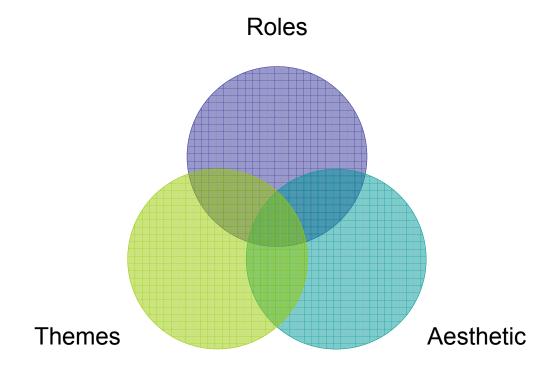
Black Movie Operational Conventions: How to make a Black Film

Naro% OCT 2005

EOC Training Manual 1-3
Mass Media Programming

Black Movie Organizational Conventions



How to make a black movie

Intro

So you wanna make a black movie. The intent of this manual is to provide the would be producer, director, screenwriter, with the components necessary to make an original black movie, with minimal effort and maximum return.

The beauty behind the black movie lies in the massive amounts of cultural capital within the African American Diaspora. The previous model for the black movie relied on often out right and blatant racist over tones, but with the continued assimilation of the African American into the mainstream culture, it is now possible to invite those into the process who may have been previously out side the box.



The key to making a black movie that is authentic is to follow the standard cultural conventions that are commonly called stereotype's. Stereotypes unlike urban legends have evolved form cultural eccentricities that may not represent the majority of the culture but is recognizable by the culture as to having "black" qualities. Hence the affirmation of the stereotype by the focus group.

By applying the stereotype's to themes or issues that are identifiable to the focus group and applying the proper aesthetic anyone can create a truly black movie.

The system

The scientific method meets the black movie. The system is based on a linear format called a continuum as per all movies, linked by plug and play themes, roles, and scenes. While storyboarding is by no means a new process, with the black movie there are certain protocols which must be followed to ensure the success of your movie.

The black movie is defined by a set of cultural circumstances which are universal and no matter what your overall plot and theme, must be observed to keep the overall cultural quality "real".

Black aesthetic

Must have scenes

Hip hop actor Hip hop gear Inner city

roles Death



TN

choice

gift

Prison



BHN



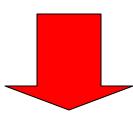
Black Themes

- 1. Violence
- Hoops
- 3. Dancing
- **Economics**
- 5. Drugs
- 6. Baby momma
- No family
- No education

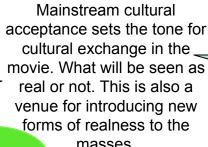
Black movie basics Stereotypes Need for a message Hip hop score statistics

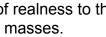
continuum

Mainstream



The Black film is shaped from without by the perceived social context of the culture, including local definitions of what makes a black movie, black.







Real



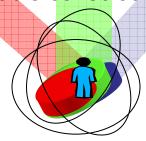
Black movie



Double consciousness

The Black film is also shaped from within by the actual representation of the participants within the real black space.

Hence the term "keepin it real"



Habitus—this is the central theoretical construct that delineates what is real and what is not. The more real the environment in your movie the easier it it for the focus group to relate and accept.

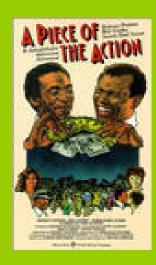
Background

Much has been said about the black movie over the years and this is by no means a critique on style or the application of artistic talent and its affect on a movie. What this manual provides is a method for creatinging a product. The quality of your product will obviously vary based on the availability of talent, funding, distribution, etc, but all of this lies outside of the actual system of organizing and creating your product.

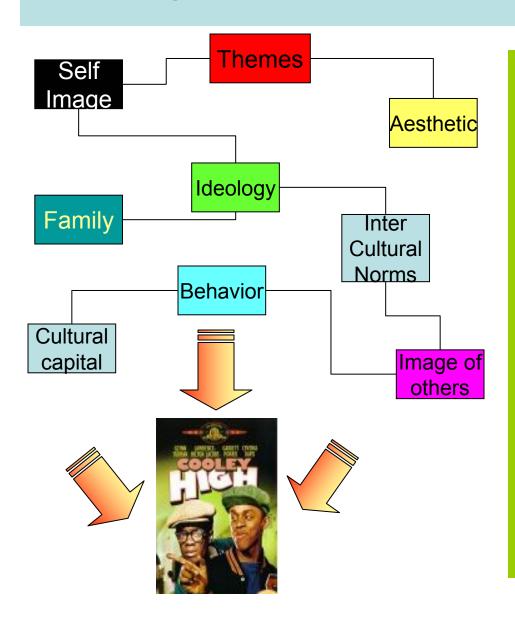
The black movie has gone from denoting the social standing of African American culture, to becoming a vehicle for introducing African American norms exaggerated or not to the mainstream of society. The black movie has also as of late been the arena for introducing budding young white stars. If you can hold your own in a couple of black movies you are on you way!

In the 70's we had the rise of the black film. While most blaxploitaion films of the time were barely one step up from poorly dubbed kung fu movies, the events in the films to some extent were mirroring the culture in a highly distorted crazy ass romantic sense. What this brought to the mainstream was a new crop of black icons, and new methods for expanding the "massage".

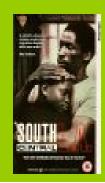




Background



Do not underestimate the importance of the ghetto icon. To prove a point we will take Cooley High a classic hood, sports, dead homie movie as a foundational example. This movie had all of the core elements of a black movie and as you can see and would run strong even if made today. It also has a where are they now scene. It is highly recommended that you study this movie for its format and methodology.







Education

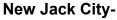




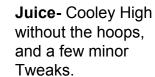


187, Dangerous Minds, Coach Carter- Classic Poitier, the Savior/Nigga who came back to teach the kids. Notice the teacher can kick ass, whuppin on a thug scene, the demand respect scene, I believe in you scene, trip to the ghetto scene.

Colors- An excellent ghetto aesthetic piece, this movie showed you its ok to kill a nigga even if he's butt naked fuckin!



The black god father, scarface. Black cop, white cop, crackhead, destroying the community message





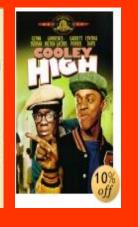


Sports

Above the Rim-Cooley High, with a Nino Brown twist



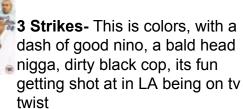


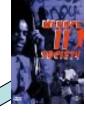




Boyz- Cooley High west coast style, football is swapped out for hoops.







Menace- Cooley High west coast style, great message speech!

South Central- this was Colors part 2 without the cops, a Nino brown, a nigga who came back, I gotta save my son twist.







Justice, Lyric, Baby Boy. Strong black women have to be surrounded by death, weak minded men, and a dream of a better life. Somebody close to the "couple" in the spot light has to die.

Love

Sections

Overall theme what is this movie about? It is not necessary to start with this from the beginning, since being black is a theme in itself.

Black basics think about this as something that all "really good" black movies have. This is a pool of black cultural traits, myths, stereotypes, etc. that you can plug and play into your movie. These conventions reinforce the cultural message you are trying to direct as well support the overall realness of the black experience. As long as you follow the rules of implementation.

Remember!!!

Black aesthetic This is about the visual and the audio and how you apply these mediums to your movie, this is QC. So don't fuck this part up or your movie will go from Dangerous minds to Clueless in about 3.2 seconds, either way you make a buck, but this is about *keepin it real son!*

Sections

Must have scenes In this section we learn that every black movie has scenes that need to be included to "keep it real" because black people know when their lives are being misrepresented on the big screen and they take offense to that shit. So we have compiled a list of must have scenes and depending on your genre (sports, drugs, shitty schools, smart kid in da ghetto) the rules of implementation for the scenes. This is where you can really flip your creativity, feel free to mix and match genres just make sure you follow the conventions. Think of it like the Matrix some rules you can bend or break as long as you have a ghetto logical basis for the scene (and that pretty much gives you the license to do whatever, shoot a baby, runnin ten niggas over in a stolen car, have a gun fight in church!) just make sure black folks can relate to this shit in some shape or form.

Subplots like a supporting cast give another dynamic to the black movie. Much like the must have scenes these areas lend to the realness of your black movie, but unlike the must have scenes you can plug and play these pieces as per the direction of your movie, you can even twist them into your must have scenes to up the realness quotient of your film. Subplots are primarily based upon the conventions set forth for roles. As long as you follow these pretty simple rules you be in preproduction for some shit you experienced at 7 eleven last weekend while you were hiding behind the nacho stand

Sections

Names Another very important part of your movie is how the characters address each other. Do not underestimate the effect and utilization of this convention. This is that phone call you got from Tyrone the telemarketer last night and you KNEW he was black based on the pinpointing of cultural norms in his speech utilization. This can make or break a hood movie, the accurate utilization of tense, pronouns, and proper names, in relation to the black cultural identity is a core element in KEEPIN IT REAL

Marketing I threw this section in here because many a black movie have been ruined by mainstream attempts to categorize the movie. I have seen, black movies with murder, and crack babies categorized as comedy, so make sure you control the image of your movie, this is also a form of keepin it real because black people don't like seeing their lives represented as comedies (unless that's the kind of movie you wanna make).

So Where do you start?

The easiest way to make a black movie is to keep it real simple

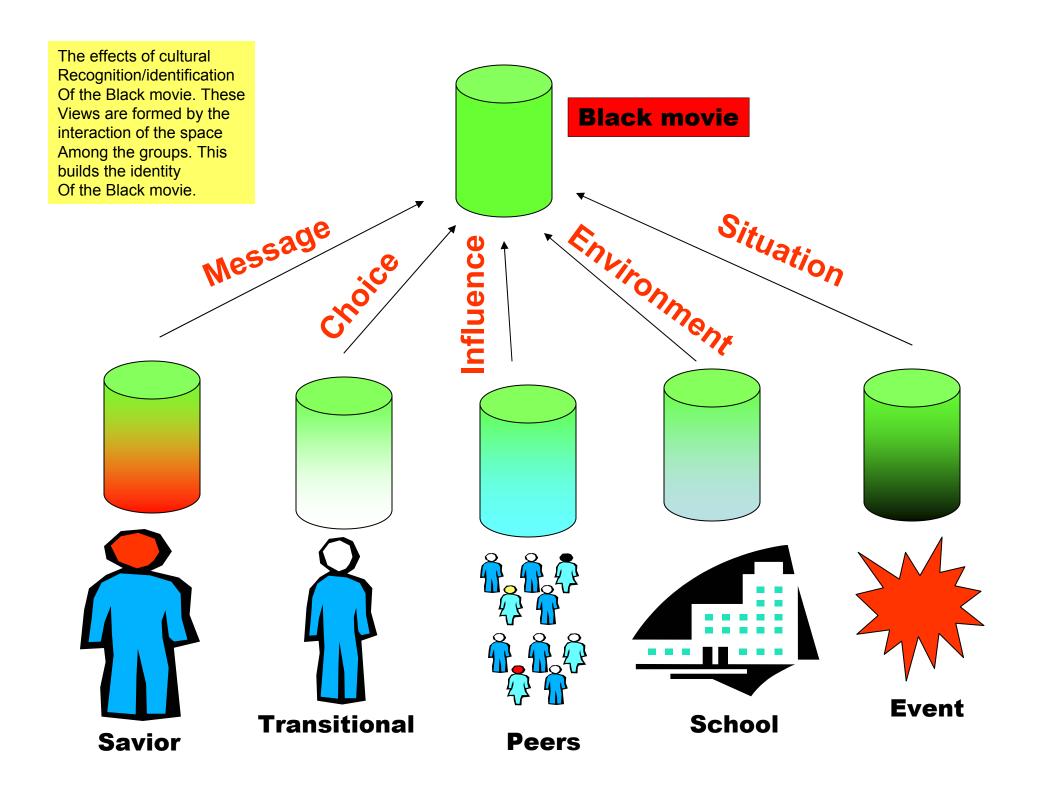
All of the characters have been well researched and tested

Come up with a simple premise: jamal wants to go to college, Lamar wants to own a rap label, Antwan don't wanna go to jail like his daddy KEEP IT SIMPLE

Use the plugins provided and follow the rules that go along with them and BLAM you have a turn key Black film with every thing you need to get it in the theaters

You already have a good black movie in you its just that you don't know how to put it together.





Outlines

These simple formats will help you get you movie off the ground

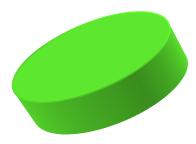
General outline (The organizational process)

Brain storming (a little weed helps with this process)

Working the story board (Plug and Play movie techniques)

Remember be flexible!!

BMOC
Theme
Genre (s),,
Roles Savior: TN: BF: NBN: BHN:
Must have scenes:
Miscellaneous twists:
Extras:
Plot:



How to make a Black movie

BMOC

Role- Bald Head Nigga

Rules- Must die or go to jail. If not then Transitional Nigga must die. Will be involved somehow in the choice and the result of the choice.

Name- Must be a one syllable nickname or very ethnic.

Scenes- Insert the scenes you plan to have the BHN involved in here

make multiple copies of each flash card and place them next to the roles in each scene

Outline



BMOC Thoma
Theme
Roles Savior: TN: BF: NBN: BHN:
Must have scenes:
Miscellaneous twists:
Extras:
Plot:

This is your first attempt at putting you ideas on paper remember keep it simple and build from here. The layers and twists will come just get the basics done first. Don't worry to much about the plot just yet if you don't have anything, you can always apply some ghetto logic to come up with this later.

Outline



ThemeMoney Genre (s) _sports,drugs,
Roles Savior: TN: BF: NBN: BHN:
Must have scenes:
Miscellaneous twists:
Extras:
Plot:

If you have any ideas at this point about characters or other wise save them for you flash cards. Like the outline the flash cards allow you to organize your ideas for your black movie. The outline should be some what completed before you attempt to work out the story boards. This way if you really want to work the plots with mad crazy twists you will have a foundation to work from.

Flash cards



Use these cards to assist in the making of story boards for your movie. If you get lost don't worry the rules for each Role, scene, name, etc. are right there, to keep you on track.

Try making several variations for each role and theme this way you can prevent the pigeon hole effect. The name of the game is organization as long as you follow the rules you can do anything with your film!

BMOC

Role- Bald Head Nigga

Rules- Must die or go to jail. If not then Transitional Nigga must die. Will be involved somehow in the choice and the result of the choice.

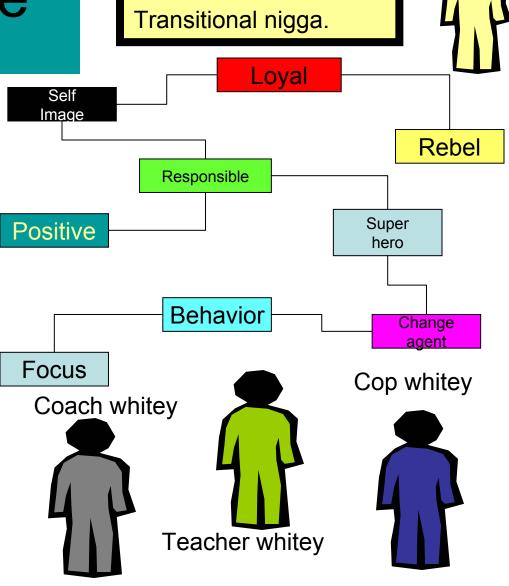
Name- Must be a one syllable nickname or very ethnic.

Scenes- Insert the scenes you plan to have the BHN involved in here

* make multiple copies of each flash card and place them next to each role in the scene

The Savior

Is seldom a young person, middle aged usually a rebel. Has had some type of police/military training. See's what the transitional nigga can be. Usually has had some type of personal tragedy that leads them to the path of savior, a role of atonement, this person is usually damaged goods on the rebound, Goes in to the depths of the ghetto unscathed (save for the "why you wanna save us" speech/narrative) and NEVER, EVER DIES



This role usually carries

The Choice to the

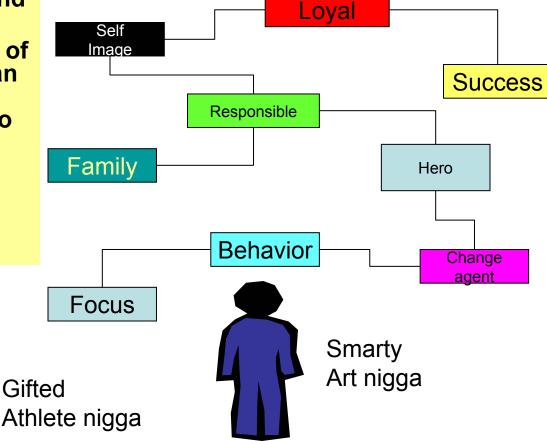
Performance notables: Michelle Phiffer, Robert Duval, Tom Berenger

The Nigga who made it out

If you don't have a white savior then The Nigga Who Made It Out can carry the message and present the choice, but the role must follow one or more of these conditions: Has to be an ex-con, product of broken relationship (divorced), has to wear a tie at some point, Played sports and "almost made it pro" must die after carrying message or presenting choice.

This role usually carries
The message to the
Transitional nigga.
Spits mad statistics
Bout black men BLAH,
BLAH, BLAH



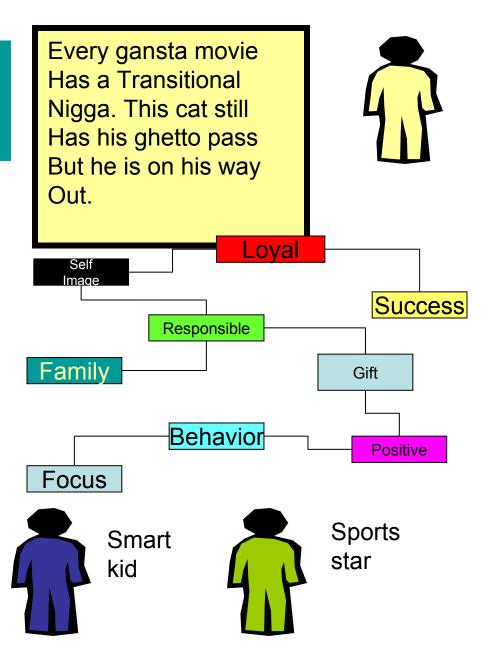




Performance notables: Samuel Jackson, Ving Rhames, Larry Fishburne

Transitional Nigga

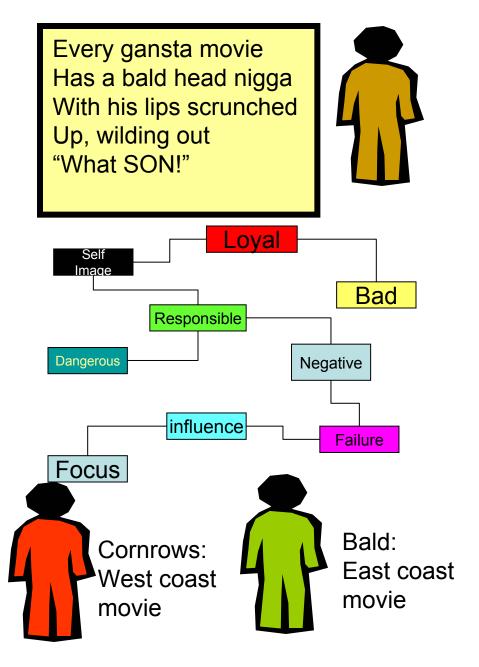
Is the one with the "gift" If he plays sports then the bald head nigga mustn't die, If his gift is intelligence bald head or some other ghetto influence must die. Is in direct communication with the nigga who made it back and the savior. Transitional nigga can elevate to the role of savior but he must die, and then and only then can bald head live to exact revenge fo his homie: note if you use this twist state bald head died or went to jail doing some grimey shit 3 weeks later.



Performance notables: Cuba Gooding JR, Omar Epps

Bald head nigga

Is always pulling the transitional nigga to the dark side, you gotta show the role doing some real grimey shit. The other side of "the Choice". Usually played by a rapper. Must Die or go to jail, if this does not happen then the transitional nigga or the nigga who made it out must die Bald head nigga must wear a hoodie some time in movie usually doing some grimey shit, unless he has corn rows which means it's a west coast hood movie



Performance notables: Fredro Starr, Bokeem Woodbine

Black female

Is always the by product of a broken family

Should have a kid or has one on the way, is usually literate but held back by the baby situation. Always has drama with her baby daddy. Knows how to cook, clean, change diapers, shop, by age 12. If she loves the bald head nigga, the bald head nigga must die, to emphasize the scope of the choice the transitional nigga must make. If she loves the transitional nigga then a rift between the "homies" subplot must be included, where she becomes the choice within a choice

Every gansta movie
Has a Black hood
"Mammie" there are
Several variations
On this charater.
INSERT LOUD ASS
CRYIN BLACK
BABY HERE



Every gansta movie
Has a **CRYIN BLACK BABY**.

Whaaa!

Mammie ver.1 Takes
Care of man, tries
To make it in the
system

Mammie ver.2 Takes
Care of man, tries
To make in the
System, shows
intelligence





Performance notables: Jada Pinkett Smith Janet Jackson, Halle Berry

Nino Brown Nigga

Is the emperor, a ghetto legend has a benz or a hummer, bling, bling, and a crew of bald head niggas. The mentor to the bald head nigga, usually the reason for the choice the transitional nigga makes. Must die or go to jail, unless he is the nigga who made it out*(see rules) if he dies then bald head nigga must go to jail*. If he goes to jail then its most likely for killing bald head nigga or some other bald head niggas or even another Nino Brown Nigga.

Insert crack, hoops, the projects, and some tight ass hip hop beats when he is on the scene.

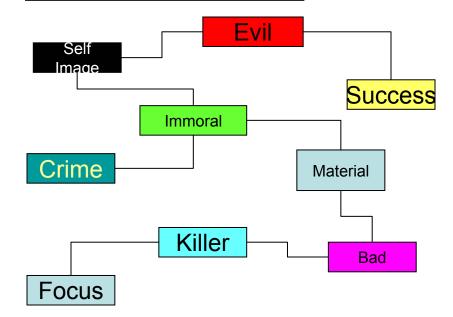
Usually has a show down with nigga who made it back, or the savior, this usually happens on the trip to the ghetto by the savior. If the nigga who made it back confronts the Nino Brown Nigga he usually dies or with the aide of the savior takes out the Nino Brown Nigga.

Performance notables: Wesley Snipes, LL Cool J, DMX, Tupac

Every gansta movie
Has a Nino Brown nigga
This cat is ballin
hardcore



This role usually carries
The get rich quick
Doing foul shit
message to the
Transitional nigga.



Must have scenes

Must have scenes will vary depending on the over all theme of the movie, some are universal while some are genre specific.

Just follow the rules if you get lost

Try blending concepts it makes a weaker premise appear to have more of a message

Back in the day scene – This usually brings up a senario in the transitional niggas younger life where he got his first "Message"

Getting Booty scene cause you gotta have the reason for "Miss Johnson's" loud ass baby.

Nino Brown nigga scene every time this guy shows up on screen it has to be big time

We shall over come some day kneegrow spirtual scene where the transitional nigga decides to "do the right thing"

The bad nigga going to jail, getting shot scene

Your homeboy getting smoked scene Black girl with a baby scene Savior going to the ghetto scene "You can do this I believe in you!"

Genre specific:

Sports scenes

All sports movies must follow these cannons

Hot dog, loud mouth nigga scene The scene where he learns about TEAM WORK

The Discipline scene where the savior hacks in and changes the thought process

The scene where he gets hurt, or his homie gets shot

The college acceptance letter scene The chat with your girl after you get the acceptance letter scene

The scene where he gets his first white girl*

The scene where they loose Where are they now scene

Genre specific:

Drug scenes

Making a crack deal the transaction scene doesn't have to be the main theme of the scene but you have to be able to see the transaction.

Nigga behind the glass on the telephone, hand on the window scene.

The stack of money scene, gotta have a counting mad money scene

Suitcase full of money scene

Scene where the transitional nigga looses a homie to violence and almost goes over the edge scene

Bad drug deal scene

Slow motion shits about to go down scene

Plea bargain scene at the station where bald head nigga shouts "you aint got shit on me man, Nuttin son!"

The white girl scene is a non negotiable must have

Genre specific:

Love scenes

Genre specific:

Dance scenes

Usually come right before a significant event in the plot

Is usually broken up by the bald head nigga wilding out and the transitional nigga tries to save his boy

Day at the park scene insert 112 song here

Female will say something at the end of the scene to "spoil" the mood.

Nigga holding the club down with his crew scene

Dancing and seeing the fine ass girl/nigga scene (usually in slow motion)

Something happened we gotta leave now scene

White boy/girl who can dance shot (not a whole scene just a couple of moves

Getting hot and heavy scene usually includes some heavy grinding and groping

Miscellaneous rules

Rules for extras that appear in the movie: if he is Mexican then he has to wear loc's or have a gang of prison tat's

You gotta have a funny nigga

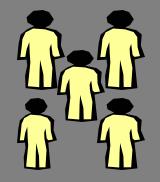
The main female has to have her home girls.

Asian people, Arabs, Mexicans always include another minority in the film diversity is always a plus and it breaks up the monotony.

Crack heads/ Any prominent crack head must die

Cop buddy teams- good cop bad cop you can even have the bald head nigga be related to the nigga who made it out black cop (since he is going to die or go to jail any way) Somebody has to be humiliated by being forced to strip in public

Make sure your movie shows some type of historic ghetto landmark that you audience will recognize (hoop court, intersection, housing project)



Every good gansta Movie has a crew of niggas scene

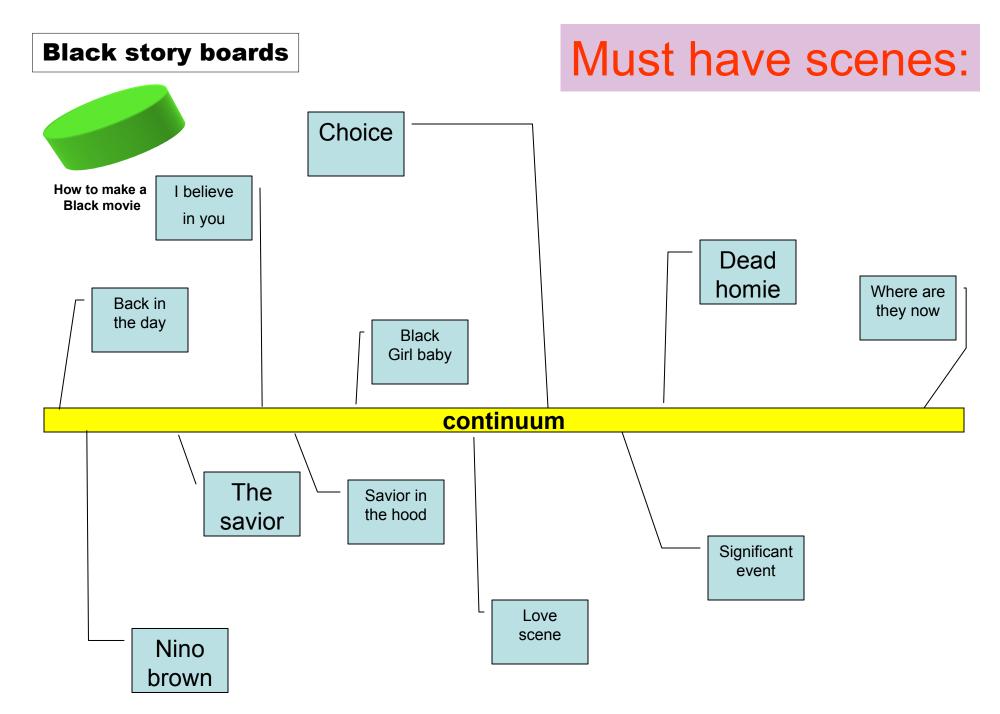
Ghetto logic

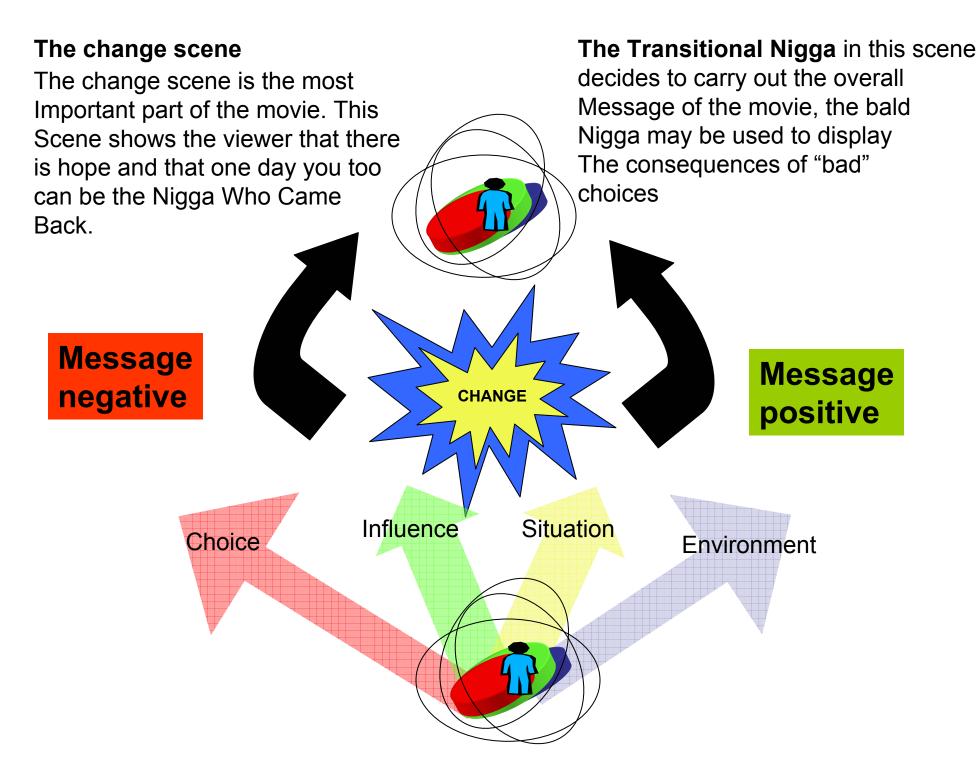
Some times you need a reason to do some really crazy shit. Just apply a little "Ghetto Logic"

Take this excellent example of ghetto logic from the hood classic Set it Off.

If crackhead Darnell can rob a bank, we can too!

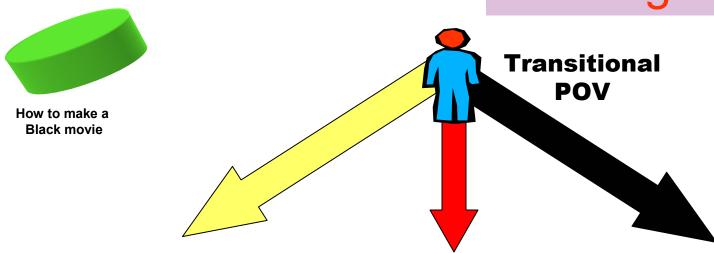
Normally robbing a bank is scifi to most people, but in the hood if someone can come close to it, then it must be possible.





Transitional Nigga; your vehicle

Working in the roles:



The transitional nigga in his habitat. This is the "this is who I am" viewpoint.



This viewpoint should be one without the influence of the savior, if promise is shown it is often hidden unless the "gift" is athletic ability The transitional nigga is usually. Presented with two destinations, one by the savior and one by the nino brown nigga



The positive path should never be seen, you have to take the saviors word on this one, while the nino path should be filled with in yo face bling bling, nigga I'm rich fo life type shit

The transitional nigga knows
That bald head nigga is going
Down the dark path, but he
Owes allegiance to his boys.



Where you Don't want To go

The outcome of this path needs to be the exact opposite of the path the transitional nigga makes

The discourse around the transitional nigga Should be emphasized by the distinct categories of interaction among characters.

Transitional POV

How to make a Black movie

The Negative aspect of the movie needs to be Organic to the transitional nigga. They have to Offer the transitional nigga a way to get ahead of his peers through negativity, and wonder Why its taking him so long to get on board with "Being Down".

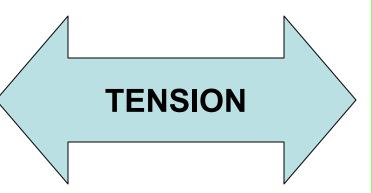
Working in the roles:

The Savior should have to go against several influences with Nothing to show for what he has to say. His massage of believing in ones self, or not taking the easy way out should always be pitted against enormous and multiple influences to the exact opposite of his "blind faith" message.





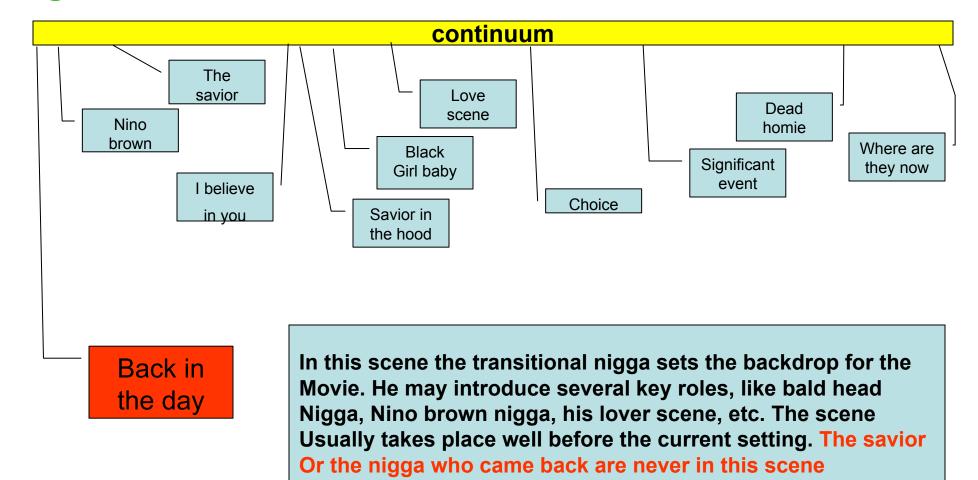






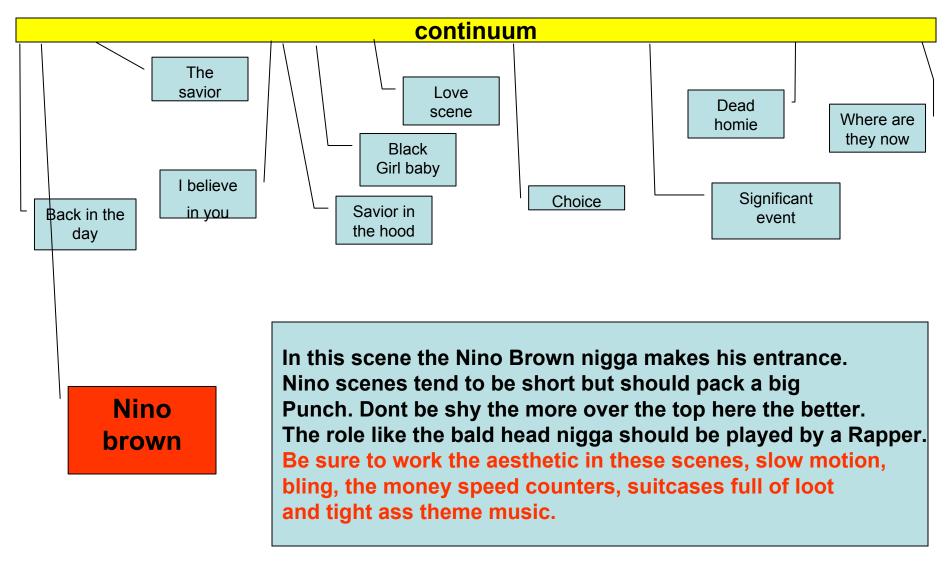
Working in the roles:





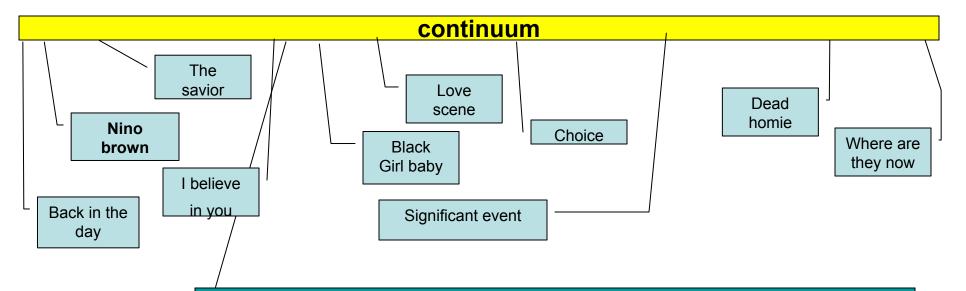
Working in the roles:





Working in the roles:



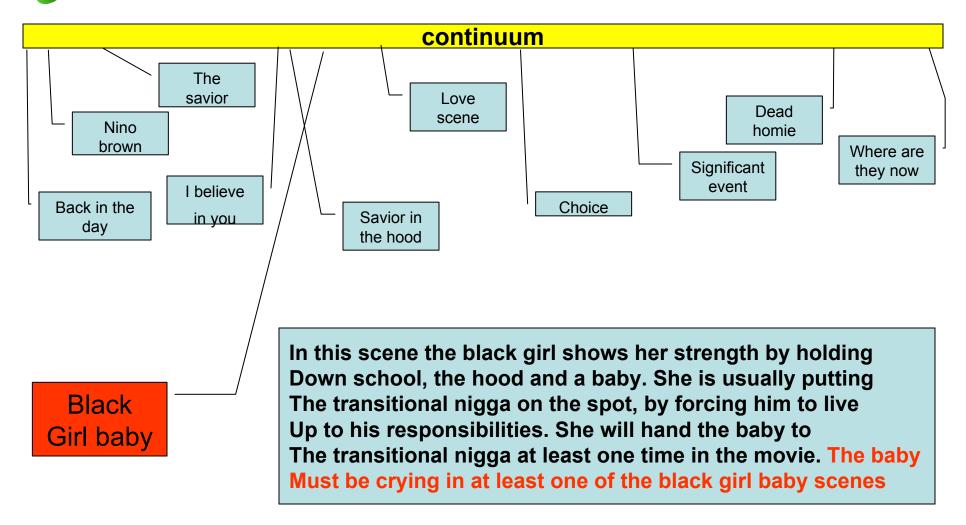


Savior in the hood

In this scene the Savior marches straight into the hood, amid All the stares and the usual what you doing here stare down scene To test his resolve goes down. He then goes into the dilapidated Household where he tells the family head Jamal has a lot to look Forward to. Now is where she then promptly berates him and shows him the Door, on the way out have the savior make eye contact with Jamal to reemphasize the importance of his visit, telepathically. Try to get the savior to walk in the middle of the street (like He is leading some kind of march). Nobody ever touches the Savior.

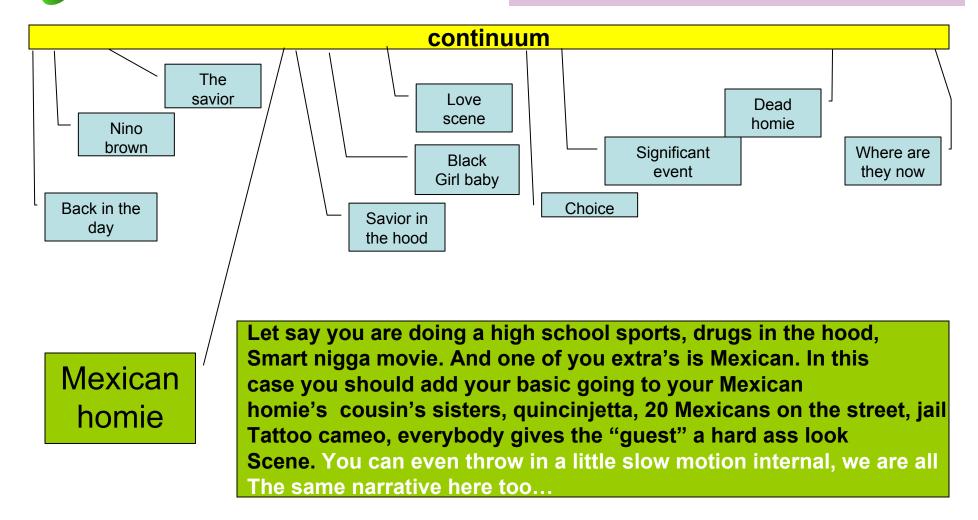
Working in the roles:



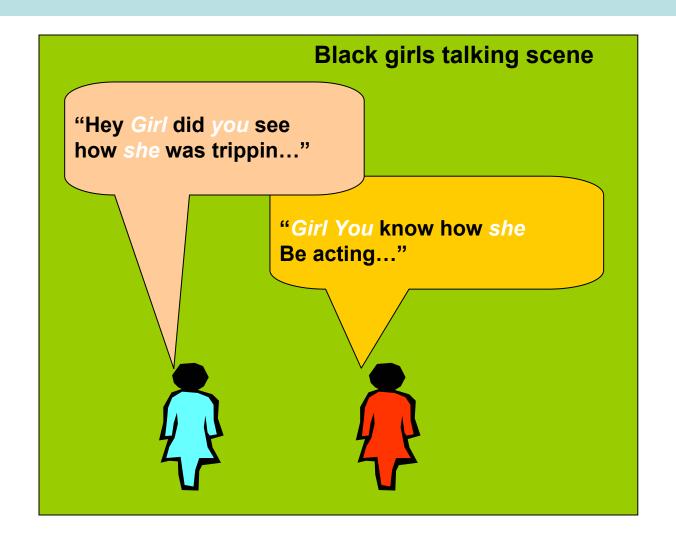




Working in the roles: An example

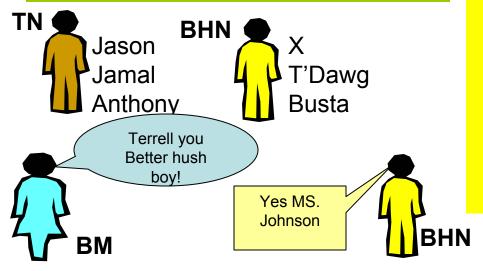


Rules for names



Rules for names

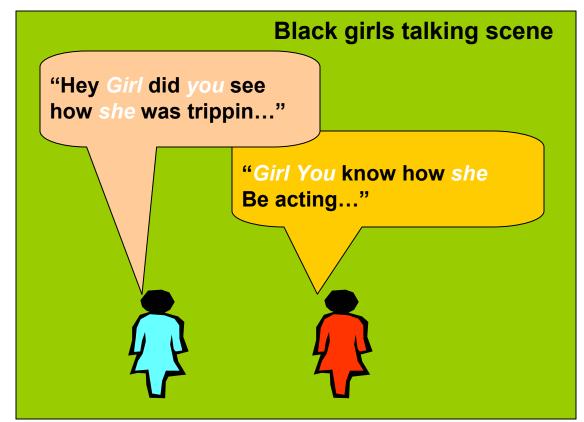
Try to keep the transitional niggas name somewhat mainstream not too ethnic, the bald head nigga usually has a nick name and goes by that moniker. Unless he is being addressed by the transitional niggas mother, or the Nigga who came back. The Nino Brown nigga usually goes by first name only unless the cops are talking about bringing him in.

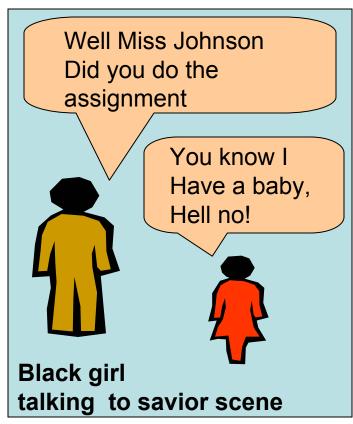


Female names should be used in certain situations, since most female names are very ethnic, once the name has been introduced, try using terms like "GURL" or "SHE" when a female is talking to another female. Male characters will refer to girls as "BABY" or "Shorty" and will only use the first name (after it has been introduced) in certain situations: after the argument, times of distress, there has to be a reason to use the first name. The Savior and the Nigga who came back may sometimes refer to females as "Miss" Johnson, and The Nino Brown Nigga uses the first name until he gets whatever it is that he is after.

Names

The usage of names is subtle yet intrusive application of cultural indoctrination for the audience





Remember dynamic utilization regarding the acknowledgement of self and others can Be used to reinforce "street cred". Cuz you know we don't be talkin like that

Male names

Female names

Andre, Antoine, Baron, Busta, Calvin, Carnell, Cordell, D'aengelo, D'ante, Da-Shawn, Darell, Darik, Darius, Dennard, Edward, **Emmet, Isiah, Jamal, Jamar,** Jemarcus, Keandre, Keenan, Kordell, Lamar, Lamont, Lavaughan, Lester, Malik, Marcus, Omarr, Otis, Perry, **Quincy, Quinton, Rachard,** Reggie, Rhashan, Sean, Smokey, Taye, Terell Trayvon, Tremaine, Tyree, Wardell, Wendell, Xavier

Aiesha Candice Carsandra
Chantoya Daeshawna
Davina Destiny
Dominique Gwen Jada
Jalissa Kalisha Kea LaKeysha La'Shawn La-Ticia
Latrina Mercedes Necie
Precious Ronnie Shanise
Shauna
Sierra Stephanie Teena Tia
Tiana Tiffany Tinecia Trina
Wanda Yevette
YoLanda

Marketing

So how do we sell this joint to the masses. First off the box like the movie needs to project easily identifiable "black" elements.

Try using Ghetto destinations
Use popular black terminology, slang
and phrases

The box should always have some sort of color distortion or gradient effect to show the "Bleakness" of the hood.

Put a rapper on the box

Make sure the words "gritty, real, thought provoking, urban" appear on the box.

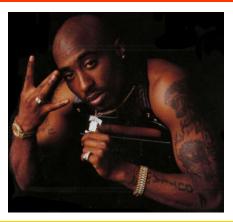
If you put a white person on the box they must be very large (bigger than anyone else on the box) and the box should be in normal color.



Notice how all of these movies incorporate several of the marketing tactics, especially the color distortion technique.

Hall of fame: Tupac Shakur





Tupac is the only figure to play all of the major parts in a black movie

Juice – bald head nigga

Above the rim- Nino brown Nigga

Bullet- Nino Brown nigga

Gridlocked- transitional nigga

Poetic Justice- Nigga who came back

Bonus Pick Gang Related- The bad

black cop role



Bokeem, Generally known the bald head nigga, has reprised the role several times in and several formats:

Strapped, Jasons Lyric, Dead Presidents, Gridlock'd, Caught up

Bonus!!Bokeem has seen a violent end in quite a few of his movies!

Hall of fame: Fredro Starr



Fredro is also in the hall of fame for his portrayal of the bald head nigga, where bokeem provided depth and insight into the bald head genre, Fredro took the art of being grimey and curling his lips to a new level! His movies include:

Strapped, Clockers, Sunset park, Save the last dance, Flossin, Torque

Hall of fame: Omar Epps



Omar Epps the best when it comes to playing that nigga with a big decision to make (Transitional Nigga). Roles include:

Juice, The Program, Higher Learning, The Wood, In Too Deep,

Hall of fame:

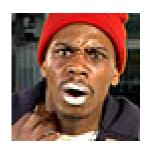
Hall of fame: Samuel Jackson Crackhead Role



Has refined the role originally created by the great Sidney Poitier, and reinvented it for a new generation. The nigga who came back all star is Sam Jackson, movies include:

Coach Carter, 187, Juice, Jungle fever, losing Issaiah, Menace to society, Fresh, Shaft, Changing Lanes* (he was the nigga who came back in spite of whitey!)

BONUS!! First black executive to be eaten by a shark!



Greatest crack head award goes to!

The Crackhead in Menace to **Society**, that was pure LA crack head, cheese burgers and blow iobs.

Chris Rock as Pookie in New **Jack City**

Sam Jackson as Gator in Jungle Fever.

Note all 3 crackheads die