

SCRIPT TITLE

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Based on, If Any

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Jack pounds at a punching bag which is steadied from behind by Tick. Jack is in his zone...

TICK
Slow it up, slow it up-

JACK
Whut-?

TICK
Slow it, let dat sweat out-

Tick sings, as Jack pounds the bag to his rhythm.

Jack delivers a last impatient slam and turns away from it.

TICK (CONT'D)
Enough?

JACK
Yeah, Ah'm pushin.

Jack goes and sit on a stool, and Tick massages his shoulders.

Ellie walks in holding a tray of food.

ELLIE
I wish they would feed their dogs
around here.

JACK
You feedin yours here, aintya?

Tick tries to unwind Jack with a little chatter.

JACK (CONT'D)
Done try and unwind me, man, juss
rub!

Beat.

ELLIE
Why don't you come back and wash
now, Jack?

JACK
Smelling pretty strong, huh.

ELLIE
You know that's not what I-

JACK
Das inuff, man.

ELLIE

Jack, will you talk to me?

JACK

Tick gawn ovah on erran, you kin go walk round dere widdim. Maebbe git a ice-cream soda, or somethin.

TICK

Not wid me, boss. Ah aint strollin round no Texas wit a white gal. Ya'll hold the fort down.

Tick leaves.

JACK

Take dem goddamn specs off. Ah can hardly see ya.

ELLIE

I didn't think you wanted to.

JACK

You readin mah mine now?

ELLIE

Jack-

JACK

Ah toleya keep outta dis, din ah?

ELLIE

I can't. Please, let them, you have to.

JACK

Finely battin fo da home team, huh? Finely come roun to it-

ELLIE

Cable them tonight. Please, Jack, and don't bitch me now.

JACK

Ah toleya-

ELLIE

No, I don't care! Forget what you told me! Say yes and get it over with for God's sake! You're letting them do this to you, it's worse-

JACK

Worse fo you, mebbe-

ELLIE

Jack, it's slow poison here,
there's nothing else to wait for,
just more of it. You've had enough,
please, you're being paralyzed-

JACK

Wid you mebbe-

ELLIE

All right, yes, with me too, with
everything but hammering that
stupid bag there! You're not your
own man any more-

JACK

Now you rollin-

ELLIE

How can you be your own man? They
have you! They do and you know it,
you're theirs. At least you can buy
yourself back from them-

JACK

Sold! One buck nigger fo de lady!

ELLIE

Let it sound the way it is! Run
when they push you and back when
they pull you, work yourself sick
in this hell-hoe for nothing, and
tell me you're not theirs--Here,
look at the grease you swallow for
them, look at the bedbug bites on
your arms, and the change in your
pockets and the blotches in your
eyes-

JACK

Doan leave de smell out-

ELLIE

The two of us smell! Whatever turns
people into niggers...(*showing her
neck*)there...it's happening to both
of us-

JACK

Wish comin true, huh-

ELLIE

No, never this, it wasn't this. I want you there fighting them again, that's what I wish now. I want to watch when you're knocking them down for this, dozens of them. God help them, wipe it off on all of them--

JACK

How about rooster-fightin? Plenty right here. I oughta look inta dat--

ELLIE

You'd fight them and be with your friends, Jack--

Jack crows like a rooster.

JACK

Somebody wanna sign me?

ELLIE

Maybe we could live then, damn you!

JACK

Lik frame house, tree in front?

ELLIE

Anything!

JACK

Nice quiet street?

ELLIE

Anywhere! A place!

JACK

Lil cozy?!

ELLIE

A kitchen!

JACK

Put de cat out? Tuck in de kids?

ELLIE

Oh, you're just hateful!

Jack grabs her from behind on the neck. Swings her around and pushes her against a table/wall.

JACK

Well, ah gonna tellya whut de livin like, baby, as far as Ah concern.

ELLIE

Get away from me-!

JACK

Ima put ya straight on it! Ah went into a fair once and dere wuz dis old pug, see, give anybody two buck who stan up a round widdim-- professional set-up, reggerlation ring an all, cep dey had rope juss on 3 sides, dass right, de back side wuz de tent. So Ah watches a couple get laid out real quick, but he doan look dat red hot ta me, see, so Ah climbs in widdim. An Ah doin alright fo a youngster, when all it once he bulls me up againss dat tent-side a de ring an SLAM, WHAM, somebody behine dere conks me, right through de canvas, musta used a 2 by 4. An evvy time Ah stans up he shove me back agin, an SLAM, dere's anuddder, down she come.

ELLIE

Jack-

JACK

Dass how it go like Ah knows it, baby-

ELLIE

Sometimes, sometimes--

JACK

All de way now! Dass where Ah is and dass whut I'm gittin, gonna git it de same sayin Yessuh, Nossuh, doan mattah whut Ah does! Ah in dere, understan? An Ah doan wan you watchin, or helpin, or waitin, or askin, or hannin me you jive about livin or anything fromya but OUT, Ah mean OUT!

ELLIE

What?

JACK
How goddam plain Ah gotta make it
for you!

ELLIE
Jack...if you want other girls-

JACK
Git you stuff ready, train out 10
aclock.

ELLIE
No, no, I won't, no-

JACK
When Tick come back Ah send hi ovah-

ELLIE
Jack, no-

JACK
Bettah start movin-

ELLIE
Stop it!

JACK
Ah apologize fo actin so yellah up
ta-

ELLIE
Wait, you have to stop it--

JACK
All Ah has to is be black an die,
lady-

ELLIE
(goes to Jack)
I want to stay, even if we-

JACK
Stay wit you own, lady-

ELLIE
What are you doing! I won't go!

JACK
Quit dat! Short an sweet. You
knowed it comin, start movin-

ELLIE
Wait, Jack!

JACK

Doan cross me now-

ELLIE

Jack, I thought we'd save something, please-

JACK

Ah said move! you through widdit now-

ELLIE

Please, Jack, I only--

JACK

No mo lousy grub you gotta puke up, no more a ya lookin like a wash out rag here, wid you eye twitchin alla time-

ELLIE

Don't--I don't care-I'll take better care-

JACK

Hangin on me, dead weight-

ELLIE

Jack, I'll find a job, please-

JACK

Ah toleya when man momma die, leave me be a while, now-

ELLIE

Jack, I can't run any more, not by myself-

JACK

You got you own people, an you a young woman-

ELLIE

No, listen. Please, I'd never-

JACK

You gonna fine you a nice-

ELLIE

No one else, I'd-

JACK

Tough titty!

ELLIE

Why can't you wait at least! Wait till you've given me a chance to make you happy-one chance, only one-I swear I've never had one-

JACK

Too big an order all around! You wanna drag it out, huh?

ELLIE

No, I won't go! I can't!

JACK

Den Ah gonna wise you up good now, you gray bitch-

Jack grabs a towel and starts whipping Ellie with the towel.

ELLIE

You can't make me go, stop doing this. Stop it!

JACK

Why you think Ah ain't put a han to ya for how long, why ya think it turn me off juss lookin atya!

ELLIE

Stop it!

JACK

You stayin, stay fo it all...ya know why? Does you honeybunch? Cause evvy time you pushes dat pinch up face in fronna me, Ah sees where it done got me, dass whut Ah lookin at, the whey, the wherefore an de Numbah One Who, right down de line, girl, an Ah mean YOU...an Ah doan wanna give you NOTHIN, understand? Ah cut it off first!

ELLIE

Oh, I despise you-

JACK

Right, like alla resta ya-

ELLIE

Oh, I'd like to smash you-

JACK

Me an evvy udder dumb nigger who'd
let ya! Now go on home an huste one
up who doan know it yet. Oughta
hang a bell on so dey hear you
comin.

ELLIE

You mean this?

JACK

Look into my purple eyes.

ELLIE

You win, "daddy".

Ellie leaves.