

Across the Pond.
By Chaska May.

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Characters:

Devonte Anderson: 18 & 27, African-American.

Claire Harris: 25, African-American.

Great Uncle Franklin: Biologically Immortal in age, African-American.

Kyle Jones: 26, Black-British.

Olivia Adebayo: 26, Black-British.

Dr John Douglas: 50, White.

Miranda Wilson: 30, White.

Jerry Turner: 35, White.

River Ford: 27, White.

Joana Anderson: Biologically immortal in age, African-American.

Thomas Anderson: Biologically immortal in age, African-American.

Police Officer: Any race and gender.

Worker at the casket shop: 50, any gender and any race.

*Smaller roles can be multi-rolled.

PROLOGUE

The sound of period folklore music is audible. The stage lights slowly draw attention to a figure dressed in an all-blue costume with African inspired jewellery. The figure dressed is sitting on a brown rocking chair, with a walking stick next to him, humming and reminiscing. The figure can be identified as Great Uncle Franklin. Great Uncle Franklin is an immortal being. He is in a hazy void intermingling between Earth and Afrotopia. Great Uncle Franklin is present throughout the play, observing the ever changing nature of Devonte's world.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: As I sit on my rocking chair and reminisce about my time on Earth, my family and my people have come a long way. I was born in 1865. Da year of da abolishment of slavery and to Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglas and all my fallen brothers and sisters, I thank. My momma worked on da plantation. My Daddy was a house slave, he slowly learned his way around. He knew da routine of da slave masters, where they'd frequent and socialize in da house. He'd sometimes sneak food and give it to da slaves working on da plantation. He couldn't bare seeing his fellow black brothers and sisters with scurvy and rickets. One time he got caught, my momma told me how he got lynched. She was still pregnant with me. She couldn't see a future for us in Mississippi as we took da arduous journey to settle in Philly. I still don't know how she managed to raise me all on her own. As I grew older, I was a carpenter until my bones gave up on me. I had a successful wardrobe business and people from all over da city would come buy my wardrobe's. I gave my momma an early retirement. Once I retired from being a carpenter, I spent my final years painting. It was soothing just letting my imagination run wild. In later years my health deteriorated slowly. It was da beginning of a hereditary curse for my family. Despite dying in 1946, it was da most humbling feeling to see da end of world war 2, an event in history that will shape future generations. My hope in humanity was partially restored. I may not be on Earth, but a lotta time has passed and I've been watching the evolution of my family and my people. I set up da Great Uncle Franklin Foundation in Afrotopia. I've dedicated my time to detoxing da traumatised minds of my people, altering perceptions of reality, including my great, great grand nephew Devonte. He's one of da greatest tragedies in my family tree since my daddy got lynched. He was born in 1994. Life was never gonna be a smooth ride for bringing up young Devonte in da Lower North East Side of Philadelphia, rife with drugs, prostitution and, homicides.

ACT 1
SCENE 1

It's 2010 in Allegheny West, Philadelphia. The stage transforms into the dining room. Thomas and Joana, Devonte's parents are on stage. Thomas is pacing the dining room.

THOMAS: Where's Devonte? He was meant to be home an hour ago.

JOANA: I dunno, maybe there's traffic.

THOMAS: Pah, traffic.

Devonte opens the front door and arrives home. We see Devonte sitting on the dining room table for the first time. He's 18 years old. He has unique, innocent and distinct features. He's wearing tracksuit bottoms and a hoodie.

THOMAS: Ya late.

DEVONTE: Relax Thomas, it's no biggie, I'm here.

THOMAS: Don't call me Thomas boy.

DEVONTE: Thomas.

THOMAS: You pushin' my buttons nigga.

DEVONTE: Now dat's not a nice way to address your child Thomas.

JOANA: We were worried sick, it's not safe in these parts.

THOMAS: Where were you?

DEVONTE: Clubbing. I'm 18 ya bunch of pansy ass losers, dat's what 18 year olds do.

THOMAS: Under my roof you do as I say. When I tell you to get home at 10:00, yo ass home at 9:45, got it? What, you think this is funny? Don't smirk at me nigga.

DEVONTE: Jus chill ol-

Thomas Lunges at Devonte and punches him repeatedly. Thomas brings Devonte to the wall and strangles him.

JOANA: Thomas stop your gonna kill him !

THOMAS: Nigga smiling in my face, arriving in my house an hour late, thinking he da muthafucking general Joana. Calling me Thomas like I'm his associate. Last week he failed his math test, lying to us both, saying he's studying, when he's watching TV and playing Xbox da entire time.

Thomas attempts to punch Devonte again. Devonte sees what's coming. Devonte runs out the front door with his backpack.

THOMAS (*Backstage*): Devonte, Devonte!

Devonte finds a porch to sit at, he unzips his backpack. He takes pills, he swallows them with a bottle of fanta. He takes out a small pack of cocaine, he starts snorting it. After a few beats he stands up. He starts to walk in the neighborhood. He becomes delirious, he collapses.

ACT 1

SCENE 2

The stage is transformed into a hospital. Devonte is lying in bed. He slowly opens his eyes. Dr Douglas is 41 in 2010.

DEVONTE: Dr Douglas? What the fuck? Where am I?

DR DOUGLAS: You had an overdose. You had a lotta pills and coke in your system buddy, you're lucky to be alive. You got any details on your parents?

DEVONTE: I don't want them to find out.

DR DOUGLAS: We'll keep you in hospital for a few more days to regulate your heart rate.

The lights dim as Great Uncle Franklin returns to center stage.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I couldn't stand by and watch Devonte slip further into oblivion.

ACT 1
SCENE 3

It's 3 days after Devonte was in hospital. Devonte is in the living room. He is wearing a T-shirt and tracksuit bottoms. Thomas and Joana are out of the house. The door opens. Great Uncle Franklin enters the living room with a long walking stick.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Hey Devonte.

DEVONTE: Da fuck, who said dat?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Mind your language son.

DEVONTE: Who are you?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I'm your Great Uncle Franklin.

DEVONTE: Man I be takin' too many drugs.

Devonte shakes his head.

DEVONTE (*Continued*): You won't go away.

Devonte shakes his head again.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: That's da idea.

DEVONTE: Why you here? Even though, you not here.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I am here. I come from your momma's side of da family. I'm here to help you.

DEVONTE: Help me? You trippin' nigga.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You love to curse don't you? I've been watching you your whole life.

DEVONTE: How?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: By da power of consciousness. You've had a rough start in life right?

DEVONTE: Says who?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You've had a rough start in life right?

DEVONTE: Says who?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: This ain't about who. Just by observing your body language, your defensive answers and by avoiding my question confirms everything I need to know and do know. You're 18. You're coming into manhood, what do you wanna be?

DEVONTE: An actor, I dunno.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: So why ain't you pursuing it?

DEVONTE: There's nothing for a black man in Philly, so what's the point?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Let me tell you something Devonte, I was born in 1865, I grew up during Jim Crow. I had a successful carpentry business and never let da white man tell me how I'm gonna live my life. I hate seeing kids wasting their life. You're a smart kid with a lotta potential. You got da internet at the click of your fingers. The internet wasn't even conceived when I was a kid. Don't insult your ancestors and those who've fallen by selling yourself short. You're in charge of your own destiny here on Earth and beyond.

DEVONTE: Beyond? You trippin' nigga.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: There is a beyond.

DEVONTE: Death.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: There is a beyond.

DEVONTE: Death.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Soul transcending.

DEVONTE: Muthafuckin' weirdo.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I want you to come to da floor.

DEVONTE: What?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Come to da floor.

DEVONTE: Why?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Sit cross-legged and close your eyes.

Devonte gets up and sits on the floor. As Devonte closes his eyes video footage of Devonte joining gangs and being stopped and held at gunpoint by police is visible. In the video Devonte is walking on the street with a gang. The police turn up.

POLICE OFFICER: Put the bag down and put your hands up where we can see 'em.

DEVONTE: What da fuck? Dat's not funny.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Keep your eyes closed.

DEVONTE: No.

Great Uncle Franklin firmly places Devonte to the ground.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Keep 'em closed.

DEVONTE: Get off me.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Stop resisting.

DEVONTE: I'll kill you!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You can't kill me.

Devonte grabs a knife and attempts to stab Great Uncle Franklin. The knife reverberates and the force of the attempted stabbing repels back to Devonte.

DEVONTE: Ah! What da fuck?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Keep ‘em closed.

Great Uncle Franklin forcibly strangles Devonte.

DEVONTE: Get off me.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Is that what you want, a life of gangs and jail?

DEVONTE: No.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Louder!

DEVONTE: No!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: What do you wanna be?

DEVONTE: An actor.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Louder!

DEVONTE: An actor!

Great Uncle Franklin leaves Devonte. Devonte’s eyes remain closed.

DEVONTE: I’m gonna be an actor. I’m gonna be da baddest muthafucking actor of da 21st century.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Louder!

DEVONTE: I’m gonna be an actor. I’m gonna be da baddest muthafucking actor of da 21st century.

Devonte exits. Great Uncle Franklin appears centre stage.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I needed to get some sense into Devonte. I needed to act like da father figure Devonte never had. I was angry at da way Thomas treated Devonte. Thomas died 6 months after Devonte was in da hospital, and Joana died 5 years later. They both work with me on da Great Uncle Franklin foundation. He's been through more than da average Joe will go through in their lifetime. At da age of 20 he trained at U-arts. It was an escape for him to be on stage, he excelled in his abilities and graduated with a 1st class degree. He's been signed with an agent and has been auditioning ever since until his health took a turn for da worst.

ACT 1
SCENE 4

It's October 2019 in Fishtown Philadelphia. The long summer days are a distant memory. The lights draw attention to a lanky figure. The figure is revealed. Devonte Anderson, 28, is wearing jeans, a turtle neck and trainers. He still retains his unique, innocent and distinct features from his youth. Devonte is in the doctor's office awaiting the results of his CT scan and colonoscopy. William Orbit's- "You know way too much about flying saucers is playing."

DR DOUGLAS: Devonte, how are you today?

DEVONTE: I just wanna get dis over with.

DR DOUGLAS: I understand, it's no doubt the most agonizing wait and I don't want to waste your time any further. Unfortunately, the combination of the abdominal discomfort and the blood in your stools over a 3-month period, has resulted in you having advanced and incurable Colon Cancer. We're giving you 6-12 weeks to live. I'm sorry Devonte.

Devonte Stands.

DEVONTE: You can't help me so what's da point? I'm gonna be another forgotten statistic. I'm gonna be another failure of black America where most black dudes don't live past 40, 42.

DR DOUGLAS: Devonte I-

DEVONTE: I shoulda known Devonte Anderson was never gonna become an actor.

DR DOUGLAS: Devonte I -

DEVONTE: 2020 is almost here. Now I know what they meant by 20:20 vision.

DR DOUGLAS: Devonte I'm really sorry. I can't imagine how hard this diagnosis is for you. My team and I will do everything we can to lengthen your life expectancy. It's in your best interest to have chemotherapy treatment.

DEVONTE: Are there any side effects of chemotherapy?

DR DOUGLAS: Yes. You may not experience all of the side effects. Every patient adapts to the treatment differently. You might suffer fatigue, loss of hair, Anaemia-

DEVONTE: Dats too many side effects.

DR DOUGLAS: I understand your concern, but it's really in your best interest. I've had many patients in my 25-year career who've had similar diagnoses to you and have lived quite a bit longer.

DEVONTE: How much longer?

DR DOUGLAS: 6 months, a year, 2 years, 5 years- it's all how your body reacts to the chemotherapy.

DEVONTE: My cancer is terminal so what's da point? I don't wanna have all those side effects. I just wanna be as strong and as healthy as possible. I wanna be with all those I love.

DR DOUGLAS: You'll have a faster decline without the chemotherapy.

DEVONTE: It's a risk I'm willing to take.

DR DOUGLAS: Are you sure?

DEVONTE: Yeah.

DR DOUGLAS: Are you sure?

DEVONTE: Don't change me-

DR DOUGLAS: You'd be the first patient I've dealt with who refused chemotherapy.

DEVONTE: I'm sure. This may prolly be da last time we see each other, come here man.

Devonte and Dr Douglas hug.

DEVONTE: Thanks for everything. *Devonte exits.*

DR DOUGLAS: The human body and the human psyche fascinates me to my core. I see parallels with my job and journalism. I watch the news and observe the physicality, cadence, adjectives, and lines of attack that journalists deliver to their guests. Most of my friends and associates view journalists with disdain and cynicism when an air of their political views bubble to the surface. Impartiality is an impossible conundrum when seeking the truth. The word truth is like the word lie. There are many versions of it, but which one do we take? There's the conundrum of chances. There are so few chances in this world, but which ones do we take? I became a doctor knowing that I will never save a life, I can only prolong it. Just like a journalist, I have been trained throughout my 25-year career to detach from my emotions when dealing with patients. That's an impossible task. I'm working 12 hour days part-time in the surgery and 12 hour days part-time in the hospital. It breaks my heart when patients don't take my advice. I have no personal vendettas, I have no motivation in my practice to seek harm and revenge, I'm not brave and I'm not a hero. When one patient comes, another one goes. When one baby is born, another person dies. Time is ticking, and time is being wasted on nefarious self-gratifying constructs. We are living in an era of great technological advancements. Just like many doctors and nurses around the world, I'm part of a microcosm within a macrocosmic crisis. I feel like a puppet dangling on a string and I have the resistance to keep going, and it works successfully for a while, but sometimes the string is cut, and it's cut fast, without warning. All that joy, aspiration, determination and sparkle of the human psyche gone in a flash. Get back to work Doctor John Douglas, who cares what I've got to say. Everybody cares about stupid influencers on the internet with the algorithms controlling what we see, hear and think.

ACT 1
SCENE 5

It's several hours after Devonte's diagnosis. Devonte arrives home. We are in Devonte's apartment. It is a typical minimalist apartment in a high rise building in Fishtown, Philadelphia. There are elements of unconventional quirkiness throughout the apartment. He enters the bedroom. He is sitting on the edge of the bed. He goes to the desk and grabs some baby pictures. He goes back to the edge of the bed. Sense of time is momentarily suspended for Devonte with the sound of a ticking clock audible with a montage of sunrises and sunsets.

DEVONTE: What's da point? I'm living on borrowed time. I guess living till 100 will never happen. Fuck everybody. Nobody's intentions are pure, all for power and glory and fame. Da rules of da land tell you to pay your taxes and abide by da law and look where I am today. Look where I am today! Look at it! Everything I worked for these last 5 years, gone.

Devonte gets up from the bed, he grabs his wallet. There is a knock at the door. At the door is a drug dealer. Devonte opens the door and hands over money to the drug dealer. He grabs the bag of cocaine, closes the front door and goes into the bedroom. Devonte looks at the bag. Devonte takes a snort of cocaine. Great Uncle Franklin appears and tackles Devonte to the ground and takes the bag.

DEVONTE: Get off me!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: This is for your own good.

DEVONTE: You imposter nigga!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Stop resisting!

DEVONTE: Selling me dreams!

Great Uncle Franklin grabs a bucket of water.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: This is for your own good.

DEVONTE: Look at me now nigga! You coon, coconut, Uncle Tom.

Great Uncle Franklin puts Devonte's head in the water twice. Great Uncle Franklin grabs a towel and dries Devonte. Great Uncle Franklin goes into the cabinet and places a fresh pair of pyjamas for Devonte. Devonte gets up from the floor and goes to bed. Devonte enters in a state of sleep-talking.

DEVONTE: This is gonna be a good dream Devonte's. Imagine, imagine, imagine. Funny word imagine. Imagine being transported to another world. A new planet, I can invite whoever I want into my planet.

The sound of Devonte's father beating Devonte is audible on stage.

DEVONTE (*Continued*): Stop drifting brain.

The sound of Devonte's father beating Devonte continues.

JOANA (*Voice-over*) : Thomas stop your gonna kill him !

Devonte screams. The bedroom door opens slowly. Nothing is visible. A female figure appears and stands next to Devonte's bed. The lights shine on Joana, Devonte's dead mother. She is dressed in all white and gold with African inspired Jewellery.

JOANA: Hey sweetie.

Devonte screams.

DEVONTE: Mom?

JOANA: Hey Devonte.

DEVONTE: I haven't seen you since you left home and moved to Sweden.

JOANA: I know.

DEVONTE: When you left my life was never da same again.

JOANA: I couldn't see a life for myself in da US. You was in U-arts and you seemed to be coping.

DEVONTE: I wasn't. No Thomas and you were gone. U-arts was my only savior in dis world. U-arts taught me the art of masquerading.

JOANA: We sent postcards and had video calls.

DEVONTE: Dats not da same.

JOANA: How do you feel about your daddy?

DEVONTE: I don't wanna talk about him.

JOANA: You can't keep avoiding him.

DEVONTE: I'm not ready.

JOANA: You can't keep avoiding him forever.

DEVONTE: Why da fuck should I bother thinking about dat asshole?

JOANA: Devonte!

DEVONTE: I can't believe you're defending him.

JOANA: He did love you.

DEVONTE: If beating me is his love language then I don't know what love is. There's only one person to blame and he's never apologized.

JOANA: He'll have his chance and you'll cross paths with him.

DEVONTE: When I die, I'm asking God to put a restraining order on him.

JOANA: Dats not possible. Spirituality is boundless.

DEVONTE: Well I'm putting boundaries up whether spirituality likes it or not.

JOANA: Don't come crying to me when I told you so.

DEVONTE: I don't cry anymore.

JOANA: One word.

DEVONTE: 2.

JOANA: ET.

DEVONTE: It's a really sad movie.

JOANA: It is.

DEVONTE: I don't understand why any parent would beat their kids.

JOANA: We're complex Devonte. I was abused by my mother, but I made a vow dat once I had kids, I wasn't gonna pass dat chain of trauma down to them.

DEVONTE: So why did you stick with him for so long?

JOANA: His way of treating me became normal.

DEVONTE: Dats not normal.

JOANA: I know. I wish I moved to Sweden sooner.

DEVONTE: Why didn't you?

JOANA: I was scared. I just wish you coulda been with me during my final breaths.

DEVONTE: I-

JOANA: I understand. You were tryna make something of yourself and I'm proud of you. I'm sorry things have turned out da way they have.

DEVONTE: It's okay momma you're at peace.

JOANA: I'm not at peace. I'm not at peace at da prospect of my little boy dying young.

DEVONTE: I'll be 28. I'm not a little boy anymore.

JOANA: You'll always be my little boy. When you were first born, I held you in my arms and I looked at your twinkling little eyes and I said you'll go far in life.

DEVONTE: Stop!

JOANA: Okay son.

DEVONTE: I do have an audition.

JOANA: What are you gonna do?

DEVONTE: Attend it and see what happens.

JOANA: What if they say no?

DEVONTE: What choice do I have? Dr Douglas said I have 6-12 weeks to live. I'm hoping for a miracle.

JOANA: Remember this Devonte, you're something special to the world, don't waste another second of your life. Write what you wanna do and do as much as you can before it's too late.

DEVONTE: It's too late.

JOANA: No it's not.

DEVONTE: Yes, it is.

JOANA: No, it's not.

DEVONTE: You got da chance to travel outside da US. I will never have dat chance, okay, so you can stop patronizing me.

JOANA: No matter where you are or how you're feeling, I'm here in spirit.

DEVONTE: I love you momma.

JOANA: I love you too son.

Joana exits. Devonte grabs his journal and starts making notes. Devonte goes back to sleep. We delve into his stream of consciousness.

PRESENTER (*Voice-Over*): And the Oscar for best actor goes to Devonte Anderson.

There is applause and cheering sound effects.

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): It took a while to get here. I trained at U-arts in Philly and thought I'd never be where I am today. Humbled by da support from y'all watching at home and from da amazing actors sat here today. I'm not gonna make this all political, but to anyone watching here in da US or across da pond in da UK or further afield, don't let anyone tell you, you can't achieve your dreams. I'd like to thank my agent. My beautiful wife Claire, sat in da audience who has been with me through thick and thin. And last but not least my momma watching above the stars. Have a good night y'all.

There is another applause and cheering sound effect. The sound of a plane is audible as we are transported to the next montage.

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): I never thought in a million years I'd be sitting on Emirates first class standing at their famous mini bar at 37,000 feet.

CLAIRE (*Voice-Over*): It's all down to you boo. Can't wait to get in the shower. Never thought planes had showers. I can't wait to land in Baku and 2 weeks later end in St Lucia feeling da warm, salty waters on my feet and to film a documentary to find my family's roots. Always wanted to go to St Lucia, but could never afford it.

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): And now you can Cheers.

The sound effects of wine clinks are present.

CLAIRE (*Voice-Over*): Chile, did you eat all the nuts?

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): *With a mouthful of nuts.* No.

PRESENTER (*Voice-Over*): And the Oscar for best director goes to Devonte Anderson.

There is a sound effect of applause and cheering.

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): Breaking boundaries is da basic foundation of my work. When dey tell you, you can't, you can. Thank y'all for putting your trust in me over da last 10 years by allowing me on your screens and behind da camera. It means da world to me. Thank you to my agent and my beautiful wife whose currently not here today. She's given birth to a beautiful baby girl. My momma watching from above the stars would spoil her like crazy. Have a good night y'all.

PRESENTER (*Voice-Over*): Welcome to Sunrise America, boy do we have an awesome guest for you this morning. Our guest is a Welcome to the show Devonte Anderson.

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): Thanks for havin' me.

PRESENTER (*Voice-Over*): You've been flying high, you've won oscar for best actor and best director and you've got a very special announcement to tell us.

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): I'm setting up two theater schools, one here in downtown Philly and one in London. Da aim is to make theater training affordable and less pretentious. I aim to have them both built in the next 3 years. Versatility and individuality will be da name of the game. My second announcement is that I'll be holding auditions for an upcoming movie I'll be directing and starring in. Filming starts in da fall, details are on my website.

The sunrise beacons across the stage. The bedroom door opens. A figure enters. The figure is revealed. Claire, 25, is wearing pyjamas. She has the glamour of Naomi Campbell and Zoe Kravitz. She has the feistiness of a lion and the sweetness of a puppy. She goes to wake Devonte up.

CLAIRE: Devonte.

DEVONTE: I got da oscar for best actor and director.

CLAIRE: Devonte.

DEVONTE: What?

CLAIRE: Devonte!

DEVONTE: Five minutes.

CLAIRE: Devonte wake up!

Devonte flicks his eyes open.

DEVONTE: What? *Beat.* Oh.

CLAIRE: Well dats a way to flatter a woman.

DEVONTE: It's not you bae,I was dreaming.

CLAIRE: No shit. Chile,when you have yo' little dreams, I can't sleep next to you.

DEVONTE: Why?

CLAIRE: 'Cause you go all weird.

DEVONTE: Well excuse me for havin' hopes and dreams.

CLAIRE: Plus you too muthafuckin' loud.

DEVONTE: If you wanna play dat game,I hate how you fart in yo' sleep.

CLAIRE: I hate how I gotta pick up yo' dirty crusty underwear.

DEVONTE: You take dat back.

CLAIRE: With skid marks!

DEVONTE: You gone too far.

CLAIRE: You just salty 'cause I disturbed your dreams.

DEVONTE: I'm salty 'cause I can't have a warm shower.

Claire checks her watch.

CLAIRE: What do you have today?

DEVONTE: What do you mean?

CLAIRE: It Begins with an A.

DEVONTE: Ah shit. Why didn't you say anything?

CLAIRE: I'm not your mother.

DEVONTE: She dead Claire.

CLAIRE: I know, but you keep acting like I'm your mother. Do you know how embarrassing dat is?

DEVONTE: I call it endearing.

CLAIRE: I call it creepy.

DEVONTE: Is da shower fixed?

CLAIRE: Nope.

DEVONTE: Man this house be like da muthafuckin' Waltons or Little House On da Prairie, I wanna another bathroom.

CLAIRE: Well till you earn dat million dollars from yo' acting career, we havin' da one bathroom.

DEVONTE: So you mean to tell me you've been home all day long and you can't even make a phone call?

CLAIRE: I'm working.

DEVONTE: A youtuber ain't a proper job.

CLAIRE: Shut da fuck up.

DEVONTE: I'm black, I don't do cold showers.

CLAIRE: So you mean to tell me you gon' walk out dis house without having a shower?

DEVONTE: We have no warm water!

CLAIRE: Boil some water.

DEVONTE: Ain't nobody got time for dat! I'll just deodorize and put some cologne on.

CLAIRE: Nasty ass, I thought theater training was all about resilience?

DEVONTE: Oh it is.

CLAIRE: So take a cold shower.

Devonte edges closer to Claire.

CLAIRE (*Continued*): What are you doin'?

Devonte Chases Claire. They run around the apartment.

CLAIRE: Get yo' Stinky ass away from me.

Claire slows down and Devonte catches Claire.

DEVONTE: Dats another thing they teach you in theater school, stamina.

CLAIRE: Okay you win, making me have a muthafuckin' heart attack.

DEVONTE: You want me to make you some breakfast?

CLAIRE: I'll pass, eggshells don't belong in an omelet.

DEVONTE: I like da crunch.

CLAIRE: Chop some onion.

DEVONTE: Onions make me cry.

CLAIRE: You pathetic D.

DEVONTE: You're insensitive, no wonder why guys never admit their feelings.

CLAIRE: You got somethin' you wanna share?

DEVONTE: No.

CLAIRE: You sure?

DEVONTE: Yeah.

CLAIRE: Exactly.

DEVONTE: Whatever,I gotta get ready.

CLAIRE: Have a good audition boo.

DEVONTE: Thanks beautiful.

Devonte does some yoga and mindfulness meditation. He gets dressed in a suit and trousers. "Rising Thermal" by Matt Hill is playing. Great Uncle Franklin appears.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I think it's time you tell Claire.

DEVONTE: I don't wanna tell her yet. We've hit our stride and I don't wanna go back to da bad ol' days.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: It'll eat her up as much as it'll eat you up.

DEVONTE: I'm tryin' not to think about it.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You can't keep avoiding this forever.

DEVONTE: I won't.

Devonte exits. Great Uncle Franklin moves to centre stage.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I dunno how cancer became hereditary in my family. I can't explain it,I'm not a scientist. I wish da chain could be broken,to stop da devastation. I decided not to tell Devonte or Joana because they wouldn't see life having much worth,but in da process I've caused them irreparable pain. I hope dat da human race will be cured from all cancers in da world. When I was diagnosed with cancer in 1944,there wasn't da research and technology. Da 21st century is da make or break century in all corners of human life.

ACT 1

SCENE 6

Devonte has arrived for his audition. He is sitting outside the audition room. The space is extremely clinical with a few film posters added for good measure. Devonte closes his eyes and meditates. The sound of Devonte's father slapping Devonte is audible on stage as he is waiting for his audition. Devonte screams.

MIRANDA (*Backstage*): Is everything alright back there?

DEVONTE: Yeah, just a bee.

MIRANDA: In October?

DEVONTE: Weird right?

JERRY (*Backstage*): Devonte, we're ready to see you now.

DEVONTE: Thanks Jerry.

MIRANDA: Hey there Devonte how are ya?

DEVONTE: I'm great Miranda, how are you?

MIRANDA: Good. Did ya get that pesky bee outta here?

DEVONTE: I dunno. I think it's gone.

MIRANDA: Great!

JERRY: Cool. Could you say your name, agent and sides to the camera please.

DEVONTE: I'm Devonte Anderson, my agent is Rueben Brooks and here are my sides.

Devonte brings his hands to camera. He turns his head from left to right. Then he turns his body from left to right.

JERRY: Cool. So we're gonna do a take. Same monologue you did for the self tape. This time I want you to address the monologue to Sandra. Don't play evil, make Kai as charming, sardonic and as mysterious as possible.

DEVONTE: Cool.

Devonte quickly grabs a chair and places it a distance from the camera in front of Miranda.

JERRY: Counting down from 3,2,1 action.

DEVONTE (*As Kai*) : The world is full of two faced mediocrity. The world is full of two faced conformity. 99.9% of the people you'll meet are boring. I'm still deciding if you are too. You're like a lukewarm chai latte curdling in the sun. Just imagine 100 of the same Ken and Barbie dolls with different faces and voices, what do you have? I wish I could look my bullies in the eye and shoot them, like squeezing blood from a stone and drinking their blood. Thirsty work right? I'm a product of my environment and of society's many screw ups. Society doesn't know what it wants. I know what I want from you. Security, prosperity, adventure and good sex. That too much to ask? Why do so many people ask me for money? Do I have mug tattooed on my ass? When I need help, I be looking stupid. Being scammed gives you a lotta time to think. Nice, nice, nice. What a horrible word. Opening up to people is my weakness. Anything you share or use against me I'll kill you for it. Let's not get to that stage. You're better than that, or are you? Just like Hamlets, to be or not to be, You decide.

MIRANDA: That's it.

DEVONTE: Thanks.

Devonte exits.

JERRY: He's outta his depth.

MIRANDA: He's got charisma.

JERRY: He's a wreck.

MIRANDA: He composed himself well. He just needs a little confidence.

JERRY: He had 4 years for that.

MIRANDA: And you get big roles just like that?

JERRY: Yeah.

MIRANDA: Even when you graduate?

JERRY: Yes Miranda, if you're good enough.

MIRANDA: Something seemed outta whack.

JERRY: Tough shit.

MIRANDA: It's something more specific.

JERRY: What are you psychic?

MIRANDA: No. I'm just saying. He probably had something going on.

JERRY: Tough shit.

MIRANDA: I think you should give him a chance.

JERRY: I can't take any chances, filming starts in 10 days.

MIRANDA: So you're not gonna give him a chance?

JERRY: Nope, what makes you think he'll produce a miracle performance on set?

MIRANDA: You never know.

JERRY: My reputation is on the line.

MIRANDA: You never know.

JERRY: Time is on the line.

MIRANDA: You never know.

JERRY: Money is on the line.

MIRANDA: You never know.

JERRY: Time is money. On his resume he said that he graduated in 2012.

MIRANDA: Yeah?

JERRY: It's 2019.

MIRANDA: So?

JERRY: He's nearly 30.

MIRANDA: So?

JERRY: Roles start drying up. He's outta his depth. He needs to stop chasing this dream now and be a banker or something where he's not gonna be frustrated.

MIRANDA: You're making a big mistake.

JERRY: No I'm not.

MIRANDA: You're making a big mistake.

JERRY: Why don't ya fuck him Miranda?!

MIRANDA: Jealous cause I won't fuck you?!

JERRY: My decision is final.

MIRANDA: But-

JERRY: My decision is final. Send the next guy in.

Miranda exits.

ACT 1

SCENE 7

The stage transforms into a casket shop. Devonte is looking around. He prepares to do the unimaginable. Devonte's stream of consciousness through his voice is playing as he goes into a casket. He closes his eyes and goes into a deep sleep. Devonte's stream of consciousness is voiced.

DEVONTE (*Voice-Over*): I was born into da world alone, I'm gonna die alone. It's baffling dat a small number of people live till 100, 105, heck even 110. Many people won't get to do what I'm doing right now. It's hard to describe. It's kinda hollow, kinda tight, but also, kinda comfy. I'm 6'2 can't y'all get a bigger casket? I hate to admit it, but I caught da railroad bug. It's a virus that sticks with very few people especially when most guys and

gals faze outta liking railroads, just like toy race cars, teddy bears and dolls. My fascination with railroads stems from one place. I love trains more than people. Dey go in straight and curved lines wid clear trajectories, cutting through da landscape and innovating da world. They innovate more than people. We never learn lessons from da past. When a train gets old, they stick it in a railroad museum for generations to see, preserved in their full glory. Dey even do it to dead animals in museums. Not us though. We wanna tear anything down we don't like, only to start da whole process again. Death scares me, it's da fear of not knowing where my soul will go. I don't wanna be a body rotting in da ground for da saprophytic feeders to feast on. I wanna be cremated. I wanna be cremated with my ashes scattered in da sea and have da minerals of da water evaporate my soul into da universe. I wanna be immortal. How can I be immortal? How come Uncle Franklin can pop up when he wants? I wanna be immortal, I wanna be immortal!

A store worker notices Devonte. The worker checks their watch and taps Devonte on his shoulder.

WORKER: Sir.

DEVONTE: I wanna be immortal.

WORKER: Sir.

DEVONTE: I don't want da world to forget about me.

WORKER: Sir.

DEVONTE: I don't wanna die alone.

WORKER: Sir.

DEVONTE: What? What do you want?!

WORKER: We're closed.

DEVONTE: My bad. I was just-

WORKER: You don't have to explain yourself, I know. May God bless you.

Devonte looks around and exits.

ACT 1
SCENE 8

Claire is the living room. She grabs her camera. She fixes her hair whilst looking at the retractable camera screen to see herself. She presses the record button.

CLAIRE: What's up Youtube, it's ya girl Claire Harris, comin' at you with another Youtube video. I gotta text from Devonte, he's at da door.

DEVONTE: What da fuck is wrong with you?

CLAIRE: Dat reaction is so gonna be da thumbnail for this video. Whilst Bae is about to shit himself, stay tuned for the next video. Bye y'all.

Claire stops the record button.

CLAIRE (*Continued*): Sorry D, it was too tempting. How was your audition?

DEVONTE: It went alright. I just get da feeling dat Jerry hates me.

CLAIRE: Who's Jerry?

DEVONTE: Da casting director with his assistant Miranda who's his bitch.

CLAIRE: Do you think you'll get da part?

DEVONTE: I dunno, it was a really good role, but you can't get too precious. Most of da time I audition for roles and you see 'em on TV or in da movie theater and they're shit.

CLAIRE: Everything is overrated these days. Da world will get to see your talents one day.

DEVONTE: Thank you baby.

CLAIRE: You better not have an affair or forget 'bout me.

DEVONTE: You my bae for life. There is nobody else I want in my life.

CLAIRE: Hmmm.

DEVONTE: I'm serious bae. I ain't about da cheating lifestyle.

CLAIRE: Hmmm.

DEVONTE: Plus I don't wanna date people in my industry.

CLAIRE: So you will date someone else?

DEVONTE: I didn't say that.

CLAIRE: You kinda did.

DEVONTE: Stop! Since when did you become a journalist?

CLAIRE: It doesn't take muthafucking Colombo to fill in da dots.

DEVONTE: Bae! We've been in a relationship for 3 years.

CLAIRE: Means nothing in Hollywood. All dem pretty girls up for grabs.

DEVONTE: Most have botox bae. I want an authentic woman.

CLAIRE: Am I not an authentic woman?

DEVONTE: Dude!

CLAIRE: I was only asking.

DEVONTE: If you weren't authentic, I wouldn't be in a relationship with you. I only care 'bout da craft. I don't care about partying or drugs.

CLAIRE: You did drugs before?

DEVONTE: In my past life.

CLAIRE: Who's to say you won't do it again?

DEVONTE: Dude!

CLAIRE: Who's to say you won't do it again?

DEVONTE: Stop.

CLAIRE: Who's to say you won't do it again?

DEVONTE: Stop!

Devonte slaps Claire repeatedly.

DEVONTE: Stupid ass bitch bringing up my past. I done tell you nigga not to keep bringing up my past. Dis is da consequence you get.

Devonte releases Claire.

DEVONTE (*Continued*): I'm gonna take a nap.

Devonte walks to the bedroom. Claire remains in the living room. Devonte looks in the mirror in the bedroom. Great Uncle Franklin appears. His presence is visible in the mirror.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Like father, like son.

DEVONTE: Dis ain't my fault.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Like father, like son.

DEVONTE: I'm nothing like my daddy.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Like father, like son.

DEVONTE: I'm da product of da system.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Bullshit! You're 27 years old, when are you gonna take responsibility for your actions?

DEVONTE: I don't bring up anyone else's past.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Tough shit Devonte, you're just like your father. Da heat gets too hot for you and you slither away into da gutter like a rat. Two steps forward and four steps backwards with you. You got a beautiful girlfriend, you're only girlfriend, and you beatin' her like she's your slave. Is dis da first time you've beaten Claire?

DEVONTE: Yeah.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I'll ask you again, is dis da first time you've beaten Claire?

DEVONTE: Yeah.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You know I hate lies.

DEVONTE: I ain't lying.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You know I hate liars.

DEVONTE: I ain't a liar!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You better promise on your momma's soul dat you will never beat Claire like dat again. I know your momma didn't raise you like dat.

DEVONTE: She didn't have a choice.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Don't you change da subject boy.

DEVONTE: Why do you keep calling me boy?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: There you go again!

DEVONTE: I don't like it when you keep calling me boy.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Think about it?

DEVONTE: Think about what?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You know.

DEVONTE: Think about what?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Don't play dumb with me boy.

DEVONTE: There you go again!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: 'Cause you keep acting like one.

DEVONTE: I'm 27 years old nigga!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Not up there you not. You gone back to being 18 again.

DEVONTE: Stop.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You nearly got kicked out of U-arts 'cause of drugs.

DEVONTE: Stop.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: You woulda had no first class degree. You woulda had no auditions. You woulda been in jail or in a casket by now.

DEVONTE: And look at me now, I'm dying!

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Devonte I-

DEVONTE: Just get away from me.

Great Uncle Franklin leaves the room.

DEVONTE (***Continued***): Stupid ass spirituality bullshit. Coming in my life thinking he muthafucking Jesus.

Great Uncle Franklin exit. Devonte walks back into the living room.

DEVONTE: Claire, Claire.

CLAIRE: What?

DEVONTE: I'm sorry.

CLAIRE: You said dat da last time, and da time before dat, and da time before dat.

DEVONTE: I'm really sorry.

CLAIRE: You're not da man I fell in love with.

DEVONTE: Claire I-

CLAIRE: Look at dis scar.

DEVONTE: Claire I-

CLAIRE: And dis one, and dis one.

DEVONTE: Claire I-

CLAIRE: Dis is all 'cause of you!

DEVONTE: I don't know what to do.

CLAIRE: Neither do I.

DEVONTE: I was waiting for my audition and I was doing my usual meditation before I have an audition and I was meditating. I was in da zone and outta nowhere, I had a flashback of my father beating da shit outta me and my momma standing there. No matter where I am or what I do, I can't escape from him. I don't why I keep hitting you. It's like I've turned into my father and I don't wanna admit it. You don't deserve any of it. I love you-

CLAIRE: Beating me is not love Devonte! When we were dating and made dis relationship official, I made a promise to you. I made a promise never to hit you or beat you. And so far I've stuck to it. You know how many times you pissed me off and how tempted I was to beat da shit outta you?

DEVONTE: So many times.

CLAIRE: You tauruses are so difficult.

DEVONTE: My father was a taurus too. It's probably why we couldn't stand each other.

CLAIRE: Do you miss your father?

DEVONTE: Sort of. I dunno. I didn't really know him, even though I lived in da same crib as him. We never had a father son relationship or one of those relationships where we have an almost friendship type relationship.

CLAIRE: What are we gonna do? Where do we go from here?

DEVONTE: I gotta fix up. I don't wanna keep feeling like dis. I don't wanna keep hurting you. I love you. You're my world and I would crumble without you. Please give me one more chance and I'll prove it to you. I'll prove it to you dat you made da right decision in sticking with me.

CLAIRE: Alright. But dis is your last chance or I'm gone, for good.

Claire and Devonte hug. The sound of a text notification is audible on stage.

DEVONTE: *(Continued)*: I didn't get da job.

CLAIRE: I'm sorry baby. There's always next time.

DEVONTE: Hmm next time.

CLAIRE: What's dat supposed to mean?

DEVONTE: Nothing. Miranda wants me to meet her at some coffee place.

CLAIRE: Why does she want you to meet her for coffee?

DEVONTE: I dunno, I hate coffee. Can I go?

CLAIRE: Chile! I'm not your momma. Do what you like, just don't cheat on me.

DEVONTE: Trust me, I won't.

There is a knock at the door.

DEVONTE *(Continued)*: Ugh. I don't wanna move, I'm so comfortable right now.

CLAIRE: I'll get it.

DEVONTE: You want some cologne?

CLAIRE: Chile,you calling me stinky?

Claire sprays some perfume and opens the door. Waiting at the door are Kyle and Olivia. Kyle is originally from Eltham, South-East London but lives in Basingstoke, a relatively wealthy part of Hampshire,part of the home counties and on the commuter belt towards London. He is a security guard for the rich and famous. He is wearing a brown leather jacket,jeans and Cuban heels. Olivia is from Peckham, a diverse and urban part of southeast London. She is an architect and interior designer. She is wearing Jeans, a cream jumper and a royal blue overcoat with trainers.

KYLE: Hey, sorry to drop in on you like this. We're the newbies on the block,we thought we'd pop by and introduce ourselves.

CLAIRE: I love y'all accent! Do come in and make yourselves at home. I'm Claire,can I get y'all a drink?

OLIVIA: That'll be great. It's bloody freezing out there.

CLAIRE: Yeah dat's Philly for ya. Devonte, we got guests.

OLIVIA: Who's Devonte?

CLAIRE: My bae.

KYLE: Oooh.

OLIVIA: Was dat really necessary?

CLAIRE: Girl, I love your braids.

OLIVIA: Thank you,I got 'em done before we arrived.

CLAIRE: Girl you gotta hook me up.

OLIVIA: You gotta come to London-

CLAIRE: I knew y'all from London.

KYLE: Well I live in Basingstoke, but I was born in Eltham, south London. Basingstoke is a 45 minute train ride away from London. It's in Hampshire.

CLAIRE: Hamp-shire?

OLIVIA: It's very posh.

KYLE: Not really. It's not exactly Guildford or Windsor.

CLAIRE: Posh?

KYLE: Means classy.

CLAIRE: Well we say bougie out here.

Devonte joins Claire, Kyle and Olivia.

DEVONTE: Hey y'all. I'm Devonte.

OLIVIA: I'm Olivia.

KYLE: I'm Kyle.

DEVONTE: I love y'all accent. Are y'all on holiday?

OLIVIA: Nope. We landed 3 days ago. We would've landed sooner if someone didn't fuck up da flights.

KYLE: I booked it too late.

OLIVIA: We're frequent fliers and we do premium economy or business whenever we can.

CLAIRE: Well least y'all here. Devonte and I can only afford coach.

KYLE: Do you have airmiles?

DEVONTE: Nope.

KYLE: Join the club!

OLIVIA: Air-miles are da best way to get cheap premium economy,business and first class plane tickets. You can use the amount of air-miles on a trip and if you get enough air-miles you can get crazy cheap tickets for like \$300.

CLAIRE: I did not know dat. I thought stuff like dat was illegal. You ain't illegals are you?

KYLE: No.

OLIVIA: You'd think we'd knock on your door?

CLAIRE: Just checking!

DEVONTE: You got insurance?

OLIVIA: Yeah.

DEVONTE: Awesome,'cause you gonna need it.

CLAIRE: *Claire touches Olivia's braids*. Girl I can't stop staring at ya braids.

OLIVIA: Well you gotta come to Peckham.

CLAIRE: Peck-ham?

KYLE: The ghetto.

OLIVIA: Shut up.

KYLE: Although £3.99 to watch a film at PeckhamPlex,absolute bargain.

DEVONTE: Damn 3.99, what's that in dollars?

CLAIRE: I dunno, math is not da one.

OLIVIA: You both got a nice place.

CLAIRE: Thank you,we do our best.

DEVONTE: Da last folk who lived here decorated it up and we stuck with it ever since. I would like to inject a few afrofuturist pieces in here but I can never get down to it. Jus' too damn tired.

OLIVIA: Having afrofuturist pieces in here would look great, but just be careful about how big da pieces of artwork are in here. It's not da biggest space in da world and it would make da place look and feel claustrophobic.

Devonte,Claire and Kyle stare at Olivia.

OLIVIA: Soz,that's da interior designer slash architect in me.

DEVONTE: Nah it's cool my best friend's wife is an interior designer.

OLIVIA:Really?

DEVONTE: Uh-huh.

OLIVIA: What's her favourite era of architecture?

DEVONTE: She loves impressionism and da renaissance era.

OLIVIA:Nice, is she french?

DEVONTE: Yeah she is. She was born in Paris,she's been here for 8 years,but she and my best friend are in Paris 'cause her father is sick.

OLIVIA: Sorry to hear that.

DEVONTE: It's cool.

OLIVIA: What's her name?

DEVONTE: Gwen.

OLIVIA: And your best friend?

DEVONTE: River.

KYLE: Odd name.

DEVONTE: Not really.

OLIVIA: River Phoenix.

KYLE: Oh yeah.

OLIVIA: Plank.

DEVONTE: What's your favorite piece's of architecture or interior design?

OLIVIA: I love art deco, and surrealism. All of which are a thread in my work.

CLAIRE: Girl, I'd go insane with all da surrealist stuff. Once I'd wake up, I'd think I was in Charlie and da chocolate factory. Creepy as hell.

KYLE: You weren't the only one creeped out by that movie as a kid.

CLAIRE: So what made you two wanna live here?

KYLE: Better opportunities here.

DEVONTE: You two not on crack with all da American Dream bullshit?

OLIVIA: We're serious.

KYLE: London's really expensive.

DEVONTE: Really? I mean Philly's pretty expensive too.

KYLE: Sure, but it's cheaper than London and you know nothing about how expensive housing is in the UK.

OLIVIA: Most people rent. Some houses in London are over a million quid.

KYLE: Some two, three million.

CLAIRE: Pounds ?

OLIVIA: Yeah.

CLAIRE: Chile!

OLIVIA: We're in a housing crisis. We've had a shortage of houses for decades. People are buying them up and not living in them half da time. They're loads of empty houses that da local authorities ain't giving to people.

KYLE: They're building more private housing than social housing.

OLIVIA: The Aylesbury Estate wasn't far from me and it was Europe's biggest social housing complex. Built in the 70's, it housed 2,000 people and they've regenerated Elephant & Castle and Camberwell with mostly private housing. So many people have been displaced to areas far from where they were brought up.

DEVONTE: Dats fucked up. It's happening here in Philly too. Dey building more cosmopolitan apartments and pushing people out.

KYLE: Plus there are too many fucking taxes in the UK.

CLAIRE: More than here?

KYLE: Yeah.

OLIVIA: Honestly, I can't remember them all off da top of my head. Kyle's da one with all da brains in our relationship when it comes to finances.

DEVONTE: So what do you do Kyle?

KYLE: I'm a security guard. I've done security for the rich and famous.

DEVONTE: Is it fun?

KYLE: Sometimes, it just depends on the person innit?

DEVONTE: Who's been da worst famous person you've done security for?

KYLE: Too fucking many mate.

DEVONTE: Who?

KYLE: Mostly just a bunch of boring Z listers clinging onto their careers. When I first started security work, I worked at Wimbledon during the tennis matches in the summer. I dealt with the public mostly, it was hard to spot the celebs at first, but a few celebs would come in, the nicest was probably Bruce Forsyth.

DEVONTE: Who?

KYLE: He was a really famous TV presenter in the UK, he was such a gent. I got an autograph from him.

DEVONTE: That's awesome.

KYLE: Yeah it was, although the pay was shit, but we move. Now I have a better paying job. I start security at Good Morning Philadelphia in two weeks.

CLAIRE: Wow you got it all covered pretty fast.

OLIVIA: So many people we know have moved abroad and it doesn't go well for them in da beginning.

KYLE: Why do you all drive on the wrong side of the road?

CLAIRE: Huh?

OLIVIA: Kyle nearly got run over crossing da road.

KYLE: I wasn't looking the right way.

OLIVIA: I told you before we got here.

DEVONTE: I so wanna go to England someday.

KYLE: Where do you wanna visit?

DEVONTE: London and scotland. I heard Scotland is beautiful and they have a different accent to London.

KYLE: You might have trouble understanding them.

DEVONTE: I'm all in.

OLIVIA: You should give haggis a go?

DEVONTE: What's Haggis?

KYLE: Sheep intestines and liver.

CLAIRE: Oh hell naw!

OLIVIA: You said you wanted to go all in.

DEVONTE: We black. We don't eat no sheep intestines.

KYLE: You eat chicken?

DEVONTE: Yeah.

CLAIRE: What's da difference?

There is an awkward silence.

DEVONTE: I wanna see y'all trains.

CLAIRE: Here we go.

DEVONTE: We could be da railroad powerhouse of da world. So many cities in America have shitty transportation. Not everyone wants to drive. I guess we lucky in philly cause we have da subway and trolley. As a country we can afford to have world class transportation.

OLIVIA: For sure, da UK started da railways ya know.

DEVONTE: Olivia,I'm impressed.

KYLE: How the hell did you know that?

OLIVIA: I did history GCSE.Plus it's basic knowledge to know who Isambard Kingdom Brunel is.

KYLE: Who?

OLIVIA: Google it, I haven't got time to do a whole history lesson. You either know or you don't. Kyle's hopeless when The Chase or Who wants to be a Millionaire is on.

KYLE: So who ended up with an A* in A level maths? Ah, Ah!

OLIVIA: Fuck off. Since we touched down, I just realised I'm gonna have to alter some of da words I use.

CLAIRE: Why?

KYLE:She uses a lot of slang.

CLAIRE: I'm havin' to code switch most of da time.

DEVONTE: So I've been wrong with "Chip,chip cheerio", this entire time?

OLIVIA: Don't say that in London,you'll get a lot of eyerolls.

KYLE: Maybe a punch in the face.

DEVONTE: Not if I punch them first.

CLAIRE: With those arms?

DEVONTE: Never underestimate my arms.

KYLE: Do you wanna arm wrestle?

CLAIRE: Yeah you should arm wrestle with Devonte.

DEVONTE: No fair.

KYLE: You can't double down now.

CLAIRE/OLIVIA: Do it,do it,do it,do it,do it.

DEVONTE: Alright fine,I'm a team player.

Devonte and Kyle have one arm on the coffee table and one arm behind their backs.Claire and Olivia crowd both of them.

KYLE: You ready?

DEVONTE: No.

The armwrestle starts. Kyle starts off in the lead. Devonte catches up, although the strain is beginning to tell. It's a close game but Kyle wins.

DEVONTE: Damn son. You're so strong.

OLIVIA: Kyle's been known to break people's fingers during an arm wrestle.

KYLE: Only with people who piss me off. I broke my uncle's pinkie, he kept touching my hair.

CLAIRE: Why?

KYLE: I dunno,I guess uncle's do weird things innit?

DEVONTE: Not mine, he gives me free haircuts.

KYLE: Nice, would you be able to link me up with your uncle so I can get a free trim?

DEVONTE: I'll try but I'm not a miracle worker.

KYLE: Another thing about the UK, barbers are so hit and miss. America is home of the good barbers.

DEVONTE: Not always, before my uncle became a barber I went to dis one place and I got a rash at da back of my neck.

KYLE: Ah shit I hate when that happens, it's cause they don't disinfect the combs and razors properly.

DEVONTE: Nasty ass.

CLAIRE: Says da guy who didn't shower till I told him.

DEVONTE: Claire!

KYLE: Bruv!

DEVONTE: Da shower was cold and I don't do cold.

KYLE: How the hell have ya survived the winters here then?

DEVONTE: We ain't in Chicago dats all I'm sayin'.

CLAIRE: It's colder there. I grew up in Chicago and my family decided to move to Philly.

KYLE: 'Cause of the cold?

CLAIRE: Nope, 'cause of da crime. I lived on da southside of Chicago. I lost friends and family due to shootings and gangs. Imagine watching da news and hearing about 50,100 shootings in a Goddamn week. It's a little better here.

DEVONTE: We lucky we ain't on the northside with all dem opioid dealings and shootings.

OLIVIA: Would you consider living in another country?

DEVONTE: I'd like to live in Europe.

CLAIRE: I'll stay here.

DEVONTE: You comin' with me we ain't doing dis long-distance relationship bullshit.

OLIVIA: No issues with guns.

KYLE: Although stop and search.

DEVONTE: Huh?

KYLE: I got stopped and searched 30 times by the police so far in my life. It's nothing I'm not used to. When I was younger, I used to have dreadlocks and they thought I was doing weed and cocaine. Everytime I left work to go home, the same police officer in the exact same location would check my rucksack.

DEVONTE: Damn.

OLIVIA: I'm lucky not to have been stopped and searched. I pray to God I never have to go through dat.

KYLE: *Checks watch.* It's 11pm, we best get going.

CLAIRE: Before you go, do you wanna go to a bar or do some clubbing at some point?

OLIVIA: Dat would be awesome!

DEVONTE: I'll come up with a cool theme. I'll send y'all more details about it soon.

KYLE: Look forward to it.

Devonte walks Kyle and Olivia to the door.

DEVONTE: Have a good night.

The 4 hug each other interchangeably. Kyle and Olivia exit.

*Devonte shuts the door. Devonte walks to the Kitchen to put the soda bottles in the bin.
Claire follows him and hugs him from behind.*

DEVONTE: They're so cool.

CLAIRE: We better save up bae, flights to London ain't cheap. It'll take at least a year to save up.

DEVONTE: Could we do it sooner?

CLAIRE: You really wanna go to England don't ya? Well it's getting late and we better get some shut eye.

DEVONTE: I love you bae.

CLAIRE: Love you too.

Claire and Devonte embrace. Lights fade. Great Uncle Franklin takes center stage.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: There are many unexplainable tangibles to da fabric and fortune of civilization on Earth. We didn't ask to be born, we didn't choose where we live, where we're from, and we didn't choose our pigmentation. A wheel of fortune is da name of da game on Earth. An awakening was needed for Devonte. Boy, I love da British accent!

ACT 1

SCENE 9

It's 10 days later. The stage is transformed into a coffee shop. Miranda is sitting at a table sipping coffee and typing away on her laptop. Devonte arrives.

DEVONTE: Hey Miranda.

MIRANDA: Hey Devonte. How are you?

DEVONTE: Pretty good. Cold as usual.

MIRANDA: Tell me about it. Summer seems so far away.

DEVONTE: Good thing we ain't in Chicago.

MIRANDA: That Lake Michigan wind in winter, yikes. I spend Christmas up there a lot. That wind goes to the bone.

DEVONTE: As Claire keeps telling me.

MIRANDA: Who's Claire?

DEVONTE: My girlfriend.

MIRANDA: Nice!

DEVONTE: Are you and Jerry together?

MIRANDA: Don't make me puke, it's 35 degrees out and ain't nobody clearing puke up in this weather.

DEVONTE: What you got there?

MIRANDA: Chai latte.

DEVONTE: Is it coffee?

MIRANDA: Nope. It's sweet and kinda spicy with the cinnamon on top.

DEVONTE: I hate coffee.

MIRANDA: Right, and that coffee breath!

DEVONTE: Don't get me started.

MIRANDA: Chai latte has a little after taste so I always carry gum with me.

DEVONTE: *Devonte gets up.* I'll order myself a chai latte then.

MIRANDA: You don't need to go up to order, it's all done on the app.

DEVONTE: Ah shit, they have wifi here?

MIRANDA: Yeah, this place has everything.

DEVONTE: So why did you wanna meet up for coffee?

MIRANDA: I thought Jerry made a big mistake not giving you the role of Kai.

DEVONTE: I thought I did alright.

MIRANDA: You were great.

DEVONTE: I kinda get da impression he doesn't like me all dat much?

MIRANDA: He's like that with everyone. His biggest inspiration in life is Simon Cowell. He ain't no Simon Cowell let's put it that way. I wanna audition you for another role. Are you good at playing nerdy characters?

DEVONTE: Of course.

MIRANDA: Awesome. I'll send you the details and a date to audition can be arranged.

DEVONTE: Will Jerry be there?

MIRANDA: Yeah. Honestly don't let him get to you.

DEVONTE: Have you always been an assistant casting director?

MIRANDA: God no. I was an actress. I trained at Yale.

A Barista arrives with Devonte's Chai Latte.

DEVONTE: Did you like it?

MIRANDA: It was a great programme, but in the last year everyone gets all bitchy.

DEVONTE: I had the same experience with U-arts.

MIRANDA: I guess most actors and creatives are bitchy.

DEVONTE: Not all. You don't seem bitchy to me.

MIRANDA: I haven't got time for all that nonsense. It's too exhausting not to be truly authentic.

DEVONTE: They all get caught out in da end.

MIRANDA: What's your long term goal with your career?

DEVONTE: I wanna dabble in a lotta stuff. Theater is my home. I wanna do more film and TV auditions.

MIRANDA: I love theater. If this was London, you'd be a star already.

DEVONTE: Really?

MIRANDA: You got some of the greatest theaters in the world. From the National Theatre, to the Royal Court, Almeida theater and the Royal Exchange. You should check 'em out. I can see you as a theater actor. You've got a great voice and a unique physicality. I feel it's wasted for you on TV and film 'cause a lotta TV and film shots are kinda belly up you know?

DEVONTE: I heard da theater over there is cheap.

MIRANDA: It depends. You can get fringe theater tickets for £10. I don't know what that is in dollars.

DEVONTE: That's a steal! Claire and I met two new folk from England.

MIRANDA: Small world right?

DEVONTE: And they were so cool and seemed really cultured.

MIRANDA: Most Americans never leave the country, if you go abroad you'll break the mold.

DEVONTE: I shoulda done what my late momma did.

MIRANDA: What?

DEVONTE: Move to Sweden.

MIRANDA: Why did she move to Sweden?

DEVONTE: She wanted to move somewhere quiet and cheap. You don't hear any shootings over there. I always wanted to see her. I was too drugged up, splashing cash on stupid shit and doing my degree at U-arts. We'd skype, we'd call, we'd send postcards. When her postcards got sent to my door, I could smell dat mommy smell. Da smell of

maternity,joy,graft,grit. I never got to see her again. She died alone. I got da call from da authorities. All dem wasted years. All dem wasted years scared of my daddy. All dem wasted years looking after me. At least she got da chance to try skiing and see da northern lights. I see momma in Claire. Dats probably why I act da fool around her. I know it drives her nuts,but it's sexy at da same time. Anyway dis ain't Dr Phil,shit. You got my email right?

MIRANDA: I do. Your mom is looking up at the stars Devonte.

DEVONTE: I will never have my breakthrough.

MIRANDA: You will.

DEVONTE: I don't know how much time I have.

MIRANDA: You're young.

DEVONTE: I don't know how much longer I'll be here for.

MIRANDA: You're young.

DEVONTE: I have incurable colon cancer.

MIRANDA: What?

DEVONTE: I have incurable colon cancer and I desperately wanted to play Kai. It was a short shoot and I wanted to leave dis planet knowing dat I pursued my dreams. I guess dat will never happen. Devonte will be known as da deluded failure who dreamt too hard,was too stubborn and who was a muthafucking drug addict.

MIRANDA: I'm sorry.

DEVONTE: I don't want your pity.

MIRANDA: This can't be the end Devonte.

DEVONTE: What do you mean?

MIRANDA: The world needs to know who you are. I wanna film a documentary and I want you to be in it.

DEVONTE: Why? My life ain't interesting. My life is dwindling away.

MIRANDA: And your life has hope and meaning to so many people in your situation.

DEVONTE: One word comes to mind,exploitation. I don't wanna be filmed when I'm on my deathbed.

MIRANDA: Think about Claire and all your friends.

DEVONTE: What about them?

MIRANDA: They want something to remember you by.

DEVONTE: I don't want them to remember me in dis state. That is in no way a summary of who I am and who I was.

MIRANDA: Try to think about it.

DEVONTE: I'm not doing it.

MIRANDA: Try to think about it.

DEVONTE: Miranda!

MIRANDA: You have my email and number. if you wanna talk.

Miranda exits.

ACT 1

SCENE 10

Later the same day, Devonte returns from the coffee shop. Claire is watching TV in the living room.

CLAIRE: Welcome home sweetie. How was your meeting with Millie?

DEVONTE: Miranda.

CLAIRE: Dats da one.

DEVONTE: Good. She offered me another audition opportunity.

CLAIRE: Nice.

DEVONTE: How was your day?

CLAIRE: Nothing special. Just watching TV and editing videos.

DEVONTE: What kinda videos?

CLAIRE: Just makeup tutorials.

DEVONTE: Boring.

CLAIRE: Shut da fuck up.

DEVONTE: You wanna grab somethin' to eat?

CLAIRE: You treating me?

DEVONTE: Maybe.

There is a knock at the door. Dr Douglas, now 50 is at the door.

CLAIRE: I'll get it.

Claire opens the door.

CLAIRE (*Continued*): Hey, do I know you?

DR DOUGLAS: I'm Dr Douglas.

CLAIRE: Dr Douglas?

DR DOUGLAS: I wanted to check up on Devonte.

CLAIRE: Well I can tell you dat Devonte is healthy.

DR DOUGLAS: And you are?

CLAIRE: Claire.

DR DOUGLAS: Nice to meet you Claire. Has Devonte not told you?

CLAIRE: Told me what? Can you please explain what's going on here?

DR DOUGLAS: I'll see myself out.

Dr Douglas exits. Claire shuts the door.

CLAIRE: Devonte, whose Dr Douglas?

DEVONTE: I've never met dat man in my life.

CLAIRE: What's going on Devonte?

DEVONTE: Nothing.

CLAIRE: What's going on Devonte?

DEVONTE: Nothing. That man is a fraud.

CLAIRE: Devonte.

DEVONTE: I've been diagnosed with incurable colon cancer.

CLAIRE: This has gotta be a prank.

DEVONTE: I'm not pranking you.

CLAIRE: Devonte you got me.

DEVONTE: This ain't a prank.

CLAIRE: Quit playin' around Devonte, this ain't funny.

DEVONTE: I'm not playin' around. I have incurable colon cancer.

CLAIRE: How long have you known? Answer me!

DEVONTE: 10 days.

CLAIRE: Why didn't you say something? *Claire starts punching Devonte.* You selfish muthafucker.

DEVONTE: Stop! I was scared. I knew it would destroy you. You're making great progress. Your Youtube channel is going from strength to strength and I don't wanna derail your dreams.

CLAIRE: Have you told anyone else?

DEVONTE: Miranda.

CLAIRE: We're in a relationship, how could you tell her before me?

DEVONTE: She had a right to know.

CLAIRE: I have a right to know!

DEVONTE: She was gonna offer me another opportunity to audition for another part.

CLAIRE: What happened Devonte? What happened to us being transparent with each other? Back to square one again. Where do we go from here?

DEVONTE: I wanna make every second count with you Claire.

CLAIRE: How long do you have to live?

DEVONTE: 6-12 weeks.

CLAIRE: What's da point?

DEVONTE: You see this journal? I've had it for over 20 years. I keep my most intimate thoughts in here. I've never let anyone look at my journal, until now. I want you to read every page, every word and every syllable of my journal.

CLAIRE: Are you sure?

DEVONTE: Why would I give to you? I've got nothin' to prove and nothin' to hide. Take it. Take it and treasure it for da rest of your life. And when I pass, you don't have to be a widow for da rest of your life. I'm gonna take a nap.

Devonte kisses Claire. Claire sits down on the sofa and opens Devonte's Journal and starts reading. Claire grabs her camera, she sits down and presses the record button on the camera.

CLAIRE: Hey Youtube, Claire Harris here. I want y'all to do a massive favor for me, only if y'all can afford it. My wonderful boyfriend Devonte who I've featured on my channel many times has been diagnosed with incurable colon cancer. He only has 6-12 weeks to live. It's a huge shock to me and to all y'all watching. I've scrolled through this book. This is Devonte's journal. He's had it for the last 20 years. I'm not gonna reveal everything dat's in dis book, but one thing I wanna make sure he does before he passes is to explore da world. He doesn't know that I'm doing this and I wanna surprise him. I'm setting up a crowdfunder page, link in da description. If y'all can spare a few dollars it'll be highly appreciated. Take care y'all and stay safe.

Claire taps the record button a second time. Claire sits on the sofa. She grabs her phone and starts texting and making phone calls. Claire breaks down. Lights out.

ACT 2
SCENE 1

It's November 2019. Kyle and Olivia are arriving at a popular Club and bar venue in the heart of Philadelphia. The club is modern,conventional and trendy. The evening is 1970's & 1990's themed. Olivia is dressed as Beyonce and Kyle is dressed as Jay Z.

KYLE: I hope this is the right place.

OLIVIA: Looks like it darling.

KYLE: Let's grab that booth before someone takes it.

Kyle and Olivia walk to the booth.

KYLE: The amount of times I was going around in circles tryna find the place was insane.
Looks like we're the first ones here,great.

OLIVIA: Well someone had to be.

KYLE: I hate arriving early,I like being fashionably late. Everyone looks at you,makes you feel like a celebrity.

OLIVIA: I gotta say you make a pretty handsome Jay Z.

KYLE: You think so? My hair's too long. Don't think Jay Z ever had long hair.

OLIVIA: You're never gonna cut dat hair are you?

KYLE: Not for a while yet. Took 3 years to get my hair this long and voluminous.
When the time comes Devonte's uncle is gonna hit me up. You look cute Beyonce.

OLIVIA: Thanks,I wanted to channel her Destiny's Child days. They came to Peckham, you know.

KYLE: Did they?

OLIVIA: Yeah in the 90's. My mum got a picture with them.

KYLE: That's so cool.

OLIVIA: But she keeps rubbing it in my face.

KYLE: Why?

OLIVIA: Cause she knows they're my favourite group. She doesn't even like their music.

KYLE: They all had great careers after they split up.

OLIVIA: They sure did, but Beyonce's my favourite.

KYLE: No shit Sherlock, cause I'm the one constantly buying her expensive perfumes.

OLIVIA: That's not expensive perfume.

KYLE: Anything over a tenner for perfume is expensive.

OLIVIA: You don't even spend a tenner on perfume. You spend £4.99 on Adidas cologne.

KYLE: That was before I came here.

OLIVIA: You stockpiled though didn't you?

KYLE: How do you know?

OLIVIA: I checked your suitcase.

KYLE: You sneaky bit-

OLIVIA: I want my bae to smell like a man, not a kid. That's one christmas present for next year I don't have to worry about. I gotta say it feels great to be back on da club scene.

KYLE: Although they could spice up the tunes a bit. We've been here for two months with barely any time to breathe.

OLIVIA: You've had it worse with all those 3am starts on Good morning Philadelphia.

KYLE: It's worth it though. You've been busy ain't you darling?

OLIVIA: Just a bit. I've got my own interior design show on prime time TV.

KYLE: And you said you didn't want to jump into showbizness.

OLIVIA: Da celeb side of it. Would hate to have da paparazzi pounding on my door,invading every ounce of my privacy. This club is very different to da clubs we've been to on holiday.

KYLE: The one in napa was lit.

OLIVIA: Surprised you remembered half of it.

KYLE: Why?

OLIVIA: You were so pissed dat you started singing come on Eileen and licking da floor. I had to carry you back to our hotel,it was so embarrassing.

KYLE: Doubt people in Philly even know that banger of a song.

OLIVIA: I heard better.

KYLE: Pah,it's the greatest song to sing when you're pissed,just like Old lands eye or God save the Queen. I wonder where Devonte and Claire are?

OLIVIA: Takin' their sweet time.

KYLE: Black timing innit.

Devonte and Claire spot Kyle and Olivia. Devonte is dressed as Jimi Hendrix,Claire is dressed as Donna Summer.

CLAIRE: Hey,hey,hey.

DEVONTE: Woah look at you both.

CLAIRE: Hot couple alert over here.

OLIVIA: Could say the same thing about you.

KYLE: Cut the niceties,what time do you call this?

CLAIRE: We thought we'd be fashionably late.

KYLE: Liv I told ya!

DEVONTE: Kyle lemme guess, you one of da Jackson 5?

KYLE: Wrong.

DEVONTE: Bruno Mars?

KYLE: Bruv!

DEVONTE: You gonna have to bail me out bro.

KYLE: Jay Z.

DEVONTE: I don't see it.

KYLE: It's the hair innit?

DEVONTE: Yeah, and Olivia lemme guess you Kelly Rowland?

OLIVIA: Oooh close.

DEVONTE: Michelle Obama?

KYLE: Bruv!

CLAIRE: She's part of Destiny's child dummy.

KYLE: Liv just gave you the biggest clue mate.

DEVONTE: Oh my bad Beyonce.

Miranda arrives dressed as Geri Halliwell in a union jack dress and Jerry arrives dressed as Noel Gallagher from the 1990's band Oasis.

MIRANDA: Hey, hey, hey.

DEVONTE: Miranda,I'm so glad you could make it,I didn't think you'd come.

MIRANDA: I usually hate clubs,but once I heard the theme I thought fuck it.

DEVONTE: Hey Jerry.

JERRY: How goes it?

MIRANDA: I hope I'm not too overdressed.

KYLE: It's bloody perfect.

JERRY: You from England right?

KYLE: Born and bred. I'm Kyle.

OLIVIA: I'm Olivia.

MIRANDA: Nice to meet you. Are you on holiday?

OLIVIA: Nope, we live here now.

MIRANDA: Awesome,how long you been here?

KYLE: A little over a month.

JERRY: Welcome to America. You like it here?

KYLE: It's fucking freedom mate.

OLIVIA: We're living the American dream.

JERRY: Nice.

MIRANDA: Anything you miss about the UK?

OLIVIA: I miss the convenience of how close grocery stores are.

DEVONTE: It's only a short drive away to Walgreens and Walmart on our street,plus it's open 24/7.

OLIVIA: I know, but having to physically get in the car and get gas as opposed to just walking is something I'm still trying to get my head around.

KYLE: You just said gas.

OLIVIA: Petrol damn.

KYLE: I miss the footie. Not the same watching highlights of my favourite team.

JERRY: I know a little bit about British football.

KYLE: Do ya?

JERRY: Yeah,I've been following the premier league.

KYLE: This is turning into a beautiful evening.

JERRY: What team do you support?

KYLE: Arsenal.

JERRY: Yikes.

KYLE: Come on man,they're improving in the premier league!

JERRY: It's all about Chelsea,England and Manchester United pal.

KYLE: Overrated.

OLIVIA:It's a good thing for me that he can't watch da footie?

JERRY: Why?

KYLE: Yeah why?

OLIVIA: Can't be dealing with all da fucking noise. I went to one game with him and it was awful. Nothing worse than having half drunken cups of beer splashed all over you from all sides.

KYLE: It was your fault for wearing an expensive dress. I told you to come in trackies?

OLIVIA: At a football match?

KYLE: It's not exactly Wimbledon is it?

OLIVIA: You shoulda taken me there!

KYLE: I know you'd fit right in. I can imagine you hanging out with all the celebs whilst us rif raff are slaving away.

JERRY: Y'all done any road trips since you've arrived.

OLIVIA: Nope, sounds like hell.

JERRY: Nonsense, nothing like a good ol' road trip, you've got the wind blowing in your face with your hand outside the window, it's perfect. I did a road trip from Salt lake City to Portland Maine.

KYLE: I've always wanted to do a mammoth road trip across America. I binge watch a ton of road trip documentaries. I wanna experience that feeling where you've been driving in one state for miles and you're just surrounded by roads and you get outta the car and you can feel the wind on your shoulders as the sun is about to set.

JERRY: Best feeling in the fucking world man.

KYLE: Let's do a roadtrip.

OLIVIA: Count me out.

CLAIRE: Ladies we gotta do a spa day.

MIRANDA: You sure you want me there?

CLAIRE: I wouldn't say if I didn't mean it.

MIRANDA: I might be America's most wanted?

OLIVIA: Are you?

MIRANDA: No.

CLAIRE: Well tag along.

MIRANDA: That does sound great. I need a little break from being a casting director. Jerry and I do 14 hour days just seeing mediocre to bad talent, and then outta the blue when the caffeine withdrawal is hitting us in the ass, somebody great comes along.

JERRY: We've won a lotta awards for best director, best casting, all that stuff.

KYLE: I better check you guys out then.

CLAIRE: We forgot to guess who Miranda is dressed up as.

DEVONTE: Celine Dion.

KYLE: Dude!

OLIVIA: Come on man this one's easy.

CLAIRE: Geri Halliwell from da Spice girls.

MIRANDA: Correct, I was starting to lose faith in humanity. Surely our generation knows who Geri Halliwell is.

KYLE: We do, just not Devonte.

DEVONTE: Modern music is not my forte.

OLIVIA: It's not that modern.

DEVONTE: Anything from 1945 onwards is modern in my opinion.

KYLE: Fuck me. Jerry lemme guess, Robbie Williams?

RIVER: Nope.

DEVONTE: Justin Timberlake?

CLAIRE: Boy you on crack?

DEVONTE: Bro you gonna have to help me out.

RIVER: Noel Gallagher.

DEVONTE: Huh?

KYLE: He's one of the singers in the 90's band Oasis.

RIVER: Thank you! Finally someone who appreciates their talent!

CLAIRE: Devonte go buy me some milk.

DEVONTE: Milk?

CLAIRE: Da grocery store is just a block away.

DEVONTE: We already got milk.

CLAIRE: Bae just get some milk please.

DEVONTE: Alright I'll be back. Do y'all need anything?

They all shake their heads.

CLAIRE: Oh and bring me back some gummies.

Devonte exits.

CLAIRE (*Continued*): Thank y'all for coming.

OLIVIA: Claire, I don't know what to say. I'm devastated.

KYLE: He's so young. Life ain't fair man.

JERRY: I was too hard on him. I always thought he was putting on an act everytime Miranda and I had an audition with him. We're in an industry full of sharks,snakes, crocodiles and rats.

CLAIRE: Good thing he didn't hear you say rats.

JERRY: Why?

CLAIRE: He's scared of rats.

JERRY: I watched your youtube videos,you've got some talent Claire.

CLAIRE: Thanks.

MIRANDA: I know you've got camera equipment which is pretty good quality actually,but Jerry and I wanna aid you further. We're proposing that we bring a small crew with some film and TV standard quality cameras to help you document everything. We have a lotta contacts and we wanna make it into a documentary. What Devonte didn't tell you was that I had a conversation with him about it and he wasn't on board with it.

CLAIRE: Well he's gonna have to be when he finds out what my subscribers have done for him.

OLIVIA: He's coming.

CLAIRE: Act natural.

Claire sets up the camera. She presses the record button. Claire sits in front of the camera.

CLAIRE: What's up Youtube,it's ya girl Claire Harris comin' at you with another video. It's been a really tough few weeks for me tryna adjust to the fact dat Devonte won't be here much longer. I looked through. Let me hold that thought.

The camera is still rolling

CLAIRE (*Continued*): Hey bae you got da milk?

DEVONTE: Yep milk is so muthafucking expensive.

CLAIRE: It sure is.

Devonte walks back to the living room.

DEVONTE: Why is there a camera here?

CLAIRE: Sit down and you'll find out.

DEVONTE: Bae dis ain't another prank?

CLAIRE: Do you want it to be?

DEVONTE: No.

CLAIRE: Good, so sit bae.

Devonte sits.

CLAIRE (*Continued*) : While you had a nap after we spoke about your diagnosis, I looked through your journal and saw that you wrote down a bucket list to travel da entire world. I recorded a secret video and spoke candidly about your diagnosis. I created a fundraiser page so that my wonderful subscribers can donate to it, so that you can fulfill as much of your bucket list as possible. My beautiful subscribers have raised \$40,000.

DEVONTE: Get out! You playin' wid me bae.

CLAIRE: I'm not.

DEVONTE: Oh my God thank you so much.

CLAIRE: As a token of our gratitude, we will be documenting Robert's bucket list in a series of emotional videos. Thank you to everyone who donated. Come into da camera guys. I wanna thank Kyle, Miranda, Olivia and Jerry. Until da next video stay safe.

Claire stops the recording.

DEVONTE: You guys are da best. I can't believe what y'all have done for me.

OLIVIA: Where do you wanna go first?

DEVONTE: Across da pond.

CLAIRE: Well we better hurry time is ticking.

The ensemble exit. Video footage emerges of the Atlantic ocean with images of slaves on boats with the sound of modern planes as Great Uncle Franklin arrives at centre stage.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Christopher Columbus, King James I of England, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Thomas Gates, The Puritans, The mayflower, John Winthrop, Roger Williams, Cecillius Calvert, James II of England, Charles II, John Berkley, George Carteret, King James II, William Penn. 1776, only 13 states were granted independence. The last 2 were Alaska and Hawaii in 1959. 50 states, 50 different cultures. Native America, gone. Native American history, shelved. Black history, shelved. We still don't know who we are or what we are. Sitting on dat plane watching Devonte and everybody close to him was da biggest thrill of my existence. Many Americans don't leave da country. Flying abroad is a luxury. Flying across da pond is a quest to see da fatal voyage dat so many of my people took. Across da pond are two countries, 3000 miles apart. 6 hours from New York to Seattle and 6 hours from New York to London. Britain and America. We're distant cousins that da pond separates us upon. We're distant cousins where we look at each other in wonder, fear and obscurity. We're conditioned on Earth to believe dat everyone is bad. Dat every good deed is for nefarious purposes, cynicism personified. When Devonte finally passes I will protect his soul, da world will remember Devonte Anderson. But for now, seeing da wonders of da planet and da wonders of humanity is my utmost motivation which still encapsulates da practice of my foundation.

ACT 2

SCENE 2

The group arrive in London. A video montage of the London skyline is visible as Kyle and Olivia show Devonte, Claire, Miranda and Jerry around. Selfies are taken when suddenly Devonte spots a figure. The figure revealed is River Ford, 27 who has a mature rugged nature. There is a small film crew surrounding the ensemble which will be present throughout their time travelling.

RIVER: Devonte.

DEVONTE: River! What da hell are you doing here? I thought you were in Paris. This is my best friend River. We go all da way back to Kindergarten.

CLAIRE: It's been a long time River.

RIVER: I know. Gwen's still in Paris and I saw your tweet and I had to come to London. Only 2 hours by train.

KYLE: You could just fly, you know.

RIVER: I know, I just prefer the train.

KYLE: I'm Kyle.

OLIVIA: I'm Olivia.

MIRANDA: I'm Miranda.

JERRY: Jerry how goes it?

RIVER: How are y'all finding London?

CLAIRE: Bougie as hell.

MIRANDA: I love coming to London. Awesome for theater.

JERRY: It's alright, I guess. I kinda miss the beach.

OLIVIA: You ever been to a beach in da UK?

JERRY: Nope.

KYLE: Why would anyone go to a beach in the middle of November?

OLIVIA: Thanks for dat useful information captain obvious. Summer is da best time to experience da beaches in da UK.

JERRY: Are they blue?

OLIVIA: Some are.

KYLE: And full of shit.

OLIVIA: Go to Brighton, go to Broadstairs and Hastings not too far London.

DEVONTE: What's your favourite beach outta da 3 you mentioned?

OLIVIA: Broadstairs. Plus there's a bullet train.

RIVER: Class 395 southeastern Javelin train. I've got my British railway train guide. You wanna do some railroad spottin'?

DEVONTE: You know what my answer is gonna be? Do y'all wanna join us.

CLAIRE: I'll pass.

OLIVIA: Do da rest of you wanna go to the pub?

JERRY: Sure.

KYLE: Could do with a pint.

MIRANDA: Can we go to the theater too?

KYLE: Ugh.

OLIVIA: I'm right at home.

JERRY: Me too. I fancy seeing an opera or ballet.

MIRANDA: Ballet, something elegant and understated.

KYLE: Well that's a relief. Musicals give me a fucking headache bruv.

RIVER: We'll be a couple hours.

OLIVIA: Cool.

The ensemble disperse.

ACT 2
SCENE 3

The stage is transformed into a train station with a bridge across the middle of the two platforms. Devonte and River sit on a bench at the platform. The crew are still present.

RIVER: I'm sorry I've not been in touch with you.

DEVONTE: You coulda called.

RIVER: I know you'd be busy.

DEVONTE: You coulda texted.

RIVER: I know you'd be busy.

DEVONTE: And I would reply.

RIVER: Only after a week, sometimes never. I felt like I was third-wheeling around you for a long time.

DEVONTE: Only for my career.

RIVER: If you live only for your career then are you really living?

DEVONTE: I wasn't. I wasn't happy once with all da rejection, having no money in da bank and all da unanswered questions surrounding my father. Whenever I watch shows and see da perfect, happy family, I puke, I cry, I wish dat coulda been me.

RIVER: My father died when I was 3 years old. I always imagine what he's like as a person. I always imagine what he'd be like seeing me grow up and I always imagine what he'd be like seeing me today. I think he woulda been proud of me. My mom says that he was easily pleased by the smallest stuff. He would be fangirling at the prospect of me having a beautiful wife. He would be so happy that I have a doctorate of philosophy in economics. I love looking at the economies of the world, always changing.

DEVONTE: I gotta D in calculus. Math fries my brain.

RIVER: I hear that man.

DEVONTE: Thanks for taking me here.

RIVER: I owed you a railroad spottin' day. I wish it wasn't done in these circumstances. Will you go back to da US?

DEVONTE: Maybe,I dunno. I feel safer here.

RIVER: Europe is much safer than back home. I wish I moved to Paris years ago.

DEVONTE: Can you speak French?

RIVER: Un petit peu.

DEVONTE: Okay!

RIVER: You didn't understand a word I just said.

DEVONTE: Not a clue.

RIVER: If you go back to the US. If you have the strength,do you wanna go on the California Zephyr?

DEVONTE: That is da closest thing to da American dream.

RIVER: I've seen countless youtube videos on that train. The best of Amtrak and panoramic views for days.

DEVONTE: I'm hoping I'll make it. I've always wanted to go to Chicago and see the Golden gate bridge.

RIVER: Both are beautiful.

DEVONTE: You've been to more places in America than most Americans, you know dat right?

RIVER: I don't wanna brag. Are you on chemotherapy yet?

DEVONTE: Nope.

RIVER: Does Claire know?

DEVONTE: Nope.

RIVER: Devonte!

DEVONTE: Too many side effects. I never told her about da chemotherapy. Dr Douglas came by and he disappeared because he knew dat I hadn't told Claire. I'm dying to know why he showed up. I guess I'll never know. I wanna die early.

RIVER: What do you mean?

DEVONTE: I wanna have a euthanasia.

RIVER: What? Have you told Claire?

DEVONTE: I don't want her to know.

RIVER: Come on Devonte, she's done this all for you.

DEVONTE: I know but I don't want her seeing me all weak, havin' to look after me 24/7 round da clock. She has her whole life ahead of her. I don't wanna be in da way of her success and I don't wanna have a slow and painful death. She won't know, plus I dunno where I'm gonna die, how I'm gonna die, it's all hypothetical, but it's something I really want.

RIVER: I don't want this to be the last time we see each other but if it is, Thank you for being my longest friend. Thank you for being a friend whose always been there for me-

DEVONTE: Not all da time.

RIVER: Come on bro. It's hard giving you compliments sometimes.

DEVONTE: It's even harder accepting them, but I appreciate it.

RIVER: Come here man.

Devonte and River hug.

RIVER (*Continued*): A train will be coming in a few minutes.

DEVONTE: You got your camera?

RIVER: Always.

DEVONTE: I've got my phone ready.

RIVER: Let's do it.

Devonte and River grab a black blazer and two black hats. They stand at separate platforms. They both do 1950's inspired dancing where they meet at the bridge and take photos of passing trains. They take selfies at the bridge. They come back down to platform level and take more photos of trains. Devonte and River end the routine and are sitting on a platform bench.

DEVONTE: Dat was awesome. I'm gonna head to da beach.

RIVER: Which one?

DEVONTE: Broadstairs.

RIVER: You want me to come with you?

DEVONTE: Join da rest of da crew at da pub and tell 'em to come to Broadstairs beach.

RIVER: You know how to get there?

DEVONTE: I'll just ask someone. I love da British accent.

Devonte and River exits.

ACT 2
SCENE 4

Devonte arrives at Broadstairs as the sunset descends on the beach. Devonte takes his shoes and socks off. Devonte is throwing pebbles. The crew are still present.

DEVONTE: Earth,wind,fire,water,carbon,oxygen,hydrogen,nitrogen,metal.

Earth,wind,fire,water,carbon,oxygen,hydrogen,nitrogen,metal.

Sight,hear,smell,touch,taste.

Sight,hear,smell,touch,taste.

Sight,hear,smell,touch,taste.

As one pebble is thrown to the sea,many are deposited.

As the water crashes on da sea wall,

The sea wall erodes.

Life erodes.

I shoulda spent more time with da elements.

This is da first time in my life where I feel calm,I feel me,unapologetically me.

I can't believe I made it to da UK.

I can't believe I navigated my way from A to B in a foreign country.

Did I know where I was going?

Yes.

Did I know where I was going?

Not really.

The thrill of travelling,the thrill of the unknown.

Am I dreaming?

As one pebble is thrown to da sea,many are deposited.

I gaze at da sunset.

Pondering where I'll be next.

I breathe in that sea air.

Diaphragmatic breathing.

A 360 degree sensation.

Da water.

Transparent.

Da water.

Fluid.

My existence.

Bound.

My soul.

Fluid.

Da water.

Pure.
 I see a boat.
 I see a boat.
 I don't know where it's going.
 There are people on dat boat smiling.
 There are people on dat boat waving at me.
 Do I wave?
 Or like da water do I retreat?
 Do I wave?
 Or like da water do I retreat?
 I feel resistance.
 I feel resistance.
 The urge to resist the resistance.
Devonte starts waving.
 All da years in da shadow of my father,gone.
 Time's ticking to find my shadow.
 All da years in da shadow of my father,gone.
 Time's ticking to find my shadow.
 As sunset turns to darkness.
 Da urge to find my shadow has never been greater.
 Thank you beach.
 Thank you elements.
 Thank you everybody in my life.
 Turn to da sunlight.
 Turn to da sunlight.
 Turn to da sunlight.
 Breathe.
 Exhale.
 Breathe.
 Exhale.
 Breathe.
 Exhale.

Devonte waves at River,Claire,Kyle,Olivia,Miranda and Jerry.

JERRY: What a beautiful beach.

OLIVIA: Broadstairs is my favourite and we came at the right time.

CLAIRE: Chile you tellin' me you travelled to dis beach outta London all on your own?

DEVONTE: Everybody should do it!

CLAIRE: You googled it?

DEVONTE: I just asked,everybody should do it. How was da theater?

MIRANDA: Fabulous.

KYLE: I gotta admit,ballet is pretty damn awesome.

OLIVIA: Kyle was crying.

KYLE: My eyes were watering 'cause of the bright lights.

OLIVIA: You were crying,just admit it.

KYLE: It was beautiful okay!

JERRY: I'm getting kinda hungry.

RIVER: Fish and chips?

KYLE: Fish 'n Chips!

JERRY: The best fish n'chips I had was in Los Angeles.

KYLE: How? Fish 'n chips is a British Tradition!

OLIVIA: A Jewish tradition.

MIRANDA: You gotta smart one Kyle.

OLIVIA: I don't wanna brag, it sets him off.

KYLE: Well I want my fish n' chips who wants to come with?

Olivia,Miranda,Jerry and River follow Kyle to grab fish and chips.

DEVONTE: I was beginning to think they'd never leave.

CLAIRE: What do you mean?

DEVONTE: I'm the luckiest man in the world. Beautiful girlfriend, beautiful sunset. I still can't believe dat you wanted to be my prom date.

CLAIRE: Why?

DEVONTE: 'Cause I didn't think you were dat into me at da time, you were way outta my league.

CLAIRE: Sometimes playin' it cool is da way.

DEVONTE: Coulda saved me da sweaty hands.

CLAIRE: You've come a long way Devonte from when we first met in highschool.

DEVONTE: I can't believe you stuck with me dis entire time, I was a mess. We've beaten our generational curse. So many relationships don't last in our generation.

CLAIRE: This one did and always will. I love you boo.

DEVONTE: I love you too baby.

Claire kisses Devonte. Devonte and Claire faces the sunset. Devonte and Claire do a slow dance as "Unchained Melody" by The Righteous Brothers is playing.

CLAIRE: You wanna have fish n' chips?

DEVONTE: I do. I wanna go back to America.

CLAIRE: We've got so much more to see.

DEVONTE: I know and it's been great, but America is my home and there is so much of home I've never seen.

CLAIRE: Are you sure?

DEVONTE: I'm positive.

CLAIRE: What do you wanna do when you get back home?

DEVONTE: I wanna do a big road trip with everybody and go on a very specific train.

CLAIRE: Oh God!

DEVONTE: You'll like it.

CLAIRE: It's amtrak right?

DEVONTE: Not any amtrak train. It's the California Zephyr. It goes from Chicago to San Francisco.

CLAIRE: How long is it gonna take?

DEVONTE: About 3 days.

CLAIRE: Chile!

DEVONTE: They'll be beds, They'll be showers, they'll be great food and panoramic views of America. A type of America dat most Americans will prolly never see in their lifetime.

CLAIRE: Alright. Only for you, I'm doing this. I wanted to go see more of Europe, da middle east, Asia and Australia.

DEVONTE: You can still explore those places.

CLAIRE: Will you still be here?

DEVONTE: I dunno.

CLAIRE: When will you ever get to experience a different culture again? We still not been to Scotland. We still not tried Haggis.

DEVONTE: I don't care about that.

CLAIRE: You don't wanna create memories?

DEVONTE: I do.

CLAIRE: You don't care dat people donated?

DEVONTE: I didn't say that.

CLAIRE: So what are we gonna do with all dis money?

DEVONTE: Donate some of it to charity. Donate it to people who need it.

CLAIRE: Why won't you wanna travel da world?

DEVONTE: It's obvious.

CLAIRE: Why won't you wanna travel da world?

DEVONTE: Claire, I wanna go home.

CLAIRE: You sure?

DEVONTE: Yeah.

CLAIRE: 'Cause once we leave there is no coming back.

DEVONTE: There will be a coming back for you if you really wanna.

CLAIRE: But there isn't for you.

DEVONTE: I know.

CLAIRE: You're gonna regret dis.

DEVONTE: No I won't.

CLAIRE: Yes you will.

DEVONTE: No, I won't

CLAIRE: Fine, let's go.

Devonte and Claire exit. The sound of a plane is audible.

ACT 2

SCENE 5

The gang are out on a roadtrip across the United States. They're in a rented campervan. A montage of all the cities they've explored are visible. At this stage Devonte's physical health has deteriorated. He is frail, often lethargic and sleeping. The crew are still present.

CLAIRE: Thanks for letting your uncle rent this campervan River.

RIVER: It's all good. I love a good old road trip. The Devonte express, up and away!

MIRANDA: How great were those quesadillas?

KYLE: Fucking brilliant, I can't believe I've never tried them before.

JERRY: Are you serious? You're from one of the greatest cities in the world and have access to so much cuisine and you've never tried a quesadilla?

KYLE: I've never had Mexican food period.

JERRY: Ay Dios Mio.

KYLE: I don't do spicy food.

OLIVIA: I wanted to try new foods with you but you'd always say "I don't like it"

CLAIRE: He just like Devonte.

DEVONTE: What you say 'bout me?

CLAIRE: Go back to sleep and dream 'bout trains.

OLIVIA: What's your favourite food Miranda?

MIRANDA: Gee,I love food from all over the world,I'm such a foodie. It's gotta be Thai food followed by German food followed by Indian food. I spent a week in Thailand and the food was stunning. Jerry and I were doing a shoot for a commercial and the food blew me away. The colors were gorgeous and the amalgamation of flavors were just awe-inspiring,it was a feast of the senses. Thai food is a beautiful fusion of love and is much easier to cook than people think.

OLIVIA: I love French food.

KYLE: Well my bank account doesn't.

OLIVIA: Anything over 20 quid is expensive for you, so I end up just paying for the whole meal.

MIRANDA: Damn,we gotta change that Kyle.

CLAIRE: At least split da bill shit. How's Gwen doing River?

RIVER: She's alright. Her dad is still in a really bad place though.

CLAIRE: Does she go to work?

RIVER: Yeah,we usually have someone look after her when me and her are away.

JERRY: You gotta love Paris.

MIRANDA: Oh yeah it's awesome.

OLIVIA: I went to Paris on a school trip,I loved it. None of the kids gave a shit about da architecture, dey just wanted to go to Disneyland Paris.

JERRY: What's better, Disneyland Paris or Disneyland Florida?

MIRANDA: Florida for sure,it's bigger.

CLAIRE: I loved going to six flags when I was growing up.

JERRY: Six flags is fucking dope.

OLIVIA: I hate roller coasters.

KYLE: You only hate them because you had a big ass meal before getting on the rides.

JERRY: I feel bad for all those people she puked on.

KYLE: You and me both.

RIVER: I'm excited to go on the California Zephyr.

JERRY: I've been on that journey a couple times in between projects.

RIVER: No way dude.

JERRY: It was pretty awesome. I can see why you and Devonte like trains. It was comfy and it was like going back in time to the 90's.

RIVER: The best decade ever.

JERRY: You know it. I feel bad for kids nowadays,shitty music,shitty shows,social media.

RIVER: Don't get me started dude. It was a simpler time.

OLIVIA: I dunno what I'd do without social media. All those people from around da world I couldn't talk to.

KYLE: You wanna bet.

OLIVIA: What bet?

KYLE: Can you stay off your phone until we get to....

RIVER: Colorado Springs.

KYLE: If you make can it without going on social media,I'll give ya \$250 dollars.

OLIVIA: How long do we have left?

RIVER: About another 30 minutes.

OLIVIA: Fuck that.

JERRY: You can't refuse that.

OLIVIA: I can.

JERRY: It's only 30 minutes.

OLIVIA: It's a lifetime.

JERRY: How do you sleep?

OLIVIA: Barely.

RIVER: Have you done any other long Amtrak journeys?

JERRY: Oh yeah. I spent 30 hours on the Crescent train from New York down to New Orleans.

OLIVIA: I always wanted to go to New Orleans.

MIRANDA: You tried gumbo?

OLIVIA: Nope.

MIRANDA: It's incredible.

CLAIRE: My grandmother makes some mean gumbo. I've got da recipe and I'll make y'all some good gumbo.

KYLE: Is it spicy?

CLAIRE: Not really, but I like it hot.

KYLE: Oh fuck.

CLAIRE: Don't stress bro, I got you.

RIVER: We've arrived in Colorado springs.

They all get out of the campervan, Devonte is the last one to get off the campervan.

KYLE: Ah the water is so pure, smell that air.

OLIVIA: Okay, this is awesome.

MIRANDA: You think this is awesome, wait till you hit Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon.

RIVER: We gotta take a selfie here, be rude not to right?

Claire grabs her phone.

CLAIRE: Group selfie!

They all crowd round and take a group selfie on Claire's phone.

DEVONTE: I'm gonna head back to da campervan.

Devonte heads back to the campervan, he goes back to sleep.

RIVER: What's wrong with D?

CLAIRE: I dunno he must be tired.

CANDACE: It's gettin' kinda chilly. I shoulda brought a sweater or something.

RIVER: Alrighty, let's go back to the campervan.

JERRY: I'll drive this leg Riv.

RIVER: You sure?

JERRY: Of course.

River, Miranda, Kyle, Olivia, Jerry and Claire go back into Campervan.

KYLE: Where are we off to next Captain?

JERRY: Next stop, Salt Lake City on the Devonte express! All you gotta do is sit back and relax.

Jerry starts driving. They start to fall asleep apart from River. We transform from Night time to day time. Jerry pulls up.

RIVER: Rise and Shine, we made it to Salt Lake City.

KYLE: Man that was a great sleep, something about good old American road trip tunes that just does it for me.

Claire wakes Devonte up.

CLAIRE: Good morning my beautiful bae, You've been asleep for a long time, did you sleep well?

Devonte is unresponsive. Claire touches Devonte again.

CLAIRE (*continued*): Come on Devonte, stop embarrassing me.

Claire touches Devonte for a third and final time.

CLAIRE (*Continued*): I can't wake Devonte up.

Jerry gets up from the driver's seat and finds a torch. He walks to Devonte and checks his eyes and pulse.

RIVER: Devonte's dead Claire.

Claire collapses to the ground.

CLAIRE: No!

Miranda and Olivia exit. River, Kyle and Jerry drag Devonte's body.

ACT 2
SCENE 6

The stage is in partial darkness as Great Uncle Franklin approaches Devonte. Great Uncle Franklin wakes Devonte up.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Devonte. Devonte. Devonte.

DEVONTE: What. Where am I?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: A void between da dust of da Earth and your new world. There is one more thing you've gotta do.

DEVONTE: What?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Stand up.

Devonte stands up. Thomas appears. Devonte and Thomas circle each other in an animalistic fashion. Devonte stands still for a few beats, looking up and down at Thomas before he strangles Thomas like a predator catching its prey.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Devonte stop.

DEVONTE: Never.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Stop!

DEVONTE: Never!

Great Uncle Franklin tackles Devonte as Thomas goes towards Devonte. and places his hand on Devonte's shoulder.

THOMAS: You can let go of Devonte Great Uncle Franklin.

Thomas places his hand on Devonte's shoulder. Devonte convulses.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Devonte listen to me. You'll be okay.

Great Franklin walks away.

DEVONTE: Don't go Great Uncle Franklin. Don't go!

Thomas places his hand on Devonte's shoulder a second time.

THOMAS: Son, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for all da pain I caused you growing up. I'm sorry dat you had to witness me beating your momma. I was abandoned by my parents when I was growing up. 3 years old to be precise. It was like an owner leaving da dog and da dog has no idea what da fuck they done. I was da dog with an imaginary lead pulling me around. I was put in multiple homes. When I was in middle school and high school, kids brutally reminded me dat I was never wanted or never loved. I was beaten on a daily basis by those kids. One time I was kicked multiple times I was coughing up blood. Da doctor said I was lucky to be alive. I was a man with 9 lives. Another life for me came. When I dated your momma and got together with her it was like living in a dystopian world. I kept thinking dat this was all a prank and she was leading me on and on. When you were born and I saw your big eyes and adorable little hands fluttering without a care in da world, I hated you. I hated you dat you came from a loving family. I hated dat you had all da food and presents you so desired. I hated dat you had a loving mother. I hated dat you had all da opportunities handed to you on a plate. In da last 6 months before I had a fatal heart attack. I went to seek da elements of da Earth. I needed answers. I wanted answers. I was a dog with a bone. I was waiting. Waiting. Waiting. Da void in my life never turned up. I was an invisible void.

DEVONTE: Why didn't you say anything?

THOMAS: I didn't want you thinking what a loser your dad is. Sometimes things hit you without any answers. The answers are in da nothingness.

DEVONTE: Dat's how I felt when I had my cancer diagnosis. Why me?

THOMAS: You stepped up and you conquered every second and I'm proud of you son.

DEVONTE: How do you know what I was doing?

THOMAS: By da power of consciousness. Did you enjoy England?

DEVONTE: I only visited London and Broadstairs and it was breathtaking.

THOMAS: Do you have any regrets not seeing any more countries?

DEVONTE: Nope.

THOMAS: We've gotta lot of catching up to do son, only if you wanna.

DEVONTE: I do.

THOMAS: I love you son.

DEVONTE: Do you mean it?

THOMAS: Yes.

DEVONTE: Do you really mean it?

THOMAS: Yes.

DEVONTE: Do you really really mean it?

THOMAS: Yes.

DEVONTE: I love you too dad.

Devonte and Thomas hug.

ACT 2

SCENE 7

We move forward in time to December 2019. We are in Claire's living room. River, Kyle, Olivia, Miranda and Jerry accompany Claire and are seated at different points in the living room. The crew are still present. There is a knock at the door.

CLAIRE: Dr Douglas.

DR DOUGLAS: Hey Claire, I came by to wish my heartfelt condolences.

CLAIRE: Thank you Dr Douglas. Look I'm-

DR DOUGLAS: Claire, I understand.

CLAIRE: Do you wanna pay your respects on camera?

DR DOUGLAS: Of course.

CLAIRE: You've heard of youtube right?

DR DOUGLAS: How old do you think I am?

CLAIRE: Um-

DR DOUGLAS: No, don't answer that. I've got a 7 year old daughter and it's a real battle trying to get her off it.

CLAIRE: Y'all this is Dr Douglas, he helped Devonte come to terms with his diagnosis.

DR DOUGLAS: Nice to meet you all.

CLAIRE: You wanna drink or anything?

DR DOUGLAS: No thanks, I'm good.

CLAIRE: Let's get started.

Claire turns the camera on.

CLAIRE (*Continued*) : What's up Youtube, it's Claire Harris. My bae, my best friend Devonte has passed. Thank you for making his final weeks on Earth a joy. We have \$25,000 left and we've made a collective decision dat we're gonna donate half to a cancer charity in da US and da other half in da UK. Thank y'all every single one a y'all who donated on da kickstarter page. **Beat.** Devonte sometimes, you'd drive me mad with yo' bad habits, but you were one of a kind. A video on da vlog will be coming in a few weeks with a documentary dat we hope to put forward on prime time TV. I have some amazing folk who meant a lot to Devonte and spent time wid him in his final moments and dey wanna say a few words.

RIVER: Devonte, you were my longest friend. We've known each other since Kindergarten. I've not always lived in Philly, but you were always lifting me up in school from kindergarten to middle school. We were bullied in school because we liked railroads but you were authentic and that's what all the bullies resent about you. You were always there when I needed it. PS: Gwen is back from Paris and her father has made a full recovery. Keep being you from above the stars. Love you always bro.

OLIVIA: Hey Devonte,as Kyle and I landed in Philly to settle for a new life,I didn't know what to expect. It was a world away from life back in London. I was reluctant to go in a campervan 'cause of my small-minded insecurities. I didn't wanna be seen dead in a campervan,but I don't regret going and seeing you enjoy yourself and exploring more of da country. We've all decided to keep doing road trips. Next we're gonna drive to St Louis and then Milwaukee to the Harley Davidson Museum. Kyle's found a new love in motorbikes on top of Arsenal,great! Kyle and I have made da hard decision to go back home. Living in America was life changing for us, but we never felt at home. I'll still be an interior designer and da producers of my new show have agreed to film back in da UK. Kyle will still be a security guard, but for a different TV show. I can remember our cute conversations on trains, I do have a little soft spot for them and da history is really cool. You're part of history now,but you'll never be forgotten. Rest in Peace D.

DR DOUGLAS: Hey Devonte. I've seen dozens of patients come and go in my 25 years of being a doctor. It feels more personal with you. I can remember you as an impressionable young kid who didn't know what he wanted to be. I couldn't believe all the drugs you took. I was scared,I was scared that I wouldn't be able to save you,but I did. It breaks my heart when kids or young adults die because they have so much more to give.When I saw you for the second time,you looked like a totally different man. I believe he would have been a huge success. You gave me that basketball player-actor vibe. As life goes on,I'll never forget you Devonte. I hope in your new resting place you'll do all of those amazing things. I'll be telling my daughter about you when she grows up.Well back to the surgery I go. Rest in peace Devonte.

MIRANDA: Hey Devonte,creatives think alike huh? I don't know a lot about the talent who audition for the projects Jerry and I do. Veneer,surface level,superficial are words that spring to mind. Having that meet-up at the coffee shop was an awesome way to get to know someone who is unique and determined. This documentary is for you and the world will never forget anyone like you. Rest in peace Devonte.

JERRY: I was too hard on you Devonte. You know what this industry is like.I've met too many snakes,sharks and crocodiles to name. I always thought you were putting on an act and that's why I didn't warm to you. Spending time with you in your final moments was an awesome way to see you without being in casting director mode.I had no idea that you like railroads, and I like 'em too. River and I are gonna plan more railroad trips around the world. We've seen a couple railroad documentaries that inspired us and it's all thanks to you. God speed Devonte!

KYLE: Hey mate you were one of the first people Olivia and I spoke to when we settled in Philly. Moving to a new country is a scary thing and you were so welcoming to both of us. I liken our friendship to chalk and cheese, complete opposites but the ultimate friendship. You were a daft little git at times, but you were a one off in a world where following the crowd is the name of the game. Rest in peace D.

CLAIRE: I love you Devonte. Let's raise a glass y'all. To Devonte.

ALL: To Devonte.

ACT 2

SCENE 8

Claire gets ready for bed. She grabs the pillow on the left hand side of the bed and hugs it.

CLAIRE: Good night Devonte.

Claire kisses the pillow. Her arm is cuddling the pillow. Devonte appears next to the left hand side of the bed where Claire is cuddling the pillow.

DEVONTE: Claire, Claire, Claire.

Claire opens her eyes.

CLAIRE: What da fuck?

DEVONTE: Turn around.

CLAIRE: Devonte?

DEVONTE: Turn around.

Claire Screams.

CLAIRE: Devonte! *Beat.* Am I dreaming?

DEVONTE: No.

CLAIRE: I must be dreaming. I gotta sit down.

Devonte grabs Claire from behind.

DEVONTE: Take my hand.

CLAIRE: I'm trippin, 'get it together Claire.

DEVONTE: Take my hand.

CLAIRE: Why?

Claire takes Devonte's hand. The stage goes into complete darkness.

CLAIRE: You know I hate da dark.

DEVONTE: Close your eyes.

CLAIRE: This ain't funny Devonte.

DEVONTE: Close your eyes.

CLAIRE: Why do I-?

DEVONTE: Open.

The stage transforms into an Afrofuturist Wonder. Claire opens her eyes. Claire is in the Great Uncle Franklin Foundation in Afrotopia.

CLAIRE: Oh my God. Where am I?

DEVONTE: Afrotopia. This is where I exist now. If you ever feel lost or alone or fed up with the world you can intertwine yourself here. I'll always be here.

CLAIRE: Doing What?

DEVONTE: Altering perceptions of reality. I want you to meet someone very special.

Great Uncle Franklin arrives.

DEVONTE: This is my Great Great Uncle Franklin, but my family call him Great Uncle Franklin. He popped up at a moment in my life when I had no sense of direction or purpose.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: It's a pleasure to meet you. I've seen you do incredible things Claire.

CLAIRE: How?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: I oversee our people from all over da world. I've mentored everybody here and they use what they've learned on Earth to inspire the next generation.

CLAIRE: How come you didn't mentor me?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: What you experienced when living on da south side of Chicago losing some of your friends and family was a travesty. I didn't help you because you didn't need it.

CLAIRE: What if I wanted your help?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: What you may want is not necessarily what you need. I allow people to explore, make mistakes and learn. That's da essence of my work. What's the point if I do everything for you? You picked yourself up and forged a new life for yourself. What you did to help Devonte as he was in his final moments on Earth was inspirational. I have a surprise for you Claire, Devonte.

Devonte grabs a crown and gives it to Claire.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: For your inspirational acts on Earth, I give you this crown. You're known as Warriress Claire The Great.

CLAIRE: Oh my God thank you. I don't look like a Warriress, I'm still in my PJ's.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Nonsense. Once a Warriress, always a Warriress. And you also get a Crown Devonte. It's been one hell of a ride. You're known as Warrior Devonte The Great.

DEVONTE: I'm honored.

CLAIRE: Look at my handsome warrior.

DEVONTE: Look at my beautiful warrioress.

CLAIRE: Can I take dis crown back with me to Earth?

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: Of course,these memories and objects hold no bounds.

Claire shakes the hand of Great Uncle Franklin. She takes the crown with her back to Earth.

CLAIRE: I wanna show you something.

DEVONTE: You know I hate surprises.

The stage is in darkness as Devonte and Claire enter a void between Afrotopia and Earth.

CLAIRE: You know I hate da dark.

DEVONTE: You should be used to it by now.

CLAIRE: Open.

We arrive back on Earth. The stage transforms into an award ceremony.

PRESENTER: (*Voice-over*): And the posthumous award for outstanding documentary goes to Devonte Anderson.

River,Kyle,Olivia,Miranda and Jerry are all on stage.

DEVONTE: Da world didn't forget about me.

CLAIRE: It sure didn't.

DEVONTE: Oh my god,River,Kyle,Olivia,Miranda and Jerry. Claire,I'm waving at them and they're not responding.

CLAIRE: They haven't tapped into their stream of consciousness yet.

DEVONTE: All I wanted to do was say hi.

CLAIRE: I know.

DEVONTE: You're not alone Claire, as you navigate a new path, I'll always be here.

CLAIRE: You know where to find me too Mister.

DEVONTE: I love you Claire.

CLAIRE: I love you too baby.

Devonte and Claire give each other a kiss.

GREAT UNCLE FRANKLIN: It has been da most extraordinary 2 months of my existence. During my later years, I spent a lotta time in libraries, pondering. I wasn't gonna let Jim Crow stop me. I stumbled across a lotta psychology books. Sigmund Frued is my favorite outta all da psychoanalysts. Da human imagination is not bound to a child or adult. Both are interlinked. The brain is the most extraordinary organ in da human body. It's flexible, dynamic and impressionable. We are receptive by nature, by design. Just like da socialization of mankind, our brain is wired in da same way. Conformity is da status quo. Negativity is da status quo. As I go back to an ether in Afrotopia helping da next generation of my people at my foundation. Remember da prefrontal Cortex. Impulses are one of the many jobs of da prefrontal cortex. Your brain is lying to you. When your subconscious mind says you can't, You can. Libraries and social media at da tip of yo' fingers. Remember da prefrontal cortex. Undo the knots. Your brain is lying to you. No two visions are the same. No two world's are the same. Your brain is lying to you. You are worthy. You are special. You are unique. You are enough. Your brain is lying to you.

Great Uncle Franklin is humming as he exits. End of play.