

Ethnicity

Bernard Mersier

## **Character breakdown**

### **Timothy**

Ten-years-old. He has an obsession with African-American culture.

### **Mathew**

Mid-twenties. He's Timothy's racist older brother.

### **Kyle**

Mid-twenties. He's trying to understand why his mother doesn't condone him dating an African-American woman.

### **Elizabeth**

She's Kyle's racist mother.

### **Ryan**

Kyle's understanding father because before he met Elizabeth, he dated an African-American woman he was in-love with.

### **Clarence**

African-American, mid-thirties. He's the sheriff.

### **Brad**

Early-twenties, Caucasian. He's a thug.

### **Maria**

Mid-twenties. Kyle's girlfriend.

### **Michelle**

Maria's racist mother

### **Will**

African-American, mid-twenties. He's a racist.

### **Manager**

He's the manager of the restaurant Kyle works at.

**ACT I****Scene I**

*Posters of various rap artists are on the wall, along with fitted baseball hats hanging on hooks. The floor is covered with dirty clothes, and collectible sport cards are scattered on the nightstand.*

*TIMOTHY is sitting on the bed wearing a baseball jersey, jeans and a fitted hat watching rap videos, imitating what he sees.*

*MATHEW walks in wearing busboy attire.*

MATHEW

What are you doing?

*Timothy keeps his eyes on the screen.*

TIMOTHY

Nothing. Watching rap videos.

MATHEW

Rap videos? What do you know about rap?

TIMOTHY

I like listening to it.

MATHEW

Do you know what the message means?

TIMOTHY

The message?

*Mathew walks over to the television turning it off.*

MATHEW

The message. Do you know what it is?

*Timothy sighs, shaking his head, shrugging up his shoulders.*

TIMOTHY

Having fun.

MATHEW

Who has fun wearing their clothes like that? When they

Speak, you can barely understand what they're saying.  
Do you want me to tell you what the message is?

TIMOTHY

...Tell me.

MATHEW

Go out and hit people upside the head starting fights, talk to hood rats, and not to mention robbing and killing people when you can make the time. It's obvious the message is you don't have to work for a living. Just kill whoever you have a problem with, get women pregnant and don't take care of the child, calling her a baby mama.

TIMOTHY

...You're saying?

MATHEW

I'm saying black people are bad, and you shouldn't like them.

TIMOTHY

Who should I like?

MATHEW

Do you hear or see white people getting into trouble or having the issues black people have?

*Timothy sits silent.*

MATHEW (CONT'D)

Try listening to music other than this rap nonsense. Be like your older brother. Get a steady job, speak correctly and take care of your responsibilities. Don't end up on welfare like all the black people in the world.

*Timothy looks at him confused, but he pretends to go along with what he's saying.*

TIMOTHY

...Okay.

MATHEW

That's my little man. Make sure you remember what I said.

TIMOTHY

Okay.

*Mathew walks out the room.*

*Timothy waits a few seconds before turning the television back on imitating what he sees.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene II**

*KYLE and ELIZABETH both wearing something casual are having a heated argument in the living room.*

*RYAN is sitting in a chair wearing something casual, annoyed by the topic.*

ELIZABETH

What do you see in that girl?!

KYLE

It doesn't matter what I see in her as long as I'm happy.

ELIZABETH

Look at her! What about her makes you happy?

KYLE

Every time I kiss her my love grows stronger.

ELIZABETH

How can you stomach the idea of kissing her?

KYLE

Because she's the woman I love.

ELIZABETH

Love has nothing to do with it! I know what your issue is. You know those black girls are quick to give it up, so you're taking advantage.

KYLE

How can you say that?

ELIZABETH

Because I know it's the truth. I hope you're using condoms. I won't have a chocolate vanilla swirl as a grandchild.

KYLE

You won't ever have to worry about seeing our baby when we decide on having one.

ELIZABETH

You're absolutely right! That's your stupidity in your lap, and I wash my hands of it.

KYLE

Wash your hands of your own stupidity.

ELIZABETH

I can't believe I call you my son.

*Elizabeth walks off stage.*

*Kyle turns his attention to Ryan.*

KYLE

What do you think, dad?

RYAN

...When I was younger before I met your mother...I dated a few black women.

KYLE

You did?

RYAN

Yep. Ashley and I were together for some years before I met your mother.

KYLE

What happened?

*He takes a deep breath shaking his head. Not because of what he's about to say, but more so from regret.*

RYAN

We had to go separate ways. By the time I could get back in touch with her, she moved on.

(Sighs)

Although we loved each other, there was nothing that could be done.

KYLE

I'm sorry.

RYAN

I'll tell you one thing. To this day, I wish I could have her back.

KYLE

...You still love her?

RYAN

Of course. Once you truly fall in-love with someone, even

if the person leaves, you never lose that feeling.

KYLE

So, you're saying?

RYAN

I'm saying don't let anyone ruin your true love, and never let your true love leave if you can prevent it.

KYLE

So, what's mom's problem?

RYAN

(Sighs)

Let me make a long story short. A black man raped your mother's sister. So, because of that, she feels all black people are foul.

KYLE

That's no excuse to take it out on me.

RYAN

I just told you, son. Don't let anyone ruin your happiness.

KYLE

Thanks.

RYAN

Anytime you need me. Get going, and show Maria a good time.

KYLE

You know I will. I'll be back later.

*Kyle walks off stage.*

*Ryan stands up shaking his head.*

RYAN

(Sighs)

If only I could go back.

**END OF THE SCENE**



**ACT I****Scene III**

*Silence cloaks the room while people peacefully sit eating their meals.*

*Mathew is walking around the room clearing tables.*

*CLARENCE walks in wearing something casual making his way to a table taking a seat.*

*Mathew walks by Clarence doing a double take before walking back towards him.*

MATHEW

Excuse me?

*Clarence looks at him.*

CLARENCE

How may I help you?

MATHEW

Are you sure you're in the right place?

CLARENCE

What do you mean?

MATHEW

I'm sorry, let me rephrase. You do know you're not the right, how shall I say...the right type to dine in this establishment?

*Clarence looks around the room confused.*

CLARENCE

What's the right type?

MATHEW

Let's stop with the games.

CLARENCE

I never knew it was a game. I truthfully need to know what's the right type?

MATHEW

(Laughs)

I can't believe you're about to have this conversation with me, Bro.

CLARENCE

(Laughs)  
Bro? Are you a racist?

MATHEW

I'm far from racist, Bro.

CLARENCE

Can you please stop calling me, Bro?

MATHEW

Why would I do that? Isn't that what you and your people from the ghetto call each other?

CLARENCE

The ghetto? You have no idea who I am, do you?

MATHEW

You're the average black man from the ghetto who stumbled into the wrong place.

CLARENCE

Your ignorance is starting to annoy me, so do me a favor. Send someone to take my order.

MATHEW

We don't sell fries, hamburgers and wing dings here. Why don't you pick something from the menu...if you can read the menu?

*Clarence smiles cracking his knuckles, sliding his chair back standing up.*

CLARENCE

Let me tell you something.

*Mathew jumps back in a defensive stance.*

MATHEW

Get back! I have the right to defend myself! I'm sorry it had to come to this because you have an issue with our rules, but, listen! There's nothing I can do about the rules or my skin color!

*Everyone looks at them confused as Clarence continues smiling, reaching in his pocket.*

CLARENCE

All I have to say is you're---

*Mathew grabs a glass from the table, and hits*

*Clarence upside the head.*

MATHEW

He's got a weapon!

The MANAGER runs on stage as Clarence holds his head laughing.

MANAGER

What's going on?

MATHEW

He was about to attack me, sir. I had to defend myself.

MANAGER

What are you talking about? Do you know who this man is?

*Mathew is confused, wondering why the Manager is more concerned with Clarence instead of what he said.*

MATHEW

He's a man who was about to attack me, sir.

CLARENCE

I was trying to tell you.

*Clarence drops his wallet on the table showing his badge.*

*Mathew's eyes widen looking at the badge.*

MATHEW

You're---

MANAGER

This is our county sheriff.

MATHEW

That means---

CLARENCE

Don't even think about running because you're under arrest.

*Clarence pulls his handcuffs out, stepping over to Mathew placing him under arrest.*

MANAGER

I'm really sorry about this.

CLARENCE

Not a problem. I'll just take my friend here down to the station. I'll see if he can follow the rules, and hold his own down there.

MATHEW

(Scared)

I can't go to jail.

CLARENCE

Be lucky you're not getting charged with assaulting an officer.

*Clarence walks Mathew off stage.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene IV**

*MARIA is sitting at her vanity staring in the mirror playing with her hair. She's wearing something casual, but seductive.*

*MICHELLE walks in wearing something casual.*

MICHELLE

You're beautiful.

MARIA

Thank you. Kyle is taking me out for dinner and a movie.

MICHELLE

Kyle? Is that the white boy?

MARIA

Yes.

MICHELLE

Is he rich?

MARIA

No.

MICHELLE

He's not rich? What do you see in him?

*Maria turns looking at her.*

MARIA

What makes you ask?

MICHELLE

He looks alright, but I wouldn't look twice. I know you wouldn't know how he is in bed because I can't see you sleeping with him.

MARIA

Why?

MICHELLE

White boys compared to black men, size does matter. I figure why have a snack, when you can have the full meal?

*Maria breaks out laughing.*

MARIA

With that said, let me get going. I'm already running late.

*She stands up walking to the door.*

MICHELLE

Maria, wait.

*She stops turning around.*

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Are you sure you'll be okay?

MARIA

We've been out plenty of times, and nothing's happened.

MICHELLE

I'm just making sure. You're my only child, and my only reason to live.

MARIA

If something was going to happen, it would happen if I was with a black or white man. I love you, and I'll see you later.

*Maria walks off stage.*

MICHELLE

...If you were dating a black man, I would feel more secure about what you said.

**END OF THE SCENE**

ACT IScene V

Mathew has his hands on the bars looking at Clarence smiling at him, while BRAD is standing against the wall staring at Mathew.

CLARENCE

That smart mouth of yours stopped running.

MATHEW

As soon as I'm released, I'm suing.

CLARENCE

Okay.

*Clarence walks off stage.*

*Mathew sighs walking over to the wall.*

*Brad gets off the wall walking over towards him.*

BRAD

What are you in for?

MATHEW

The charge is assault with a weapon, but he said he won't file the report if I stay here for the night.

BRAD

Is that right? You assaulted the guy who brought you in?

MATHEW

Yup.

BRAD

Why did you assault him?

MATHEW

I was explaining to him he was in the wrong establishment, but he wouldn't listen.

BRAD

He was in the wrong establishment? What made him wrong?

MATHEW

Can you name one black person who is sophisticated? If you can, then yes, I was wrong.

BRAD

You have a thing against black people?

MATHEW

Of course I do. Look at the way they dress, talk and act. How can you begin to think they're civilized people?

*Brad laughs, patting Mathew on the shoulder as if he's proud of what he said.*

MATHEW

I'm glad you understand. We need more---

*Brad grabs him by the collar, pressing him up against the wall.*

BRAD

No, I don't understand. I happen to like black people.

MATHEW

...You what?

BRAD

You heard what I said. Not only do I like black people. My baby mama is black.

MATHEW

Baby mama? How---

BRAD

She's a beautiful black woman with her head on her shoulders, and has the heart to love a person like me. That's why I'm with her.

MATHEW

You said baby mama? I don't understand.

BRAD

And you'll never understand, white boy who thinks he's better than everybody. But I'll give you something you can understand.

MATHEW

What?

CLARENCE

(Off stage)

Lights out in three minutes!



BRAD

When these lights go off...you'll learn to respect not only black people, but people in general.

MATHEW

...There's no need---

BRAD

There's a need for this. You need to learn that people are no different from the next.

MATHEW

But...you're white.

BRAD

I'm me as an individual. The color of a person doesn't make them.

*The lights go out, and all you can hear is punches and Mathew screaming.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene VI**

*Kyle and Maria are holding hands in the store.*

MARIA

I Told you the movie would be good.

KYLE

It's about time you picked a movie worth sitting through.

*She gives him a kiss on the cheek.*

MARIA

Don't act like that. Just say your baby has good taste.

KYLE

What special benefits come with it?

MARIA

You'll be lucky if you get anything.

KYLE

I'm already lucky. I have the most beautiful woman in the world by my side.

*They engage in a passionate kiss.*

KYLE

Let me grab a few things from the back.

MARIA

I'll pick a drink since my baby did something I wanted to do.

KYLE

Make sure it's something to get you more in the mood.

MARIA

Go get what you're about to get.

*Kyle walks off stage.*

*Maria stands at the counter looking over the drinks.*

*WILL staggers on stage wearing a wife beater and jeans, dropping his cigarette to the floor*

*stepping on it, before walking over to Maria stopping behind her.*

WILL

What's going on beautiful?

*She turns her head looking at him sneering.*

MARIA

Nothing's going on.

WILL

It's gotta be something going on. Scrumptious women like you don't stand around alone without something going on.

MARIA

(Sighs)

If there was something going on, it would have nothing to do with you.

WILL

Playing hard to get? I like that, baby.

MARIA

Why are you calling me baby? People actually have names.

WILL

I'm calling you baby because that's all I'll be saying while I'm putting this pipe on you, girl.

*He tries to wrap his arms around her waist, and she turns around shoving him.*

MARIA

What's wrong with you?! You don't know me!

WILL

I'm trying to...

*Kyle comes back holding some chips and pops, pausing when he sees Will bothering his woman.*

KYLE

Who is this?

MARIA

I have no idea.

*Will stares at Kyle confused.*

WILL  
Who is this?

MARIA  
My man!

*Kyle places his items down, moving Maria to the side getting in Will's face.*

KYLE  
What's the problem?

WILL  
Calm your nerves, white boy.

KYLE  
Call me what you want, but you're not about to bother my woman.

WILL  
(Laughs)  
This is your woman? You don't realize you're getting used? This fine sister doesn't love you.

MARIA  
Excuse me?!

KYLE  
Baby, I got this.  
(To Will)  
This fine sister has been my woman for the past five years.

WILL  
White boy, you're so dumb. Sisters only talk to your kind for money.

KYLE  
Well---

MARIA  
Hold up! Why should I talk to a no good, no job having or a future black man like you?! Men like you made me try a white man in the first place! You think you're this and that, when you're only worth one night, if you can do that right!

WILL  
(Laughs)  
Sister, I understand. You don't wanna blow what you got going on, believe you me, I understand

completely.

MARIA  
Boy, if you don't get---

KYLE  
Don't worry about it. Let's just go.

*Kyle takes Maria by the hand, and they walk off.*

WILL  
(Mocking Kyle)  
Don't worry about it. Let's just go.

*Kyle turns around walking to Will shoving him to the floor.*

KYLE  
Leave well enough alone! You're not getting my girl!  
You're not doing anything with your life! You don't  
want what you're looking for!

*Kyle goes back to Maria, and they walk out of the store, leaving Will on the floor dazed for a few seconds, before standing up pulling a knife out making his way out the store behind them.*

KYLE  
I can't believe people these days.

MARIA  
Don't even think about it. Let's just go get a room  
and relax.

KYLE  
You're right. I shouldn't let---

WILL  
I guess you think you're tough huh, white boy?!

*Kyle and Maria stop walking, but don't turn around.*

KYLE  
Don't you have a corner to sit on and drink a forty  
ounce?!

WILL  
That's funny.

*Will runs at Kyle with the knife forward, and*

*Maria turns around jumping in front of Kyle getting pierced, releasing a loud scream.*

*Will slowly pulls the knife out, and Kyle turns around catching her falling back, and they both fall to the floor.*

*Will stands lost holding the bloody knife.*

KYLE

Baby, it'll be okay. It'll be okay baby, just lay here in my arms. Help! Somebody help us!

*Will runs off stage dropping the knife.*

MARIA

I'm okay. I just...I just need---

KYLE

(Sobbing)

I'm right here. I won't leave you.

MARIA

I know you won't leave me. You love me.

KYLE

I'll always love you. There's no one for me, but you.

MARIA

Kiss me.

*He gives her a kiss, and when he pulls back, her soul has moved on.*

KYLE

No!

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene VII**

*Timothy is sitting on the bed watching rap videos, wearing a wife beater and shorts.*

*Mathew walks in the room bruised up with a limp, wearing something casual.*

*Timothy looks at him and quickly turns the television off.*

TIMOTHY

What happened to you?

MATHEW

Don't worry about it. What were you in here doing?

TIMOTHY

Nothing.

*Mathew takes a seat next to him.*

MATHEW

Watching those rap videos again?

TIMOTHY

Don't get mad.

MATHEW

I'm not about to get mad.

TIMOTHY

Why not?

MATHEW

I'm actually glad you're watching them.

TIMOTHY

You told me not to listen to rap music.

MATHEW

I know what I told you. But after my experience yesterday, I realized something.

TIMOTHY

What's that?

MATHEW

There's no difference in race, and you never judge a

book by the cover because it makes you stupid.

TIMOTHY

So...black people are cool?

MATHEW

Everybody is cool as long as they don't think they're better than anyone else.

TIMOTHY

How cool is that?

MATHEW

(Laughs)

Turn the television on.

*The two sit listening to music, both imitating what they see.*

**END OF THE SCENE**



**ACT I****Scene VIII**

*Kyle is sitting at his desk wearing his blood stained clothes staring at pictures of him and Maria.*

*Elizabeth comes in.*

*He turns his head looking at her sighing disgusted.*

KYLE

(Sobbing)  
I'm sure you're happy.

ELIZABETH

Why would you say that?

KYLE

The girl you hate so much is gone. You can go back to calling me your son.

*She walks over to him trying to touch him, and he moves away.*

KYLE (CONT'D)

Don't touch me.

ELIZABETH

I understand how you feel.

KYLE

You have no idea how I feel. You didn't like her, and basically disowned me as a son because I was in-love. What happened to auntie has nothing to do with how I feel.

ELIZABETH

How do---

KYLE

Dad told me.

ELIZABETH

It's more than that. My issue comes from---

KYLE

You have no legitimate reason why you don't like black people. You know what? People like you would

make me hate white people because of the ignorance that comes from your mouth. Unlike you, I'm not closed-minded blaming an entire race because of one person's actions.

ELIZABETH

Kyle...

*He turns his back to her, and picks up a picture staring at it.*

KYLE

Leave. There's nothing else for us to discuss until you realize the way you think is ignorant.

*It dawns on her the hate she has for no reason destroyed the relationship with her son. Lowering her head, she walks out the room.*

*Kyle continues looking at the photo. Finally placing the picture down, he pulls out a pocket knife opening it, placing it on his heart.*

KYLE (CONT'D)

There's no need to live without you. Love no longer remains in my heart since you're gone. The only person who made me happy was you. I love you, Maria. I'll be with you soon.

*He shoves the knife in his heart releasing a soft moan, falling on the desk dead.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**END OF ACT I**

**THE END**