

THE WHIZ-BANG WATCH

by Anthony L. Mariani

Contact: Anthony L. Mariani 14810
Ridgewood Drive Little Rock, AR 72211
Marianifilms@gmail.com



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THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARCUS: an African American teenager, present day.

MOM: Marcus's mother.

TEAGU: A Slave 1800

HARRIET TUBMAN: The head of the underground railroad 1864

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER: A Buffalo Soldier 1898.

SERGEANT GEORGE BERRY: A Buffalo Soldier 1898, the first to plant a flag on San Juan Hill.

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD: A Buffalo Soldier 1898.

PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH: A Buffalo Soldier 1898.

BESSIE COLEMAN: the first civilian licensed African-American pilot in the world.

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL: Tuskegee Airmen 1944.

1st LT. JAMES B. KNIGHTEN: Tuskegee Airmen 1944.

2nd LT. LOUIS R. PURNELL: Tuskegee Airmen 1944.

2nd LT. GRAHAM SMITH: Tuskegee Airmen 1944.

2nd LT. SPANN WATSON: Tuskegee Airmen 1944.

ROSA PARKS: December 1, Montgomery, Alabama. 1955.

JOHN LEWIS: Civil Rights marcher. 1965.

TRAYVON MARTIN: African American teenager, 2012.

POLICE OFFICER ONE: A voice offstage

POLICE OFFICER TWO: A voice offstage

PLACE & TIME

The Present - Marcus's bedroom – night.

Baltimore slave auction 1800

Dorchester County, Maryland. 1864

Kettle Hill, Cuba 1889.

Curtiss Field, Long Island, NY September 3, 1922

Anzio, Italy January 28, 1944.

Montgomery, Alabama. December 1, 1955.

Selma, Alabama March 7, 1965

Sanford, Florida, February 26, 2012

The Present - Marcus's car – night.

Scene 1

Marcus sits chair in a dimly lit room holding a framed photo of an elderly African American man. His mother enters carrying a small box.

MOM

Marcus, can I come in?

MARCUS

Yeah, momma.

MOM

It's been a long day.

She walks over and sits in the chair next to Marcus and holds out the small box.

MOM (CONT'D)

Your grandfather wanted you to have this.

MARCUS

What is it?

She hands the box to Marcus, and he opens the lid and finds a pocket watch inside.

MARCUS

A watch?

MOM

That's not just a watch. That was your granddaddy's "Whiz-Bang Watch."

MARCUS

Whiz-Bang watch?

MOM

That's what he would always say before he went to bed. He would open the watch and look at the time and then shut it and say, "Whiz-Bang look at the time." Then he would go off to bed.

Marcus looks over the watch.

MARCUS

His Whiz-Bang watch, thank you, mama.

MOM

Your Grandfather loved you Marcus; Now, you try to get some sleep.

She rises and begins to exit, Marcus calls out to her, and she turns back toward him.

MARCUS

Momma?

Marcus looks down at the watch flips it open looks at the time and then shuts the watch.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Whiz-Bang, look at the time.

She smiles with pride.

MOM

Goodnight, Marcus.

MARCUS

Goodnight Momma.

Marcus smiles as he watches his mother exit. Marcus then looks down at the watch.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Whiz-Bang.

He then stands on his chair, flips the watch open and holds it high up to the sky.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

WHIZ-BANG!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of a thunderclap and then a flash of lighting.

BLACKOUT

Scene 2

fade up to find Marcus still standing on the chair and next to him TEAGU, a slave from 1800 is standing on his own chair adjacent to Marcus. They both have their arms behind their backs like they are bound in shackles.

Who are you?
MARCUS

I'm Teagu.
TEAGU

I'm Marcus. Where are we?
MARCUS

Marcus tries to struggle to get free.

Pratt Street, near the Baltimore harbor.
TEAGU

Baltimore?
MARCUS

Marcus notices the strange clothes Taegu is wearing.

What year is this?
MARCUS

The year? It's eighteen hundred.
TEAGU

Eighteen hundred? Where are we?
MARCUS

I told you, Pratt Street, near the Baltimore harbor.
TEAGU

Marcus stops struggling and looks around at the room.

No, this place, what is this place?
MARCUS

This place? This is a slave trader's jail.
TEAGU

MARCUS

Slave trader's Jail?

TEAGU

Yes, I heard one of the guards say they were shipping us out on the next sail that sets for New Orleans.

MARCUS

What are they going to do with us in, New Orleans?

Teagu lets out a deep, loud laugh.

TEAGU

What do you think they are going to do? Sell us, man, what else are you going to do with a slave.

MARCUS

Slave? I'm nobody's slave.

Teagu, laughs again.

TEAGU

You in a slave jail, you a slave.

MARCUS

I'm telling you I'm nobody's slave.

TEAGU

You tell that to the man in New Orleans. They are going to stand you up on an auction block, and you are going to go to the highest bidder.

MARCUS

Highest bidder? Bids by who?

TEAGU

The plantation masters. We ain't going to New Orleans for no pleasure sail. We're going to New Orleans to pick cotton.

MARCUS

I'm telling you I'm nobodies' slave.

Marcus struggles again to get free, and Teagu laughs at him.

TEAGU

You may not be a slave now, but you just wait until we get to New Orleans. Your fit and healthy, you got good teeth. You are going to fetch a good price, and you will be picking cotton.

MARCUS

I'm nobodies cotton picker.

The sound of the heavy cell door, swinging open. Marcus starts to panic and strains to get free.

TEAGU

You better watch what you say, Marcus, if they hear you talking like that you're as good as dead.

Footsteps echo louder and louder as get closer. Marcus manages to get one arm free from behind him. He reaches in his front pocket and pulls out his grandfather's pocket watch. He flips it open and looks and the time and shouts out!

MARCUS

WHIZ-BANG! WHIZ-BANG!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of thunderclap and then a flash of lighting.

BLACKOUT

Scene 3

A voice whispers out in the dark.

HARRIET

Who's there?

A pool of light slowly fades up on Marcus, who is laying on the ground in the center of the stage.

MARCUS

Marcus.

Harriet creeps out from one side of the stage, she keeps low to the ground and stops when she spots Marcus.

HARRIET

What's the password, Marcus?

MARCUS

The Password?

HARRIET

Yes, you have to say the password if you want me to help you.

MARCUS

Whiz-bang?

HARRIET

That's correct.

Harriet runs up to Marcus and lays on the ground next to him, keeping her eyes sharp looking over their surroundings.

HARRIET

Sorry, but you can never be too safe. Hello, I'm Harriet.

MARCUS

Hi Harriet, I'm Marcus. Harriet, can I ask you a strange question?

HARRIET

Sure, ask away. Only keep your voice down.

MARCUS

Harriet, where am I?

HARRIET

Dorchester County, Maryland. You got one more stop to go.

MARCUS

One more stop to go? And the year?

HARRIET

It's Eighteen Sixty-Four.

MARCUS

What do you mean one more stop to go?

HARRIET

To Freedom Marcus.

MARCUS

You're, HARRIET TUBMAN!

HARRIET

Sssh! Keep your voice down. How do you know my name?

MARCUS

Everyone knows about Harriet Tubman.

HARRIET

What are you talking about? Who knows about me?

MARCUS

Where I come from, everyone knows about the work you do. How you help people escape to freedom.

HARRIET

You mean, Black folks?

Marcus nods yes.

HARRIET (CONT'D)

I have to be careful, Marcus. You have to be careful too; you're not out of the woods yet.

MARCUS

I understand.

HARRIET

Now listen to me, Marcus. Stay low and work your way down this path towards the creek in the next holler over. When you reach the creek, follow it upstream to the North. Use the large rocks for cover as you work your way up the creek bed. Stay in the shadows. If you hear dogs, you run, and you run fast, crisscrossing through the creek water staying upstream. The first town you come to is unfriendly; you need to stay low and out of sight. Work your way under the bridge and continue upstream until you get to the farm with white silo. Look for the white silo, Marcus. On one side of the silo is an old hen house. Go inside the hen house and underneath the feeding troth are some loose floorboards. Pry open the boards and climb down underneath the hen house and replace the boards back in place above you. There should be a candle and matchsticks down there. Light the candle, and you will find a narrow tunnel. You will have to crawl holding the candle out in front of you. Keep crawling until you reach the main house and the closet in the cellar. Blow out the candle and wait there in the dark. You will eventually hear three knocks on the cellar door. Answer the three knocks with two of your own. Do you got that?

MARCUS

Yes, three knocks answer with two of my own.

Suddenly you hear the sound of dogs in the distance slowly approaching.

HARRIET

Dogs! We need to split up! Remember what I said Marcus Three knocks with two. Good Luck!

Harriet exits quickly into the darkness; the sound of the dogs gets closer.

MARCUS

Wait, Harriet? Three knocks with two. Three knocks with two.

Marcus a quick pace . The sound of the dogs grows louder as Marcus pace quickens.

MARCUS(CONT'D)

Three Knocks with two. Three Knocks with two. Three Knocks with two.

The sound of the dogs is almost on top of Marcus as he stops in his tracks. He pulls out he the watch and flips it open and says.

MARCUS

WHIZ-BANG!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of thunder and then a flash of lighting. Blackout.

Scene 4

The sound of soldiers making a charge in battle, the sound of gunfire and yelling.

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER

We have the advantage now men. Charge down upon them!

The Gunfire slows, and you hear the sound men yelling and running across the stage.

SERGEANT GEORGE BERRY

Over here men follow my flag!

The yelling changes directions as they follow the sound of Berry's Voice.

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD

Let's show them how Buffalo Soldiers fight!

More gunfire then suddenly it all slows. One soldier shouts out a victory cry.

PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH

Yahoo! That's it, boys! They're surrendering!

The gunfire stops. Marcus who is laying on the ground with his arms covering his head. Lifts his head to see PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD enters, like all the Buffalo soldiers he wears a yellow cavalry bandana.

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD

Man, that sure was some fight. You okay?

Marcus checks his body for any damage.

MARCUS

Yeah, I think so.

Bird reaches down, and grabs hold of Marcus's hand and help pull him up off the ground.

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD

We sure took it to them today!

MARCUS

Yeah, we sure did. I'm Marcus.

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD

I'm Bird. They call me Birdman.

MARCUS

Birdman, can I ask you a question?

Private Bird gives him a nod yes.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Where are we?

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD

Boy, you must have gotten your head walloped. This here is Kettle Hill.

He then points off stage.

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD (CONT'D)

That down there! That's San Juan Hill.

Two other Buffalo Soldiers entering from the direction of San Juan Hill.

PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH

Bully! BULLY! Did you hear that? He said, BULLY! I saw you, Berry! I saw you plant that flag!

SERGEANT GEORGE BERRY

Forget it, Charles.

PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH

Forget it? After what we have been through today? No, I'm tired of this.

SERGEANT GEORGE BERRY

Private English! I said forget it.

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD

I'm sorry Sergeant, English is right.

Sergeant Berry shoots Bird a sharp stare!

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD (CONT'D)

Now hear me out, Sergeant. I just don't think it's right that them, journalist circle around him like that. I saw that Mr. Stephen Crane is scribbling in his pad and that Mr. Fredrick Remington is painting his portrait like he was a president or something.

PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH

That's right, and when he said that he and those east coasts out of shape blue bloods were the first up San Juan Hill, well I just had to step in.

MARCUS

What did you say?

PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH

I said, "excuse me, sir, you must be mistaken my first sergeant was the first up San Juan Hill, I saw him plant our flag there. Mr. Crane asked me what his name was, and I said, Sergeant George Berry. Then that Roosevelt turned to me and said, BULLY! I said ask 1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER; he will tell you what happened. That big grinning Roosevelt shouted BULLY at me again, and the reporters turned back to hear about his so call courageous charge up San Juan Hill.

SERGEANT GEORGE BERRY

Now, I said that's enough! Who cares who did what. We did our job; we took that hill. We are the 10th Cavalry Regiment, The Buffalo Soldiers; We're the fighting bulls of the Buffaloes, we did our jobs today. (BEAT) ATTENTION!

The men and Marcus all snap to attention as 1ST Sergeant Saint Foster enters.

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER

Men, History may not remember how you fought today, but I have to say I could not be more, proud of your efforts. First, this morning, coming to the aid of the first failed assault and then taking Kettle Hill. I saw some brave fighting taking that Hill.

Then after, fighting all day, to pick yourselves up by your bootstraps and charge down on San Juan Hill and to be the first to plant our flag on that ridge. Well, Men The fighting buffaloes sure showed them today. PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH, STEP FORWARD!

Private English takes one step forward.

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER(CONT'D)

PRIVATE CHARLES ENGLISH, I saw you hold our flank on Kettle Hill today. They pushed hard on our flank, and you pushed back, and then rolled over them! I'm proud of you. (Beat) PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD!

PRIVATE JOSEPH BIRD steps forward.

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER(CONT'D)

Private Bird, you were in the lead wave of both charges today. Facing enemy gunfire, you fearlessly charge and overran their positions. I'm proud of you, Birdman. (Beat) SERGEANT GEORGE BERRY!

SERGEANT GEORGE BERRY steps forward.

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER(CONT'D)

Sergeant Berry, what can I say about your actions today. You were a true Buffalo Soldier. History may not remember you as, the first one up San Juan Hill, but let me tell you, Sergeant Berry, I will never forget it!

1 St Sergeant Foster snaps to attention and gives a military salute to his men.

MARCUS

Whiz-Bang.

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER

What was that private?

Marcus steps forward and snaps to attention.

MARCUS

I said, Whiz-Bang, Sir!

The 1st Sergeant smiles.

1ST SERGEANT SAINT FOSTER

Whiz-Bang, yes a Whiz-Bang job today. (Beat) now let's move out buffaloes.

They get information two by two and start to quick step singing as they exit off stage and slowly fading in the distance — the Regimental Song of the Tenth Cavalry Regiment from about 1885 sung to the tune of Stephen Foster's Camptown Races.

We're fighting bulls of the Buffaloes, Git a goin' – git a-goin'
From Kansas' plains we'll hunt our foes;
A trottin' down the line.
Our range spreads west to Santa Fe, Git a goin' – git a-goin'.
From Dakota down the Mexican way;
A trottin' down the line.

Goin' to drill all day
Goin' to drill all night,
We got our money on the buffaloes,
Somebody bet on the fight.

Pack up your saddle and make it light. Git a rollin' – git a-rollin'.
You are training fast for a hard fight; A-rollin' down the line.
Untie your horse and boot and gun, Git a goin' – git a-goin'.
Shake out your feet or you'll miss the fun, A-rollin' down the line.

Goin' to drill all day
Goin' to drill all night,
We got our money on the buffaloes,
Somebody bet on the fight.

Marcus stands alone in the middle of the stage listing to the sound of the singing fading away. He then flips open his watch and smiles with pride.

MARCUS

Whiz-Bang!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of a thunderclap and then a flash of lighting. Blackout.

Scene 5

The sound of a single engine biplane slowly grinds away. BESSIE COLEMAN is sitting in the front seat of a biplane with goggles and a leather flying helmet if you can find one. Marcus sits in the chair behind her. Bessie looks back at Marcus and turns back forward flying her plane and shouting over the noisy engine.

BESSIE COLEMAN

Quelle belle journée dans le ciel!

She looks back to Marcus to see if he understood what she said in French.

BESSIE COLEMAN (CONT'D)

Parle Français?

MARCUS

What? No, I took Spanish!

BESSIE COLEMAN

Oh, you speak English. I said, What a beautiful day in the sky! (Beat) I'm Bessie Coleman.

MARCUS

Hi, Bessie. I'm Marcus. Where are we? What year is this?

They both slowly lean their bodies to the right as Bessie makes a wide bank of the plane and then she motions to Marcus and points down below them.

BESSIE COLEMAN

That's Curtiss Field, Long Island, NY below us. Today is September 3, 1922.

MARCUS

You sure you know how to fly this thing?

Bessie lets out a laugh.

BESSIE COLEMAN

Hold on, Marcus!

She speeds the plane up and banks it quickly in the opposite direction, they both lean together as they bank, then she pulls up and they start to make a loopy loop. They both raise their hands like on a roller-coaster when they are upside down, Bessie loving it, Marcus terrified from it. Then she pulls the plane up and levels off.

BESSIE COLEMAN(CONT'D)

That answers your question?

MARCUS

Where did you learn to fly?

BESSIE COLEMAN

I took lessons from a French ace pilot near Paris.

MARCUS

How did you get to France?

BESSIE COLEMAN

By way of Chicago. I worked as a Manicurist at the Chicago White Sox Barber Shop. I would hear stories from pilots returning home from World War I. They were always talking their glory days flying during the war. So, I took a second job at a chili parlor to make enough money to become a pilot.

MARCUS

Why not just get your pilots license in America?

BESSIE COLEMAN

American flight schools will not admit neither women nor blacks.

MARCUS

So, you want to France?

BESSIE COLEMAN

I took French-language class at the Berlitz School in Chicago, and I then traveled to Paris in November 1920 to earn my pilot license.

MARCUS

That's amazing, so you're the first female African American pilot?

BESSIE COLEMAN

No, Marcus, I'm the first African American Pilot, male or female. (Beat) The air is the only place free from prejudice. (Beat) Hang on!

Bessie maneuvers the biplane into a double barrel roll, side to side, which freaks Marcus out.

MARCUS

What was that all about?

BESSIE COLEMAN

Well, I got my pilots license I quickly realized that to make a living as a civilian aviator I would have to start Barnstorming.

MARCUS

Barnstorming?

BESSIE COLEMAN

Yeah, a Flying circus, "Barnstorming,"

She pulls a flyer out of her jacket and passes it back to Marcus.

BESSIE COLEMAN

I'm stunt flier. I perform for paying audiences. You mean you're not here for the wing walker job?

MARCUS

Wing walker, Oh, no not me.

BESSIE COLEMAN

Come on it's easy, try a few stunts, handstands, hanging by one's teeth, and transferring from one plane to another. Just hang on to guide wires, you will be ok. (Beat) I'll level it out, go ahead, try it.

MARCUS

You sure I'll be okay?

BESSIE COLEMAN

You'll be fine. Just make sure you keep your hands on the guide wire.

Marcus climbs out of his chair, and slowly works his way out onto the wing of the plane, the whole-time grabbing hold of a guide wire. He stops mid-wing and holding both hands on the guide wire he turns back and smiles at Bessie.

MARCUS

I did it!

BESSIE COLEMAN

You're a born wing walker, Marcus!

MARCUS

Bessie, you were right!

BESSIE COLEMAN

Right, about what?

MARCUS

The air is the only place free from prejudice.

Marcus, still holding on to the guide wire, starts to make some of his popular modern-day dance moves, as he shouts with joy!

BESSIE COLEMAN

Be careful, Marcus!

MARCUS

This is AMAZING!

Marcus lets go of the guide wire, and after gaining his balance starts to dance again.

BESSIE COLEMAN

Marcus, grab ahold of the guide wire!

Marcus tries to grab hold of the guide wire but loses his balance and slips and falls off the side of the wing. The lights change leaving only Marcus; his arms raised above his head, he is shaking as he falls in a pool of blue light. Marcus struggles to pull one arm down and to reach into his pocket and pull out the watch. With one hand he almost loses hold of the watch while he flips it open.

MARCUS

Whiz-Bang!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of a thunderclap and then a flash of lightning. Blackout.

Scene 6

The humming sound of a squandered of planes in the distance, slowly getting closer. The lights fade on a winged formation of chairs, with men in each chair, with long white scarves and red tips on them, wrapped around their necks. Marcus is sitting the cockpit of a fighter plane on end of the formation. Watching the others fly next to him. Marcus leans his mouth into his cockpit radio.

MARCUS

Where are we?

The Leader in the center of the formation cuffs his hand over his mouth and answers Marcus.

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Were almost over the beachhead at Anzio, keep your eyes wide open men! Who is that drifting from formation?

2nd LT. SPANN WATSON

Captain Hall, it's the new guy, Marcus!

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Marcus, stick with the formation you don't want any of the Nazi's sneaking up you.

2nd LT. LOUIS R. PURNELL

Stick with the red tails, Marcus. We got your back.

1st LT. JAMES B. KNIGHTEN

Sir, a squadron of *Luftwaffe* FW 190 fighter-bombers, at two o'clock.

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Ok, Tuskegee Airmen, let's show these Nazi's what a *Schwarze Vogelmenschen*, can do!

MARCUS

Schwarze Vogelmenschen?

2nd LT. SPANN WATSON

Black Birdmen.

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

1st LT. Knighten split off with Smith and Purnell, approach them from the right.

1st LT. JAMES B. KNIGHTEN

Yes, sir!

Knighten, Smith, and Purnell all simultaneously turns their planes to a quarter turn to the left.

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Watson, you and Marcus stick with me and will approach them from the left.

Hall, Watson, and Marcus all simultaneously turns their planes to a quarter turn to the right.

1st LT. JAMES B. KNIGHTEN

Don't fire until were right upon them.

2nd LT. GRAHAM SMITH

We're going to have a little Tuskegee shooting gallery.

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Here we go men, Knighten, your planes will be the first wave and will swoop in right behind.

The engines begin to roar louder.

1st LT. JAMES B. KNIGHTEN

Let's go Redtails!

Knighten attacking a plans and he fires his guns. Smith and Purnell follow.

2nd LT. LOUIS R. PURNELL

I got one! He is smoking!

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Okay, men let's hit them with a second wave!

Hall attacking a planes he fires his guns. Watson and Marcus follow.

2nd LT. SPANN WATSON

You got one Captain! I saw the pilot bale out!

1st LT. JAMES B. KNIGHTEN

Okay, men, let's take another crack at them.

Knighten attacking a planes and he fires his guns. Smith and Purnell follow.

2nd LT. LOUIS R. PURNELL

Say, hello a Black Birdman, Nazi!

2nd LT. GRAHAM SMITH

You got one, Purnell! I saw him crash into the beachhead!

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

One, more time men! Keep those bombers away from our support troops!

Hall again, attacking a plane he fires his guns. Watson and Marcus follow.

2nd LT. SPANN WATSON

You got another one Captain! That makes three for you in the past two days!

MARCUS

You got one too Watson! I saw him on fire as I flew past him!

1st LT. JAMES B. KNIGHTEN

Sir, they are turning back. Should we follow in pursuit?

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Negative, Knighten. Our job is to guard that beachhead. Join back in, formation and let's head for home, boys. That was some beautiful flying today!

Everyone pulls their planes back into formation. facing straight forward,

2nd LT. LOUIS R. PURNELL

Sir, I think that gives us a total of thirteen plans we shot down in the past two days.

2nd LT. SPANN WATSON

That's thirteen Nazis who will never forget meeting the Tuskegee Airmen. What do think, Marcus?

MARCUS

I'd say it was a whiz-bang job!

CAPTAIN CHARLES B. HALL

Yes, a whiz-bang job today men! Now, let's head for home.

Marcus pulls out his watch and flips it open.

MARCUS

Whiz-Bang!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of a thunderclap and then a flash of lighting. Blackout.

Scene 7

The sound of a bus rolling up and coming to a stop. The Bus stopping shakes Marcus awake. The buses front doors opening an African American walking up a dropping change to pay their bus fare, then exiting the bus, walking towards the back where the sound of the second door is opening. They step up onto the bus. Marcus is sitting in the back row of the bus, a woman is sitting next to him, they are flanked on both sides with three seats, like

bench seats. The front of the bus is empty with rows of two by two seats with a center aisle.

MARCUS

Can I ask you a question?

The Bus Commuter nods a yes.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Where are we?

BUS PASSENGER

This is the Cleveland Avenue bus.

MARCUS

Cleveland Avenue?

The Bus starts up once more and rumbles down to the next stop. This stop, three more African American passengers, pay their fee at the front of the Bus, exit and re-enter in the back. They sit in the three seats near the middle of the bus.

The bus comes to a stop and once again, the sound of the front door opening. One by one six African American passengers walk in the front door of the bus, pay their fare and exit again. Then one by one they walk to the back door of the bus, which opens, and they sit in the benches around Marcus.

The Bus starts up again. It rumbles down the road to its next stop. The front door opens, and Rosa Parks steps onto the bus. She pays her fare and sits in an empty seat in the first row of back seats reserved for blacks in the "colored" section near the middle of the bus next to other African American passengers.

The starts up again and moves to the next stop. The sound of the front door open, and then the sound of people quickly one after another dropping their money in the bus fare box. Then the sound of the Bus Driver, James F. Blake from off stage.

JAMES F. BLAKE

Y'all better make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats!

The three African American passengers next to Rosa get up and stand in the back of the bus.

JAMES F. BLAKE

I've got white people up here standing, let me have these seats.

Rosa shakes her head no and slides in her row to the window seat.

JAMES F. BLAKE

Why don't you stand up?

ROSA PARKS

I don't think I should have to stand up.

JAMES F. BLAKE

Well, if you don't stand up, I'm going to have to call the police and have you arrested.

ROSA PARKS

You may do that.

The sound of the Bus driver talking into his radio.

JAMES F. BLAKE

Rita, This James Blake. I have a code red, can you send a patrol car, were at the stop Empire Theater.

A long uncomfortable pause, then the red and blue police lights flash and then one short burst of the police siren. The sound of the front bus door opening.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

Now, just what is going on here?

JAMES F. BLAKE

I've got me a colored-women, who won't give up her seat for the white passengers.

POLICE OFFICER TWO

What's your name girl?

ROSA PARKS

Rosa Parks.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

Parks, you're that Barbers wife. Well, Rosa Parks, you're in violation of Chapter 6, Section 11 segregation law of the Montgomery City code!

ROSA PARKS

Why do you push us around?

POLICE OFFICER TWO

I don't know, but the law's the law, and you're under arrest.

Rosa stands up and places her hands behind her back like she's handcuffed. She then walks like she is led off the bus. She exits handcuffed and walks into the dark as she exits off stage.

The sound of the Bus Starting back up, the bus door shuts, and the bus once again rumbles down the road. Everyone is silent. Marcus pulls out his watch and flips it open.

MARCUS

Whiz-Bang!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of a thunderclap and then a flash of lighting. Blackout.

Scene 8

Marcus is standing at the foot of a bridge Then a man dress in a black suit and clean white shirt and thin black tie enters and meets Marcus.

JOHN LEWIS

Good Morning my brother.

MARCUS

Good Morning.(Beat) Can I ask you, what day is this and where are we?

JOHN LEWIS

Today is Sunday, March 7th, and this is the base of Edmund Pettus Bridge.
(Beat) You look lost my friend, are you not here for the march?

MARCUS

March?

JOHN LEWIS

Yes, were marching today from here in Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama, to demand the right to vote for black people. My name is John, John Lewis.

MARCUS

My name is Marcus, Congressman.

JOHN LEWIS

Congressman?

MARCUS

You should think about running for Congress someday.

John Lewis laughs.

JOHN LEWIS

One thing at a time. Let's get the right to vote first! So, you are marching today with us, Marcus?

MARCUS

Yes, Sir!

JOHN LEWIS

I have to warn you, Marcus, it's going to get rough today. Look over there.

He points out toward the audience and the other side of the bridge.

JOHN LEWIS

That's a line of a state policeman, with riot gear and Billy-clubs. I see Police dogs too.

Marcus flexes his arm muscles.

MARCUS

When the time comes, I'll be ready to fight!

JOHN LEWIS

No, No Marcus. Have you not been listening to the words of Dr. King?

MARCUS

Dr. King?

JOHN LEWIS

Yes, he is here with The Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He has preached "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Which cuts without wounding and ennoble the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals."

MARCUS

Look at them Mr. Lewis; they are ready to fight.

JOHN LEWIS

Dr. King also said, "Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral." If you march with us today Marcus, you must resist the temptation to fight back. Your resistant to fight, it's a weapon more potent than any man's fist.

MARCUS

I understand. I want to March with you.

JOHN LEWIS

Then Join us arm in arm brother, Marcus.

From both wings of the stage come, other men and women who join together locking arms, they start to march. Slowly step by step start crossing the bridge — the Sound of dogs barking in the distance, as the Marchers begin to sing the gospel protest song, "We Shall Overcome." The sound of the dogs attacking people grows louder, and you soon hear them attacking people. The a fog fills the

air as the smoke from tear gas canisters shoot around them. One by one the marchers get attacked from the ends of the marching line. As, they are attacking the fall to the ground arm raised over their heads, never fighting back, the line grows smaller and smaller as they get closer. Soon, the only two left are John Lewis and Marcus. Then John Lewis is attacked and beaten. Marcus continues, and he too is attacked and goes down. He uses one arm to shield his head from a beating and pulls his watch out with the other hand.

MARCUS

Whiz-Bang!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of a thunderclap and then a flash of lightning. Blackout.

Scene 9

A pool of light fades up. Marcus stands up alone, in the under a street light on a foggy morning. He hears something that startles him — a Seventeen-year-old dressed in a light grey hoodie steps out of the darkness and into the light.

MARCUS

You scared me, brother.

TRAYVON MARTIN

Sorry man, I'm just running down to the store. (Beat) You lost, man?

MARCUS

Yeah, where are we?

TRAYVON MARTIN

Sanford, Sanford, Florida.

MARCUS

Florida? What year is it?

TRAYVON MARTIN

February 26, 2012.

MARCUS

2012?

TRAYVON MARTIN

Man, you okay?

MARCUS

Yeah, I just hit my head. I feel a little out of it.

TRAYVON MARTIN

Hold out your hand.

MARCUS

What?

TRAYVON MARTIN

Hold out your hand.

Marcus holds out his hand. Trayvon pulls out a half-empty pack of Skittles Candy and places it in Marcus's hand.

TRAYVON MARTIN (CONT'D)

Skittles always gives me energy. Keep them.

MARCUS

You sure?

TRAYVON MARTIN

Yeah, I keep them, I'm just about to buy some more.

MARCUS

Thanks, man.

Marcus extends his hand to thank him.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'm Marcus.

TRAYVON MARTIN

I'm Trayvon.

The two shake hands. Then Trayvon flashes a peace sign to Marcus.

TRAYVON MARTIN

Peace out, Marcus.

Trayvon turns and exits into the darkness.

MARCUS

Peace out, Trayvon.

Marcus turns away starts to walk in the opposite direction of Trayvon, out of the light but stops at the edge of the pool of light.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Trayvon. Trayvon Martin?

Marcus turns back into the center of the light and shouts out after Trayvon.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

TRAYVON! TRAYVON, WAIT!

Three-gun shots ring out in the distance. (Beat) then one final shot. Marcus lowers his head.

MARCUS

Peace out, Trayvon.

Marcus pulls out his watch and flips it open.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Whiz-Bang!

The lights start to flash there is the sound of a thunderclap and then a flash of lighting. Blackout.

Scene 10

The sound of a car driving down a road, Marcus sitting in the driver's seat, steering his car as he drives down the road. Red and blue police lights flash, and a single siren burst ring out. Marcus checks his rearview mirror and sees the police lights and pulls his car off to the side of the road. He turns the engine off on his car. You hear the police car roll to stop and two car doors slam.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

Put your hands up where I can see them!

Marcus raises his hands.

POLICE OFFICER TWO

What are you doing driving down this road, this late at night?

MARCUS

I was diving home officer.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

Home? There is not home within miles of this area.

MARCUS

I'm a little-lost officer.

POLICE OFFICER TWO

I'll say you are, boy.

MARCUS

Can you tell me what I did wrong, officer?

POLICE OFFICER ONE

You match a description.

MARCUS

A description.

POLICE OFFICER TWO

Do you have an ID, boy?

Marcus starts to lower his hands to get his wallet.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

Freeze, or I'll shoot!

MARCUS

I was going to get my ID.

POLICE OFFICER TWO

Nobody told you to lower your hands. Now, I want you to slowly, and I mean slowly retrieve your ID.

Marcus slowly lowers his hands and reaches into his front pocket and places his hands on his watch. He closes his eyes for a moment and prays. He pulls out the pocket watch.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

He has a gun!

MARCUS

It's a watch. It's my watch!

POLICE OFFICER TWO

Drop the weapon!

Marcus flips open the watch.

MARCUS

WHIZ-

BLACKOUT!

End of Episode.