

The Great American Negro Experience

By

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The Great American Negro Experience

Notes

THIS PLAY MOVES FAST. This cast is ALL BLACK. Some characters are White, but are still played by the cast when mentioned.

There is no intermission.

Music - Music/ Music Cues helps build the play. Please pay attention to them.

Video - There are multiple video montages in this piece.

I did have the opportunity to make the music cues and video montages. If needed, you can contact me, the playwright, personally. If not, go wild.

Reference - This piece was inspired by a Disney World attraction at EPCOT Center.

WELCOME TO THE GREAT AMERICAN NEGRO EXPERIENCE

The only thing we see on stage is a wooden podium with a microphone, and a giant Black eagle that hangs about the podium. There should be a spotlight on the Eagle. Music should be playing as the theatre is being filled.

The song playlist should go accordingly..

1. *Smooth Criminal* by Michael Jackson - Munich Symphonic Sound Orchestra ver.
2. *Handsome and Wealthy* by Migos - Trap Symphony ver.
3. *End Of The Road* by Boyz II Men - (Acapella)
4. *My President* by Jeezy
5. *Who do you love?* by YG
7. *Formation* by Beyonce
8. *FUBU* by Solange
9. *Swag Surfin* by F.L.Y. (Fast Life Yungstaz)
10. *September* by Earth, Wind, and Fire.

As the last song dies down, the lights do the same. A CAST MEMBER enters and stands at the podium. The cast member is wearing a U.N.I.T.Y Pan-African inspired costume. This costume is basically an off putting dashiki with U.N.I.T.Y attraction pins decorated all around the chest area. Ya' know...for the amusement park feel.

CAST MEMBER

(SUPER DUPER EXCITED)

HELLO! HELLO! HELLO! HELLLLLOOOO EVERYBODY! YOU GUYS MADE IT INSIDE! CLAP YOUR HANDS! GET EXCITED!

The cast member waits for a response from audience.

CAST MEMBER

(SUPER DUPER EXCITED)

BOOO! YOU CAN TRY HARDER! ARE YOU READY FOR A DANDY RANDY GOOD OLE' TIME!

Waits for another response.

CAST MEMBER
(SUPER DUPER EXCITED)

WELLLL THAT'S AMAZIIIIINNNNNNGGGG! I WANT ALL OF YOU TO GIVE A HUGE AROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR YOURSELVES! CONGRATS EVERYONE! REALLY!!

Note: Cast member moves around while reciting lines.

CAST MEMBER
(Upbeat!)

My name is *murmurs a name* and AGAIN, thank you so much for coming! There were many spots you could have gone, but you came here for some super fantastic awesome fun. Here at the U.N.I.T.Y theme park, we're glad we can be of service to our visitors everyday, every month, and every year. For those who are still unfamiliar with our key word U.N.I.T.Y, remember we are "Universal Nations Integrated Together Yesterday." Our founder, Roy Norman, believed that creativity, imagination, and an open mind can lead to a more progressive and safer world. Without "The Great American Negro Experience" we would be nowhere without our sponsor.

BAM! An image of a black man in black face on a box of cereal, holding a bowl, appears behind the Cast Member.

CAST MEMBER

Coon Flakes. Coon Flakes, the flakes that are full of crunch..its nappy. Coon Flakes.

The image should disappears.

CAST MEMBER

Now remember! Here are the grounds rules. No cell phones. No flash photography. No video recording. And for *some* audience members...remember... no stealing, no face time calls, and please no gunshots. We've worked too hard for *yall* to act up.

(Begins to speak in Spanish)

Para nuestros huéspedes de habla española, sólo tienes que hacer lo que tienes que hacer. A nadie le importa. Que te diviertas.

[Translation: For our Spanish speaking guests, just do what you need to do. No one cares. Have fun.]

CAST MEMBER

Without further adieu, let's start the adventure. The Great Negro one.

Lights off on the cast member. The Black Eagle's spotlight grows bigger. The instrumental of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" plays. It dies down.

Two images of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois project on stage. Lights on Booker T. Washington standing in front of his image. He begins to recite the "Atlanta Exposition Speech."

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors and Citizens...

He smiles and looks at the audience.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Why, yes you...the citizens! Let me tell you all ...One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. I but convey to you...the sentiment of the masses of my race when I say that in no way have the value and manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized than by the managers of this magnificent Exposition at every stage of its progress.

W.E.B. DuBois stands in front of his image. He begins to recite "The Evolution of Negro Leadership" speech. His clothing should be matching the one in the projected image as well.

W.E.B. DUBOIS

...Mr. Washington is one of the most striking of these cases, and his autobiography is a partial history of the steps which made him a group leader. The way in which groups of human beings are led to choose certain of their number as their spokesmen and leaders is at once the most elementary and the nicest problem of social growth.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

(Surprised)

Oh, wow! Mr. W.E.B. DuBois. I didn't see you there!

W.E.B. DUBOIS

Well, isn't it my good ole pal Mr. Booker T. Washington!

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

(surprised)

Friends! Wow, I didn't think were friends Mr. Dubois.

W.E.B DUBOIS

Nonsense. We are here today for a greater purpose!

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

AH! YES! The alliance we have for the greater good of the Negro people.

They come together, and link arms together.

They unlock their arms., and they fold them as the stand back to back Buddy cop style.

W.E.B DUBOIS

You are correct Mr. Washington.

Booker T. Washington turns out to the audience with a certain glee on his face.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Ah! We forgot to introduce ourselves! Silly me. HELLO EVERYONE! My name is Booker T. Washington. I was an American educator, author, orator, and advisor to many presidents of THESE United States. Between 1890 and 1915, I was the dominant leader in the African-American community.

W.E.B DUBOIS

You forgot to mention a show off!

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Well, if you want be so forward about who I am....who are you?

W.E.B DUBOIS

WELL I AM W.E.B DUBOIS. I was an American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, and editor. I am the author of the acclaimed *The Souls of Black folk*, a cornerstone literary work of African-American literary history. A special bonus... I received a *secondary* bachelor's degree *cum laude* from Harvard University in 1890.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Mmmm, and they say I am the show off! Shall we begin?

W.E.B DUBOIS

Let us begin!

They both snap their fingers. The lights get brighter. “Lift Every Voice and Sing” begins to play again. When the music starts to play, they are in a different pose.

Note: At this point, the pose is up to the actors. Just know that it has to be corny and enthusiastic.

W.E.B DUBOIS

The images of us. The folk. The people. The African American people.

Both actors change poses.

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

As a wise author once said, “The past, the present and the future are really one: they are today.” These words bring light to a journey we are going to embark.

W.E.B DUBOIS

AH! Quoting Ms. Harriet Beecher Stowe?

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

WELL OF COURSE!

W.E.B DUBOIS

I am impressed of your vast knowledge. Sometimes I forget about your vast intellect.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

You always seem to forget my intellect Mr. DuBois.

W.E.B DUBOIS

Fair Mr. Washington. But sometimes you forget my point of view.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Let’s put our debates to the aside, and take a look at the beauty that is us!

Soon a VIDEO MONTAGE starts to play behind them. They both turnout and face the screen. They both should have their arms out, pointing to the screen, presenting it as a work of art.

The video montage showcases a whole bunch of Black people doing amazing things. Jesse Owens running, Michael Jackson dancing, Mariah Carey serving vocals, Martin Luther King marching, maybe some Whoopi Goldberg in *Sister Act*, and lastly we should see an image of **Barack Obama at his 2009 inauguration**. The last image is super **important. Do not take that out.** Whatever you think is mainstream black up to 2009, put it in this video montage.

The music gets louder. Booker T Washington gets up and walks up stage..

W.E.B DUBOIS

Always, human beings will live and progress to greater, broader, and fuller life. The cost of liberty is less than the price of oppression.

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

WELL!

W.E.B DUBOIS

What's that, sir?

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

Quoting yourself twice aren't you?

W.E.B DUBOIS

Because America... we *helped* build it. Therefore, I should quote myself twice. Don't ya think old friend?!

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

What sense of humor you have! Will you be bringing it along the ride?

Dubois doesn't answer for a quick second. He looks lost. Booker T. tries to alert DuBois.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

I SAID! Will you be bringing it along the ride Mr. Dubois!?

Dubois shuts down for a second. Something ain't right with the words...

W.E.B DUBOIS

AH! Sorry! Lost in the moment of the..the...THE HISTORY! To answer you Mr. Washington...perhaps! Our history is rich as the soil we ALL in habit!

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Our story is wider as the great big sky that we ALL share.

W.E.B DUBOIS

Deeper than the oceans and the seas we ALL sail-

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

-And wider then the green patches of earth we ALL stand on.

They change poses! Booker T is still keeping up with the act. DuBois poses with a lack of enthusiasm as before. He is thinking..

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

LET US COME TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION!

Booker T snaps his fingers and soon two ENSEMBLE MEMBERS come on stage and start waving the Pan African flags. The music gets louder.

W.E.B DUBOIS

LET THE LIGHTS SHIMMER IN OUR FESTIVITIES OF OUR CULTURE!

Booker T. looks at DuBois

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Are you ready to go back Mr. Dubois? A time before you and me?

DuBois freezes again. Booker T. taps his arms a little bit.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN A NAP BEFORE WE HAD COMPANY! I SAID.... MR. DUBOIS ARE YOU READY TO GO BACK IN TIME!

DuBois gets back into character. Still not enthusiastic.

W.E.B DUBOIS

Of course! I am a scholar of course! I was born to uncover the depths of the unknown.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

(to the audience)

He forgets that I am a scholar too!

He does a little chuckle.

W.E.B DUBOIS

WHY! Maybe if you act like it! We would have started already!

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

FINE THEN! Any last words before we start!

W.E.B DUBOIS

We welcome you all to our narrative-

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

ON THE-

W.E.B DUBOIS

Great-

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

AMERICAN-

W.E.B DUBOIS

Negro-

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

EXPERIENCE!

(to the audience)

You ready?

W.E.B DUBOIS

No.

Booker T. Washington looks at Dubois. Like an errie
“what the fuck” look.

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

No?

W.E.B DUBOIS

NO!

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

(to the audience)

What he is trying to say ladies and gentlemen that he is READY TO EXPERIENCE-

W.E.B DUBOIS

-Knock it off Gerald.

Uh-oh.

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

What? Gerald? Who is he?

W.E.B DUBOIS

I can't do it!

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

Do what?

W.E.B DUBOIS

Can we stop the music?

BOOKER T WASHINGTON

What?

(Loud whisper)

Seymour I told you not to do this.

SEYMOUR

No Gerald, I mean it this time! HEY, stop the music!

GERALD

GERALD?! I don't know who this Gerald person is! I AM BOOKER T.-

SEYMOUR

Gerald-

GERALD

BOOKER T WASHING-

SEYMOUR
YOU CAN STOP!

GERALD
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON!

SEYMOUR
ARE YOU REALLY?!

GERALD
YES I AM!

SEYMOUR
NO YOU'RE NOT!

GERALD
(to the audience)
PREPARE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN FOR THE FACES OF THE NEGRO RACE.

SEYMOUR
NO! I AM NOT GONNA PUT A SHOW FULL OF BULL SHIT.

Pause. Um..

GERALD
(out of character)
What are you doing?

The dancers stop dancing. The flag bearers keep going.
The music still plays. It's weird.

SEYMOUR
HEY! THE MUSIC! STOP THE MUSIC! STOP!

The music stops. The flag bearers are still going. Gerald
looks at the flag bearers.

GERALD
(to the flag bearers)
GUYS! Stop.

They stop.

SEYMOUR

I' m not doing it! Not anymore

GERALD

Are you out of your mind Seymour?

SEYMOUR

You are not my superior.

GERALD

Well I should be! Ever since you became an actor here, I've known what was best-

SEYMOUR

So you know what's best for me!

GERALD

Of course I DO! I am on YOUR side.

SEYMOUR

You have funny ways of showing it.

GERALD

This is not the time!

(trying to get back into the show)

MR. DUBOIS AND I ARE HAVING A LENGTHY DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW TO PUT ON THIS SPECTACLE FOR YOU ALL!

We should here a voice from the audience. They are not heard, but just seen.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

IS THIS A PART OF THE SHOW?

GERALD

YES!

AUDIENCE MEMBER

DOESN'T SEEM LIKE IT!

SEYMOUR

Someone gets it.

GERALD

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ON YOUR SIDE! Why can't you get that through your head.

SEYMOUR

-Don't get all snippy with me because I want to-

GERALD

-Tell it as it is ?! I heard it before. Let me tell you now, thats cute. REAL cute.

SEYMOUR

-Oh so I am cute!?

GERALD

-Yeah! Black MAN you cute! Looking real dumb with your suspenders out here tryin to find some realness in an amusement park show. Amuse my ass.

SEYMOUR

I thought we couldn't curse!

GERALD

Well! The magic is all gone now! Ain't it?

SEYMOUR

WELL.... NO ONE GIVES ME RESPECT ON WHAT I DO HERE!

GERALD

So you hate it here! We all hate it here! Don't be all bougie about it!

SEYMOUR

Oh so I am "bougie!"

GERALD

I SAID WHAT I SAID!

SEYMOUR

AGAIN! No one listens to me-

GERALD

Oh here you go!

SEYMOUR

Here I go what?! No one ever listens to me. Not you. Not the boss. Not the company of this evil magical place.

GERALD

SEYMOUR! I like Cheese it's and Bowney paper towels. I would like to keep buying them. IT'S CALLED BEING A GROWN MAN AND SHUTTING UP ABOUT IT.

(under his breath)

You fuckin the whole thing up. And now I have to explain this whole thing to corporate-

SEYMOUR

AND?! AND! IT AIN'T JUST BOUT THE MONEY! DAMN! YOU ACTUALLY LIKE-

GERALD

-Cheese its. Delicious.

SEYMOUR

(turns to the audience)

Foreal, ..do yall ACTUALLY think this shit is really true.

AUDIENCE MEMBER (OFF)

I MEAN....YEAH...KINDA. I DON'T KNOW.

GERALD

WELL, don't get your buttons twisted sir-

SEYMOUR

They don't have anything twisted.

GERALD

OKAY! OKAY! FINE! BUT THE QUESTION IS...WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW? HUH? WE GOT 75 MORE MINUTES UNTIL THOSE DOORS OPEN-

AUDIENCE MEMBER (OFF)

YEAH! THEY ARE CLOSED! WE CAN'T LEAVE UNLESS SOMEONE DIES.

Silence for a couple of seconds...

SEYMOUR
-Imma fuck it up.

GERALD
Excuse me?

SEYMOUR
Oh yeah!

GERALD
Yeah!?

SEYMOUR
IMMA FUCK IT UP!

GERALD
Who now?

AUDIENCE MEMBER (OFF)
HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO FUCK IT UP! HE SAID IT TWO TIMES
ALREADY!

SEYMOUR
Yeah! I'm gonna fuck it up.

Seymour looks around for a minute. He quickly snaps his fingers at the dancers and flag bearers.

SEYMOUR
Keep dancing and wavin them flags and stuff. YO PLAY THAT MUSIC BACK!

The music begins to play.

GERALD
What are you doing?

SEYMOUR
I'm tired of you *MR. BOOKER T!* Screw your money. I told you I was gonna do me!

Seymour leaves the stage. Gerald follows after him.

GERALD (OFFSTAGE)

YO, IF THE HEAD BOSS MAN COMES, I AIN'T AFRAID TO SNITCH.

SEYMOUR (OFFSTAGE)

YALL NIGGAS...WE DOIN THE SHOW OUR WAY.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 3 (OFF
STAGE)

OH WORD?

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 2 (OFF
STAGE)

'BOUT GOD DAMN TIME!

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 1 (OFF
STAGE)

YOU SURE?!

SEYMOUR

ERIC! GO BEHIND THE BOOTH AND TAKE CONTROL OF AUDIO AND
LIGHTS! MAKE IT LOOK *SPECTACULAR*.

We hear foot steps going up to the control booth. We
hear some muffles, trying to find the right equipment.
This lasts for a quick second until...