

True (Opera) Detective | Scene Clues

At the home of Reverend Earl Little, his wife Louise, and their four children, followers of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association gather for a meeting. Louise anxiously awaits the return of Earl, who is late to the meeting. She fears that he has been harmed, noting that the Ku Klux Klan burned down their previous home shortly after Malcolm's birth.

A white social worker arrives, accusing the Little family of neglect. She commands the children to be taken by foster care as Malcolm calls to his mother for help. His older sister Ella arrives and takes Malcolm into her custody. Ella comforts Malcolm and introduces him to "the Hill," an upwardly mobile, middle-class Black neighborhood.

Malcolm's friend Street convinces him to pull off a heist. Police officers enter with clubs and arrest them. Malcolm appears, handcuffed in a chair under a glaring light. He speaks—perhaps to interrogators, perhaps to no one—recalling how white supremacist violence has always followed him. He resolves to bear the power of his truth against evil.

Reginald Little comes to visit his older brother in jail, encouraging him to turn to the Muslim faith and the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm begins to accept the idea of conversion as the voice of Elijah Muhammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam, is heard offstage. They meet and Malcolm changes his last name to "X," signifying both his lost African origins and a placeholder for his future name to be given by God. Elijah shows him how to pray in the manner of the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm begins traveling the country, leading rallies and founding temples in Boston, Philadelphia, Springfield, Hartford, Atlanta, and New York. Before a large crowd, he lays out his agenda for pan-African Black liberation. During this period, Malcolm oversees organizing activities for the Nation of Islam.

True (Opera) Detective | Scene Clues (CONTINUED)

As news swirls of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, reporters swarm Elijah asking for comment, but he rebuffs them. They then turn to Malcolm, who states that JFK's death was the foreseeable consequence of America's violent culture.

Malcolm meets with Elijah, who confronts him for having gone against his command by making a statement about JFK's assassination. He suspects that Malcolm has grown too popular for the Nation of Islam, and Malcolm questions if he has been sabotaged, suggesting that perhaps Elijah does not obey his own laws.

Malcolm's wife Betty comforts him as he grows weary from increasing media attention and political turmoil within the Nation of Islam. He embraces Betty and their daughters, and she encourages him to make the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca.

While in Cairo on the Hajj, Malcolm abandons Western clothing for the simple white cloth of a pilgrim. A call to prayer is heard, and a group of Muslims begin to pray. As he watches those around him, he begins to emulate their movements. Having received his new name, el-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, he kneels and prays.

When Malcolm returns from his pilgrimage, flanked by allies in African and Muslim garb, he is mobbed by reporters—still addressing him by his former name—who ask him about the riots in Harlem. He corrects them, reiterating that the violence of American culture leads to more violence.

Malcolm meets with his allies in a hotel room, detailing his plans and espousing a philosophy of self-defense and solidarity among all people of color around the globe. Though he learns of frequent threats to his life, he remains resolute in his faith that the Black liberation struggle will continue and succeed—even if he is killed.

True (Opera) Detective | Libretto Clues

My strong body quakes with
fear
He will not return.
In these twilight hours
Every shadow moves,
Every light is a fire.
I remember so clearly
The terror of night riders,
horses coming closer,
Riding down our lives.

We call the streets
By our own names.
We Negroes don't leave a place
Quite the same. [...]
Some are bootblacks or doctors,
Some are lawyers or cobblers.
We're all kind of family,
Almost next of kin.
We're just tryin' to make it
From where we've been.

I would not tell you
What I know.
You would not
Hear my truth.
You want the story
But you don't want to know.
My truth is you've been on
me
A very long time,
Longer than I can say.
As long as I've been living
You've had your foot on me,
Always pressing.

You got my letter?
Read what I said? [...]
I've changed.
I've found a new way.
I'm clean,
Starting out new.
I met a man
Who showed me the truth. [...]
Have you ever met a man
Who knows all things? [...]
He knows who you are,
Where you've been.
He knows your future.

An "X" you must claim
For what was lost—
Your African name,
An ocean crossed.
An "X" will stand
Until God returns
To speak a name
That will be yours.
Come, Malcolm X,
Let me teach you.
Allahu-Akbar
Allah is the greatest.
Let me teach you.

If we are going to be free,
It will be done by you and
me.
And we won't turn the other
cheek,
We won't turn the other
cheek
To get our freedom.
We are ready to die,
To get our freedom.
We will use any means—
Whatever means necessary—
To stand for ourselves,
To live for ourselves,
Or keep catchin' Hell.

True (Opera) Detective | Libretto Clues (CONTINUED)

America's clime of hate is coming back on itself. Not only are defenseless blacks killed but now it has struck down the chief of state. That hate struck down Medgar Evers. That hate struck down Patrice Lumumba. In my view, it's a case of chickens coming home to roost.

You speak so freely,
You speak to me of law.
Do you come to judge
Or be judged?
They say you have grown too
big
For the Nation.
For our Nation.

When a man is lost
Does the sky bleed for him,
Or does the sunset
Ignore his tears?
When a man is lost,
Do the stars die
For a night,
Or does the city
Hide them
In its glare?
Alone in his dreams
In a light seldom seen.
Soon the henchmen will
come
Take his sky and stars
And leave only blood.
When a man is lost,
What is left inside?
What makes him take one
step,
Or keep on breathing?

My name is Shabazz
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz,
A name for one reborn.
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz,
A name for one who has heard
The universe make but one
sound.
It moves as one force,
A whirling desert storm.
Each of us a cloud of sand
Flying round the silent eye.

You always ask
What you already know.
You wonder why
There is revolt—
A violent land breeds violent
men.
The slaver breeds a rebel,
Not a slave.
Can't you see at all?
Do your eyes tell you lies?

I've learned so much in Africa.
We're part of something so big,
A movement spanning the
globe.
We're freedom fighters all
From here to Angola,
Mozambique, Ghana,
Zimbabwe, South Africa.
They teach us that freedom
Can come from ballots or
bullets.