

~~I can get a longer pair of pants. He says, "Don't you know it's easier for me to find a shorter nigger than it is for me to get a longer pair of pants? Why don't you just scroonch down in them."~~

~~So I scroonched down in them and became a pretty good waiter. I bet I'm the only one here who can bone and serve a trout on a moving train without putting any in the customer's lap.~~

~~(A projection of alluring 1930s co-eds in stylish hats covers the back wall.)~~

Start Here

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I arrived at Lincoln College with a comic book in my back pocket and a highly cultivated interest in the female gender.

I was pinned to seven co-eds. All at the same time! I'd already decided to become a dentist and never lift anything heavier than a poker chip.

Then one day we go in to town to see a movie and after we buy our tickets, they tell us we have to go around to the back and up the stairs to sit in the colored balcony—the crow's nest.

I'll tell you something. If enforcement hadn't been so such a problem they would have made a law that said, "white folks get to laugh first".

We asked for our quarters back and they refused. We got angry and pulled down a bunch of curtains and broke a door and ran like hell.

We were kind of pleased with ourselves, but that night I couldn't sleep. I lay there thinking, am I going to go through life being humiliated because of the color of my skin?

One of the boys was named Langston Hughes. Yes, Langston Hughes—he was already writing poetry.

You see, Lincoln was an all-Negro college with all white professors, and Langston was a fighter. He'd organized a campaign to get Lincoln to hire some Negro professors. The next day I went to Langston and said, "I want to work with you."

We had our first Negro professor within a year and I learned something from Langston—one person *can* make a difference. He got me committed. I put away the comic books, stopped playing pinochle, started reading history and joined the debate team.

And then one day I met the most beautiful and smart and sensitive seventeen year old co-ed you ever saw. Everyone called her Buster. I told Buster she could wear my pin. Buster informed me that I was going to marry her.

And that's just what I did.

By then I knew I wanted to go to law school, so I got out my white jacket to go make some money at the Gibson Island Club, where my daddy was the head waiter.

*(Period music. A projection of an elegant Southern dining club.)*

One night a United States Senator—a very crude individual—comes in with a bevy of beautiful women and sits down at a table under a portrait of some great confederate general. He spots me.

He says, "Hey, nigger." Now I don't like the idea of his calling me that, not one bit. But I go over. "Nigger, I want service at this table." Well, I give him the service and he keeps callin' me that and I'm liking it less and less. But when he gets up he lays twenty dollars on the table. Now this crude fellah keeps comin' to the club and keeps on leaving me twenty-dollar tips. Those twenties added up.