked. What I didn't know at the time was that I would be re-hired and re-fired on that same movie two more times. Koppelman: I can't sit here and grouse about being rewritten when the rest of the country is struggling to make ends meet each month; if I'm being rewritten, I've already been paid. That doesn't mean that I never grouse. I do. But I shouldn't.

Nathanson: My emotional response has been the same from day one, which is a mix of disgust and horror, no matter what side I'm on. It's always upsetting. Walker: Almost every time I've left a job, it was because a director came in with notes I just couldn't bring myself to execute. If there are big notes I just don't "get," then the only thing that makes sense is for me to step aside and not do a halfhearted rewrite. Just that as much as I accept that getting rewritten comes with the territory,

there are now two movies with my name on them that I haven't been able to bring myself to see. That's how high my hopes were when I wrote the first drafts of both, and how crushing it was to see what became of them (based on what little I could bring myself to read of the production draft and what I've been told about the final film). So as much as I like to profess shrugging off being rewritten, it can be heartbreaking.

What's it like rewriting someone else?

Koepp: I'm fine with that.

Koppelman: If you don't want to be rewritten, protect yourself from the beginning. Don't take assignments or rewrites. And don't pitch. Write specs. Get 'em made independently. Become a producer. A director. Or do what Leslie Dixon did on *Limitless* – make it a condition of the deal that you cannot be rewritten.

You have to separate out the question of rewriting from the question of credit grabbing. As far as the practice of rewriting itself goes, I feel no guilt when hired to do it. I think that distinction is important, though – going after credit you don't deserve is immoral. Rewriting is not. I can think of three instances where [my writing partner, David Levien] and I were specifically called in to [do a rewrite to get] a movie green-lit. The studio head or director told us: This thing is either getting made or going away on the pass you do. Each time, we turned our draft in and the movie got green-lit.

We didn't get credit on any of the three films I'm thinking of. Didn't even arbitrate for credit. So if the writers we rewrote in those cases were angry or frustrated, they shouldn't be – they got all the residuals, even though we got them their green light.

Nathanson: I generally call [the prior writer] and ask how they feel about it. If they are okay with it, I'll consider doing it.

Walker: I don't do many rewrites, because if I read something I think is horrible, I usually don't have the ability to step back and imagine fixing it, while if I read something good, I don't feel I have much to offer in improving it, and the studio should just use that same writer to do what little tweaking seems to be needed. There is such a thing, though, as a writer getting to a point where they're "written out" on a project. Especially since writers aren't working in a vacuum, with all the other voices in their head (real and imagined), and producer notes and studio notes that are part of the process. And I guess I'd like to think if I'm coming on to do a rewrite, that might have been where the previous writer ended up. Even if they don't think so. Objectivity doesn't exist when it comes to your own writing, or in any creative endeavor, really. But almost as a necessary delusion, lack of objectivity is a two-way street. So, any writer worth their salt is basically going to think that their rewriting is saving and vastly improving

material, and yet say "How dare they?" the moment something of their own is being rewritten by o
Even if a friend were to insist that it wouldn't bother them and I should go ahead and rewrite them, I know it'd be too painful. There's the expression "killing your babies," regarding cutting things in a script that you adore, and, no matter how well-intentioned, no one wants to see the blood of their own babies on the hands of a friend.

Why do you think it is so common to replace screenwriters as opposed to other artists on films?
Koepp: William Goldman said once that it's because everybody knows the alphabet, so everybody thinks they can write. And, by extension, everybody thinks they can change a writer because, basically, anybody can write. And it's the cheapest, easiest part of the production to change. You can even have more than one [writer] going at once, which isn't the case with a DP or an actor or anybody else. The majority of the other jobs involve a tremendous amount of upheaval because the majority of the other jobs on a movie don't start until production. But because the writer works in the netherworld of development, where time can expand infinitely, there is much less risk and turmoil in changing writers. And you can always go back to what you had. It's the hell of too many choices.

Koppelman: The job of the writer on a studio assignment is to deliver a shootable script as defined by other people – the director, actors, producers, and studio. Has the writer been devalued

in town? For sure. And wrongly so. And the practice has no doubt made the overall quality of studio movies worse. But it is the current state of play, and there's no changing it.

Nathanson: I don't understand it. If the third lead on a TV pilot is replaced, it is a story in Deadline Hollywood, but nobody cares if a writer is replaced on a movie. Screenwriters are artists like any other artists, but screenplays do not exist as a form of public art. Screenplays are built to live and die in service of the film. We are all, in a sense, unpublished writers.

Follow Gavin Polone on Twitter: @gavinpolone

**APPENDIX 10: 'THE ROAD TO DIVERSITY IS CLOSED:
PLEASE SEEK ALTERNATE ROUTES'**

**'THE ROAD TO DIVERSITY IS CLOSED: PLEASE SEEK
ALTERNATE ROUTES'**

A speech by Lenny Henry

Written by Lenny Henry

Script edited by John Irwin

INTRO

Clips to open -1.30

Good evening, yes, I am Lenny Henry. I am an actor, comedian and writer and I'm going to ask you to THINK BOLD tonight. Think Bold. Ok?

A couple of months ago, I was approached by the Royal Television Society to deliver a speech about diversity in the TV industry.

Now diversity is actually a very complex issue- it covers all sorts of things, Gender, Ethnicity, Disability, Religion, Culture – but I had to write this from my own perspective and my own experience about the things that I really care passionately about. I make no apologies about that; I can only wave one flag at a time.

So tonight I'm going to talk mainly about ethnicity.

I'm going to talk about the TV programmes my family and I endured in the 60's and 70's and how rare the appearance of an ethnic minority was back then.

I'm going to talk about my early days in the business, the mistakes I made, and the things I've learnt along the way.

I'll also be discussing the current state of the

British television industry and the need for affirmative action.

Do we want Quotas? Or can we depend on the goodwill of a few movers and shakers ---- white movers and shakers, in top positions?

I'm going to be looking at ways we can change things

Because- I want this speech to be a catalyst, I don't want you to feel that coming to this speech is just an opportunity to tick another box..."That's ethnicity dealt with ,TICK!"

No. I want you go out and take practical steps, bold steps - to improve diversity wherever you are-

if you're not going to take positive action starting tomorrow -please leave now.

Good. Now I know that most of you want to see change happen, that's why you've come along tonight'- thank you. Some of you might be thinking, ' I've heard all this before, Len you're just preaching to the choir ...' Well, you're gonna hear it again. And you're gonna go on hearing it, until you actually do something.

But first of all, I want to take you back to a wonderful time - when there was free love, you could leave your front door open all day, and the

only mobile phone was the Tardis.

Yes ladies and gentlemen, I'm talking about the golden age of TV

(PPT title card)

TV AS IT WAS

Clips: Alf Garnett etc 2.30

TV producers of the 60's and 70's missed a great opportunity. Rather than reflect the reality of multi ethnic Britain they chose a more xenophobic route - emphasizing points of difference instead of similarities.

If they had been more truthful in their observations -showing Britain as it actually was - who's to say we couldn't have encouraged more young black kids to perform at a higher level in school or prevented the Brixton riots even ?

Television could have had a profound effect on race relations in the UK, which is why it matters that what was actually on offer was so mediocre in terms of quality and intention.

When I first started watching TV, there were no black people on it at all. That was in the days of black and white television. They should have called it white and white television.

If a black person did come on, people thought there was something wrong with the set (fiddle with contrast with one hand phone in hand) "Hullo-Radio Rentals? There's a dark bloke on my telly. Can you come and get him off?" (Fiddle) he's still there.

The only black people constantly on telly were the Black and White minstrels.

PICTURE OF MINSTREL

And they were white! White blokes with black shoe polish on their faces-and big white lips. Accurate! What did they do, sit in front of the mirror and go "What do black people look like? I know!" (Draw huge lips on self)

My mom would be this close to the screen "Well it's nice to see some black people on TV for a change. But look at those lips. They must be from one of the small islands."

LOSE PICTURE

We had CY Grant, the king of calypsos and, in the early 70's, Derek Griffiths on Play School.

If a black or ethnic minority person was featured in a TV show, we noticed.

We loved the telly in our house –

ALF GARNETT PICTURE

even Till Death Us Do Part. Johnny Speight created the racist, right wing, monster Alf Garnett, brilliantly portrayed by Warren Mitchell.

You might say that Speight was being brutally honest about how racist white people spoke about ethnic minorities, but it didn't stop Alf being adopted as a hero by the very people he was satirizing.

Speight tried to ensure that in each story line, Alf came off the worst. But when I went to school the next morning, it was always me who came off worst.

Wog, coon and Paki were just some of the words parroted back to me in the playground. I tried to explain that I was not in fact from Pakistan, but Philip Sherman decided to overlook this technicality, as he repeatedly kneed me in the

crotch.

Context is everything; Alf Garnett was a ludicrous character and in the right context pretty funny – but put him against the background of Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech...is he so funny then?

LOSE ALF PICTURE

If scriptwriters, and producers knew how influential they were, they wouldn't bandy offensive terms around quite so readily – post ironic or not.

Words like wog, Paki and Coon back then, and Chav and Pikey today, have a profound effect on our communities.

We used to watch Love Thy Neighbour, Mixed Blessings, Mind Your Language; It Ain't Half Hot Mom, Curry and Chips... I remember my family's reaction to these programmes – we enjoyed them because it felt like we were being included. "Look! They've put someone in it who looks like us, so it must be for us."

The problem with these shows is that they all led with race as their premise. You couldn't see a black or Asian face on the screen without some dialogue about the problems they had 'fitting in'.

This was very different to the American TV we watched at the time

In the sixties Bill Cosby starred in I-Spy-

I Spy -PICTURE

and later in the 80's he had his own show, the Cosby show,

Mix from I spy to

Cosby Show pic

Playing a successful middle class family man. Without any dialogue at all about him not 'fitting in.'

It was number one in the Nielsen ratings for five consecutive seasons, won three Emmy's, three golden globes and featured in Time magazine's fifty greatest TV show's of all time.

Proving that a mass audience could identify with a black family and not perceive them to be any different from themselves.

Lose Cosby pic

Meanwhile I'd be in front of the TV on a Sunday night - watching All Creatures Great and Small, Miss Marple, Darling Buds of May, Jeeves and Wooster... And never see a black face. They all

depicted pre-immigration Britain: blue skies, green fields, white people. The National Front wouldn't meet on Sunday evening- they were all at home in front of the box going "Perfick."

It's like today- you can't move for 'Bonnets and Crinolines' on the telly and the people wearing them are all white. By the time Queen Victoria was on the throne- this country had a sizeable black population -so where are they when I turn on the telly?

It's like there's a rule about showing actual black people in Britain on screen, for fear of the audience having to actually speak to the real black people living in the next street.

That's the world I grew up in, there was both witting and unwitting racism; you rarely saw a black or brown person on the screen -and when you did, they were always talking about just how black or brown they were.

America was light years ahead of us when it came to on screen diversity

Unfortunately I wasn't living in America - I lived in Dudley.

CRAP PICTURE OF DUDLEY.

MY CAREER

(Title card)

By the time I became a regular on TV I was very aware of the lack of people who looked like me on screen and behind the camera.

It was a very lonely time, on mainstream telly back then... but I can't complain, because I bought my mom a house.

When I was a young comic, I used to watch The Comedians – Johnny Hamp's legendary show, featuring comics from pubs, cabaret, and workingmen's clubs. Like Ken Goodwin, Frank Carson, Jim Bowen, Roy Walker, and the late Bernard Manning – Wonder where Bernard is now?
Hope it's warm.

But Hamp did do a bold thing. He introduced us to Charlie Williams, Sammy Thomas and Jos White - three black comedians. All from up north

Pics of Charlie W.S.Thomas and J.White...

You have to understand, at this point in my life, I'd only really ever heard black people speak American, Jamaican, African, London, or Dudley. I didn't know there were black people up north. My family'd watch The Comedians with their jaws on the

floor. We were like David Attenborough watching crabs mating on Christmas Island.

(Broad Dudley) How come Charlie Williams talks like that?

(Jamaican) I don't know, boy, what you asking me for?

And they were very clever ,because they did the kind of jokes that endeared them to a white audience... "If you don't laugh I'll come and move in next door to you".

Almost as if they were saying: 'I'll stab myself in the heart before you do'

This was the environment in which I began my career in 1975.

LOSE PICS OF COMEDIANS

Now if Tony Robinson's Time Team were doing a dig in the X Factor studio, they might just uncover some remains – the bones of a long extinct TV dinosaur that once dominated the airwaves.

Yes, I'm talking about New Faces; the TV talent show that discovered Marti Caine, Showaddywaddy, Michael Barrymore, Les Dennis, Victoria Wood and of course...the Chuckle Brothers!

PICTURE OF THE CHUCKLE BROTHERS

To you, to me, Thanks for that New Faces!

LOSE PICTURE OF THE CHUCKLE BROTHERS

After winning that show several times, I landed the role of Sonny Foster, in the imaginatively named sit-com, The Fosters.

PICTURE OF THE FOSTERS

It was the first all-black British sit-com. Made by an all-white production team. So we had a white writer, a white director and a white producer, all telling this black family how to behave.

'Well at 6 o'clock at my house, we usually have a sherry and break out the petit fours... Is that the sort of thing you'd do?'

All really nice people to work with, of course, but no way did this show reflect a typical black household anywhere in the UK that I'd ever seen.

LOSE FOSTERS PIC

Round about this time Spike Milligan, God bless him, got some stick for blacking up to play an Indian. Michael Bates got into trouble for doing it in 'It Ain't Half Hot Mom'. Dave Allen blacked up now and

then for his sketch show – no one said anything to him. But I was hip deep in camel cack when I got booked to be the only real black guy in the Black and White Minstrel show.

No one told me it wasn't cool. It was hard labour, for four years, there was a club tour, a winter show, and Sunday concerts... it was tough.

No one in my family came to see me. At least they say they didn't, but I remember one night in Blackpool, there were some very big people on the back row with brown paper bags over their heads. The one at the end with the handbag kept going 'Ha hey! He's as good as Doddy!'

No one told me that it might not be cool to be in the Minstrels. There was no one that looked like me that I could turn to for advice.

The papers got a photograph of me and one of the minstrels – with me wiping his face and leaving a trail of pink skin, and him wiping white make up off onto my face – so we both looked like we were strangely white. I look at these pictures now and I want to shoot everyone involved. Including myself.

The clubs were the same:

(TITLE CARD :In Club land-V.T. CLIP OF CHARLIE

WILLIAMS)

Wherever I performed I would be the only black person in a completely Caucasian environment.

Naively, I toed the line: I did what Charlie and Sammy and Jos had done before me - Tell the 'darkie jokes' and take the money.

That's how things were back then.

When I first went to work at the BBC; the only black people there were the guys on the gate and the women in the canteen.

So a) I didn't need a pass to get in and b) I always got extra helpings at lunchtime...
Canteen lady: 'Come on eat up - you need to put on weight. If you're the only black guy with his own show on TV, there's got to be more of you'

At the beginning of the 1980's my life was to change with the explosion of 'Alternative Comedy'.

COMIC STRIP NUCLEAR MISSILE LOGO

The older comedians used to say ' you know why they call it alternative comedy don't you - they're not funny!'

But to me, it was liberating.

The alternatives declared themselves to be non-racist and non-sexist. And having been through what I'd been through in club land, I wanted to join in.

LOSE COMIC STRIP PIC

Paul Jackson was very plugged into all this and, as a result, was a huge influence on me. I jettisoned anything that pandered to the racist element in the audience. By the end of 1982, I was doing a completely new act featuring material from my new show which Paul produced and directed -Three of a Kind.

THREE OF A KIND PIC

Before we launched the show at the beginning of 1981 we had an open day where writers could come and meet Tracey Ullman, David Copperfield and myself.

We all made speeches about the type of show we wanted to do: non-sexist, non-racist etc, and then we mingled.

I met some fantastic writers, some of whom I still work with today. But, even though there were over 200 writers in the room, not one of them was from an ethnic minority. Not one.

All of those guys were on the starting blocks of their careers, and quite a few of them have ended up working on some of the top shows in TV. Perhaps if we'd been bolder , and included some black and brown faces in that room, they too could have had a career in this business -but they weren't given a chance.

LOSE THREE OF A KIND PIC

And who's to say, what the effect would have been on Three of a Kind, or any of the Lenny Henry shows, if there had been a diversity of voices on those productions. Who's to say what influence they may have had on what ended up on screen?

So what am I saying here? I'm saying – that when I started, I was surrounded by a predominantly white work force. 32 years later... not a lot has changed.

To walk on set and find a black D.O.P, or an Asian boom operator, is as rare as seeing John Mcrirrick on the front cover of Vanity Fare. I think that's a great shame.

So, to show you what you're missing, we've actually done a mock up for you...

(Mocked up photo of John Mcrirrick on the cover of Vanity Fair)

I'm sorry, I should have issued a warning before showing that picture.

Title card: TV AS IT IS NOW

Clips on screen (ending with: Stephen K. Amos's joke from live at the Apollo: '...one out, one in'.

Stephen K. Amos there, from Live at the Apollo.

I have to watch meself with him –I caught him in my back yard last week in a balaclava with a semi automatic...

but is what he said true?

When I started there were four black comedians you might see on TV: Charlie Williams, Sammy Thomas, Jos White and occasionally-Kenny Lynch.

How many black British comedians are there working on mainstream TV today? How many can you think of?

AUD INTERACTION

Miss Jocelyn, Felix Dexter, Stephen K. Amos, Gina Yashere, Junior Simpson.

This is appalling. As far as comedy is concerned in this country, ethnic minorities are pitifully underserved. Why?

Where's the new initiative in comedy? Is anybody

going out to clubs with their Diversity goggles on?
Looking for black / Asian or whatever comedians?

If they're looking for stand-ups for a new show,
do the researchers and producers cast their net
wide?

Do they go to the Hackney Empire, or any of the
ethnic minority comedy nights put on by Upfront
comedy or Harmony productions all over the country?
Or do they head down to Jongleurs, the Comedy store,
or up the Edinburgh festival, the same as they
always do?

This is an area that needs a massive kick up the
bum.

An area that I think has got it right is Children's
TV, particularly at the BBC. There'll you'll see
black, white, mixed race and Asian presenters,
you'll see people with disabilities, you'll see
every sort of person that you're likely to meet in
every day life.

It's fantastic.

Richard Deverill, Controller of Children's BBC,
has taken a bold ,three-pronged approach to
diversity:

Prong number one:

Each member of the board has a relationship with an
organization that works with children from diverse
communities, such as Whiz kids, or the National

Deaf Children's Society. The result, is a mutual growth in understanding. With the national Deaf Children's society, they went further and produced guidelines, which are available to all broadcasters, on how TV can better serve deaf children. So what they're doing, influences TV across the board ;I think it's called a 'ripple effect'

Prong number two:

They ensure that diversity is represented on screen ,by having a specific clause written into their contracts with independent producers; which means diversity is always raised at commissioning.

The Indies (and In House) know, it is something they have to take into account– it's not just an after-thought.

Prong number three: is to improve diversity behind the cameras. After all, a more diverse work force, will more naturally, and better portray, diverse communities.

They have schemes to encourage those who would love to work for the BBC, but lack confidence –They've had a few successes here, for instance Andy Akinwolere

PIC OF ANDY AKINWOLERE

The Blue Peter presenter and triple word scrabble score -came via this route.

LOSE PICTURE

This is the way it should be done; if other organizations follow Richard's example you won't have to listen to another speech like this in five years time.

Another area that gets it right is the news.

NEWS AT TEN LOGO PIC

Come on! We've got - Mark Eddo, Nina Hussein, George Allegiah, Joyce o Hajah, And the king - Trevor Mcdonald! One night you'll be watching TV and Trev will go...

SFX BONG

"Good evening Brothers and sisters, we have taken control! Seize the power. Smash the government. Overthrow the police. But first the headlines."

LOSE PICTURE

The reason News has such a diverse on screen presence is partly due to schemes like Move on up, a bold initiative set up by BECTU in 2002.

They've got over a thousand black and ethnic minority professionals on their books; they broker meetings between these professionals, and executives from more than seventy companies in film, television and radio.

It's networking. A bit like speed dating but with a career at the end, not a shag.

And what's happening in drama?

One of the places your most likely to see a representation of multicultural Britain is in the Queen Vic on Albert square.

In a recent survey, ethnic minority characters accounted for 13% of the cast of Eastenders. (Cockney) "It's sorted!"

Hospital dramas too, it seems, are safe ground for minority actors. 25% of the casts of Casualty, Doctors, and Holby city are from an ethnic minority. I was watching Holby the other night – there were so many brothers and sista's on it, I thought I was watching a repeat of Roots!

In hospitals all over the country, the staff rooms are full of people going –"Tundi, look at this – I want to go there and see if I can get a job!"

The British public is now becoming used to seeing the occasional black brown or yellow face in

Mainstream Contemporary drama. There's a black actor playing an assistant in Waking the Dead, there's a black actor playing an assistant in Spooks and up until recently there was a black actress playing an assistant in Dr Who. Who knows, one day we might actually see a black actor playing someone in charge....

There is still work to do . And while we're about it -lets cut the stereotyping right now: when you can cast a Somalian girl in your piece simply because she is the best actor for the job, when you can cast an Asian actress and she's not the victim of an arranged marriage, when you can cast a Jamaican man with dreadlocks and he's not a drug dealer... then we will have achieved something.

When you can see past their foreignness – and just live with their talent and make a decision based on that, and that alone, then we'll have made a change and I can't wait for that day.

Now, some of the statisticians in the audience, may be sitting there thinking, 'This is all very well Len but where are the figures for overall staffing within the British television industry?'

And the Royal Television society told me that the best way to present figures is in a pie chart...

Here we are:

(LEN INDICATES PIE CHART USING REAL PIES ON SCREEN)

These pies represent ethnic diversity within the industry- Lets start with the BBC pie and, as you can see, the BBC's target figure was 12.5 percent, and they actually have: 10.6 percent. So – lagging a bit there. Bit of a smaller pie.

The target for senior managers was 7%,
And you actually have: 4.38 percent...so a much smaller pie there...To Christopher Biggins that would be a mere canapé.

I love you, you paid for my car, but buck your ideas up.

Coming to ITV's pies now.

Now, ITV set no formal targets, so we've got two empty plates there...

They have -seven percent across the network –
That's low –what's going on there?

And then it gets a bit scrappy here, because instead of a percentage of senior management they've said they have... "One in three GMTV production trainees and two senior ITN managers."

At the risk of not snagging a primetime drama series with Robson Green and Caroline Quentin- That's rubbish...

I can't really represent that with a pie, so I've just given them- half a sausage roll, a handful of peanuts and sm chzy wtsts , which coincidentally , is what's in Johnny Vegas's pockets right now.

So ITV need to get baking.

Come on ITV -get your apron on, smear some butter in that baking tray - and fix us up some Diversity Pie!

Channel 4 -their target was 13 % and they achieved 12 percent. Very little difference in the pie size there - they could be twins. Very well done.

Your target for senior staff was 9 %
And you have 7% - that's not bad - at least your trying...

you can have a dollop of cream for that.

Lastly, we have Channel Five's results. Their target was 13%, and they actually have 10.3 %

That's not shameful is it? You could eat that!

If you do better next year I might even get you a tin opener..

And they didn't have a target for senior management, so an empty plate there...

But they do have 7% in senior management, so they get a reasonably sized pie for that.

But you could do better five –As the renowned 20th century philosopher Jockey Wilson once said:

if you haven't got a target, what are you going to aim at?

And there's a man who knows about pies.

The pie chart ladies and gentlemen. Give it up!

LOSE PIE CHART PICS

TITLE CARD :GHETTO TV – IS THIS THE ALTERNATE ROUTE?

'The road to diversity is closed. Please seek alternate routes.'

That's the title of my talk and, I have to be

realistic, what if nothing happens? What if nothing changes? Is there an alternate route?

What if you guys, sit there –listen to all this and then go back to the office tomorrow and do nothing about it?

Some years ago, the late great Norman Beaton approached me with an idea he said, 'Bana! This isn't good enough – we're being told what to write, perform and act by people who don't know what they talkin' about!' (That's the clean version by the way). He said 'Boy, we need producers, directors, executives –people who look like us! Unless we control this thing, they gonna keep excluding us. Only letting us play the waiter, or the third nurse from the left, or the fourth cop from the right... Is that what you wanna do with your life?' Eh?'

And I laughed because it was easy for me in those days; I had my own TV show, and production company. Then he said, 'Lenny man, what we need is our own TV station. We could make our own shows, brudder! Dramas, comedies, documentaries – we could do it...'

There is an argument for commissioning ethnic minority programmes and broadcasting them on specific channels.

lextra, MTV Base and Zee TV are all hugely popular
But whenever I watch these channels, all I see is a
ghetto - and I don't know about you, but I've never
wanted to live in the ghetto.

I don't know anybody who does. You never meet
people from the home counties going ' I'm thinking
of relocating to the Ghetto, there are some
marvelous opportunities there - apparently , one
can purchase crack cocaine and set fire to a police
car. What larks!'

Nobody wants to be in the ghetto, OK? We all want
to live in the mainstream, where everyone gets a
chance to compete for the same prizes.

When I work in the States I don't see this problem
- They've got 'on screen diversity down'

Now I know what you're thinking - 'How can a
country much more racist than the UK make such
great strides while we're making pigeon steps?'

Well, I would say that slavery, the KKK, lynchings,
race riots, segregation, more lynchings, Rosa Parks,
Martin Luther King, more lynchings, non violent
protest, Malcolm X, violent protest, Louis
Farrakhan, the beating of Rodney King, the LA riots,
Spike Lee, the million man march, Barack Obama -
and of course the mighty Oprah Winfrey...probably
had something to do with it.

LOSE ALL PICS.

Do we really have to go through everything they went through to just to get some more black and brown faces in Coronation Street? Do you really want a million men marching to Weatherfield to protest about the lack of ethnic diversity in the Rovers Return?

I'd like to see that episode: (Northern) Hey Michelle – these blokes outside want a million pints of bitter and two packets of crisps.'

Our industry has to change – if we are going to truly represent multicultural Britain in the 21st century; we must, as Hamlet instructed the player king, 'hold, as twere, the mirror up to nature.'

Because it hurts to be excluded.

I know I keep banging on about this –in fact, I got an email a few weeks ago from a bloke complaining, that he'd seen me on the Hootenanny (PAUSE FOR RESPONSE) talking about there not being enough ethnic minorities on the telly he said: You're always banging on about race- Have you got a chip on your shoulder? Get over yourself!'

That's what he said! That's like a bloke who's done twenty years in jail for a crime he didn't commit,

protesting his innocence and the guy in the next cell says 'You've really got a chip on your shoulder haven't you? Can't you change the record pal?'

Well if that's having a chip on your shoulder, yes, I HAVE got one. And I'm proud of it. It's a big, fat juicy chip, and it's not going anywhere until you guys prove to me I can take it off.

TITLE CARD: Ways we can Change things.

So what can we do?

Well – At the beginning of the Nineties
When I was chairman of Crucial films,
The first thing I did was instigate an initiative
called A Step Forward. It was a bold step.

The BBC funded a three-day course for young
writers from a multi ethnic background. Everyone in
the industry came to talk with them, –and they got
to work with some of the best comedy writers and
producers at the time –John Lloyd, Richard Curtis,
Jimmy Moir, Charlie Hanson, James Hendrie.
It was a great success and some of those writers
went on to work on Eastenders, Casualty, Baby
father and of course The Real McCoy, which grew out
of that initiative.

The other thing we did was to ensure that whenever
possible we had a multi ethnic cast and crew. I
told my executive producers to go out there and
find them. And it was a revelation.

I met so many talented people: soundmen, directors
of photography, make-up artists, first, second and
third AD's –, whatever they do –these people are
out there.

They just want the chance to do their jobs. We
can't just rely on good will – Casting and crewing

from a multi ethnic talent pool is the way forward. Affirmative action is needed if this is going to happen....Affirmative action... from you.

The Cultural Diversity Network has been organizing meetings, setting targets and running workshops, and I really hope that we will begin to see the results of those endeavors very soon.

From now, you need to start thinking of Diversity as an asset, not a problem.

The TV industry is going to have to adapt if it is to stay alive.

People are already moving away from mainstream entertainments to look at things on the Internet, their phones, on cable and satellite TV.

There are at least 15 South Asian satellite TV channels broadcasting on the Sky Digital platform.

Black Entertainment Television is about to launch its UK network.

I say to you now, if you want to keep your viewers. you've got to adapt.

Because , if you don't adapt ...

PICTURE OF DINOSAUR

I know what you're thinking, you're thinking -'why me?'

Well if not you, who? If not now When?

During my career, I've been mentored, advised and nurtured by many talented and kind people.

My only wish is that future generations of talented individuals from ethnic minorities will be afforded the same privilege.

But so that wish can come true here's what I want you to do tomorrow. This is where you have to be bold...

Title card : Len's List:

1. When you're commissioning your programmes -put diversity on the agenda. write it in there so it doesn't get forgotten.
2. Reach out to schools and colleges and make people aware that ethnic minorities are welcome in the UK TV Industry-get in on the ground floor otherwise these people are not going to be able to contribute to our industry.

3. Set targets. you know who I'm talking about. If you don't set targets, you're gonna have an empty plate up here. I don't want anyone to end up with two cheesy balls and a pepperami –set targets..do it tomorrow.
4. Create internships to give people without the benefit of an Oxbridge education the chance to participate in programme making.I'm talking mentoring , apprenticeships the full works.
.
5. When you're looking for people to put in front of the cameras – why don't you try going off the beaten track a little bit? You might just find...someone like me
- 6.You commercial guys – start thinking of ethnic minorities as an untapped market. They're the audience of the future; they're consumers just like everybody else , start going for that diversity pound
- 7.and you might not be able to do this tomorrow – unless you're Mark Thompson or Michael Grade –but – Start appointing ethnic minority staff. None of this changes –unless you appoint staff.

And I'm not talking about cleaners, security guys, scene shifters, or anyone wearing a uniform –I'm talking about decision makers , producers , directors ,commissioners. Who knows ,It's possible that a black man might become the leader of the

free world – why not a Director General of the BBC-
pulling up outside in a Cadillac?

He still wouldn't get in 'General Who? Do you know
Lenny Henry?'

At the beginning, I asked you to be bold I have
here a quote ,it's from Goethe (Gurta) , and it's
about making a decision , committing oneself and
being bold :

"The moment one definitely commits oneself, then
Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to
help one that would never otherwise have occurred.
A whole stream of events issues from the decision,
raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen
incidents and meetings and material assistance,
which no man could have dreamed would have come his
way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do,
begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in
it. Begin it now."

Title card....

BEGIN IT NOW. (Leave that up there...)

Ends.