The Talk: Crucial Conversations for Contemporary Kids of Color in the New South

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The Talk

Crucial Conversations for Contemporary Kids of Color in the New South

by **Sonny Kelly** // *Illustrations by* **Bill Thelen**

The Talk is a one-person performance that draws on the voices of ancestors, elders, youths, and intellectuals to engage in the difficult conversations that we must have with our children as we prepare them to survive and thrive in a divided America. In this original, seventy-five-minute performance, I evoke over twenty characters who draw audiences into deep reflection about racial division, marginalization, and violence in America. This experience weaves together interactive theater, autoethnography, oral history, literature, a dynamic embodied performance, and a multimedia production to engage audiences in critical conversations around reconciliation, racial equity, and identity.

The Talk was born of a painful conversation that I had with my son in the spring of 2015. As I prepared to drop him off for a typical day of first grade at a typical elementary school in Fayetteville, North Carolina, the radio announced a typical narrative that I had managed to keep from my son's ears until that very moment. Together, we heard that protests and riots had broken out in the streets of West Baltimore, Maryland. I had no choice but to explain to my child the cause of all this mayhem: a black man named Freddie Gray had died—or was killed—while in the custody of Baltimore police. Looking into my back seat, I beheld a beautiful black boy, who would one day grow up to become a black man—a black man who would look

an awful lot like the pictures I had seen on CNN of the now-deceased Freddie Gray. I realized then that it was time to have a father-son talk about identity and survival in this great land we both called home. But, how do you explain to a child that he faces a world that often condones and enacts violence against bodies that look like his? How do you explain to a seven-year-old his all-encompassing blackness?

I imagine that my father, a man who survived a harrowing childhood in a small segregated town in South Texas in the 1940s and '50s, once asked himself these same questions. He fled the Jim Crow South for a new life in Southern California, where he met my mother and started a family in the land of perpetual sunshine, pop culture, and opportunity. Decades later, here I was raising my own son in a New South, much unlike the one my father had fled, and yet still not entirely my own.

It took me a week to digest the anguish that this awkward conversation with my son had caused me. The result was "Sterling's Story," a short narrative about my love for him and my concern for his safety in a racialized world. When I learned that "Sterling's Story" was part of a larger phenomenon known as "The Talk," I knew that I had to do more with it. What has emerged is a dynamic piece of theater that is, at times, more experience than performance. As I move between the roles of actor, facilitator, storyteller, and concerned parent, I pull audience members deeper into the experience by employing call-and-response, direct address, and by calling for them to interact directly with one another. As a result, no one is left to "sit back and enjoy the show." Instead, *The Talk* empowers and enlivens audience members to lean in and experience with me what Augusto Boal calls "the therapeutic stage," where we are all encouraged to imagine new possibilities together. Today, I perform *The Talk* for diverse audiences at universities, schools, theaters, and communities across the United States. Here, I share salient excerpts from the full production.[1]

The Talk

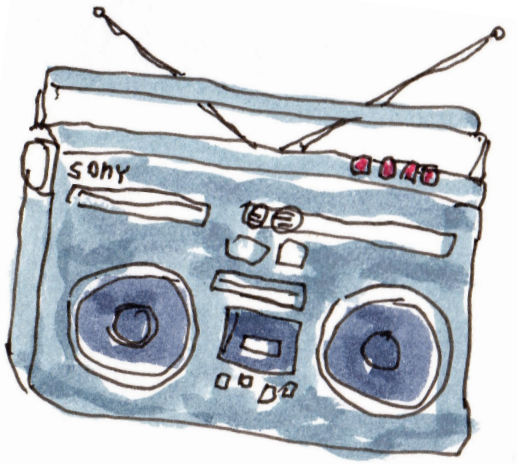
ACT 1, SCENE 1: CRASH!

There is a single chair in front of a large projection screen at center stage. There is a large desk and office chair, a chalkboard, and a few bookshelves lined with books on stage right. A comfortable lounge chair and small wooden stool on stage left. Books are stacked around the space on multiple wooden surfaces. A spotlight reveals SONNY, a forty-something black man sitting in the chair at center with his hands at the 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock positions, gripping an invisible steering wheel.

FEMALE SINGER, *sings Oscar Brown Jr.'s "Brown Baby."*

"Brown baby brown baby
As you grow up
I want you to drink from the plenty cup
I want you to stand up tall and proud
I want you to speak up clear and loud
Brown baby

Brown baby, brown baby
As years roll by
I want you to go with your head held high
I want you to live by the justice code
I want you to walk down the freedom road
Brown baby."[2]



SONNY.

"I have only a minute.
Only sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me—can't refuse it.
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it,
But it's up to me to use it.
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute—
But eternity is in it."[3]

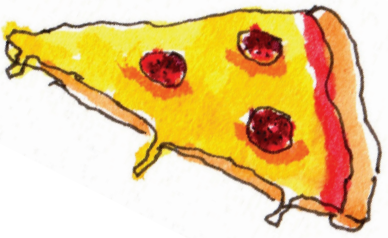
(*Peers into the back seat via the rearview mirror as he drives.*) All right, you got everything? Backpack, lunch, glasses . . . Glasses? C'mon, man, you know the rules. Glasses should be where? In the case or . . .

STERLING. On my face! I got 'em, Daddy!

SONNY. That's right! Looking good, my man! Hey, and don't leave any fruits or vegetables in that lunch bag today. Eat it all, you hear me? Don't you bring another piece of broccoli back to my house! You understand me?

STERLING. Ugh. Yes, sir. But, Daddy, sometimes I run out of time at lunch.

SONNY. I bet you don't ever run out of time to eat pizza or drink chocolate milk, do you? Mm hmm. Right! Don't you bring another piece of broccoli back to my house! You got that?



STERLING. Yes, sir.

SONNY. Hey. Hey. Who loves you?

STERLING. Daddy and Mommy.

SONNY. Who?

STERLING. Daddy and Mommy!

SONNY. That's right! How much do we love you?

STERLING. Mucho, mucho, mucho.

SONNY. And what's that mean?

STERLING. A lot, a lot, a lot.

SONNY. You got it! A lot, a lot, a lot! (*Turns on the radio.*)

RADIO. Our top story is in Baltimore, where rioting has broken out in the streets. (*A projection of rioting in Baltimore appears on the screen.*) This violence comes just hours after Freddie Gray, who died under mysterious circumstances last week, while in police custody, was laid to rest . . .

SONNY, *turns off the radio.* Son, we need to talk. (*A loud whoosh is heard to indicate a warp of time and space. The projection screen fades to black.*)

ACT 1, SCENE 2: DEFINING "THE TALK"

SONNY propels himself from the chair. He turns around, crosses to the table stage right, picks up a pair of glasses and puts them on, becoming the PROFESSOR. The PROFESSOR gazes over his audience as if they are students in a classroom.

PROFESSOR. (*A projection of a flowing American flag appears on the screen.*)
Langston Hughes:
"Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)" (*The projection screen fades to black.*)[4]

Good evening, friends! It's about time we had a talk. In this often confusing, always uncertain, painfully thought-provoking age of the postcolonial, postmodern, post-racial, post-whatever else you want to call it. Where black lives matter, blue lives matter, and all lives matter, but somehow we all end up sadder. We need to talk. I don't have time for platitudes or political correctness, so, if you don't mind, I'm just gonna tell it like it T-I-is! As the Good Book says, the TRUTH shall set you free. Amen? But, first, I need to know something, my friends. Can we talk? No. Really. Can we talk? Thank you.[5]

(*Writes "The Talk" on the chalkboard.*) "The Talk," as it has come to be known, is a resounding epidemic in communities of color in these United States. It is an activated artifact of an age long gone. A new craze based on an old habit. It's the kind of talk that Mamie Till (*a closeup of Emmett Till's face appears on the projection screen*) had with her only child, fourteen-year-old Emmett, back in the summer of 1955, as she nervously packed him up for a trip from his native Chicago to visit her family down in Money, Mississippi. On that sunny August morning, Emmett was warned in the deep, desperate tones of a mother who knew all too well the dire danger that Jim Crow justice posed to the bodies of bright black boys from Chicago. She called him by his nickname . . .

MAMIE, *sitting in the chair center stage*. Bo! Now, you listen here! Please, Bo. Just put a handle on all those "yes"es and "no"s. Say, "Yes, ma'am," or "No, sir." Say, "Yes, Mr. So-and-So," and "No, Mrs. So-and-So."[6]

PROFESSOR. That "talk" turned out to be their last. Just a few days later, Emmett Louis Till would be beaten, murdered. (*The projection screen fades to black.*) His body, tossed into the Tallahatchie River, by Roy Bryant and his half-brother J. W. Milam. Two angry white men who merely suspected that Emmett had flirted with a white woman—Roy's wife, Carolyn. Shortly after Roy and J. W. were found not guilty by a jury of their peers, they openly admitted to the murder. Mamie insisted on an open-casket funeral.[7]

MAMIE. (*to audience*) Have you ever sent a loved son on vacation and had him returned to you in a pine box, so horribly battered and waterlogged that someone needs to tell you this sickening sight is your son, lynched? Let the people see what I've seen. I think everybody needs to know what has happened to Emmett Till.[8]

PROFESSOR. Now, I'd like to think that times have changed since 1955, right? Well, back in 2012, on Sunday, February 26th, in Sanford, Florida, a seventeen-year-old black boy named Trayvon Martin (*a close-up of Trayvon appears on the projection screen*) was stopped by a neighborhood watch patrol named George Zimmerman, a man who merely suspected that Trayvon was a criminal. Armed with only a bag of Skittles and a can of Arizona Tea he'd just purchased from a convenience store, Trayvon was stopped, shot, and killed that night. (*The projection screen fades to black.*) The following year, shortly after George Zimmerman was found not guilty of Trayvon's death, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder addressed the NAACP. (*The NAACP emblem appears on the projection screen.*)

ERIC HOLDER. Trayvon's death last spring caused me to sit down to have a conversation with my own fifteen-year-old son, like my dad did with me. This was a father-son tradition I hoped would not need to be handed down. But as a father who loves his son and who is more knowing in the ways of the world, I had to do this to protect my boy. I am his father, and it is my responsibility not to burden him with the baggage of eras long gone but to make him aware of the world that he must still confront. (*A projection of a flowing American flag appears on the screen.*)[9]

PROFESSOR.

"Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)" (*The projection screen fades to black.*)[10]

I recall the words of Howard L. Craft in his piece "Grandma's Letter to Peanut During His Freshman Year." (*Sits in chair and becomes GRANDMA.*)

GRANDMA. I was bragging on you to Mrs. Johnson, Sunday. My big rusty butt grandson is a freshman in college. I remember when you was playing with Power Rangers, now look at you, all growed up smart and handsome. Still, there some things I want you to keep in mind. I ain't worried bout you studying, you've always made A's. Your mama and your daddy done talked to you about drinking and them fast tail gals so I ain't much concerned about that neither.

Just remember that college you go to is mostly white and you gon' have plenty of white friends but the world y'all share ain't the same. When you get stopped by the police put your hands on the wheel and look straight ahead, don't make no quick movements. Say, "Yes, sir" and "No, sir," and don't ask no questions. Just take the ticket and we'll deal with it later and if the lights ever come on behind you at night, you don't stop until you're in a public place. I know you done heard this a hundred times, but the time you don't heed it, we'll be headed to Greer's funeral home to make arrangements. My heart couldn't take that, baby. (*Sits up. A projection of a flowing American flag appears on the screen.*)[11]

PROFESSOR.

"O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this 'homeland of the free.')" (*The projection screen fades to black.*)[12]

"The Talk" has emerged as a sort of undesired discursive heirloom. A habitual hand-me-down from generation to generation. It is a persistent reminder that on any given day in this great land, the location, disposition, and recognition of any particular black body may place that black body in the crosshairs of imminent deadly force. (*Crosses to center chair.*)

SONNY. Son. Son . . . (*Rises and crosses to stage left to put on POP's hat and sit in the chair on stage left.)*

ACT 1, SCENE 3: "THE TWO AND THE TEN"

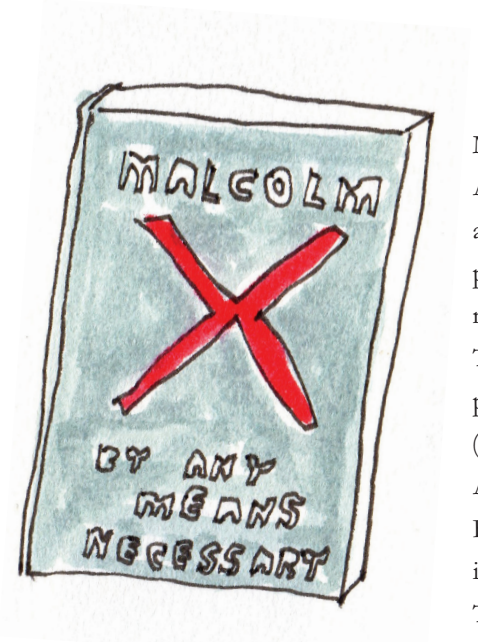
POP. Son! Pay attention, now! Listen! Keep your hands on the two o'clock and the ten o'clock! Now, don't reach for nothing until the officer asks you for it. Have your license ready, and always keep your registration card in the glove compartment, on the top, where you can get to it. And, don't forget your insurance card! They always try to get you with the insurance. Have that ready too. Just follow the officer's instructions and answer his questions. And make sure you call him "sir" or "officer." Understand? Boy, you listening to me?

SONNY. I got it, Pop! I got it! Two and the ten, license, registration, insurance. I got it! (*To audience*) It's 1992. I'm sixteen and about to get my driver's license. And, outside of girls, it's the only thing I can think about! So, about a year before this, a man named Rodney King (*a video of the 1991 Rodney King beating plays on the projection screen*) was beaten almost to death after he was pulled over by Simi Valley police officers, which led to the famous L.A. riots just about one hour from my house. I mean, you could see the smoke from the freeway. (*The projection screen fades to black.*) But I felt safe in the suburbs of Orange County. There were lots of kids of color in my community. Latino, Asian, South Asian, Pacific Islander, Arab, Persian, you name it. We had it! Only their races were named for geographical locations and languages, while mine was just a color. I was always . . .

"That black kid over there!"
"Your hair is so cool! Does it get wet? Can I touch it?"
"Dude! Do you rap! Oooh, spit some rhymes for us, bro!"
"*Oye, mira este mayate. ¡Baila negrito!*"
"Hey, *Mi Dang*, you play basketball?"
"You like her? Well, you know she doesn't like black guys, right?"

Being the only black kid in most of my classes and social settings wasn't all bad. Hip-hop was king, which gave me automatic street cred. (*'90s hip-hop music plays and a close-up of sixteen-year-old SONNY is projected onscreen as SONNY dances across the stage.*) So I entered the world each day with an impervious armor, fortified by dance and diction lessons from my cousins in South Central L.A.

"Whattup, Cuz!"
"Bet!"
"Fo' Sho'!"



My breastplate was a leather medallion with the African continent embroidered onto it in red, black, and green. You know what I mean? My helmet was a prominent, perfectly picked hi-top fade, and I shielded myself from any haters with a black Bart Simpson T-shirt that I got from the Slauson Swap Mall that simply read, "It's a Black thing, you wouldn't understand." (*Music stops.*) Meanwhile, I took it upon myself to read Alex Haley's *Roots* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. But, still, where I lived, we didn't talk much about racism or oppression, discrimination or police brutality. That was stuff that used to happen back in the day, you know? My parents had moved here from a mostly black neighborhood in South Central just before I was born. They said they wanted a better life for my brothers and me. (*The projection screen fades to black.*)

PROFESSOR. Knock, knock! (*The audience responds, "Who's there?"*) Ghetto (*The audience replies, "Ghetto who?"*) (*Writes "Ghetto" and "Suburbs" on the chalkboard.*) Get to the sub-urbs if you want the best schools, safe streets, and a better life for your family. For decades, blacks were actively excluded from white neighborhoods by discrimination and predatory lending. White homeowners knew that having even one black family in their neighborhood would prove poison for property values—so they kept blacks out by any means necessary. The color line had a red line. But, by the mid-1970s, anti-discrimination laws like the Fair Housing Act made it possible for some suburbs to become the upwardly mobile black family's Ellis Island. (*An aerial view of the Statue of Liberty appears on the projection screen.*)

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"

. . . as long as they have no criminal record, good credit, and can make this mortgage payment. Not to mention a car, car insurance, and a driver's license. (*The projection screen fades to black.*)[13]

SONNY. So I finally got my license after taking the test twice. What's funny is my father actually taught driver's ed, so I really should've done a lot better on the test. But I remember that Pop taught his students that keeping their hands on "the two and the ten" allowed them

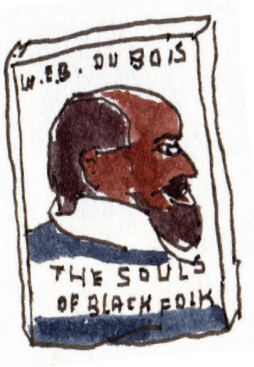
to react quickly and defensively while the vehicle was in motion. But for me the two and the ten was also a lesson in the business of survival when the vehicle was stopped. Within a few months I learned firsthand the value of that lesson. And I was reminded of who I was, and where I was. (*Sits down in the chair at center stage.*)

Some friends and I went over to Newport Beach, a wealthy, mostly white area. I drove my dad's old pickup truck, loaded with a bunch of brown and black kids from Santa Ana—a mostly working-class city. I guess I was just excited because everybody was like, "Sonny, dude! Turn right. The beach is over there! The beach is over there! Make a right! Make a right!" So, I turned right . . . onto a one-way street directly in front of an oncoming police cruiser. (*A police car siren blares while blue and white lights flash onstage. SONNY rises, crosses stage left, and puts on a pair of dark aviators.*) The officer stepped out of his vehicle.

OFFICER, *strolls around the car.* What are you homeboys doin' out here today? Goin' to the beach, huh? You know what you did, right? Right. *That* is a one-way street. License and registration, please. Proof of insurance. This car is registered to a Berry Kelly. Who's that? . . . Your father, huh? (*Scans entire vehicle with his eyes.*) Okay. Here's your ticket. You can appeal it by following these instructions on the back, or just pay the fine here and mail it in by this date. You homeboys be safe.

SONNY. Yes, sir. (*Watches OFFICER walk away.*) I don't think he ever called me by my name. I wondered what "homeboy" meant to him.

PROFESSOR. Homeboy! What's up, homeboy! Homegirl! Homey! Homes! (*Greeting audience members with fist pounds and high fives.*) According to Merriam-Webster (*the definition of "homeboy" appears on the projection screen*), the word "homeboy" means "a boy or man from one's neighborhood, hometown, or region." It also means . . . (*"A fellow member of a youth gang" appears on the projection screen. SONNY selects an audience member.*) Will you please read that for me? One word, two very distinct definitions. (*The projection screen fades to black.*)[14]



In *The Souls of Black Folk,* written back in 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois explained black Americans' experience: "One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." You see,

whether we like it or not, these two souls daily navigate a precarious collision course; and it's only a matter of time before . . . (*SONNY reluctantly returns to the chair on the center stage.*)[15]

ACT 1, SCENE 4: OF BLACK BOYS AND MEN

SONNY. It's spring 2015. April. My son is seven, in the first grade . . . (*SONNY sits in the chair on center stage and looks into the imaginary rearview mirror.*) You got it! A lot, a lot, a lot! (*SONNY turns on the radio.*)

RADIO. Our top story is in Baltimore where rioting has broken out in the streets. This violence comes just hours after Freddie Gray, who died under mysterious circumstances last week, while in police custody, was laid to rest . . . (*SONNY attempts to turn off the radio, but the sound persists. The radio sound melds into a cacophony of multiple voices from multiple stories: "A black man . . . Sources say a black man was seen . . . An unarmed black man . . . Witnesses saw a black man . . ." Images of dead, arrested, and injured black men appear on the screen. SONNY climbs up the back of the chair trying to flee an inescapable scene. Meanwhile, multiple images of black men being arrested, incarcerated, and injured show on the projection screen.*)

SONNY slides the PROFESSOR's glasses back on as he stands boldly in the chair.

PROFESSOR. Did you hear that? A *black* man! Let that sink in. Feel that. In your skin. In your guts. In your bones. Feel what it does to you. A "black man." (*Writes "Black Man" on the chalkboard.*) My friends, whether we like it or not, that term is more loaded than all the 12-gauge shotguns, .357 Magnums, and .45-caliber pistols that the Black Panther Party (*a photo of the Black Panthers on the steps of the California state capitol with firearms appears on the screen*) brandished when they scaled the steps of the California State Capitol back in '67, declaring their human rights before God and Governor Ronald Reagan himself! (*The projection screen fades to black.*)

Say it with me: "Black man." Come on, let me hear you! Say it. "Black man." Say it again. I want you to take a moment to consider what that term means to you. Now, if I'm being honest, it's a little unfair of *me* to ask *you* what the term "black man" means to *you*, when the truth is, we don't even really know, do we? It depends doesn't it? The age of said black man, his size, his dress, his profession, his criminal record; not to mention, the time of day in

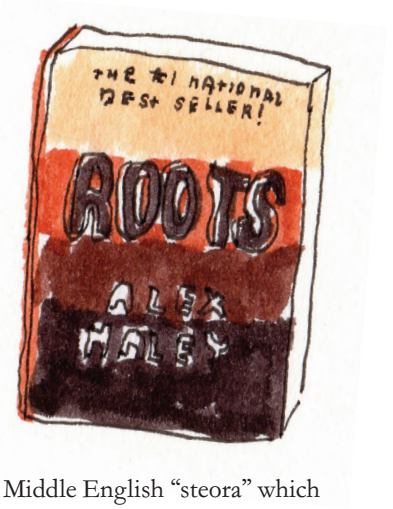
which you encounter this black man. And, of course, as the real estate agents have taught us: *location, location, location*. A theater, a classroom, a city street, a back alley, a prison, a football field. This colonized, often brutalized and criminalized infrahuman—the black man in the western world—has learned that his value, his meaning, his humanity, his very *life* depends in any given moment upon a constellation of factors that far exceed his own reach.

So it's Sunday, April 12th, 2015, and an unarmed black man (*an image of Freddie Gray's arrest appears on the projection screen*), just twenty-five years old, is arrested by the Baltimore police for reasons that are rather inconsequential now. By Saturday, April 18th, this black man is in a coma caused by what the doctors call "forceful trauma." (*The projection screen fades to black.*) On Sunday, April 19th, at approximately 7:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, this black man is dead.

Between April 19th and May 6th, the streets of West Baltimore are ablaze. Protests, riots, looting. (*Images and video of protests, riots, and looting in West Baltimore show on the projection screen.*) A state of emergency is declared in the city limits. At least twenty police officers injured, twenty-seven drugstores looted, sixty structure fires, 150 vehicle fires, more than 250 people arrested, over 300 businesses damaged; thousands of police and Maryland National Guard troops deployed. All this cost the City of Baltimore an estimated $20 million! When the smoke cleared, six police officers were accused of this black man's death. Three were acquitted. Three had all charges dropped. There were zero convictions. All of this, because of one black man? One black man who was some mother's child. (*A close up of Freddie Gray appears on the projection screen.*) Some father's son. Some grandparent's hope, pride, and joy. One black man named Freddie Gray. Freddie Gray was a man. Excuse me. Freddie Gray was a *black* man, who, like Emmett, Trayvon, Tamir Rice, Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Terence Crutcher, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Stephon Clark, and so many others who have perished at the hands of people with power and pistols. Like them, Freddie was once just a little black boy. (*A photo of Freddie Gray as a child appears on the projection screen. SONNY returns to the car, and as he sits the projection screen fades to black.*)[16]

SONNY. He has this beautifully brown chocolate skin that he gets from his mother. Deep, dark brown eyes that hide behind the rounded folds of his cheeks when he smiles. He got those from me. Dark, tightly curly hair designed by God to grow from his scalp and protect his precious brain from the intense African sun. His name is Sterling. I remember the first day I met him. My Sterling. I remember staring into his new face, his little brown

eyes squinting at the glare of the hospital lights. And the kid's got a pair of lungs on him. I mean, he is wailing! I look at his mother—weak, exhausted, but somehow more angelic and alluring to me than ever before. She gives me the nod and it's like that scene out of *Roots,* you know, when Kunta Kinte's dad holds him up in the moonlight. I'm dating myself. It's like that scene out of *The Lion King* when Rafiki holds up Simba on Pride Rock. Only instead of a lush African forest or a sprawling savannah, I'm in a hospital with all these people and bright lights and this baby who is screaming like somebody's killing him. "You are Sterling." He stops crying. Our eyes lock . . .



FEMALE SINGER, sings *Brown's "Brown Baby."*
"Brown baby, brown baby
As you grow up
I want you to drink from the plenty cup
I want you to stand up tall and proud
And I want you to speak up clear and loud
Brown baby"[17]

PROFESSOR. Sterling! Born on Saturday, December 8th, 2007, in San Antonio, Texas. "Sterling" comes from the Middle English "steora" which means "star," followed by the diminutive suffix "-ling." Sterling literally means "little star."

SONNY. Figuratively, it means "pure and thoroughly excellent," as he is, and always will be in my eyes. And in those big brown eyes of his, I can see infinite possibilities! But today . . . But today . . . But, today, when I peer into the back seat, all I can see is a *black boy* who will one day become a black man.

Son, we need to talk.

NOTES

1 I developed *The Talk* alongside my director and dramaturge, UNC-Chapel Hill Artist-in-Residence Joseph Megel. *The Talk* made its professional debut in January 2019 at the Durham Fruit and Produce Company (now known as The Fruit) as a coproduction of StreetSigns Center for Literature and Performance, Bulldog Theater Ensemble, and UNC-Chapel Hill's Department of Communication.

Contributors included video designer Zavier Taylor, audio designer Michael Betts II, lighting designer Elizabeth Grimes Droessler, set designer Rob Hamilton, stage manager Carol Land, and dramaturge Elisabeth Lewis Corley. Special thanks to Elenah G. Kelly, vocalist on the show's original soundtrack, who has lovingly sacrificed much time and energy supporting this effort and is the amazing mother of our beautiful brown babies, Sterling and Langston. Augusto Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*, trans. Adrian Jackson (New York: Routledge, 1995), 23–24.

2 "Brown Baby," track 9 on Oscar Brown Jr., *Sin & Soul*, Columbia CL 1577, 1960, 33⅓ rpm.

3 Randal Maurice Jelks, *Benjamin Elijah Mays: Schoolmaster of the Movement, A Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 189.

4 Langston Hughes, "Let America Be America Again," in *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, eds. Arnold Rampersad and David Roessel (New York: Vintage Classics, 1995), 189.

5 John 8:32.

6 *DAR HE: The Lynching of Emmett Till,* directed by Rob Underhill (Durham, NC: Mike Wiley Productions, 2013), DVD.

7 *Time Photo*, "When One Mother Defied America: The Photo that Changed the Civil Rights Movement," *Time,* July 10, 2016, http://time.com/4399793/emmett-till-civil-rights-photography/.

8 Editorial Board, "Everybody Needed to Know What Happened to Emmett Till," *Chicago Tribune*, July 12, 2018, https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/editorials/ct-edit-emmett-till-murder-mississippi-20180712-story.html; Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954–1965* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), 44.

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