

THE HILL

an original screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

A passionate ORCHESTRAL SCORE (THE HILL MAIN THEME) plays on a variation of the ROOTS THEME.

One by one, SKETCHES are torn out of aged BOOKS and tossed into a FLAMING FIREPLACE. As each sketch is completely burned, another sketch is torn from a book and tossed into the fireplace.

SERIES OF SKETCHES

Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden.

The Tower of Babel is destroyed in Babylon.

Imhotep constructs the first pyramid for the Pharaoh Zoser.

The Pharaoh's daughter takes in baby Moses.

Greek philosophers study at the Library of Carthage.

Jesus is crucified on the cross.

The Pope hangs a painting of Black Madonna in his office.

Olmec Heads are constructed in South America.

The Moors invade Spain.

The Moorish Empire falls during the crusades.

Slaves are shipped to America on the "Good Ship Jesus."

Afrika is colonized.

CUT TO BLACK:

BLACK SCREEN

Pages are torn from a calendar which dial back the year. The years dial back from A.D. to B.C. until there is nothing left but darkness. These words appear where the calendar was:

IN THE BEGINNING...

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

There are three carved holes at the bottom of the screen: triangle, circle, square. A challenged HAND forces a SQUARE PEG into a round hole. Once the hand is removed from the square peg, it reveals the word:

ORIENTATION

CUT TO:

INT. BOXING RING - NIGHT

All of the KEY PLAYERS IN THE MOVIE - whom you're yet to meet - are spread out across the screen, eyes directed forward: the Pre-Alumni Association members in power suits, the Chapel Assistants in clergy collars, and the Disciples of ANKH in Afrikan robes. The Pre-Alumni Members, the Chapel Assistants, and Disciples of ANKH all wear BOXING GLOVES.

The floor of the boxing ring is covered with a FLAT MAP OF THE WORLD.

Meet ADAM (17), he's all that's American - baseball, Cracker Jacks, and apple pie. Adam wears a GOLD PINKY RING on his right-hand engraved with the initials "A.L.E." beneath a small DIAMOND.

Adam stands in the center of the screen. He wears a LETTERMAN SWEATER which reads: "THE HILL." He stares directly at the camera.

Now, say hello to CHANCELLOR DIX (58). He's light skinned and full of pretentious honor and overplayed grandeur.

Chancellor Dix sits at the judges' table garbed in a GENERAL'S MILITARY DRESS.

Adjacent to Chancellor Dix, garbed in a complimenting ADMIRAL'S MILITARY DRESS, is DEAN RICHARDS (52). He would be better placed as a Baptist Television evangelist instead of aging in academia.

LIESL, dressed as a ring card girl, walks into the center of the ring and holds up a RING CARD which reads:

(EVERY MAN 4 HIMSELF)

Adam smacks the gloves of the two students closest to him.

As all the students bump gloves together with a fighter form an opposing camp, a BELL RINGS.

CUT TO:

EXT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

College age Afrikan-American men squeeze through the doors of a rustic gym. The MARQUEE reads:

1991-1992 Hillfield University Freshman Orientation Week

ADAM (V.O.)

August 28th, 1990. Freshmen Week at Hillfield University, or "The Hill" as they like to call it. It's where boyhood ends and manhood begins. The Hill is a microcosm of the real world. What you experience here, you will experience in the world, but tenfold.

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

All of the freshmen sit on the floor of the gym.

Adam crouches next to T.J. and WINSTON. T.J. (18), dark skinned, is a pure blood bumpkin equipped with a homemade Jheri curl. Winston (17), light skinned, could be the spokesperson for "Snobs-R-Us".

TWELVE UPPERCLASSMEN DISCIPLES OF ANKH stand at attention underneath a basketball hoop in a straight line. They are all dark-skinned Afrikan-Americans. Each Disciple wears matching combat boots in addition to an array of traditional style "Back to Afrika" garb - robes, beads, and ankh necklaces. Each Disciple's head is evenly partitioned with sprouting dreadlock twists.

At the end of the row of Twelve Disciples stands a thirteenth Disciple, KAREEM (21), Assistant Ra of ANKH. He wears a different robe and his locks are long and flowing.

OSIRIS parades amidst the freshmen in a baggy cotton traditional Afrikan gown while he clutches a STAFF forged of hardened root. Osiris (22), is a light skinned, green eyed Afrikan-American man with a deep resounding commanding voice, long flowing locks, and lengthy bushy beard.

OSIRIS

My brothers, there are...
(raises staff)
Three things...

The Disciples snap to parade-rest and each present THREE FINGERS.

DISCIPLES

Three!

OSIRIS (CONT'D)

That I must leave you with before you go tonight.

Osiris lowers his STAFF.

The Disciples return to attention.

OSIRIS (CONT'D)

Number One. Be on time! A Hillfield Man is always on time. To be on time, means to be fifteen minutes early.

While you rush to get to work, in just enough time, to be late as hell, the white devils have been there for three hours.

They've read the paper, had breakfast together, and talked about you. Be on time!

The freshmen CHUCKLE.

T.J.

(during the silence)

Oh lawd, who the fuck is this guy?

OSIRIS

(shouts)

Who am I?

Osiris POUNDS HIS STAFF TWICE on the floor.

Kareem marches out of formation next to Osiris.

KAREEM

Sir, your name is Osiris, sir!

(roars)

Ra, of ANKH, sir!

Kareem marches back into formation and snaps to attention.

The freshmen LAUGH.

T.J.

Ra?

WINSTON

It's equivalent to basileus, but
in lieu of being a Greek Frat,
it's Afrikan.

T.J.

Basileus?

OSIRIS

Number Two.

Raises STAFF.

The Disciples snap to parade rest and each present TWO
FINGERS.

DISCIPLES

Two!

ADAM

(to T.J.)

Shhh. He's moving on to number
two.

Winston and T.J. look at Adam, and both ROLL THEIR EYES.

OSIRIS (CONT'D)

A Hillfield Man always has a pen.

Osiris removes a PEN from his gown.

The Disciples snap to attention. They flex INK PENS.

FRESHMEN VOICE

That's to write down the numbers
of our Springfield Sisters.

OSIRIS

The key to a good memory is writing
it down. You can always tell a
Hillfield Man. But, you can never
tell him much.

LAUGHS.

A few of the freshmen wave PENS.

OSIRIS (CONT'D)

And my brothers, **Number Three.**

The Disciples snap to attention.

DISCIPLES

Three!

Osiris stands next to T.J.

OSIRIS
 A Hillfield Man, never, never,
ever, has a Jheri curl.

PANDEMONIUM.

The freshmen lift T.J. up above their heads. They bounce him around like a beach ball.

DISCIPLES
 The Hill!

It's catchy. Freshmen repeat it at random.

Osiris POUNDS HIS STAFF TWICE on the gymnasium floor and outstretches his arms, gown draping, like Moses at the Red Sea.

The Disciples march in place.

Kareem leads the marching disciples through the sea of freshmen.

KAREEM
 (chants)
 RAIN...

DISCIPLES
 (chants)
 CAN'T STOP THE HILL!

KAREEM
 SLEET...

DISCIPLES
 (chants)
 CAN'T STOP THE HILL!

KAREEM
 (chants, imitating a
 girl)
 SPRINGFIELD...

DISCIPLES
 (chants)
 MAY SHOCK THE HILL!

ALL
 (chants)
 BUT, NO ONE STOPS THE HILL!

Freshmen quickly pick up the tune and all CHANT in unison ad nauseam.

Osiris boldly points his staff at HOSEA JOHNSON (23),
 Chancellor of the Chapel Assistants.

A clergy collar hugs Hosea's throat and a SCOFIELD BIBLE bound in a LEATHER CASE is perched under his arm. Hosea is accompanied by SEVEN CHAPEL ASSISTANTS each with matching collars and LEATHER BIBLE CASES.

Among the Chapel Assistants are MORGAN and EVERS. Morgan (20), would be better named as "Malcolm Machiavelli." Evers (22), Vice Chancellor of the Chapel Assistants, is a portly, jolly fellow who is far too nice to completely trust.

Hosea coldly locks EYES with Osiris.

Hosea removes a CIGAR from his coat pocket. He holds it erect, for a beat, next to his head, then bites the tip off, and spits it out in Osiris' direction.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

T.J. attempts to cross Osiris' path in order to talk to some of the fellas, but is met with the strong arming PALM of DISCIPLE JONAS (21), an over zealous follower.

DISCIPLE JONAS

Stand back, my brother. Osiris is coming through.

Osiris tunnels between two rows of marching ANKH Disciples. His gown flows behind him like the train of an Emperor returning home from a long day's conquest. Disciple Jonas leans over and whispers into Osiris' ear.

DISCIPLE JONAS (CONT'D)

You will be the next Hillfield University Student Government President.

Kareem steps out of line and puts his arm around T.J.

KAREEM

(whispers)

I used to have a Jheri curl, too. You can look a brother up if you want. I'm the R.A. on the first floor of Anderson Hall.

Winks.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

A lone STATUE of Frederick E. Hillfield towers in front of the barren walk of an ominous chapel.

INT. CHAPEL - STAGE - NIGHT

Hosea stands on a DIMLY LIT stage encapsulated by a VINTAGE PIPE ORGAN. Hosea is positioned in front of a podium upon which rests his Scofield Bible encapsulated in a soft leather case. The Chapel Assistants stand by close in a row of solidarity. Morgan is on Hosea's right-hand side and Evers is on Hosea's left-hand side.

HOSEA

In the words and the wisdom of the
old Chinese proverb, it is better
to light a lantern in the night
than it is to curse the darkness.

The house lights go down. A SILHOUETTED FIGURE OF REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. raises and LIGHTS A LANTERN. His back is to the audience.

[EXCERPT FROM THE REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S "I HAVE A DREAM SPEECH" DELIVERED ON THE STEPS OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON D.C. ON AUGUST 28, 1963]

MALE CHORALERS, dressed in all black, slowly walk up the aisles from the front of the chapel towards the back of the chapel. Each choraler carries a single LANTERN which illuminates his own face. They sing the WENDELL P. WHALUM ARRANGEMENT OF "LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING (THE NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM)."

KING SILHOUETTE

MALE CHORUS
(SINGS)

I have a dream,

LIFT EVERY VOICE

That one day this nation
will rise up and live
out the true meaning
of its creed: "We hold
these truths to be
self-evident: that all
men are created
equal."...

AND SING

TILL EARTH AND

HEAVEN RING,

RING WITH THE HARMONIES...

INT. CHAPEL - SEATS - NIGHT

Winston YAWNS.

WINSTON

I'm going to the block party.

Winston leaves.

T.J.
 (to Adam)
 Coming?

ADAM
 I'll catch up with you guys later.

INT. CHAPEL - STAGE - NIGHT

The Chapel Assistants join arms with Hosea, Morgan, and Evers.

The King Silhouette BLOWS OUT his LANTERN.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

JOHN MASON makes eye contact from the wing with Hosea who is still on stage. Hosea raises a LANTERN to his face and smiles.

John Mason (22), is the self-proclaimed despot and Premiere of the Pre-Alumni Association.

John is accompanied by five officers from the Pre-Alumni Association. They all wear power costumes: blue suits, white shirts, and red ties. Among the officers are TERRELL and LAWRENCE.

Terrell (21), Associate Premiere of the Pre-Alumni Association, is a dark skinned cavalier born leader.

Lawrence (21), is a wryly passive aggressive with the weight of the world in his electromagnetic glasses.

John whips out a CIGAR and LIGHTS it. Without breaking eye contact, he flicks ASHES onto the stage, then walks away.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

It's post performance hour. Hosea is well guarded by his posse of preachers - the Chapel Assistants.

RONALD ROLLINS (30), slick and clean-cut, the Resident Director of Packard Hall, warmly wraps one arm around Hosea and clasps Hosea's hand with the other. Ronald wears a CLERGY COLLAR.