

Paris is Burning by Jennie Livingston (1992)

[Winner of 8 major awards, including NY film critics, LA film critics, and Sundance Festival Grand Jury prize.]

(modern dance music playing)

HE'S READY

TO BUST THEIR ASS.

Kim Pendavis:

I REMEMBER MY DAD, HE SAID

"YOU HAVE THREE STRIKES

AGAINST YOU IN THIS WORLD

"EVERY BLACK MAN HAS TWO--

"THAT THEY'RE BLACK

AND THEY ARE MALE.

"BUT YOU'RE BLACK

AND YOU'RE A MALE

"AND YOU'RE GAY.

"YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE

A HARD FUCKING TIME.

"IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO THIS

"YOU'RE GOING

TO HAVE TO BE STRONGER

THAN YOU EVER IMAGINED."

YOU HAVE TO OPEN THE DOOR.

YOU ALL HAVE

TO OPEN THAT DOOR TOO.

(funky dance music playing)

(loud cheering)

Emcew

GET OFF THE FLOOR.

GET OFF THE FLOOR!

LEARN IT AND LEARN...

IT...WELL.

ALL RIGHT,

MISS LABELLE.

ALL RIGHT!

LOOK AT THOSE!

DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY

WHO I AM AND ALL OF THAT?

Woman:

PEPPER LABEIJJA?

I AM PEPPER LABEIJJA

THE LEGENDARY MOTHER

OF THE HOUSE OF LABEIJJA.

NOT THE FOUNDER.

KRISTA WAS THE FOUNDER.

I JUST RULE IT NOW...

WITH A SOFT GLOVE.

AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME

TO BE THE MOTHER

'CAUSE IT'S SO MANY LITTLE KIDS

THAT I HAVE TO LOOK OUT FOR

ALTHOUGH

THEY DON'T LISTEN TO ME

AND THEY BUCK MY AUTHORITY

I STILL THINK

I RULE IT PRETTY WELL.

THEY LIKE ME

AND I'VE BEEN AROUND

FOR TWO DECADES...

REIGNING, THAT IS.

I'VE GOT MORE GRAND PRIZES

THAN ALL THE REST.

(dance music playing)

GAY PEOPLE--

MEN GATHER TOGETHER

UNDER ONE ROOF

AND DECIDE

TO HAVE A COMPETITION

AMONGST TH SELVES

BALLS.I WENT TO A BALL

I GOT A TROPHY,
AND NOW EVERYBODY WANTS
TO KNOW ME.

THIS MOVIE IS
ABOUT THE BALL CIRCUm
AND THE GAY GROUP
THAT'S INVOLVED WITH IT
AND HOW EACH PERSON'S
LIFE BROUGHT THEM
TO THIS CIRCUIT.

IT'S LIKE CROSSING
INTO THE LOOKING GLASS
IN WONDERLAND.

YOU GO IN THERE,
AND YOU FEEL...
YOU FEEL 100% RIGHT
AS BEING GAY.

Woman:

NOT LIKE IN THE WORLRL
THAT'S NOT WHAT
IT'S LIKE IN THE WORLD.
IT SHOULD BE LIKE THAT
IN THE WORLD.

THIS SOCIETY, THEY FLIP GOING
TO A FOOTBALL GAME, BASKETBALL.
THAT'S THEIR ENTERTAINMENT.

A BALL IS OURS.

WE MAY SPEND MORE TIME
PREPARING FOR A BALL
THAN ANYBODY WOULD SPEND
PREPARING FOR ANYTHING ELSE.

THE BALL TO US
IS AS CLOSE TO REALITY
AS WE'RE GOING TO GET
TO ALL OF THAN FAME
AND FORTUNE AND STARDOM

AND SPOTLIGHTS.

Pepper:

I'D ALWAYS SEE THE WAY

THE RICH PEOPLE LIVED

AND I FEEL IT MORE.

I'D SAY "I'D HAVE TO HAVE THAT"

BECAUSE I NEVER FELT COMFORTABLE

BEING POOR.

I JUST DON'T.

OR EVEN MIDDLE CLASS

DOESN'T SUIT ME.

SEEING THE RICHES

SEEING THE WAY PEOPLE

ON DYNASTY LIVED--

THESE HUGE HOUSES--

AND I WOULD THINK

"THESE PEOPLE HAVE 42 ROOMS

IN THEIR HOUSE.

WHAT KIND OF A HOUSE IS THAT?"

SO WHY IS IT THAT THEY

CAN HAVE IT AND I DIDN'T?

I ALWAYS FELT CHEATED

OUT OF THINGS LIKE THAT.

Emcee:

YOU HAVE SPACE

TO DO ALL THAT YOU INTEND TO.

NOW THE CATEGORIES ARE:

BUTCH QUEEN, ONE THROUGH 17

AND FOR THE GIRLS,

18 THROUGH 30.

AS FAR AS ALL

OF Y'ALL NOT WALKING

PLEASE REALIZE

WE ALL AT ONE TIME

HAVE LUSTED TO WALK

A BALLROOM FLOOR

SO GIVE THE PATRONS
AND THE CONTESTANT
YOU KNOW, A ROUND OF APPLAUSE
FOR NERVE 'CAUSE WITH Y'ALL
VICIOUS MOTHERFUCKERS
IT DO TAKE NERVE.
BELIEVE ME.
WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE SHADY,
JUST FIERCE.
THOSE BALLS ARE MORE OR LESS
OUR FAOTASY
OF BEING A SUPERSTAR,
LIKE THE OSCARS OR WHATEVER
OR BEING ON A RUNWAY Ac A MODEL.
A LOT OF THOSE KIDS
THAT ARE IN THE BALLS
DON'T HAVE TWO OF NOTHING.
SOME DON'T EVEN EAT.
THEY COME TO BALLS STARVING,
AND THEY SLEEP IN THE UNDER 21
OR THEY SLEEP ON THE PIER
OR WHEREVER.
THEY Do 'T HAV A HOME
TO GO TOBUT THEY'LL GO STEAL SOMETHING
AND GET DRESSED UP
AND COME TO A BALL
FOR THAT ONE NIGHT
AND LIVE THE FANTASY.u
A BALL IS THE VERY WORD--
WHATEVER YOU WANT TO BE, YOU BE.
YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO DISPLAY
YOUR ELEGANCE,
YOUR SEDUCTIVENESS
YOUR BEAUTY, YOUR WIT.
YOU CAN BECOME ANYTHING
AND DO ANYTHING

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW
AND WON'T BE QUESTIONED.

I CAME, I SAW...

I CONQUERED.

THAT'S A BALL.

Emcee:

GIVE HER WHAT SHE WANTS.

YOU BRING HER TO YOU EVERY BALL.

WHY ARE YOU ALL GAGGING SO?

I GUESS I LIKE THE EXCITEMENT--

SOME CHEERING AND SCREAMING

IF YOU LOOK GOOD...

AND THAT'S WHAT GOT ME.

I LIKE THE COMPETITION.

MAKES ME STRONGER.

MAKES ME THINK MORE.

MAKES ME WANT

TO COME BACK AND GET THEM.

IT'S NOT JUST THE WINNING.

IT'S... IT'S THE GIVING nOO

'CAUSE I FEEL THAT I GIVE

A LOT OF ENJOYMENT

TO A LOT OF PEOPLE

THAT GO TO BALLS..

THEY ENJOY TO SEE IT.

I ENJOY TO WALK FOR THEM.

THAT'S MY PHILOSOPHY,

AS I SHOULD SAY.

Man:

TO BE LEGENDARY

LET YOU KNOW,

I'M LEGENDARY, YOU'RE NOT.

IT FEELS GOOD.

LIKE GETTING

AN OSCAR.

A OSCAR, RIGHT.

IT'S <HE SAME THING.
BECOME A LEGEND,
YOU HAVE AN OSCAR.
IT'S THE SAME THING.
I DON'T REALLYOCONSIDER MYSELF
A REAL LEGEND.
I'VE BEEN AT THE BALLS
WITH THE LEGENDARY CHILDREN
AND I'VE S AMPED MYSELF
WITH HE LEGENDARY CHILDREN
wBUT I'M ONE OF THE TOP,
UPCOMING CHILDREN-- LEGENDARY.
YOU HAVE LEGENDARY CHILDREN
AND UPCOMING LEGENDARY CHILDREN.
WEwRE THE UPCOMING ONES,
SO WE BEEN OUT LONGER
THAN THE ONES HERE NOW.
AND WE HAVE OUR STATUS
IN THE BALLROOM.
HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU
TO DO THE TANK TOP?
A HOUR.AN HOUR?
YES.YOU DON'T DO THAT.
IT USUALLY DOESN'T
TAKE YOU AN HO
TO DO A SHIRT
ESPECIALLY A TANK TOP?
UH-UH. /THAT'S NOT YOUR SPEED. /
Emcee:
KIM PENDAVIS.
STATEMENT.
FUTURE LEGEND.
KIM AND ME,
WE'VE BEEN OGETHER
AND IT'S MORE OR LESSaME.
I'M THE ONE

THAT'S KIM'S PROTEGE
BECAUSE I GO WITH KIM
TO THE BALLS
HELP HIM OUT, HELP HIM IRON.
IF I DON'T GO WITH HIM AND IRON,
HE'LL BE THERE WRINKLED
OR HE'D BE TIERE IRONING
BUT, YOU KNOW, IT HELPS OUT
WHEN SOMEBODY ELSE IS THERE
IN YOUR CORNER AT YOUR SIDE
TO SAY, "YOU CAN DO IT.
DO WHAT YOU USUALLY DO."
WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT?
3 JUST SIMPLE, YOU KNOW,
JO SATISFACTION.
THAT'S IT.

I DON'T REALLY ASK MUCH.
AND THEN FROM TIME TO TIME
LATER ON, I WEAR THE OUTFIT.
(screaming)

Emcee:
ANYONE WAITING IN THE WINGS
YOU KNOW YOU HAVE
TO MAKE ROOM FOR PEPPER LABEIIJA.
PEPPER LABEIIJA.
PEPPER LABEIIJA.
GIVE HER SOME WALKING ROOM.

Dorian Corey:
LIZ TAYLOR IS FAMOUS.
SO IS PEPPER LABEIIJA.
PEPPER LABEIIJA.
IN A SENSE, SO AM I
BUT OF A VERY MUCH
DIFFERENT QUANTITY.
NO MAGAZINE'S GOING
TO RUN OFF TO COVER ME

IF I GO TO A PREMIERE
BUT IT'S STILL
A FAME. IT'S A SMALL FAME ,
BUT YOU AB ORB IT,
AND YOU TAKE IT...
AND YOU LIKE IT.
YOU LIKE THE ADULATION,
THE APPLAUSE
THE PEOPLE CHEERING YOU ON...
THE WINNING.
IT'S LIKE A PHYSICAL HIGH.
IT'S A...
YOU KNOW, IT'S A GOOD HIGH.
IT'S AN ADDICTIVE HIGH
LIKE ALL HIGHS
BUT IT'S A HIGH
THAT WON'T HURT YOU.
IF EVE YBODY WENT TO BALLS
AND DID LESS DRUGS
IT WOULD BE A FUN WORLD,
WOULDN'T IT?
I'M DRESSING> OF COURSE,
TO GO TO A SHOW
BECAUSE I'VE ALWAYS DONE THIS
PROFES ONALLY
AND I WAS A DANCER
AND I'M TRYING TO REMEMBER
WHEN THE FIRST TIME
I WENT TO A BALL.
THAT WAS THE EARLY-TYPE BALL
WHEN EVERYBODY JUST WALKED
AND THEY GAVE AWAY
<N FOUR OR FIVE PRIZES
IN A VERY LIMITED CATEGORY.
AND THE CHILDREN NOW,
MOST OF THEM, 75% OF THEM--

OF THE CHILDREN
YOU SEE AT THE BALL--
WOULDN'T KNOW
WHAT A BALL WAS
IF IT KNOCKED THEM IN THE HEAD.
WHEN I FIRST STARTED GOING
TO BALLS, IT WAS ALL DRAG QUEENS
INTERESTED IN LOOKING
LIKE LAS VEGAS SHOW GIRLS--
BACK PIECES, TAIL PIECES,
FEATHERS, BEADS.
AS THE '70s ROLLED AROUND,
THINGS STARTED CHANGING.
IT STARTED COMING DOWN
TO THEY JUST WANTED TO LOOK
LIKE A GORGEOUS MOVIE STAR
LIKE MARILYN MONROE,
ELIZABETH TAYLOR.
NOW THEY'RE TRYING
TO LOOK LIKE MODELS
LIKE IMAN AND CHRISTIE BRINKLEY
AND MAUD ADAMS.
EVERYONE COULDN'T BE
A LAS VEGAS SHOW GIRL.
EVERYONE COULDN'T PUT ON
FEATHERS AND A HEAD PIECE
SO THEN MADE THE CATEGORIES
FOR EVERYBODY.
THAT'S WHAT REALLY MADE
THE BALLS CHANGE
SO THERE WAS MORE INVOLVEMENT.
EVERYONE THAT GOES
TO ONE OF THESE AFFAIRS NOW
DAMN NEAR PARTICIPATES.
EVENTUALLY OVER THE COURSE
OF A YEAR'S BALLS

THEY'VE ALL WALKED THE RUNWAY
IN SOME CATEGORY OR ANOTHER.
EITHER YOU'VE GOT A NICE BODY
OR YOU ARE VERY FASHIONABLE
OR YOU'RE VERY PRETTY /
OR YOU'RE VERY REAL-LOOKING)
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING
THERE FOR EVERYONE
AND THAT'S WHAT KEEPS
THEM ALL COMING.
AND IT'S LIKE IN NATURE.
I'M SUCH A NATURE FAN.

YOUNG ONES ARE ALWAYS BUCKIN
TO MOVE THE OLD BULLS
OUT OF THE WAY.
THAT'S WHY THEY CHANGE
AND GO THROUGH
ALL THESE MAD CATEGORIES
I NEVER CAN STAY AWAKE FOR.

Emcee:

UPCOMING PRETTY GIRL 1986
TAKE IT TO THE FLOOR. T
THEY'RE SHOWING OUT
FOR THE PRESS.
AUDIENCE, PLEASE BACK UP
AND GIVE THEM AIR.
NEXT CATEGORY: HIGH FASHION
WITH THEIR SPORTSWEAR.
THE POCONOS
VERSUS THE CATSKILL.

Sexy body...
IS THERE ANYONE WALKING?
SOME CHILDREN WERE ASKING ME
WHAT I MEANT BY MISS CHEESECAKE.
YOU MUST NOT ONLY HAVE A BODY
BUT YOU MUST BE SEXY.

A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BODIES
BUT ARE NOT SEXY.
BIG BODY!BODY! BODY! BODY!
AND CURVES!
A BODY THAT SAYS
"COME UP AND SEE ME SOMETIME,
BIG BOY."GOING TO SCHOoL.
SCHOOL.ELEMENTARY.
HIGH SCHOOL.
COLLEGE.NOT
HERE.SCHOOL.
LOOKING LIKE A GIRL
GOING TO SCHOOL.
DO SHE LOOK LIKE A GIRL
GOING TO SCHOOL?
(disco music playing)
TOWN AND COUNTRY
EXCLUSIVELY DONE.
GET INTO THEIR SUITS.
I SAID THE WELL-DRESSED MAN
OF THE '80s.
GET INTO THE SUITS AND GET
INTO THE PUMPS.
Dorian Corey:
IN REAL LIFE, NOU CAN'T
GET A JOB AS AN EXECUTIVE
UNLESS YOU HAVE
THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
AND THE OPPORTUNITY.
NOW, THE FACT THAT
YOU ARE NOT AN EXECUTIVE
IS MERELY BECAUSE OF
THE SOCIAL STANDING OF LIFE.
BLACK PEOPLE HAVE
A HARD TIME GETTING ANYWHERE
AND THOSE THAT DO

ARE USUALLY STRAIGHT.
IN A BALLROOM,
YOU CAN BE ANYTHING YOU WANT.
YOU'RE NOT REALLY AN EXECUTIVE
BUT YOU'RE LOOKING
LIKE AN EXECUTIVE.
YOU'RE SHOWING
THE STRAIGHT WORLD
THAT "I CAN BE AN EXECUTIVE,
IF I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY
BECAUSE I CAN LOOK LIKE ONE,"
AND THAT IS LIKE A FULFILLMENT.
YOUR PEERS, YOUR FRIENDS
ARE TELLING YOU
"OH, YOU'D MAKE
A WONDERFUL EXECUTIVE."

Emcee:

IS THIS THE BUSINESSMAN
OF THE '80s OR WHAT?
HIGH-FASHION PARISIAN.
MODEL'S YVETTE.
CHANTEZ, CHANTEZ
CHANTEZ, CHANTEZ, CHANTEZ,
CHANTEZ, CHANTEZ...
MARDELLE! THIN!
STREAMLINED!
TRIM! MARDELLE!
THE CATEGORY IS
"BUTCH QUEEN FIRST TIME
IN DRAGS AT A BALL."
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
YOU KNOW
WHAT PAWIS MEANS.
EXACTLY. BUTCH QUEEN.
BUTCH QUEEN.
BUTCH QUEEN.

BUTCH QUEEN.

BUTCH.(audience cheering)

Model:

FIRST TIME IN DRAGS AT A BALL.

THAT'S WHAT I NEEDED TO HEAR.

("The Star Spangled Banner"

playing)Man:

THE MILITARY SCENE

IS A BASIC SCENE.

DOESN'T CALL FOR

A BUNCH

OF FLAMBOYANT TURKEY BOAS

AND BUGLE BEADS, RHINESTONE.

IT'S A BASIC CATEGORY.

THE MORE NATURAL YOU ARE

THE MORE CREDIT

YOUR OUTFIT IS GIVEN.

Emcee:

COME ON, NOW

IT IS A KNOWN FACT

THAT A WOMAN DO CARRY

AN EVENING BAG AT DINNERTIME.

THERE'S NO GETTING AROUND THAT.<

YOU SEE IT ON CHANNEL 7

BETWEEN ALL MY CHILDREN

AND JEOPARDY

ANOTHER WORLD, DALLAS

AND THE WHOLE BIT.

AN EVENING BAG IS A MUST.

YOU HAVE TO CARRY SOMETHING.

NO LADY IS SURE AT NIGHT.

WITH THE CURRENT CHILDREN--

THE CHILDREN THAT ARE YOUNG--

THEY'VE GONE TO TELEVISION,

YOU KNOW.I'VE BEEN THROUGH SEVERAL BALLS

AND THEY'VE ACTUALLY HAD

CATEGORIES-- DYNASTY.

YOU KNOW, WANT YOU TO LOOK LIKE
ALEXIS OR KRYSTLE.

AND I GUESS THAT'S JUST, UM,
UH... A STATEMENT OF THE TIMES.
WHEN I GREW UP

YOU WANTED TO LOOK LIKE
MARLENE DIETRICH, BETTY GRABLE.
UNFORTUNATELY, I DIDN'T KNOW
THAT I REALLY WANTED
TO LOOK LIKE LENA HORNE.

WHEN I GREW UP, OF COURSE,
YOU KNOW...

BLACK STARS WERE STIGMATIZED.
NOBODY WANTED

TO LOOK LIKE LENA HORNE.

EVERYBODY WANTED

TO LOOK LIKE MARILYN MONROE.

(disco music playing)

WHAT YOU FIND...

Man:

WHEN YOU'RE A MAN AND WOMAN
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.

YOU CAN ALMOST HAVE SEX
ON THE STREET

IF YOU WANT TO.

THE MOST SOMEBODY WILL SAY IS,
"HEY, GET A HUMP FOR ME."

BUT WHEN YOU'RE GAY,
YOU MONITOR EVERYTHING YOU DO.

YOU MONITOR HOW YOU LOOK,
DRESS, TALK, ACT...

DID THEY SEE ME?

WHAT DID THEY THINK OF ME?

...I FEEL I NEED YOU

WHAT YOU KNOW

OHH TO BE REAL...

Pepper:

TO BE ABLE TO BLEND--

THAT'S WHAT REALNESS IS.

...OOH, YOUR LOVE'S

FOR REAL NOW

YOU KNOW THAT

Yo R LOVE IS MY LOVE...

IF YOU CAN PASS

THE UNTRAINED EYE

OR EVEN THE TRAINED EYE

AND NOT GIVE AWAY

THE FACT YOU'RE GAY

THAT'S WHEN IT'S REAL.

BANSHEE...

LOOKING LIKE THE BOY

THAT PROBABLY ROBBED YOU

A FEW MINUTES

BEFORE YOU CAME

TO PARIS'S BALL.

THE IDEA OF REALNESS IS

TO LOOK AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

LIKE YOUR STRAIGHT COUNTERPART.

SHAKE THE DICE, STEAL THE RICE.

RIGHT HERE, COME ON, BABY.

YES, DADDY

I GOT MY FOOD STAMPS

AND CARD WAITING.

ALL RIGHT. DUST, COKE,

BASE, SOAP, ROLAIDS.

YOU GOT IT.

THE REALER YOU LOOK

IT MEANS YOU LOOK

LIKE A REAL WOMAN...

OR YOU LOOK LIKE A REAL MAN...

A STRAIGHT MAN.

Emcee:

SWEETHEART, WITH A CIGARETTE
YOU'RE GIVING ME
A BANSHEE GIRL EFFECT.
THIS IS BANSHEE.
YOU'RE NOW THE GIRL
OUT AT A CORNER
TALKING ABOUT, "YO, MAN."
ONE THAT CAN HANG OUT
WITH THE ROUGHING
AND THE TOUGHING.
IT'S NOT A TAKEOFF
OR A SATIRE.
NO, IT'S ACTUALLY BEING ABLE
TO BE THIS.

Emcee

BRENDA XTRAVAGANZA--
LOOKING LIKE A BANSHEE GIRL.
BANSHEE GIRL REALNESS.
ONE THAT COULD TAKE
HER BABY BROTHER TO SCHOOL.
ONE THAT SAY, "HEY, I SAW
A BUNCH OF THOSE THINGS
WALKING DOWN THE STREET..."
IT'S REALLY A CASE OF
GOING BACK INTO THE CLOSET.
TEN, TEN, TEN, TEN, TEN.
ARE THERE ANY MORE?
GIRLS, HAVE WE COME
TO A DECISION?
THEY GIVE THEIR SOCIETY
WHAT THEY WANT TO SEE
AND THEY WON'T BE QUESTIONED.
RATHER THAN GOING
THROUGH PREJUDICES
ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND LIFESTYLE

YOU CAN WALK AROUND COMFORTABLY
BLENDING IN
WITH EVERYBODY ELSE.
YOU ERASE ALL THE MISTAKES,
ALL THE FLAWS, ALL THE GIVEAWAYS
TO MAKE YOUR ILLUSION PERFECT.

Pepper:

MY MOTHER KNEW I HAD TROPHIES
WHICH I WAS TELLING HER
I WON FOR BASKETBALL.
I HAD WON TROPHIES
FOR RUNNING TRACK.
I WAS WALKING UP ON 145th STREET
WITH MY GIRLFRIENDS.
I HAD ON WHITE HOT PANTS,
A CHIFFON BLOUSE
A PONYTAIL.
MY FATHER WAS WAITING
FOR THE LIGHT IN HIS CAR.
HE SAW ME AND RECOGNIZED ME.
HE WENT STRAIGHT TO MY HOUSE,
AND TOLD MY MOTHER
"YOUR SON IS A WOMAN."
SHE DIDN'T PRESS IT THEN,
BUT A FEW MONTHS LATER
WHEN SHE NOTICED
THAT I HAD BREASTS
EVERYTHING
STARTED COMING TOGETHER.
SHE REALLY WAS DEVASTATED.
"HOW COULD YOU HAVE BREASTS
BIGGER THAN MINE?
"YOU'RE GROWING NAILS.
"YOU'RE BECOMING A WOMAN
RIGHT BEFORE MY VERY EYES.
I'M EMBARRASSED."

BUT SHE STILL LOVED ME
BUT THE NAGGING AND THE...
OH, MY GOD,
ABOUT THIS WOMAN'S CLOTHES.
WHEN I HAD WOMAN'S CLOTHES
STASHED IN MY CLOSET
AND SHE FOUND THEM,
SHE WOULD DESTROY THEM.
SHE BURNED UP A MINK COAT.
I WAS, OH, DEVASTATED.
SHE SMELLED THE PERFUME IN IT
WHICH WAS JUNGLE GARDENIA
AND SHE SAID,
"THIS IS YOUR COAT."
TOOK IT DOWNSTAIRS
IN THE BACKYARD
AND BURNED IT
AND I STOOD THERE
AND CRIED LIKE A BABY.
AS LONG AS I HAD A MOUSTACHE,
IT'S CUTE FOR ME.
SHE DON'T WANT ME TO BE
IN NO GIRL'S CLOTHES.

Pepper:

WHEN THEY'RE UNDETECTABLE
THEY CAN WALK OUT
OF THAT BALLROOM
INTO THE SUNLIGHT
AND ONTO THE SUBWAY
AND GET HOME, AND STILL HAVE
ALL THEIR CLOTHES
AND NO BLOOD RUNNING
F THEIR BODIES
THOSE ARE
THE FEMME REALIST QUEENS
AND USUALLY OF THE CATEGORY

FOR YOUNG QUEENS.
SOME OF THEM SAY THAT WE'RE SICK
WE'RE CRAZY,
AND SOME OF THEM THINK
WE ARE THE MOST GORGEOUS,
SPECIAL THINGS ON EARTH.
I WOULD LIKE TO BE A SPOILED,
RICH, WHITE GIRL.
THEY GET WHAT THEY WANT
WHenever THEY WANT.
THEY DON'T HAVE
TO REALLY STRUGGLE
WITH FINANCES
AND NICE THINGS
AND NICE CLOTHES
AND THEY DON'T HAVE
TO HAVE THAT AS A PROBLEM.
I DON'T FEEL THAT THERE'S
ANYTHING MANNISH ABOUT ME
EXCEPT MAYBE WHAT I MIGHT HAVE
BETWEEN ME DOWN THERE
WHICH IS MY LITTLE
PERSONAL THINGS
SO I GUESS THAT'S WHY I WANT
MY SEX CHANGE
TO MAKE MYSELF COMPLETE.
I WAS ABOUT 13, 14 YEARS OLD.
I USED TO DO IT
BEHIND MY FAMILY'S BACK--
THIS DRESSING UP-
BUT FINALLY,
THEY CAUGHT ON WITH IT
AND I DIDN'T WANT
TO EMBARRASS THEM
SO THAT'S WHEN I MOVED AWAY.
I MOVED TO NEW YORK

AND I CONTINUED DOING IT.
WHEN SOMEONE HAS REJECTION
FROM THEIR MOTHER AND FATHER
WHEN THEY GET OUT IN THE WORLD,
THEY SEARCH.
THEY SEARCH FOR SOMEONE
TO FILL THAT VOID.
I KNOW THIS FOR EXPERIENCE
BECAUSE I'VE HAD KIDS COME TO ME
AND LATCH HOLD TO ME
LIKE I'M THEIR MOTHER OR FATHER
'CAUSE THEY CAN TALK TO ME.
I'M GAY, AND THEY'RE GAY
AND THAT'S WHERE
A LOT OF THAT BOLDNESS
AND MOTHER BUSINESS COMES IN
BECAUSE THEIR REAL PARENTS
GIVE THEM SUCH A HARD WAY TO GO.
THEY LOOK UP TO ME
TO FILL THAT VOID.

Man:

HOW OLD ARE YOU?
I'M 15.WHAT TIME IS IT?
HEY, LOOK AT
THE TIME-- 2:26.
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
I'M 13.AND YOU'RE
OUT HERE..?
WHERE DO
YOU LIVE?I LIVE IN HARLEM.
WHY YOU
DOWN HERE?
WHERE'S
YOUR MOTHER?
I DON'T HAVE
A MOTHER.EVERYBODY

HAS A MOTHER.
WHERE'S
YOUR MOTHER?
SHE'S GONE.
WHERE'S
YOUR FATHER?
HE'S GONE TOO.
WHO YOU
LIVE WITH?
A FRIEND.YOU TOO?
I LIVE WITH MY MOTHER
IN THE BRONX.
Y'ALL JUST
HANGING OUT..?
THERE ARE A LOT OF THESE KIDS
I MEET NOW--
THEY COME FROM SAD BACKGROUNDS--
BROKEN HOMES, OR NO HOME AT ALL.
THE FEW THAT DO HAVE FAMILY
WHEN THE FAMILY
FINDS THAT THEY'RE GAY
THEY X'd THEM COMPLETELY.
A HOUSE... A HOUSE...
LET'S SEE
IF WE CAN PUT IT DOWN SHARPLY.
THEY'RE FAMILIES.
YOU CAN SAY THAT.
FOR A LOT OF CHILDREN
WHO DON'T HAVE FAMILIES
BUT THIS IS A NEW MEANING
OF FAMILY.
THE HIPPIES HAD FAMILIES
AND NO ONE THOUGHT
NOTHING ABOUT IT.
IT WAS A QUESTION
OF A MAN AND WOMAN

AND CHILDREN, WHICH WE GREW UP
KNOWING AS A FAMILY.

IT'S A QUESTION
OF A GROUP OF HUMAN BEINGS
IN A MUTUAL BOND.

(dance music playing)

YOU KNOW WHAT A HOUSE IS.

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT A HOUSE IS.

A HOUSE IS A GAY STREET GANG.

WHERE STREET GANGS GET

THEIR REWARD FROM STREET FIGHTS

A GAY HOUSE STREET FIGHTS

AT A BALLAND YOU STREET FIGHT AT A BALL

BY WALKING IN THE CATEGORY.

THE HOUSE IS STARTED

BECAUSE YOU WANTED A NAME.

THE PEOPLE THAT THE HOUSES

ARE NAMED AFTER

WERE BALL WALKERS

WHO BECAME KNOWN FOR IT, REALLY.

Emcee:

WORK, PARIS, DUPREE...

WORK, PARIS, DUPREE...

Pepper:

AFTER THE FIRST FEW HOUSES

WERE STARTED

AND NAMED AFTER PEOPLE

WHO HAD WON TROPHIES

THEY ALSO WOULD CREATE HOUSES.

THEYw WORK

AT BUILDING ITS NAME UP

WHICH WERE THE HOUSE

OF XTRAVAGANZA

THE HOUSE OF SAINT LAURENT...

OVERNESS.PENDAVIS.

ADONIS.LAMET.

PENDAVIS.SAINT LAURENT OF COURSE.
DUPREE.THEY SAW ME,
AND THEY ALL LIKED ME
AND THE REST
OF THE XTRAVAGANZAS.
THEY DECIDED IF YOU WANT
TO BECOME AN XTRAVAGANZA
YOU HAVE TO WALK A BALL FIRST
AND IF YOU SNATCH A TROPHY
THEN YOU'VE BECOME
THE XTRAVAGANZA.
THAT'S HOW IT'S SUPPOSED
TO WORK WITH EVERYONE
BUT, UH... LIKE THAT
IT WASN'T WITH ME.
I JUST BECAME AN XTRAVAGANZA.
HECTOR XTRAVAGANZA IS THE ONE
WHO STARTED THE HOUSE.
HE WAS THE FIRST GAY MAN
I EVER MET.
E FIRST TIME HE TOOK ME
TO T E VILLAGE
WHICH WAS MY BIRTHDAY
I HAD JUST TURNED 15 YEARS OLD
AND HE THREW A PARTY FOR ME
OUT THERE.
HE BOUGHT ME A CAKE.
I MET A LOT
OF DRAG QUEEN TRANSVESTITES
THAT I DIDN'N'BELIEVE WERE
BECAUSE THEY WERE SO BEAUTIFUL
AND THAT KIND OF SUNK
INTO MY HEAD.
IT MADE MEOWANT
TO EVEN DO IT MORE.
THEY TREAT EACH OTHER

LIKE SISTERS...
SISTERS OR BROTHERS.
OR MOTHERS OR...
YOU KNOW, LIKE I SAY,
"OH, THAT'S MY SISTER
"BECAUSE SHE'S GAY TOO,
AND I'M GAY.
AND SHE'S A DRAG QUEEN
OR WHATEVER."

Man:

MY MOTHER IS ANGIE XTRAVAGANZA.
MY FATHER IS DAVID XTRAVAGANZA.
THE HOUSE OF XTRAVAGANZA
HAS DONE A L i.
IT'S MADE ME FEEL LIKE
I HAVE A FAMILY.
WE'RE ALWAYS TOGETHER.
WE ALWAYS SPEAK ON THE PHONE.
I AM ANGIE XTRAVAGANZA<
AND THE MOTHER
OF THE HOUSE OF XTRAVAGANZA.
WHEN THERE'S A BALL
I'M ALWAYS DOING SOMETHING
FOR EVERYBODY.
I DO THAT ONE'S HAIR
THE OTHER ONE'S MAKEUP
CHOOSE THEIR SHOES,
THEIR ACCESSORIES
ALWAYS OFFER ADVICE
AS FAR AS WHAT I KNOW
AND WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH
IN GAY LIFE.
I RAN AWAY WHEN I WAS 14
AND I'VE LEARNED ALL SORTS
OF THINGS, GOOD AND BAD
AND HOW TO SURVIVE

IN GAY WORLD.

All:

XTRAVAGANZA POWER.

I BOUGHT HER HER TITS.

I PAID FOR THEM.

HE PAID FOR MY TITS.

MY TITS.SHAKE THEM TITS, MOMMY.

YOU PAID FOR MY TITS.

ALL SHE WANTS FOR CHRISTMAS

IS HER TWO FRONT TITS

HER TWO FRONT TITS,

HER TWO FRONT TITS

AND WE GAVE THEM TO HER.

OUR MOTHER EN N NURSES US.

SHE'S A GOOD WOMAN.

SHE NEVER. SHE'S NOT

MY MOMMY IS A DRAG QUEEN

LOOK, I SING...

Emcee:

FROM THE HOUSE OF XTRAVAGANZA

FOR MOTHER OF THE YEAR

KEEPING HER CHILDREN INTACT

CAN WE HAVE ANGIE XTRAVAGANZA?

(applause)

WORK FOR US, GIRL.

WALK THAT RUNWAY.

DO THIS FOR

ANDRE CHRISTIAN, GIRL.

Man:

MY BIRTHDAY WILL COME.

P I ALWAYS GET A BIRTHDAY GIFT

FROM ANGIE OR MY REAL MOTHER.

THEN WHEN I GOT THROWN

OUT OF MY HOUSE ,

ANGIE LET ME STAY WITH HER

TILL I GOT MYSELF TOGETHER

AND I GOT WORKING,
AND SHE FED ME.
SHE CAN BE A PAIN IN THE ASS
BUT I WOULDN'T TRADE HER
FOR ANY OTHER MOTHER.

Willi Ninja:

YOU HAVE TO HAVE SOMETHING
TO OFFER IN ORDER TO LEAD.
THE MOTHER BECOMES THE MOTHER
BECAUSE SHE IS USUALLY
THE BEST OF THE GROUP.

I'M WILLI NINJA,
MOTHER OF THE HOUSE OF NINJA.

Emcee:

GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS.

Willi:

I AM THE MOTHER
OF THIS HOUSE
BECAUSE I'M THE BEST VOGUER.
TO BE THE MOTHER OF THE HOUSE
YOU HAVE TO HAVE THE MOST POWER.
TAKE A REAL FAMILY--
IT'S THE MOTHER
THAT'S THE HARDEST WORKER
AND THE MOTHER
GETS THE MOST RESPECT.
AS FAR AS MY NAMING MY HOUSE
"THE HOUSE OF NINJA"
NINJAS HIT HARD,
THEY HIT FAST--
AN INVISIBLE ASSASSIN,
AND THAT'S WHAT WE ARE.
WE COME OUT TO ASSASSINATE.
THE HOUSE OF LABEIIJA
IS THE LEGENDARY HOUSE.
I HAVE THE MOST MEMBERS,

I AM THE MOST POPULAR. ,
NEW YORK CITY IS WRAPPED UP
IN BEING LABEIJJA
SO IT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.
AND I AM THE FIERCEST MOTHER.
LABEIJJA? I WOULDN'T BE
CAUGHT DEAD IN THAT HOUSE.
I DON'T SEE THAT HOUSE.
ONLY REASON I SEE MY HOUSE,
PENDAVISIS BECAUSE KIM AND AVIS,
BECAUSE BOTH OF THEM WALKED.
AT THE LAST BALL,
AVIS SHOWED HER ASS OFF.
THEY CALL THEM cOMPETITIONS,
BUT BELIEVE ME, THEY'RE WAR
AND THEY OFTEN DO LEAD
TO FIGHTS.
THE EMOTIONS BE VERY HIGH.
THEY'RE VERY INTENSE,
VERY INTENSE AFFAIRS.
BUT I GUESS THAT'S
WHAT MAKES THEM FUN--
LIKE A GOOD MOVIE,
IF THERE'S NO EMOTION
YOU DON'T ENJOY IT.
I DON'T TALK MUCH
ABOUT THE BALL KIDS
BECAUSE I WANT THEM
TO TALK ABOUT ME
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T WALKED YET.
AND IT'S LIKE, WELL,
WILLIAM SAYS
"I WANT YOU TO WALK
IN MY BALL."
AND I KEEP TELLING WILLIAM
"I'LL WALK WHEN I WANT,

NOT WHEN YOU WANT."

SO FAR, I DON'T KNOW

WHEN I'M GOING TO WALK.

I'M THINKING SOMEWHA AROUND

cTHE T ME OF THE LEGENDS BALL

BUT DON'T QUOTE ME ON THAT.

Octavia St. Laurent:

IT REALLY CAUSES HATE

BETWEEN TWO INDIVIDUALS.

IT'S LIKE A WAR

ON THE F FOR.

LIKE WORLD WAR III.

THE ONLY THING, THEY'RE GAY.

Emcee:

CUT THE MUSIC.

NOW I SAID...

I SAID MEN'S GARMENTS.

Dorian:

HE LOOKED LIKE HE HAD ON

A MAN'S FOX COAT.

WHERE ARE THE MEN'S GARMENTS?

Contestant:

I PAID FOR IT, MOTHERFUCKER.

IT BUTTONS ON THE RIGHT SIDE.

IT BUTTONS

ON THE RIGHT SIDE.

Dorian:

SOMEONE CAME UP

AND TOLD THE EMCEE

THAT IT WAS A WOMAN'S COAT.

I THOUGHT IT WAS KIND OF SILLY

TO NITPICK.

Spectator:

OOH, THAT'S SHADY.

THAT WAS SHADY.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.

Dorian:

WAIT A MINUTE, WAIT A MINUTE
WAIT A MINUTE,
WAIT A MINUTE, NOW.
LET'S NOT GET LOUD.
NOW, DAVID,
DAVID, DAVID...
THAT'S THE ONE THING
I FIND FAULTY WITH THE BALLS--
AFTER THEY'VE LAID DOWN
THESE CATEGORIES
THEN TIEY TRY TO BECOME
A STICKLER
FOR EXACT INTERPRETATION.
MERELY A POINT TO DISCREDIT
THE CONTESTANT
LIKE THE OLYMPICS
WHERE THE RUSSIAN JUDGE
BROUGHT TO THE FACT
THAT THE AMERICAN COACH
HAD STEPPED ONTO THE FLOOR
AND THAT WAS A DISQUALIFICATION
FOR THE CONTESTANT. r
JUST AS PICKY AS A BALL.
FOR LITTLE FLAWS LIKE THAT
THAT'S BECAUSE
THAT'S A PART OF SHADE--
THAT'S THE IDEA.
KNOCK 'EM OUT IF YOU CAN.
HIT 'EM BELOW THE BELT.
WHERE IS HE?
WHERE IS HE?
WHERE IS HE?
TOM, IT'S HER BALL.
SHADE COMES FROM READING.?
READING CAME FIRST.

READING IS THE REAL ART FORM
OF INSULT.

NOW, YOU WANT TO TALK
ABOUT READING?

LET'S TALK ABOUT READING. /

WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU,
PEDRO?ARE YOU GOING THROUGH
SOME KIND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL
CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE?

SHE WENT BACK

TO BE A MAN.

YOU WENT BACK

TO BEING A MAN.

TOUCH THIS SKIN,

DARLING.TOUCH THIS SKIN,

HONEY.TOUCH ALL OF

THIS SKIN, OKAY? a

YOU JUST CAN'T TAKE IT.

YOU'RE JUST

AN OVERGROWN ORANGUTAN

YOU GET IN A SMART CRACK,

AND EVERYONE LAUGHS

BECAUSE YOU'VE FOUND A FLAW

AND EXAGGERATED IT

THEN YOU'VE GOT

A GOOD READ GOING.

I AM A PERSON

JUST LIKE YOU.

YOU CUT ME,

I BLEED LIKE YOU.

Dorian:

IF IT'S HAPPENING

BETWEEN THE GAY WORLD

AND THE STRAIGHT WORLD

IT'S NOT REALLY A READ.

IT'S MORE OF AN INSULT,

A VICIOUS SLUR.

THERE GO MY SISTER

RIGHT THERE.

SHE DON'T WANT TO ADMIT

SHE MY SISTER.

Dorian:

BUT IT'S HOW THEY DEVELOP

A SENSE OF HOW TO READ.

THAT'S HER HUSBAND

BACK THERE.

AND THAT'S MY GIRLFR END.

Dorian:

THEY MAY CALL YOU A FAGGOT.

YOU FIND SOMETHING

TO CALL THEM.

BUT WHEN YOU ARE

ALL OF THE SAME THING

THEN YOU HAVE TO GO

TO THE FINE POINT.

IF I'M A BLACK QUEEN

AND YOU'RE A BLACK QUEEN

WE CAN'T CALL EACH OTHER

BLACK QUEENS.

THAT'S NOT A READ,

THAT'S A FACT.

THEN WE TALK ABOUT

YOUR RIDICULOUS SHAPE

YOUR SAGGY FACE,

YOUR TACKY CLOTHES.

LET ME SEE WHAT YOU ARE.

YES, IT'S PAINT!

NO MOTHERFUCKING PAINT,

GIRL.SHE WEARS MORE MAKEUP

THAN MY MOTHER.

THEN READING BECAME

A DEVELOPED FORM

WHERE IT BECAME SHADE.
SHADE IS, "I DON'T TELL YOU
YOU'RE UGLY
BUT I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU,
BECAUSE YOU KNOW YOU'RE UGLY."
AND THAT'S SHADE.

(disco music playing)

Emcee:

DROP...(whistle blows)
DIP...(whistle blows)
SPIN...(whistle blows)
DROP...(whistle blowing)
DIP...Willi:

VOGUING IS THE SAME
AS TAKING TWO KNIVES
AND CUTTING EACH OTHER UP,
BUT THROUGH A DANCE FORM.

Emcee:

DROP... DIP...
SPIN... VOGUE...
DIP...DROP... TURN...

Willi:

VOGUING CAME FROM SHADE
BECAUSE IT WAS A DANCE
THAT TWO PEOPLE DID
BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T
LIKE EACH OTHER.
INSTEAD OF FIGHTING, YOU WOULD
DANCE IT OUT ON THE DANCE FLOOR.
WHOEVER DID THE BETTER MOVES
WAS THROWING THE BEST SHADE.

Emcee:

NO TOUCHING.
IF YOU TOUCH, I'M CHOPPING YOU,
I'M TELLING YOU NOW.

Willi:

WITH THE PANTOMIME FORM
OF THE VOGUE
WHAT SOMETIMES I DO
IS I MAKE MY HAND INTO A FORM,
LIKE A COMPACT, A MAKEUP KIT.
I'M BEATING MY FACE WITH
BLUSH SHADOWS TO THE MUSIC.
THEN USUALLY, I'LL TURN
THE COMPACT AROUND
TO FACE THAT PERSON
MEANING LIKE ALMOST
MY HAND IN A MIRROR
FOR THEM TO GET A LOOK.
THEN I'LL START DOING
THEIR FACE
BECAUSE WHAT THEY HAVE
ON THEIR FACE
NEEDS A DRAMATIC MAKEUP JOB.
SO VOGUING IS LIKE A SAFE FORM
OF THROWING SHADE.

Emcee:

PARIS...DUPREE...

WORK...PARIS...

DUPREE...WORK...

ALL RIGHT, MISS RICHARD.

DON'T KNOCK OFF MISS PARIS.

(snare and kick drum

playing disco beat)

COME ON, BABY, TAKE YOUR TIME.

BRING IT TO THE JUDGES.<

JUDGES, GET INTO THE FORM

AND THE STYLE, WORD.

Willi:

THE NAME WAS TAKEN

FROM THE MAGAZINE VOGUE

BECAUSE SOME OF THE MOVEMENTS

OF THE DANCE
ARE ALSO THE SAME AS THE POSES
INSIDE THE MAGAZINE.
THE NAME IS A STATEMENT
IN ITSELF.
I MEAN, YOU REALLY WOULDN'T GO
TO A BALL TO DO THE MADEMOISELLE.
NO WAY. Emcee:
NOW WE'RE ALL GOING TO GET UP
ON THE FLOOR--
NEW YORK AND JERSEY.
WAKE UP, COME ON.
ALL RIGHT.
DANCE LATER ON.
BOBBY LAME.
I WISH I KNEW
HOW TO DO THAT.
ow! GOOD. GOOD.
GOOD. GOOD.
(screaming)
Willi:
LIKE BREAK DANCING,
THE DANCE TAKES
FROM THE
HIEROGLYPHICS OF ANCIENT EGYPT.
IT ALSO TAKES
FROM SOME FORMS OF GYMNASTICS.
THEY BOTH STRIVE
FOR PERFECT LINES IN THE BODY
AWKWARD POSITIONS,
BUT IT GOES ONE STEP FURTHER.
IT'S MAKING A NAME FOR ITSELF
BUT I WANT IT TO BE
KNOWN WORLDWIDE.
I WANT TO BE ON TOP OF IT
WHEN IT HITS.

I WANT TO TAKE VOGUING
NOT TO JUST PARIS IS BURNING
BUT I WANT TO TAKE IT
TO THE REAL PARIS
AND MAKE THE REAL PARIS BURN.
THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO
AND NOT JUST THERE
BUT TO OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL.
MY HOUSE NAME IS NINJA
AND I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO TAKE
MY WHOLE HOUSE AND GO TO JAPAN
OD REALLY LET LOOSE AND DO IT,
AND HAVE THEM ACCEPT IT THERE.
I WANT TO BE A BIG STAR...
UH, KNOWN GENERALLY
EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD.
YOU KNOW,
MAYBE AS A CHOREOGRAPHER
A FAMOUS DANCER, A SINGER
ALL OF THEM.
WHAT THE BALLS HAS TO DO
WITH THATAS FAR AS THE DANCE FIELD
IS MAYBE PERFECT MY CRAFT
A LITTLE BETTER--
TO LEARN NEW THINGS, NEW IDEAS
AND BRING THEM
TO THE REAL WORLD.
IT'S BEEN REALLY UNBELIEVABLE,
MY LIFE. IF I WAS TO DIE
TODAY OR TOMORROW
I COULD NOT SAY I HAVE NOT HAD
AN EXCITING LIFE.
I'VE HAD A FABUL...
AND I'M NOT RICH, MIND YOU.
JUST IMAGINE,
IF I HAD THE DOLLARS...

IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH
FOR THE WORLD.
IF I HAD
THE RICHES AND FAME
ALL OF YOU HERE WOULD BE RICH.
I'M VERY GENEROUS.
I WOULDN'T ENJOY HAVING
A LOT OF MONEY
LIKE BEING A MILLIONAIRE
AND HOARDING IT.
I'I'SHARE IT WITH MY LOVED ONES.
I'D WANT THEM TO HAVE IT TOO.
WE'D ALL HAVE TO GO.
I'D WANT TO CHARTER A PLANE,
AND WE ALL FLY TO PARIS.
(classical music playing)

Emcee:
O-P-U-L-E-N-C-E.
OPULENCE.YOU OWN EVERYTHING.
EVERYTHING IS YOURS.
(march music playing)

Pepper:
THIS IS WHITE AMER... ICA.
ANY OTHER NATIONALITY
THAT IS NOT OF THE WHITE SECT
KNOWS THIS
AND ACCEPTS THIS
UNTIL THE DAY THEY DIE.
BUT THAT IS EVERYBODY'S DREAM
AND AMBITION AS A MINORITY--
TO LIVE AND LOOK AS WELL
AS A WHITE PERSON
IS PICTURED AS BEING
IN AMERICA.
EVERY MEDIA YOU HAVE,
FROM TV TO MAGAZINES

TO MOVIES, TO FILMS...
I MEAN, THE BIGGEST THING
THAT MINORITY WATCHES
IS DYNASTY AND THE COLBYS...
ALL MY CHILDREN,
THE SOAP OPERAS.
EVERYBODY HAVE
A MILLION DOLLAR BRACKET.
WHEN THEY SHOW YOU
A COMMERCIAL
FROM HONEY GRAHAM TO CREST
OR LESTOIL OR PINE-SOL
EVERYBODY'S IN THEIR OWN HOME.
THE LITTLE KIDS
FOR FISHER-PRICE TOYS--
THEY'RE NOT
IN NO CONCRETE PLAYGROUND.
THEY'RE RIDING
AROUND THE LAWN.
THE POOL IS IN THE BACK.
THIS IS WHITE AMERICA.
AND WHEN IT COME
TO THE MINORITIES
ESPECIALLY BLACK
WE, AS A PEOPLE,
FOR THE PAST 400 YEARS
IS THE GREATEST EXAMPLE
OF BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION
IN THE HISTORY
OF CIVILIZATION.
WE HAVE HAD EVERYTHING
TAKEN AWAY FROM US
AND YET WE HAVE ALL LEARNED
HOW TO SURVIVE.
THAT IS WHY,
IN THE BALLROOM CIRCUIT

IT IS SO OBVIOUS
THAT IF YOU HAVE CAPTURED
THE GREAT WHITE WAY OF LIVING...
OR LOOKING...
OR DRESSING, OR SPEAKING...
YOU IS A MARVEL.
I THINK IF I COULD JUST BE
IN TV OR FILM OR ANYTHING
I'D DO THAT
INSTEAD OF THE MONEY.
OF COURSE, I DO WANT THE MONEY
BECAUSE I WANT THE LUXURY
THAT GOES WITH IT
BUT...

I WANT TO BE WEALTHY...
IF NOT WEALTHY, CONTENT,
COMFORTABLE, YOU KNOW?
I WANT TO BE SOMEBODY.
I MEAN, I AM SOMEBODY, I JUST
WANT TO BE A RICH SOMEBODY.

Emcee:

DON'T TELL ME
YOU SEEN HER IN A SUPERMARKET
AND SAID, "THAT'S A FAG."

Octavia:

WOMEN DON'T GO OUT OF THEIR WAY<
BECAUSE THEY ARE WOMEN.
I WENT OUT OF MY WAY
BECAUSE I WASN'T
AND I WANTED
TO BE THE BEST I CAN BE.

Emcee:

THE VIRGINIA SLIMS GIRL
IS HERE...

Octavia:

THIS IS NOT A GAME.

THIS IS SOMETHING

I WANT TO LIVE.

Emcee:

SHE'S HERE IN PERSON.

HOPEFULLY, GOD WILLING,

BY 1988 I FULLY HOPE TO BECOME

A FULL-FLEDGED WOMAN

OF THE UNITED STATES.

YOU LOOK AT ALL THESE MODELS

ON THE WALL

EVERY ONE OF THEM ARE GORGEOUS

EVERY ONE OF THEM ARE BEAUTIFUL

BUT EVERY ONE OF THEM

HAVE THEIR OWN LOOK.

THIS IS MY IDOL, PAULINA.

SOMEDAY I HOPE

TO BE UP THERE WITH HER.

IF THAT COULD BE ME

I THINK I WOULD BE

THE HAPPIEST PERSON IN THE WORLD

JUST KNOWING THAT

I CAN COMPARE TO PAULINA

TO STAND NEXT TO HER

AND TO TAKE PICTURES WITH HER.

I LOOK AT HER HERE

AND I SAY SHE'S SEDUCTIVE

AND SHE'S ALLURING.

I LOOK AT HER THERE

AND I SAY

SHE'S SEXY AND PROVOCATIVE.

I LOOK AT HER HERE

AND I THINK THAT SHE'S CHILDISH

AND LITTLE-GIRL TYPE

AND I LOOK AT HER HERE

AND IT'S THE SAME

AND I LOOK AT HER HERE

AND I THINK OF WICKED BEAUTY.
THAT'S HOW I SEE HER.
I ADMIRE HER, YOU KNOW
THE RED-HOT FIRE OF HAIR
AND... THE WHOLE BIT.
YOU'RE NOT TRYING HARD,
THEN I BECOME HARD.
DO NOT BELIEVE
JUST BECAUSE I'M A GUY
THAT I CANNOT DO IT.
TO BE A TEACHER,
I HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO DO IT.
I'VE TAUGHT FOR VARIOUS SHOWS
LIKE FOR F.I.T.
I'VE TAUGHT MODELS.
GIRLS THAT ARE
FROM VARIOUS AGENCIES
HAVE COME TO ME
BY WORD OF MOUTH.
(conga music playing)
NEW YORK CITY WOMEN
ARE A LITTLE BIT HARDER
THAN MOST WOMEN.
I'M TRYING TO BRING
THEIR FEMININITY BACK
AND BRING SOME GRACE AND POISE.
WHETHER THEY
BECOME MODELS OR NOT
IT'S NICE TO KNOW
BECAUSE IT'S
MORE ATTRACTIVE TO MEN.
...THE WALK THAT SHE'S DOING
IS BASICALLY TO GET MORE
MOVEMENT IN YOUR HIPS NATURALLY.
DON'T EXAGGERATE IT.
(classical music playing)

MOST LIKELY
SHE'LL GET WHAT SHE WANTS
ESPECIALLY IF SHE'S
IN A MAN'S WORLD.
SHE CAN STILL HAVE
HER EQUAL RIGHTS
BUT BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE A MAN
BY USING HER FEMININE WILES.

Emcee:

ARE THEY SOFT?
LOOKING FROM HEAD TO TOE,
WOULD YOU KNOW?
IS THIS REALNESS OR NOT?
LET IT BE MOTHERFUCKING HOT.
(disco music playing)
MISS OCTAVIA,
YOU DON'T FEEL THIS REALNESS?
WHERE ARE YOU AT, SISTER?
UP TO... RIGHT THERE.
NOT BOTHERED.

WHAT YOU FIND NOW
I THINK I LOVE YOU
WHAT YOU FEEL NOW...
ALL I WANT
ALL I GET...

LABELIJA.CANDY LABELIJA.
REALNESS IN THE DAYTIME,
DARLING.SHE GOES TO SCHOOL AS A WOMAN.
GET INTO IT.
GET INTO BOTH OF THEM
AND SEE WHICH ONE IS REALER.
FEEL THE FLESH
OR WHATEVER IT MAY BE.
IS IT SOFT OR NOT?
IT'S SOFT.
COME, COME, COME.

SCORE MISS OCTAVIA FIRST.

STEP FORWARD.

TEN, TEN, TEN, TEN, TEN.

SCORE TENILLE.

WHAT YOU FEEL NOW...

I FEEL I NEED YOU...

NINE, TEN, TEN.

...TO BE REAL

GRAND PRIZE: OCTAVIA.

FIRST PLACE: TENILLE.

THERE'S PEOPLE

WHO SIT HOME ALL DAY.

THEY HAVE POTENTIAL, OKAY?

THEY GO TO THE BALLS

AND THEY PROVE

THAT THEY HAVE POTENTIALS

ON ACTUALLY SELLING

A GARMENT, OKAY

BUT THEY LIKE,

"I HAVE THIS POTENTIAL.

"THE BALLROOM TELLS ME.

THE BALLROOM TELLS ME

THAT I'M SOMEBODY."

WHEN THE BALLROOM IS OVER,

WHEN YOU COME HOME

YOU HAVE TO CONVINCE YOURSELF

THAT YOU ARE SOMEBODY

AND THAT'S WHERE THEY GET LOST.

EVERYBODY'S LOOKING

FOR SOMETHING

SWEET DREAMS

ARE MADE OF THESE

WHO AM I TO DISAGREE...

Emcee:

IT'S ALSO IN A MAGAZINE.

WHAT'S THE NAME

OF THE MAGAZINE?

ELITE. SWEET DREAMS

ARE MADE OF THESE

WHO AM I TO DISAGREE?

Dorian:

IT WAS A TIME WHEN YOU COULD

SPEND A GREAT DEAL OF TIME

MAKING OUTFITS

AND PREPARING FOR SOMETHING.

NOW THEY COME VERY QUICKLY

AND THE MOODS CHANGE

VERY QUICKLY.

I COME FROM THE OLD SCHOOL

OF BIG COSTUMES--

FEATHERS AND BEADS.

THEY DON'T HAVE THAT ANYMORE.

NOW IT'S ALL ABOUT DESIGNERS.

IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU CREATE.

IT'S ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN ACQUIRE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ISN'T THAT BEAUTIFUL?

\$559.HOW'S THAT FOR A SIMPLE DRESS?

IF YOU HAVE ON A LABEL

IT MEANS THAT YOU'VE GOT WEALTH,

WHEN IT DOESN'T REALLY

ANY SHOPLIFTER CAN GET A LABEL.

YOU CAN'T COME DOWN THE RUNWAY

IN SOMETHING FOR 14.99 OR 49.99

AND SAY, "WELL, I'M LOVELY,"

AND EXPECT TO WIN.

TO DESCRIBE, EXPLAIN MOPPING--

MOPPING, YOU GO INTO A STORE

AND... JUST LOOK

LOOK FOR WHATEVER

YOU WANT TO SEE

LOOK FOR WHATEVER...

MOPPING IS STEALING.
GENERAL STEALING.
HOWEVER IT'S DONE,
IT'S STEALING.
IF YOU'RE WORKING EVERY DAY
YOU'RE STRUGGLING
TO BUY THIS OUTFIT
WHEN YOU WALK
YOU'RE LIKE, "THIS IS ME"
AND YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS
AS WELL AS YOUR MEANS
OF PROJECTION OF YOUR OUTFIT
IT SHOWS IF
YOU ACTUALLY STOLE IT
OR YOU PURCHASED OT.
YOU CAN
ACTUALLY TELL?
YOU CAN ACTUALLY TELL.
FAGGOTS ARE A STUNT
IN THEMSELVES, REGARDLESS.
MAKE NO MISTAKE.
WHEN IT COMES TO A STUNT,
IT GOES IN ORDER.
IT GOES FAGGOTS,
THEN GIRLS, THEN BOYS
BECAUSE BOYS ARE THE STUPIDEST.
THEY DON'T KNOW HOW
TO DO A STUNT RIGHT.
FAGGOTS WILL DO A STUNT
AND YOU WILL NEVER
CATCH UP WITH IT
UNTIL YEARS LATER
AND THEN YOU'LL BE LIKE,
"OH, SHIT.
THIS FAGGOT PULLED
THIS STUNT ON ME."

WE WENT DOWN THERE, WE HAD FUN
AND ACT STUPID AND CAME BACK.

THE BEST THING WE DID

WAS ROY ROGERS.

THAT WAS FUN.

YOU WOULD HAVE HAD

SOMETHING TO EAT

BECAUSE HOW MUCH DID YOU PAY

FOR THAT SANDWICH?

MAYBE \$5.00

OR SOMETHING.

\$5.00?MAKE NO MISTAKE,

WE GOT YOUR \$5.00 BACK.

I HAD TWO DOUBLE CHEESEBURGERS

TWO FRIES, A COKE,

A SPRITE AND AN ORANGE

CHICKEN AND CHIPS...

I LIVED ON THAT LINE.

WE GOT OVER, AROUND,

SAY AROUND \$200 IN FOOD.

SEE?THEY PUT CHEESE

ON THE MEAT.

(laughter)

I HOPE AFTER THIS

ROY ROGERS DOES NOT CHANGE

HOW IT HAS ITS FOOD

BECAUSE IF IT DOES

BY THIS INTERVIEW

I WILL BE SO UPSET...

I WILL BE SO UPSET...

I WILL BE SO...

I WOULD BE HURT.

I'M TELLING YOU,

I REALLY WILL BE.

WHERE ELSE CAN YOU GO IN,

GET IT DONE YOUR WAY

AND GO OUT WITHOUT PAYING?

Emcee:

CARLA XTRAVAGANZA SAID
WILL YOU PLEASE RETURN
HER BLACK PATENT LEATHER SHOES,
SIZE SEVEN.

THERE IS A REWARD.

SHE WANT HER PUMPS.

SHE SAID IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK
TAKING HER SHOES.

GIVE 'EM BACK.

THE DAYTIME, IF THEY GO OUT
THEY'RE ONLY GOING OUT
TO HUSTLE UP A QUARTER OR TWO
TO GET THEIR THINGS
FOR THE BALL

OR GO TO A LITTLE JOB.

A LOT OF THEM HAVE
LITTLE JOBS NOW.

THEY WORK.

DON'T THINK THEY'RE LAZY.

IN NEW YORK CITY,
YOU WORK OR YOU STARVE.
YOU WORK SOME KIND OF WORK,
LEGAL OR OTHERWISE
BUT YOU HAVE TO WORK
TO SUSTAIN YOURSELF.

Emcee:

THE LEGENDARY TENILLE DUPREE
AND THE FATHER OF THE HOUSE
OF EBONY, MAX DABUSHIAK
PRESENTS A NIGHT
OF LIVING HELL AND PUNISHMENT
AT THE IMPERIAL ELKS LODGE
160 WEST 129th STREET
WHICH IS RIGHT HERE.

DOORS OPEN AT 5:00 A.M.
GRAND MARCH IS AT 7:00 A.M.
THE BALLS ARE USUALLY LATER
BECAUSE OF THE FACT
THEY'RE WAITING
FOR THE WORKING GIRLS
TO GET THERE.
AND WHAT IS IT
THOSE GIRLS ARE DOING?
WELL, THEY'RE MAKING MONEY
FOR THE BALLS
OR THEY'RE MAKING
THEIR COSTUMES, THEIR OUTFITS
OR, YOU KNOW,
GETTING IT TOGETHER LIKE THAT.
WHAT'S THEIR PROFESSION?
USUALLY SHOW GIRLS.
USUALLY THEY'RE,
YOU KNOW, SHOW GIRLS.
UH-HUH. ANYTHING ELSE?
WELL, IT DEPENDS.
IT DEPENDS.
I DON'T KNOW A LOT
OF THEIR PROFESSIONS
BUT USUALLY,
THEY'RE SHOW GIRLS, USUALLY.
THE THING THAT HELPED ME
MAKE MY MOST MONEY
THROUGH THE ESCORT SERVICE
IS BEING THAT I'M SO LITTLE,
I'M SO PETITE, I'M TINY...
UM, THE BLONDE HAIR
AND THE LIGHT SKIN
THE GREEN EYES
AND THE LITTLE FEATURES--
THAT CLIENTS' HANDS

WILL BE BIGGER THAN MY HANDS
WHILE THEY WOULD
HOLD MY HAND OR SOMETHING.
YOU KNOW, THEY'D LIKE FEELING
THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING
PERFECT AND LITTLE
AND NOT SOMEONE
THAT'S BIGGER THAN THEM
BECAUSE I GUESS
THAT KIND OF DISTURBS THEM.
MOST ALL THE DRAG QUEENS
THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE BALLS
90% OF THEM ARE HUSTLERS.
I GUESS THAT'S HOW
THEY MAKE THEIR MONEY
TO GO TO THE BALLS
AND GET WHATEVER THEY NEED.
I USED TO HUSTLE IN NEW YORK
TO MAKE MY MONEY.
I WAS WITH A GUY
AND HE WAS PLAYING
WITH MY TITTIES
TILL HE TOUCHED ME DOWN THERE.
HE FELT IT, AND HE SEEN IT,
AND HE TOTALLY FLIPPED OUT.
HE SAID, "YOU FUCKING FAGGOT.
"YOU'RE A FREAK.
"YOU'RE A VICTIM OF AIDS
"AND YOU'RE TRYING
TO GIVE ME AIDS.
"WHAT, ARE YOU CRAZY?
"YOU'RE A HOMO.
I SHOULD KILL YOU."
YOU KNOW, STUFF LIKE THAT.
I WAS REALLY TERRIFIED
SO I GRABBED MY BAG

AND JUST JUMPED OUT THE WINDOW.
BUT, SEE, NOW I DON'T LIKE
TO HUSTLE ANYMORE
AND I'M AFRAID
OF WHAT'S GOING ON, THE AIDS
AND I DON'T WANT TO CATCH IT.
LATER ON THIS EVENING
I'M SUPPOSED TO MEET SOMEONE,
A FRIEND OF MINE
A VERY GOOD OLD FRIEND OF MINE.
HE'S A YOUNG, VERY GOOD,
ATTRACTIVE, HANDSOME YOUNG MAN
AND HE'S TAKING ME OUT TO DINNER
LATER ON THIS EVENING
OR FOR COCKTAILS
AFTER MIDNIGHT.
I KNOW HE'LL GIVE ME SOME MONEY
JUST FOR ME TO MAYBE
BUY A PAIR OF SHOES
AND A NICE DRESS
SO THAT THE NEXT TIME HE SEES ME
HE'LL SEE ME LOOKING
MORE AND MORE BEAUTIFUL
THE WAY HE WANTS TO SEE ME
BUT I DON'T HAVE TO GO
TO BED WITH HIM
OR ANYTHING LIKE TT.
AT TIMES, THEY DO
EXPECT SEXUAL FAVORS
BUT THAT IS
BETWEEN MYSELF AND THEM
SO I DO NOT WISH
TO FURTHER SPEAK ABOUT THAT /
IF THEY DO.
BUT AT MOST TIMES,
99% OF THE TIME, THEY DON'T.

95% OF THE TIME, THEY DON'T.
BUT I FEEL LIKE...
IF YOU'RE MARRIED,
A WOMAN, IN THE SUBURBS--
A REGULAR WOMAN
IS MARRIED TO HER HUSBAND
AND SHE WANTS HIM TO BUY HER
A WASHER-AND-DRYER SET--
IN ORDER FOR HIM TO BUY THAT
I'M SURE SHE'D HAVE TO GO
TO BED WITH HIM ANYWAY
TO GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS
FOR HER TO GET WHAT SHE WANTS
SO IN THE LONG RUN,
IT ALL ENDS UP THE SAME WAY.

Octavia:

IF MONEY WASN'T SO IMPORTANT
IN THE WORLD TODAY TO SURVIVE
I GUESS I WOULDN'T WANT ANYTHING
BUT WHAT I HAVE NOW
BUT SINCE MONEY DOES
I HOPE THAT THE WAY I LOOK
PUTS MONEY IN MY POCKET.
YOU KNOW? I'M REALLY WORKING HARD.
I'M GOING TO WORK EVEN HARDER.
YEAH. THERE WE ARE.
THAT IS LOVELY.
STILL. OH, IT'S BEAUTIFUL
LIKE THAT FOR THE LIGHT
WHEN YOU KIND OF
DO THIS TO THE LIGHT.
I WANT PEOPLE TO LOOK AT ME AS,
"THERE'S THE MODEL, OCTAVIA."
"THERE'S THE ACTRESS, OCTAVIA."
THERE'S MISS SUPER-MODEL
OF THE WORLD, OCTAVIA."

IS THIS ENDLESS,
THIS CATALOG OF POSES?
I COULD KEEP GOING
LONGER THAN YOU COULD?
YEAH, JUST THERE.
I DON'T WANT TO END UP
AN OLD DRAG QUEEN
WITH NOTHING GOING F [ME
BUT TRYING TO WIN GRAND PRIZE
AT A BALL.
BACK A LITTLE BIT
LIKE YOU DID.
YES, THAT.
TWISTING A LITTLE BIT MORE
TO THE LIGHT...
YEAH, GREAT.
COULDN'T BE BETTER.
I DON'T THINK THE WORLD
HAS BEEN FAIR TO ME.
NOT YET ANYWAY.
YEAH. LOVELY.
LOVELY. I'VE BEEN A MAN
AND I'VE BEEN A MAN
WHO EMULATED A WOMAN.
I'VE NEVER BEEN A WOMAN.
I'VE NEVER HAD THAT SERVICE
ONCE A MONTH.
I'VE NEVER BEEN PREGNANT.
I COULD NEVER SAY
HOW A WOMAN FEELS.
I CAN ONLY SAY HOW A MAN
WHO ACTS OR DRESSES
LIKE A WOMAN FEELS.
I NEVER WANTED A SEX CHANGE.
THAT'S TAKING IT
A LITTLE TOO FAR

BECAUSE IF YOU DECIDE LATER ON
TO CHANGE YOUR MIND, YOU CAN'T.
ONCE IT'S GONE, IT'S GONE.
A LOT OF KIDS I KNOW
THEY GOT THE SEX CHANGE
BECAUSE THEY FELT
"OH, I'VE BEEN TREATED SO BAD
AS A DRAG QUEEN
"IF I GET A PUSSY--
EXCUSE THE EXPRESSION--
I'LL BE TREATED FABULOUS."
BUT WOMEN GET TREATED BAD.
THEY GET BEATEN,
THEY GET ROBBED
THEY GET DOGGED.
SO HAVING THE VAGINA--
<NTHAT DOESN'T MEAN
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE
A FABULOUS LIFE.
IT MIGHT, IN FACT, BE WORSE.
SO I'VE NEVER RECOMMENDED IT,
AND I WOULD HAVE NEVER GOT IT.
I'M SO THANKFUL
THAT I WAS THAT SMART.
THIS NEXT 40 OR SO YEARS
THAT I'M GOING TO BE HERE-- /
I'M GOING TO LIVE.
AND FOR THOSE CHILDREN
THAT CAN'T TAKE THE FACT
THAT I STILL LOOK YOUTHFUL:
HA, SUFFER!
NO BAGS, NO LINES.
LOVELY.AMERICA'S NICE.
YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU WANT
IF YOU HAVE THE MONEY.
YOU CAN BE WHAT YOU WANT.

LOOK AT ME.
IN '84, I'VE HAD
A NOSE RECONSTRUCTED JOB.
I'VE HAD MY CHEEBONES RISEN.
I'VE HAD
A CHIN IMPLANT
AND BREAST IMPLANTS.
TELL THEM
LIKE IT IS.
THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR
THAT HAS BEEN COMPLETED
IS I'VE HAD
A TRANSSEXUALISM OPERATION.
THAT MEANS I'VE HAD
A SEX CHANGE.
I'M NO LONGER A MAN.
I AM A WOMAN.
I FEEL GREAT.
SHE HAS TO RUB IT IN.
I'M VERY HAPPY.
I FEEL THE PART OF MY LIFE
THAT WAS A SECRET
IS NOW CLOSED.
I CAN CLOSE THE CLOSET DOOR.
THERE ARE NO MORE SKELETONS
IN THERE AND I'M AS FREE AS THE WIND
THAT'S BLOWING
OUT ON THIS BEACH.
(laughing)
EXCEPT THAT VOICE
IS STILL THERE.
AS FREE AS THIS BEACH.
I AM WHAT I AM
I AM MY OWN SPECIAL CREATION
Woman:
AT THE DIOR COUNTER,

SAMPLE POISON BY DIOR, LADIES.

SAMPLE

THE ELEGANCE TODAY.

POISON BY DIOR.

CAN I SAMPLE IT?

YES--

DIOR'S POISON.

FAB.DELICIOUS, YES?

FOLKS, PLEASE KEEP MOVING.

WE'RE TRYING TO KEEP

THE AISLES CLEAR.

Woman:

We're in a search

for the Super-Model of the Year.

This is for this year

with two of our top models.

And we are interviewing

candidates

to become

the Super-Model of the Year.

CLIENTS LIKE MODELS

WHO ARE HELPFUL

WHO NEVER SAY THE CLOTHES

ARE TERRIBLE EVEN IF THEY ARE.

AFTER ALL,

NOT EVERYTHING IS PERFECT.

THEY HAVE TO MAKE

THE LEAST PERFECT OF CLOTHES

LOOK LIKE A DIOR

AND SO THEY CAN'T JUST SAY

"THAT'S THE WORST THING

I'VE EVER SEEN."

THEY HAVE TO MAKE IT LOOK GOOD.

THEY HAVE TO BE CHEERFUL.

NOBODY LIKES TO GO IN

AND HEAR YOUR TROUBLES.

WHEN PEOPLE ASK YOU
HOW YOU FEEL
DON'T TELL THEM IF YOU'RE SICK
BECAUSE THEY DON'T CARE.

Reporter:

THREETWO, ONE.
BUT WHILE THE FACES OF THE '80s
STOOD ON LINE
THE FEET OF THE '80s
DID SOME WAITING--
HALF AN HOUR
AND ROUND THE BLOCK
ALL THE WAY TO THIRD AVENUE.
ONE OF THESE YOUNG LADIES
COULD BECOME
THE SUPER-MODEL OF THE WORLD.
EXCITING?TRY AGAIN.
HOW DOES THIS TYPE OF THING
SQUARE WITH WOMEN'S LIB?
WHAT ABOUT MEN--
DO THEY TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY
WHEN THEY HEAR YOU'RE A MODEL?
DOES THIS SQUARE
WITH THE WOMEN'S LIB MOVEMENT?

Women:

CAN I HAVE A FEW MORE
OF YOU OVER HERE?
CAN I HAVE
A FEW MORE WOMEN?
I'M SHERR .
SHERRY,
MY NAME'S JANET.
JANET, SO YOU WANT
TO BE A MODEL?
YES.I WAS IN
THIS CONTEST.

THAT'S ME.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT.
YOU STILL LOOK GREAT.
WE LOOK AT 75,000 PICTURES.
THAT'S THE AVERAGE AMOUNT
THAT WE LOOK AT EACH CONTEST.
WHAT HAVE GIRLS BECOME?
ARE THEY THE SAME?
HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT?
GIRLS ARE NOT DIFFERENT
FROM YESTERDAY
OR THE DAY BEFORE.
EVERYBODY'S WHO'S YOUNG
HAS A HOPE AND A DREAM
AND I DON'T THINK THAT
IT'S EVER BEEN ANY DIFFERENT
IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.
I BELIEVE THERE'S A BIG FUTURE
OUT THEREWITH A LOT OF BEAUTIFUL THINGS,
A LOT OF HANDSOME MEN.
A LOT OF LUXURY.
I WANT A CAR.
I WANT TO BE
WITH THE MAN I LOVE.
I WANT A NICE HOME
AWAY FROM NEW YORK
UP THE PEEKSKILLS
OR MAYBE IN FLORIDA--
SOMEWHERE FAR
WHERE NO ONE KNOWS ME.
I WANT MY SEX CHANGE.
I WANT TO LIVE
A NORMAL, HAPPY LIFE
WHETHER IT'S BEING MARRIED
AND ADOPTING CHILDREN.
WHETHER IT'S BEING

FAMOUS AND RICH...
I WANT TO GET MARRIED
IN CHURCH IN WHITE.
SOMETIMES I SIT
AND I LOOK AT A MAGAZINE.
I TRY TO IMAGINE MYSELF
ON THE FRONT COVER
OR EVEN INSIDE.
I WANT TO BE A COMPLETE WOMAN
AND I WANT TO BE
A PROFESSIONALa ODEL
BEHIND CAMERAS
IN A HIGH-FASHION WORLD.
I WANT SO MUCH MORE.
I WANT... I WANT MY NAME
TO BE A HOUSEHOLD PRODUCT.
I WANT EVERYBODY TO LOOK AT ME
AND SAY, "THERE GOES OCTAVIA."
I WANT THIS.
THIS IS WHAT I WANT.
AND I'M GOING TO GO FOR IT.

Emcee:

OPENING WINNER'S WALK,
AMY XTRAVAGANZA.
AMY XTRAVAGANZA.
WINNING...

VOGUE.(dance music)

VOGUE.VOGUE.

VOGUE.VOGUE.

AMY...PREVIOUSLY,

I INTRODUCED RAP MUSIC
ALONG WITH THE DANCING
TO JAPANESE PEOPLE
AND THEY REALLY LOVED IT.

Woman:

THIS IS VOGUING

A FORM OF DANCE
THAT HAS ITS ROOTS IN HARLEM
A TAKE-OFF ON RUNWAY MODELING
WHICH THEY HAD PLENTY OF
LAST NIGHT AS WELL.
VOGUING IS AN ATTITUDE,
A STYLE.IT'S... IT'S...
AN INSTITUTIONALIZED
SHOWING-OFF
BUT NOT WITHOUT
ENTERTAINMENT VALUE.
A VERY SPECTACULAR
AND VERY IMPORTANT ART FORM.
VERY IMPORTANT.
IT'S JUST SO THEATRICAL.
AND THE ENERGY...
IT'S JUST TERRIFIC.

Woman:

Besides putting voguing
in vogue, this Love Ball
sponsored by the Design
Industry's Foundation for AIDS
raised more than \$350,000
for research and housing
for the homeless who have AIDS
and I have never seen
anything quite like it
and I'm Connie Collins,
News 4, Manhattan.

Willi:

TWO YEARS AGO, I WAS WORKING
Y IN A HEALTH FOOD STORE
STILL TEACHING AND TRYING
TO PERFORM ON MY OWN.
WELL, NOWMY FOOT IS LIKE
IN EVERY LITTLE DOORSTEP

THAT YOU CAN THINK OF.
UM... I'M DOING A LOT
OF RUNWAY WORK, DANCING
PERFORMING FOR MALCOLM McLAREN
VARIOUS OTHER PEOPLE
DOING CHOREOGRAPHY.
HELPING PEOPLE
TO PUT THEIR SHOWS TOGETHER
SO IT'S GOING VERY GOOD.
THIS EARRING I HAVE...
I BOUGHT THIS IN JAPAN.
IT SAYS HOUSE COUTURE.
I CAN'T READ THE REST OF IT.
IT HAS A SCISSOR
AND IT HAS JUNIOR GAUTIER, 89,
OF COURSE.
THAT'S A GAUTIER LABEL EMBLEM.
I BOUGHT IT, MIND YOU.
I HAVE THE RECEIPTS.
WHERE, I DON'T KNOW,
BUT I BOUGHT IT.
THE BALLS HAVE KIND OF
GOTTEN TONED DOWN
COMPARED TO WHAT IT USED TO BE.
WHEN I TELL PEOPLE WHAT IT IS
AND IT'S NOT WHAT THEY EXPECT
THEY FEEL A LETDOWN.
THEY SAY IT WAS LONG
OR IT WAS DRAGGED-OUT
OR IT WAS BORING.
THE BALLS ARE
LONG AND DRAGGED-OUT
BUT THEY WERE NEVER BORING.
I REALLY DO MISS
THE STREET ELEMENT
BUT EVERYTHING CHANG S

AND EVERYTHING'S
BEEN CHANGING DRASTICALLY.
YOU KNOW, NEW YORK'S
NOT EVEN THE SAME ANYMORE.
(dance music playing)

Ooh, child...

Angie:

I ALWAYS SAID TO HER
"VENUS,
YOU TAKE TOO MANY CHANCES.
YOU'RE TOO WILD
WITH PEOPLE IN THE STREET."
BUT THAT WAS VENUS.
SHE ALWAYS TOOK A CHANCE.
SHE ALWAYS WENT
INTO A STRANGER'S CAR.
ALWAYS DID WHAT SHE WANTED,
TO GET WHAT SHE WANTED.
I HAD A BOOKING
FOR A CHRISTMAS SHOW AT SALLY'S
AND THE D.T.'s CAME TO ME
WITH A PICTURE OF HER MURDERED
AND THEY WERE ABOUT
TO CREMATE HER
BECAUSE NOBODY HAD CAME
TO VERIFY THE BODY.
I HAD TO GIVE THIS INFORMATION
TO HER FAMILY.
ACTUALLY, THEY FOUND HER DEAD
AFTER FOUR DAYS
STRANGLER UNDER A BED
IN A SLEAZY HOTEL.
I'M HUNGRY.
WE USED
TO GET DRESSED TOGETHER.
CALL EACH OTHER AND SAY

WHAT WE WERE GOING TO WEAR.
SHE WAS LIKE MY RIGHT HAND.
EVERY TIME I GO ANYWHERE
I MISS HER.
THAT WAS MY MAIN...
THE MAIN DAUGHTER OF MY HOUSE,
IN OTHER WORDS.
BUT THAT'S PART OF LIFE
AS FAR AS BEING
A TRANSSEXUAL IN NEW YORK
AND SURVIVING.
I ALWAYS HAD HOPES
OF BEING A BIG STAR.
THEN I LOOKED...
AS YOU GET OLDER,
YOU AIM A LITTLE LOWER
AND I JUST SAY
"WELL, YEAH, YOU STILL
MIGHT MAKE AN IMPRESSION."
EVERYBODY WANTS TO LEAVE
SOMETHING BEHIND THEM--
SOME MARK UPON THE WORLD.
THEN YOU THINK YOU'VE LEFT
A MARK ON THE WORLD...
IF YOU JUST GET THROUGH IT...
AND A FEW PEOPLE
REMEMBER YOUR NAME.
THEN YOU'VE LEFT A MARK.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BEND
THE WHOLE WORLD.
I THINK IT'S BETTER
TO JUST ENJOY IT.
PAY YOUR DUES AND ENJOY IT.
IF YOU SHOOT A ARROW
AND IT GOES REAL HIGH
HOORAY FOR YOU.

WHAT YOU THINK OF
WHAT YOU FEEL NOW
WHAT YOU KNOW
TO BE REAL
WHAT YOU THINK OF
I THINK I LOVE YOU
WHAT YOU FEEL NOW...
BRING THE CAMERA CLOSER,
MR. DeMILLE.
I'M READY FOR MY CLOSE-UP.
AND SO... TO BE REAL
OOH, YOUR LOVE'S
FOR REAL NOW
YOU KNOW THAT
YOUR LOVE IS MY LOVE
MY LOVE IS YOUR LOVE
OUR LOVE IS HERE TO STAY...
OKAY, WINTER SPORTSWEAR--
PREFERABLY FUR, BUT IF NOT
IN ERROR, YOU CAN...
NATURAL FIBERS.
IF YOU CHOOSE THE POLYESTER,
GOD HELP YOU--
YOU KNOW HOW THE CHILDREN ARE.
TO BE REAL
OOH, YOUR LOVE'S
FOR REAL NOW
YOU KNOW THAT
YOUR LOVE IS MY LOVE
AND MY LOVE IS YOUR LOVE
OUR LOVE IS HERE TO STAY
YOU ADD U-G AT THE END
OF YOUR WORD.
BUT YOU HAVE TO TAKE OFF
THE FIRST LETTER OR LETTERS
UNTIL YOU GET INTO A VOWEL.

TO BE REAL NOW
IS-UG IS-UG A-UG OO-UG ASS-UG
AM-UG OO-UG...

TO BE REAL
WHAT YOU THINK OF
I THINK I LOVE YOU
WHAT YOU FEEL NOW
I FEEL I NEED YOU
DON'T YOU KNOW NOW
TO BE REAL
IT'S GOT TO BE REAL
TO BE REAL
IT'S GOT TO BE REAL
TO BE REAL!

I'M NOT LOOKING FOR ANYTHING.
I THINK ALL MEN ARE DOGS.
I HONESTLY DO.
EVERY MAN STARTS BARKING
SOONER OR LATER.
I'M A QUIET PERSON.
AND IF YOU BELIEVE THAT,
I OWN THAT ISLAND THERE, TOO.

WHAT YOU FEEL NOW
WHAT YOU KNOW
TO BE REAL
WHAT YOU THINK NOW
WHAT YOU FEEL NOW
WHAT YOU KNOW NOW
TO BE REAL
TO BE REAL.

(slow blues music)

THEY WANT TO BE
WITH THEIR KIND.
THEY WANT TO BE
GAY AND GAY.
'CAUSE PROBABLY

JUST LIKE A GANG
JUST LIKE A COMMUNITY.
IN A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY,
THEY WANT TO PRAY TOGETHER.
WELL, THIS GAY COMMUNITY
MIGHT WANT TO...
OR, OR THEY, LIKE, WANT
TO BE TOGETHER.

SOMEDAY
I'LL WISH UPON A STAR
AND WAKE UP WHERE THE CLOUDS
ARE FAR BEHIND ME
WHERE TROUBLES MELT
LIKE LEMON DROPS
WAY ABOVE THE CHIMNEY TOPS
THAT'S WHERE, THAT'S WHERE
YOU'LL FIND ME

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT!

(applause)

CLAP YOUR HANDS.

ALL RIGHT, MISS PATTI.

...OVER THE RAINBOW

OH... ?SO THIS IS NEW YORK CITY

AND THIS IS WHAT

THE GAY LIFE IS ABOUT.

RIGHT? , N j q N woeoe