

Dinosaurs in the Hood

Let's make a movie called *Dinosaurs in the Hood*.

Jurassic Park meets *Friday* meets *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

There should be a scene where a little black boy is playing with a toy dinosaur on the bus, then looks out the window & sees the T-Rex, because there has to be a T-Rex.

(It's a dinosaur movie, duh)

Don't let Tarantino direct this. In his version, the boy plays with a gun, the metaphor: black boys toy with their own lives the foreshadow to his end, the spitting image of his father. Fuck that, the kid has a plastic brontosaurus or triceratops & this is his proof of magic or God or Santa. I want a scene

where a cop car gets pooped on by a pterodactyl, a scene where the corner store turns into a battleground. Don't let the Wayans brothers in this movie. I don't want any racist shit about Asian people or overused Latino stereotypes.

This movie is about a neighborhood of royal folks—

children of slaves & immigrants & addicts & exiles—saving their town from real ass dinosaurs. I don't want some cheesy yet progressive Hmong sexy hot dude hero with a funny, yet strong, commanding Black Girl buddy-cop film. This is not a vehicle for Will Smith & Sofia Vergara. I want grandmas on the front porch taking out raptors

with guns they hid in walls & under mattresses. I want those little spitty

screamy dinosaurs. I want Cecily Tyson to make a speech, maybe 2. I want Viola Davis to save the city in the last scene with a black fist afro pick

through the last dinosaur's long, cold-blood neck. But this can't be a black movie. This can't be a black movie. This movie can't be dismissed

because of its cast or its audience. This movie can't be metaphor for black people & extinction. This movie can't be about race.

This movie can't be about black pain or cause black people pain.

This movie can't be about a long history of having a long history with hurt.

This movie can't be about race. Nobody can say nigga in this movie

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who can't say it to my face in public. No chicken jokes in this movie. No bullets in the heroes. & no one kills the black boy. & no one kills the black boy. & no one kills the black boy. Besides, the only reason I want to make this is for that first scene anyway: the little black boy on the bus with a toy dinosaur, his eyes wide & endless

his dreams possible, pulsing, & right there.

Danez Smith

Dear White America

with lines from Amiri Baraka & James Baldwin

I have left Earth in search of darker planets, a solar system that revolves too near a black hole. I have left a patch of dirt in my place & many of you won't know the difference; we are indeed the same color, one of us would eventually become the other. I have left Earth in search of a new God. I do not trust the God you have given us. My grandmother's hallelujah is only outdone by the fear she nurses every time the blood-fat summer swallows another child who used to sing in the choir. Take your God back: though his songs are beautiful, his miracles are inconsistent. I want the fate of Lazarus for Renisha, I want Chucky, Bo, Meech, Trayvon, Sean & Jonylah risen three days after their entombing, their ghost re-gifted flesh & blood, their flesh & blood re-gifted their children. I have left Earth, I am equal parts sick of your 'go back to Africa' as I am your 'I just don't see color' (neither did the poplar tree). We did not build your boats (though we did leave a trail of kin to guide us home). We did not build your prisons (though we did & we fill them too). We did not ask to be part of your America (though are we not America? Her joints brittle & dragging a ripped gown through Oakland?). I can't stand your ground. I am sick of calling your recklessness the law. Each night, I count my brothers. & in the morning, when some do not survive to be counted, I count the holes they leave. I reach for black folks & touch only air. Your master magic trick, America. Now he's breathing, now he don't. Abra-cadaver. White bread voodoo. Sorcery you claim not to practice, but have no problem benefitting from. I tried, white people. I tried to love you, but you spent my brother's funeral making plans for brunch, talking too loud next to his bones. You interrupted my black veiled mourning with some mess about an article you read on BuzzFeed. You took one look at the river, plump with the body of boy after boy after boy & asked 'why does it always have to be about race?' Because you made it so! Because you put an asterisk on my sister's gorgeous face! Because you call her pretty (for a black girl)! Because black girls go missing without so much as a whisper of where?! Because there is no Amber Alert for the Amber Skinned Girls! Because our heroes always end up strung out or strung up! Because we didn't invent the bullet! Because crack was not our recipe! Because Jordan boomed. Because Emmett whistled. Because Huey P. spoke. Because Martin preached. Because black boys can always be too loud to live. Because this land is scared of the Black

mind. Because they have sold the Black body & appropriated Soul. Because it's taken my father's time, my mother's time, my uncle's time, my brother's & my sister's time, my niece's & my nephew's time... how much time do you want for your progress? I have left Earth to find a land where my kin can be safe. I will not rest until black people ain't but people the same color as the good, wet earth, until that means something, until our existence isn't up for debate, until it is honored & blessed & loved & left alone, until then I bid you well, I bid you war, I bid you our lives to gamble with no more. I have left Earth & I am touching everything you beg your telescopes to show you. I am giving the stars their right names. & this life, this new story & history you cannot own or ruin

This, if only this one, is ours.