

PREFACE

My first two questions for today's brilliant, black male: how would you respond, if you received an email tonight from a casting agent who invited you to an onstage audition this coming weekend? Presuming that it goes well, what questions would you ask, if any, before accepting the role?

Not to worry, if you can't answer definitively at this moment – but you should become far more adept at posing and fielding some critical questions about the role typically proffered to you, once you have finished reading this book.

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GENERAL STAGE DIRECTIONS

***Throughout this book, I offer a series of personal vignettes, spanning from youth into adulthood, to help illustrate those subtle inflection points that have often abbreviated my intrigued infatuation with white girls and women.**

***Sandwiched between those retellings are deeper dives into the relevant human and historical factors that should be considered carefully before a black male pursues a(nother) white female and (further) explores this singularly challenging iteration of interethnic relations.**

*We will examine the primacy of the ego and its centrality to our presumptions/narratives/actions – after all, what else is one’s ego at its root, if not some dearly-held beliefs about oneself and one’s place in the world? On that note, please don’t let any of the so-called psychology *experts* try to convince you of a more complex diagnosis – the European blend of wisdom/theory/rumor rarely applies to the black male experience.

*Some editorial purists will undoubtedly find my syntax and format unconventionally jarring – please, let us be jarred, if we may rise up to our next level of (self) awareness. Fortunately, this offering was not conceived in complete fealty to the classical (read: European) conventions of literature. Instead, it’s intended to serve as a handy field survival guide for black males of growing conscience and consciousness. Our endangered species routinely encounters, and must successfully evade, both visible and invisible hazards – either of which can turn our journey perilous in an instant.

*I have deliberately chosen to employ interethnic, not *interracial*, terminology – why? For those who haven’t already done so, readers will be encouraged to consider the origin/utility/utter invalidity of the *race* concept itself throughout this book – ideally relinquishing any formerly (in)convenient antiquations (i.e. *minority*, *colored*, *n-words*) as well. All human beings are simply people; each one of us is nothing more or less than a highly advanced and adaptable mammal equipped with a larynx. Thus, first names are not merely adequate; they are far more accurate labels.

*I have properly referred to the surrounding territory as the United States (US), in lieu of the wistful yet popular appellation of *America*. Out of egotism, vanity, and per their *manifest destiny* scripts, white people originally pre-empted the *American* label (read: stage name) many decades ago, specifically to the exclusion of others. Canadian and Mexican human beings also occupy our same continent, but rarely do they seek to distinguish or elevate themselves with the same brand of artifice and arrogance. Regardless, whenever the label is being applied by white folk, they usually apply it only to themselves – with the identical hubris that also applies the label of *World Champion* to those victorious sports teams, save for futbol (read: soccer). As Malcolm X previously, forcefully indicated, *Americans* do not have to struggle to redeem their constitutionally-protected rights and recognition. Many black people still struggle to accept this distinction; some of us prefer to honor Flag Day and July 4th, in lieu of acknowledging the significance of *Juneteenth*.

*On a related note, I deliberately reject the AP convention to capitalize the word *black* when referring in this book to my fellow sisters and brothers. As with other prevarications, this mainstream convention stresses the ethnicity of black people, while it minimizes the ethnicity of white people. Such spurious notions are often subtly employed in support of the biologically-outdated concept of *race*, and I seek to eclipse them both in this frank and overdue examination of reality at the ground-level. For I intend to take us as far down a rather grotesque alley as I possibly could through my extensive research of available records – please also find a related/abbreviated/sordid national timeline of events included in the appendix.

*The scope of this book is clearly aimed towards my black brothers living here in the US, where our experiences have been known to vary from the start. That being established, you shouldn’t rely solely upon my experiences and interpretations, as I have also called upon a number of white women to very candidly reveal the joint nature of our dilemma. Ultimately, I will be forced to evaluate any ensuing critiques through

the lens of black manhood; thus, I will not apologize for any discomfort experienced by white readers. Those days are behind us now.

WHY SHOULD YOU READ THIS BOOK?

*If, as a black male, at any point, you begin to feel as though you've been programmed or conditioned to worship the white, European-based standards of feminine beauty and grace by default, then I would strenuously encourage you to study and save this book for your future reference.

*Today's white female enjoys a greater proximity to the black male than ever before, and the incredible pull of our primal instincts can overwhelm us all so quickly. Prior to your interface, however, many white females have brazenly constructed their own archetype of what a black man is supposed to say and be. Therefore, we must get beyond the superficial imagery of the white goddess and determine instead what lies beneath – ideally, before you decide to buy what she may be trying to sell you about yourself.

*Due to the inherent cyclicity of life, and of nature itself, many of us repeat the same behaviors over and over again without properly assessing our choices and situation beforehand. For example, I kept having *bad luck* with love in general, until I painfully realized that I was receiving a much narrower, ego-based, version of love (at best) from my white girlfriends. Some readers might relate to my experiences and reconsider their own dating options and romantic intentions much more carefully than I once did.

*Given a consistent exposure to mainstream media (including one's social media niche), along with the maintenance of a relatively unrestrained ego, nowadays nearly any resident of the US can perpetuate mistaken beliefs about their privileged and/or exceptional humanity. With our redacted national historical record, compounded by the readily apparent mainstreaming of interethnic relationships (at least in a two-dimensional sense), any black male might come to view his *success* with white females as further evidence of his **own** exceptionalism. However, this book is designed to help fill those knowledge gaps and help you avoid wasting any more of your time, energy, and money (all of which are more precious than ever) on such questionable beliefs and romantic notions. For this has been written from the perspective of someone who, for decades, mistakenly believed that he was exceptional, too. So much for our *intelligent design*, once and for all.

*My overarching goals: 1.) to help illuminate some of those romantic blind spots (read: inflection points) that are generally obscured by the long shadows of history/legend/culture; 2.) to demonstrate how cyclical yet vital soul work routinely generates higher powers of self-effacement and acceptance; 3.) to encourage a more mindful response to assorted yet related stimuli over time.

*For my black brothers currently onstage, who are dating or intending to marry white females exclusively – I would encourage you to proceed with far less blind reverence or presumed certainty going forward. In fact, the questions posed from cover to cover of this guide may help to decipher what is happening between the two of you in real time.

While each of us naturally seeks to become a stronger, prouder black man, our (r)evolution into true liberation begins on the inside. Please trust that my personal quest for liberation will always, always be tied up with yours.

“Goddess on a mountain top, burning like a silver flame, the summit of beauty and love – and Venus was her name..” *Venus, Shocking Blue*

WHO AM I, TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

Well, who do I have to be? I’m a sentient black man born in the US, a recovering egocentrist who primarily coveted white females of European descent, and of Jewish heritage, for more than forty years. As compared to most of my white male contemporaries, I lunched and dined at the same counters and tables; I shared the same teachers and read the same books; I hung out at the same sandboxes/roller rinks/arcades/keggers; I attended the same bar and bat mitzvahs; I skied across the same lakes and slopes. What’s more, I even developed the same media consumption patterns and musical libraries as they did, only to (relatively recently) accept the reality that I was never actually going to become white myself. While a gift for mimicry may have been the most valuable asset of my youth, I could never lead a self-directed life without finally letting it go.

As the pioneering black boy of my suburban subdivision, most of my ideals were forged in a foundry of whiteness and bleakness that characterized those halcyon 1970s. Hence, the conventional anguish of adolescence became even more soul-draining and confusing by turns, as I eagerly conformed to the same confining standards/hopes/dreams of my surrounding environment through numbing waves of self-deception and naivete. One such moment remains indelible; I can vividly recall the instant when I first acquiesced to the legendary spell of white femininity. On one sparkling, searing afternoon in 1977, I rode my skateboard over to my best friend’s house – when no one answered their front door, my nascent, attention-seeking ego drove me towards the backyard in a desperate search to find someone, anyone with whom to play, until I suddenly stopped dead in my tracks. Tiptoeing quickly behind a hedgerow, I recognized the strains of “Gold Dust Woman” reverberating across their patio because I had purchased Fleetwood Mac’s “Rumours” myself earlier that summer, as did almost every other kid in our neighborhood. Undetected at first, through the shrubbery and wafts of cigarette smoke I could recognize a few blondes and brunettes from my elder sister’s grade, as they twisted and glistened under the sunlight. Shortly before the unruly mass of my Afro revealed my hiding spot, I fell completely enraptured as my eyes captured all of those white girls resplendent in their snug bell bottoms and lavish Bonne Bell. Once Scott’s oldest sister, Beth, had established herself as the clear winner of this unofficial Stevie Nicks/Linda Ronstadt/Lindsay Wagner lookalike contest, she whirled around in her Foster Grants before flashing a dazzling grin directly towards me – instantly I was busted yet hooked! For many years afterward, I would draw upon a variety of blondes/brunettes/redheads to form my most desirable and definitive feminine archetypes, and for this I would come to pay dearly – in many forms of currency, as it turned out. So, yes, I quite literally and figuratively drank the Kool-Aid down to the very last drop on that hot summer day; by now, you should consider me an authoritative black male who perennially pursued his own/special/elusive white goddess.

Many years later, after finally realizing that I had been so thoroughly programmed and deeply conditioned from boyhood to strongly favor white women of European and/or Jewish extraction, I had to acknowledge that my egocentricity was inhibiting the self-effacement that becomes a pre-requisite for one’s genuine self-actualization. How so? Let’s just say that I often forced others to walk on eggshells, so as not to disturb my preconceptions about who I was, about who they should be in relation to me, and about what role(s) they should play in my life. Having delayed the definition and establishment of my own black identity during my formative years, I could never surpass the boyhood version of myself until I (finally) became far more

mindful of my fragile ego as a middle-aged adult. In other words, before I could move forward as a more grounded and self-aware black man, I had to shift my psyche into reverse and go all the way back to my very first dalliance.

Meanwhile, during that same summer of 1977, an 82 year-old man named George Schyuler was living out his final days alone in a New York City hospital bed; unbeknownst to me, he was most likely revisiting the foibles of his own egocentricity, while making a final attempt to reclaim/redeem/resolve his own black identity, as the sun set on his life's journey. Towards the end of this book, readers will probably attain a much clearer understanding of the price that he eventually paid for his procrastination.

For the time being, at least, let's suspend our worship of the white goddess – any such cloying veneration of her presumed feminine supremacy shall not appear in these pages. In fact, after reading this book, perhaps you will reconsider exactly why she may have become so *irresistible* to you and many other brothers just like us. Perhaps.

“And is it over now, do you know how? To pick up the pieces and go home..”

Gold Dust Woman, Fleetwood Mac

Auditioning with Kristy and cannabis

From the first exposure, some proportion of white women has always been intrigued by black men, and the pull often becomes mutual. Owing to our primal human nature, the records show that pairings so mixed have occurred unceasingly in these United States since at least the 17th century. All the while, white males have proven to be our very powerful/resentful/ruthlessly determined adversary – especially when it comes to protecting the presumed chastity and purity of his wife and daughters. As we shall examine throughout this book, the tight constrictions of white patriarchy have fostered the spirit of daughterly rebellion for generations, and so it shall remain going forward. And yet, even if she does rebel against patriarchal authority on occasion, a daughter may still fail to question her father's underlying presumptions about white supremacy/privilege/entitlement. Consequently, every black male must be mindful of this dynamic, lest we unwittingly assume the role of the prostrate dummy who bleeds onstage at the finale.

*After pecking and petting a few of the *good girls* at my lily-white elementary school, I became commingled with a far less wholesome group in junior high. As my test scores plummeted, much to the chagrin of my own parents, I didn't necessarily pursue the healthiest outlets to help me deal with the tension and teenage angst that were often roiling through my pubescent/needful/rebellious psyche. If anything, my progression from smoking tobacco to cannabis demonstrates a clear regression in my self-esteem and decision-making skills during this period. To complicate matters, in lieu of reaching out to my own family members as I struggled to cultivate my self-identity, I tended to seek solace instead from white boys and girls who could not meaningfully empathize with my struggles. While serving with a certain naiveté in my role as the young black male integrator of a suburban schoolhouse (read: playhouse), I repeatedly experienced bouts of objectification/isolation/doubt that laid the groundwork for a paralyzing period of self-alienation. Critically, I suppressed those feelings – who could possibly identify with the ultimate interloper? With my adolescence nearing its full tilt, I solicited both attention and acceptance as their entertainer, forestalling my academic progress with precisely the type of classroom antics that frequently landed me in detention hall at the end of the day. These behavioral patterns often prove especially formative and consequential to the lives of black*

schoolboys, who are naturally seeking to establish their masculinity while this hostile society reliably squelches it in turn.

Lamentably, in a desperate search for (white) role models and acceptance, I eagerly auditioned for the still more treacherous role of the follower. Late one afternoon, as yet another detention period was coming to a close, I got a sneak peek of the cannabis joint that my ninth-grade, white male, co-conspirator was bravely wielding in the hallway adjacent to our principal's office. Not only did his bravado spark my interest, primarily in the prospect of getting high for the first time, but it also predictably caught the eyes of the female detainees in our midst – Kristy and Jessica. After we were released from administrative captivity, Jeff led me and the girls straight into the woods that stretched out far beyond the athletic fields. Once we assembled there, I quickly got with the program while the joint was being lit and circulated – oh, yes, I surely inhaled fully and deeply. I next recall riding home on the back of Kristy's moped, at once euphoric and sophomoric from all of the excitement that commonly follows such proscribed activity.

But the plug was pulled quickly on my daydream, the instant Kristy dropped me off down the street from my house. As I nervously asked for her phone number upon my dismount, she initially giggled and then abruptly denied my request by claiming that her father would “just kill” her if she ever started dating “a black.” Apparently, while her mother was teaching Kristy to embrace the onset of menses, her father was delivering a far less encouraging acknowledgement of her pubescence. Although I'd not previously heard such a threat voiced in my presence, the confidence of her delivery convinced me of both its authenticity and the applicability to my own survival as well. And then, off she roared – we would never again exchange more than a few glances and grins from across the school hallway.

*Luckily, I had failed to become a bargaining chip between a rebellious Kristy and her father, if only because she had taken his prior warnings to heart. Failing this, I would have made an easy mark for them both, given my inexperience at courting, as well as an acute longing for inclusion with my white classmates. Although her rejection may seem relatively benign to the reader at this stage, we should not overlook its relevance or utility, for Kristy was only verbalizing what many white females often fail to convey through their averted glances and forced grins. Whether prompted by fear or regret, Kristy knew well enough to dash my hopes right from the start – with so many white girls and women striving for the role of the polite and progressive *feminist*, rarely do we receive such direct, advance warnings onstage.*

*Nevertheless, it's doubtful that I could overstate how fateful this afternoon would become – not just during my adolescence, but for decades to follow. Prior to this inflection point of my eighth grade, I had been an honor roll student and one of the better athletes in my school; afterwards, my GPA would eventually fall below 2.0, and I stopped pursuing many sports and other extracurriculars altogether. As a teen black boy hungry for validation, I gravitated towards an ever more deviant and truant set of *friends*, while naively deducing that we all secretly shared a similar sense of youthful alienation and exclusion. Therefore, I kept lowering my own self-worth and standards, while withering under those white-hot klieg lights of the junior high school stage. In the end, I probably became best known as the first black class clown at my school; the one who was willing to entertain my classmates shamelessly/rebelliously/desperately, in exchange for their acceptance (if not just a few laughs) en route to the detention hall. Despite a series of brief and clumsy physical encounters that occurred towards the end of my grade school years, none of those white girls ever seemed to take me seriously, and absolutely none of them ever took me home to meet their father – proudly, fearfully, or otherwise. Instead, predictably, their laugh track was usually provided at my*

ultimate expense, and my cravings for white affection and validation would only become more poignant/persistent/unfulfilled in the coming years.

“The girls smile, and people forget, the snow packs as the skier tracks, people forget they’re hiding..”

Eminence Front, The Who

Our fallacious and troubled psyche

Especially when armed with their full quiver of digital applications, the rituals of cultivating and projecting one’s self-image obsess millions of faithful subscribers. As inhabitants of our wildly individualistic culture, most get driven by their psyche to dutifully create (and fastidiously update) their social media presence, in similar allegiance to the egocentrism that often commands the selection of the very cars that we drive, of the homes that we mortgage – even of the people that we eventually link up with romantically and/or matrimonially. Given our bottomless, national thirst for self-promotion, the ego and superego often meld to serve as our very own personal representative(s) on stages both public and private. Thus, our iron-clad commitment to individualism, and to out-do all others with our rampant *success*, usually comes at the expense of our authenticity. Even though the word “ego” may seem rather innocuous to you now, please do not underestimate the finesse or flammability of its repertoire. As fragile as it is unreasonable, the ego has become the psychic root of our national identity – it’s no wonder that we spend so much time shouting *the other* down, as the impatient child in most of us strongly prefers to be heard or seen (or *liked*) in the moment, than to toil offstage and wait for the delayed gratification that eventually springs from a commitment to living our lives with greater authenticity/humility/empathy.

Simply put, the ego provides the base for our precious self-image, “especially as the self is contrasted with another self or the world...the organized conscious mediator between the person and reality especially by functioning both in the perception of and adaptation to reality.” (1)

By the time of adulthood, one’s unexamined/unrealistic/unbridled ego may come to host interminable bouts of self-delusion, hindering our ability to be consistently and authentically present – whether in front of others or when simply facing the mirror in privacy. On a daily basis, if not hourly, the ego reliably guides us toward a distorted ideality, while we tend to ignore those awful realities that conflict with our most childlike projections and cherished presumptions. Over time, and quite predictably, we often become unable to reconcile our own distortions and delusions with those being just as strongly held by our neighbor, leaving our egos in a constant (shouting or shooting) battle to define ourselves (only) in relation to the *other*. Several layers beneath our fairly impenetrable and egotistical shell is where true vulnerability/humility/authenticity resides, but most of us try to avoid the discomforting soul work which enables those deeper digs. Instead, most of us would much prefer to rely upon a relatively small but nearly homogenous troupe of handsomely paid script readers, each one of whom relies heavily upon a professional team of producers and directors, writers, voice coaches, costume designers, prop masters, makeup artists, among other handlers, to project whatever passes for human authenticity from stages and onto screens across this land.

If you are getting the idea that the ego feeds directly from, and back into, one’s sense of entitlement, then you are on the right track – and this loop commonly draws tighter, as the conventional US resident (true

citizenship escapes so many) comes to feel entitled to an active social calendar, vibrant sex life, or the fulfillment of their presumed manifest destiny, by any means necessary. Again, the prevalence of these presumed entitlements embodies our individualistic/capitalistic/white supremacist culture, and the evidence is overwhelmingly and indisputably demonstrated every day and night across every single online dating platform that's out there. However, before (re)visiting those apps in pursuit of your presumed romantic destiny, at least two existential questions are worth your consideration right now (please also see appendix):

- a) If you don't know who the hell you are, then how can you authentically begin to understand who someone else is?
- b) What value does *love* hold, if you presume to love someone without the capacity to empathize with them?

Due to the fallibility and fragility of the human psyche, we must also examine the intervention of one's superego, which "represents internalization of parental conscience and the rules of society, and functions to reward or punish through moral attitudes, conscience, and a sense of guilt." (2) More specifically, we must learn to identify/interpret/address those internal conflicts that often arise between our ego and superego during life's journey. Through the machinations of my own fragile ego, for years I felt entitled to the acquisition of a blonde/buxom/white wife – one who could simultaneously propel and justify my arduous ascent up the corporate ladder. However, my superego would evoke an acute hesitancy to bring even the most promising candidates out to my black family's reunions, for fear of any resultant bitterness/resentment/confrontations. Perhaps the superego is best considered as our innermost critic.

Since the ego props up our ideal sense of self, as opposed to driving authentic self-knowledge, is there any reason to doubt that our most egocentric urges would be deeply connected to our choice of clothing, jewelry, and cars – or to any of the other objects or people that we collect and selectively display to others in the public space? For instance, if we seek to outwardly project an image of wealth, our ego eagerly points us toward luxury car brands, designer clothing, and garish *bling*. Additionally, if we dare to believe that anyone (or everyone) must be insufferably curious about today's lunch selection – well, that's our ego talking to us, as we hurriedly post our photos of kale salad and avocado toast on Instagram or Facebook. Ultimately, whenever we seek to impress our friends and family, especially by parading a string of attractive (even if vacant) dating partners, this becomes a clear signal of our ego's desperate longing for external sources of recognition/validation/envy. If you routinely wrestle with the question, "But, what will they think of me?" – this is a clear indication of your ego and superego at work.

As with objects and people, many of those actions or feelings that we also dare to demonstrate (or hide) in public are usually regulated by the interplay between our ego and superego. As we noticed during the protracted summer of 2020, many a white female is willing to march at a Black Lives Matter rally or two, outwardly displaying the progressive face of *tolerance* to the public eye. At the urgings of her ego, she may cast herself as the tolerant/modern/liberated white woman, across her entire niche of social media and dating apps, while her superego subconsciously harbors those very same presumptions of black inferiority that are commonly passed down in the privacy of the family hearth – reinforced thereafter in nearly every conceivable manner and venue. However, just as soon as her family/friends/associates begin to treat her as more of a *rioter* than just a mere *liberal*, her superego will likely drive her to hew more closely to

those presumptions of white supremacy before she opts out of subsequent marches altogether. Indeed, yesterday's tolerant, white *liberal* can readily transmogrify into tomorrow's vehement protestor against the Black Lives Matter movement, no matter how trendy it once became to briefly acknowledge the guilt and shame of their complicity in our subjugation. Meanwhile, we should also correctly (re)interpret the label of *tolerance* -- the ego is far more likely than is the soul, to conflate one's tolerance for *others* with a legitimate presumption of universal human equivalence. It's often the constant tension and interplay between the ego, the superego, and the soul that keep us awake at night, rendering the US as the undisputed global leader in terms of sleep aids/mattress vendors/opioid addictions/liquor outlets/guns and ammunition sales/murder and suicide rates, but I digress.

While helping us to interpret our assigned roles onstage, the superego also holds and defends our strongest presumptions and associations -- for many white people, these provide the irrational roots of the uniquely blind hatred that they've always reserved for the (unwitting) black stage dummies among us. Whenever black people fail to adhere to our assigned role and script, those that call for our ongoing objectification/subjugation/compliance, white people tend to respond with defensiveness/resentment/anger -- which may quickly suppress or override any of their latent fear/guilt/shame. If anyone should doubt the impact of the ego and superego upon our scripted national legacy, they only need to examine and consider the differential treatment historically offered to people representing various ethnic groups in this country. For example, those males with familial origins in China/Japan/India have not been lynched here by the thousands over time, only because far fewer white children were ever taught to hate them. On the other hand, nearly every single white father who has ever lived in this country has guided his child(ren) to reflexively hate (if not to merely disdain) those of us with ties to Africa/Central America/South America/the Indian Reservation, because we (still) represent the closest, most direct threat to his ego-fueled quest to remain the stage director (read: slaveholder) emeritus.

If sufficiently provoked by her latent guilt and shame, even the most highly-privileged white woman could drive downtown to attend a Black Lives Matter march, and park her luxurious SUV remotely inside a secured garage, before getting lost in the fray while sporting an equally fashionable yet meaningless *Demand Racial Justice* t-shirt. Having previously tweeted her remorsefulness into cyberspace, she might even hoist a placard that succinctly declares a sudden, overwhelming love for all black people -- although, in her escalating regret, she might overlook the many hundreds of thousands of us who have already been unjustifiably lynched in her (mother's and grandmother's) honor. After handsomely tipping the black valet attendant who retrieves her luxury car, she would be wise to hide or even discard any such props before returning to her gated subdivision. Perhaps sleep will come somewhat easier to her on that night, if her psyche temporarily suppresses its guilt and shame. Even so, she may wake the next day to the familiar, visceral twinge that likely stems from her latent fear of retribution at the hands of some black antagonist. If those fearful twinges become even more pronounced, say, in the seclusion of the voting booth, yesterday's white abolitionist is likely to mark her ballot in favor of today's unapologetic white supremacist misogynist -- as evidenced by the simple majority of white women who voted for Don Trump back in 2016 (and again in 2020!). (3, 4) Should she happen to have any children, one wonders how this white mother might respond when someone approximating that young black valet attendant happens to appear on her doorstep only days or weeks later -- especially while he is in clear pursuit of her daughter.