



DRIVING WHILE BLACK MAGIC

Directed and Edited by Julia C Liu
Written and Created by Vatic Tayari Kuumba

Starring Cloteal L. Horne
with
Becky Bass, Kelly Seigh, Ana González & Vatic Tayari Kuumba

2020 / 8 minutes / Drama / USA / Color / English
Website: www.DrivingWhileBlackMagic.com
Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/409137926>
Instagram: www.instagram.com/drivingwhileblackmagic/
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LOGLINE:

A spiritual woman recites her affirmations for decolonization, while protests erupt over another state sanctioned killing.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

In the absurdist world of Providence Plantations, a spiritual woman works to decolonize her thoughts. While driving home from her job at the sleep lab, she tries to block out news of another state sanctioned killing. After narrowly missing a run in with police, the line between reality and a waking nightmare begins to blur.

LONG SYNOPSIS:

DRIVING WHILE BLACK MAGIC is the opening to an absurd alternate near future where Nadege, a spiritual woman, works to decolonize herself through daily rituals for affirmation. She works a soul crushing job at a sleep lab, for a boss who can never get her name right. Nadege has to work late again, while her husband Reggie and their dog Fatboy wait for her in their new condo in Providence Plantations.

Before she starts her commute, Nadege casts a spell of protection for her drive home. During the drive, she blocks out news of more protests over another state sanctioned killing. She turns on her self help tape, reciting the teachings of Obeah the Spirit Mother.

After narrowly missing a run in with police, Nadege begins to have premonitions of danger. As she gets closer to home, the line between reality and a waking nightmare begins to blur.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

I directed DRIVING WHILE BLACK MAGIC to explore the internal world of someone trying to decolonize herself in an oppressive state. It is a surrealist film based on the play A FURTIVE MOVEMENT: THE USE OF FARCE written by my collaborator Vatic Tayari Kuumba. I met Vatic by chance at a community art show in 2018. We found common ground as artists who are interested in creating weird and immersive work through a strong anti-racist lens. When I first read his play, I was immediately drawn into the world of Providence Plantations and how it mirrors our own. Many people outside of our homestate do not know our official name is "The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." This legacy of slavery was on the state seal until June 2020, when the Governor finally issued an executive order to drop it.

Our goal with this film was more than telling a story; we wanted to create a visceral experience that drops the viewer in the POV of our heroine Nadege. The audience should experience her daily rituals for protection and affirmation and feel her weariness and anxiety from living in an anti-Black world.

In the play, A FURTIVE MOVEMENT, Providence Plantations is a Purgatory where all the characters are trapped in a theatrical farce. Adapting this idea of Purgatory or a liminal space to the screen was one of my biggest challenges as a director. I incorporated symbolism and repeating imagery to conjure an other-worldly atmosphere in the art direction to hint at this concept. It was also important that we show the destructiveness of police violence without being overly graphic. In this world, blood becomes crystals and rose petals.

I am inspired by Nadege and Obeah, complex women who find power through ritual. How do you decolonize your own thoughts when faced with the lurking presence of structural racism and state violence? This film attempts to answer that question through the experience of one woman's daily commute home.

FILMMAKERS:

Julia C Liu, Director and Editor

Julia is a Providence based director, cinematographer and artist. Her passion for visual storytelling started through her comics, evolving into filmmaking as a way to bring her illustrations to life. Liu is a contributing director to the New York Times' Emmy-nominated Op-Doc Series and has directed and shot music videos premiering on Stereogum, NPR Music, and The 405. She is a member of the International Cinematographers Guild Local 600 and a graduate of Brown University.

Vatic Tayari Kuumba, Writer and Story Creator

Vatic is a writer, activist, poet, rapper and creator. He is developing a cycle of plays with Rites & Reason Theatre at Brown University and Trinity Repertory Company. Raised inside a redline box, Kuumba is a child of two veterans of Jim Crow Florida. In 2014, he was arrested during a Black Lives Matter protest - almost losing his job as the Director of the 21st Century School in Providence because of his activism. DRIVING WHILE BLACK MAGIC is based on the universe and characters in his play A FURTIVE MOVEMENT: THE USE OF FARCE.

Keith Heyward, Producer

Keith is a filmmaker, web developer, and interactive media designer who has created a wide range of media experiences from documentaries to multimedia art exhibits and music videos. Clients include BBC, National Geographic, Netflix, Science Channel and NHK Enterprises. His Steadicam operating and aerial cinematography are featured in DRIVING WHILE BLACK MAGIC.

Joanne Bartholomeuszs, Producer

Joanne is a Providence based Producer, originally starting her career in Singapore. She has worked on countless sets internationally, in both the art department and production. This is her debut project in the United States.

Katherin Castro, Cinematographer

Recently selected for the American Film Institute Cinematography Intensive for Women in Los Angeles, Katherine is a New York City-based Cinematographer. After studying architecture and photography while living in the Dominican Republic, Katherine returned to Boston in 2008 where she began working in film and TV. Her work spans narrative, music video & documentary and has recently been screened in film festivals such as Indy Film Fest, Woods Hole Film Festival & Asian American International Film Festival in NYC

CAST:

Cloteal L. Horne, Lead Actress

Cloteal is a dynamic actress, teacher, director, and theatre-maker, born-and-bred in San Diego California. She holds a B.F.A in Theatre Arts from Boston University, and is working towards receiving her M.F.A in Acting at Brown University/Trinity Rep. She has starred in countless plays across the country. Standing on the shoulders of those that have come before her, Cloteal is a product of her grandmother's prayers and her ancestors' wildest dreams.

Becky Bass, Voice of Obeah

Becky Bass, hailing from the beautiful island of St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands, is a renowned vocalist, steel pannist & actor based in Providence, Rhode Island. As a graduate of Brown University in Theatre Arts & Performance Studies, Becky received Brown's Weston Award for Excellence in Musical Theatre. A two-time New England Urban Music Award winner, Becky's angelic voice and skillful steel pan playing can be heard while performing her Caribbean Soul music.

Kelly Seigh, Supporting Actress

Kelly Seigh is a Providence based actor. She received her MFA in Acting at the Trinity Rep Conservatory in 2002. Kelly was a co-founding member of Elemental Theatre Collective and has worked with Trinity Repertory Company, The Gamm, The Wilbury Group, Living Literature and the Manton Avenue Project locally as well as with North Shore Music Theatre in Boston and the Wagon Wheel Theatre in Indiana.

PRODUCTION CREDITS:

Directed and Edited by	Julia C Liu
Created and Written by	Vatic Tayari Kuumba
Produced by	Joanne Bartholomeusz, Keith Heyward, Julia Liu, Vatic Kuumba
Director of Photography	Katherine Castro
Nadege	Cloteal L. Horne
Boss	Kelly Seigh
Reporter	Ana González
Obeah	Becky Bass
Reggie	Vatic Tayari Kuumba
Sleep Patients	Diamond J. Tevyaw, Deshon Coit, Myles Lennon, Jasmin Gomes Steve Reyes, Julia Liu, Joanne Bartholomeusz
First Assistant Director	Natále Tsiporti
Steadicam + Drone	Keith Heyward
1st AC	Karen Garcia
Grip	Jennifer Evans Brignolia
Swing	Mark Hutchinson
Make Up and Hair	Kriket Smith
Sound Recording	Kelly Gallanar
Wardrobe Styling	Tomi Randall
Set Dressing	Rena Rong
Set Dressing	Joan Wyand
Production Assistant	Meghan Graham
Picture Car Driver	Carrie Wunsch
Composer	Ted Hearne
Composer	Chris Monti
Composer	Aviva Jaye
Editor	Julia C Liu
VFX + Co-Editor	Keith Heyward
Co-Writer	Julia C Liu
Re-recording Mixer	Jason Fyrberg
Colourist	Marika Litz

TECHNICAL:

Country: USA
Language: English
Short genre: Drama
Run time: 8 minutes
Aspect Ratio: 2.35