

Writing Sample

THE DEBATE

A Play in Two Acts

by

John Monteleone

John Monteleone
PO Box 2723
Sag Harbor, NY 11963
(631) 258-0228 C.
info@JohnMonteleone.com

© Copyright 2020
by John Monteleone
All Rights Reserved
Registered with
The Library of Congress
Dramatist Guild Member #103727

CHARACTERS

LUCE (Don Luce)

Self centered mindless arrogant jackass of a human being with a big mouth, small mind and grotesque sense of entitlement.

MORPH (Joe Morph)

A decent life-long politician with serious losses in his life, that have made his empathy and understanding of other people a real part of his character.

MODERATOR

A highly sophisticated, intelligent black woman and successful journalist.

MANY OTHER CHARACTERS AND VOICES

Each main character will play all the other characters in the script.

THE TIME

Presidential Debate - could be any year.

THE SET

Up stage right and left are 2 Podiums with Red, White and Blue trim. They are set on a diagonal to one another and the audience. The Moderator's Table is situated so we can see her face clearly, not her back. Upstage center on the back wall is a huge American Flag, hanging Down vertically between the two Podiums. This should be set so that when a pin-spot or other lighting effect occurs downstage it disappears. Downstage area below the Two Podiums is a large area where battles and other scenes from history emerge.

ACT I

AS THE AUDIENCE ENTERS
WOODIE GUTHRIE'S original recording of
THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND with scratches on
the recording plays in the background but
clearly audible. It loops once it ends
until the play begins at which point it
fades out unnoticeably.

AT RISE

Lights rise on the Moderator, a Black
Female, looking at the stage, crying,
sometimes sobbing, snapping tissues out of
a tissue box, wiping tears, letting the
tissue drop gracefully into a pail next to
her. She does this several times.

After a moment, lights rise on President
Don Luce and his Contender Joe Morph
standing at their podiums. Luce, the
incumbent President, is ACTING stern, hiding
a terrified little boy within himself who
wants his daddy to love him but never did.
Morph has a big broad smile showing off
his expensive white caps.

Moderator continues to cry and wipe her
tears and discarding tissues. Then after
she's composed herself, she begins.

MODERATOR

Thank you President Luce and Vice President Morph. My
first question goes to the President with 2 minutes and
no interruptions. Mr. President, 300,000 Americans
have died due to the Coronavirus Pandemic which...

LUCE

...I was playin' golf the whole time how could it be my
fault..?

Pause. She looks at him.

MODERATOR

But your administration...

LUCE

..Kill the ACA...

MODERATOR

...An answer rather than a slogan would be appreciated sir, and we're on The Covid Crisis - there are predictions by leading doctors...

LUCE

...LOCK UP MORPH
TIE 'EM TO A TREE
FOUR MORE YEARS
FOR GENIUS ME...

MODERATOR

...That state by February, 4 months from today, there will be 500,000 human beings dea...

LUCE

...Wait. Human what?

MODERATOR

Human Beings.

LUCE

Human BEANS?

MODERATOR

500,000 human BEINGS, not BEANS, sir - American human beings - dead on your watch.

LUCE

Goya oh Boya. Great company great great fabulous company. I don't wear a watch. I believe in them. Beans. Human or Vegetable. Could be either I never discriminate. Equality. Equality. American Beans. Human Beings. White Beans. No difference to me. Our beans come first no matter who they are! AMERICA FIRST MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

EXCERPT 2 - DON'T CALL ME A NIGGER, MR. PRESIDENT!

MODERATOR

What... Is... Your... Health... Care... Plan...

LUCE

HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR WOMAN YOU'LL GET WRINKLES TOO SOON AND NO ONE WILL WANT TO CHAIN YOU TO A BASEMENT BEAM AND FUCK YOU WITH A STRAP ON.

MODERATOR

with regards to Healthcare, we have yet to see anything in writing? When will we see...

LUCE

...It's Great.

MODERATOR

...Glad to hear that so when...

LUCE

...Greatest. Greatlier. So Great.

MODERATOR

So when will we be SHOWN, the...

LUCE

...Greater than Greatlier. Big. BIG! Bigger than a Nigger.

They stare at one another.

Long Pause.

MORPH

Dear God.

LUCE

ARE YOU DEAF DO NOT SAY HIS...

MODERATOR

(jolts up to standing)

...Did... You just call me a Nigger?!

She stares daggers at him.

Pause.

Luce stares back at her thinking overtime.

LUCE

No. Of course not. Not you. I didn't even know you were black I thought it was a bad make up job. It's a TV network after all. It just rhymed with Bigger and popped into my head so I just said it for effect - got your attention didn't it?

She stares daggers at him.

Pause.

LUCE

Oh come on now, don't be offended it's a wonderful word if you think about it... starts with a nice little ride you know on that nice long "Nnnnnnnnnn" then an abrupt "IG" - just stops you in your tracks and makes you listen,

(MORE)

LUCE (CONT'D)

(cliche' black slave dialect)

"gotz ya attenin' ain't dat now right, maam'!"

(speaks normally)

Adds suspense you know, but then the word ends with a long errrrrrr - you can sing it...

(sings it - Al Jolsen Style)

NIIIIIGGEERRRRRRR

NIIIIIGGEERRRRRRR

NIIIIIGGEERRRRRRR BEAN

BE MY LITTLE

NIIIIIGGEERRRRRRR BEAN

(speaks)

That "RRRRRRRRRRRRR ENDING" is fabulous and has a little growl, that bite to it, like a little lynching, very nice word - "NNNNNIIIIIGGEEEEERRRRRR."

She stares daggers at him.

LUCE

(big smile, throws her a kiss)

Love the word Nigger - a good ol' American slang - Grrreeaaat.

She stares daggers at him.

LUCE

Like Fuck. Shit. Asshole. Bitch. Cunt. Whore. Slut.

She continues staring daggers at him.

LUCE

Good solid Americana. Make America Great Again stuff!

(waves at the audience, smiles, throws kisses)

She continues staring daggers at him.

LUCE

You can also spell Nigger like - African Americans - spell it in Rapp Songs and street slang because they have no real vocabulary due to choosing to remain in poverty:

(spells it)

N.I.G.A. Abbreviated Americana. Slum-Speak. They say NIGA, I say NIGGER... same shit. Like you. I bet you come from the slums, or rather slum cum.

(chuckles and spells it)

S.L.U.M. - C.U.M.?

She continues staring daggers at him.

LUCE

(to audience, smiling, flirting)

Don't know why so many people don't like the word Nigger it has a catchy brand for the beans too now that I think about it. Amazing idea. So UN-Racist. We could call them NiggerBeans! In honor of Niggers. Better yet. NaziNigger Beans! In honor of Nazi's. They were terrible people but I'm sure there were some very fine people too, but the word has a nice ring to it you know? NiggerNaziBeans or HitlerPutunBeans or NuclearBeanBombs by PutinKimJonLuce..!

MODERATOR

Don't call me a Nigger, sir.

LUCE

...I've GOT IT - REGIME BEANS! That better? REGIME BEANS rather than NIGGERBEANS? That stop your night sweats sweetheart? Hmmm?

The moderator is steaming angry staring at him - he stares back. Morph is staring mouth agape in disbelief. She doesn't know what to do, trying to remain in control and professional.

MODERATOR

Mr. President. My family descended from SLAVES. Racism is real in America and we have seen the lynchings, past and present. I grew up with very little opportunity. I come from the Projects in the South Bronx. It was a long journey to this mountaintop from the Cotton Fields of Georgia.

Lights quickly shift to amber, as if in sepia tones - we're in the early 1800's. At the same time Luce downs a Master Slave Owner's hat and shawl, and Moderator throws on or takes off clothing making her into a teenage slave. She is thrust from where she is standing to center stage, facing the audience and she is terrified, panting.

Luce moves from his podium slowly, never taking his eyes off of her, and slowly approaches her with a predatory swagger. She backs away but there is nowhere she can run.

Morph watches in very dim light as if watching history unfold before him.

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER
(southern accent, horny smile,
swaggering arrogance)
What're you doin' out here alone?

MODERATOR AS TEEN SLAVE
Nothin' sir, jus' walkin'... M' Daddy's right beh...

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER
...Commere.

*The slave girl is terrified and backs
away.*

Lights fade out on Morph.

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER
Nowhere to run gurl. Commere now, do like yer told.

*She is torn, looking in all directions.
Trembling terror on her face.*

*He slowly moves towards her with a
sickening predatory smile. She is frozen
in terror.*

MODERATOR AS TEEN SLAVE
Please, sir, not again... I tell my Daddy dis time.

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER
Too bad for him, gurl.

*He grabs her by her hair, jerking her
head back, and pulls her into him, her
face is out towards the audience and filled
with terror. Tears start to roll. He
positions himself behind her. She's bent
over as he pushes her into position.*

*He lifts her skirt, from behind, and we
see him unzipping his zipper then he enters
her and rams her hard. She screams, he
throws his hand over her mouth pulling
her head back. Her eyes are bulging out
of her head both in physical pain and
emotional terror, and he fucks her ramming
hard, she jolts with each thurs and grunts
in pain and fear as he does, and this
goes on for 30 seconds or longer, the
pain growing, without remorse.*

*Morph has put a Black Man's Face Mask,
removed his jacket and has overalls on,
and due to the very dim light on him, he*

looks like a black slave that's tired, he moves into the edge of the dim light hunched over from a bad back - we see only a little of him.

MORPH AS SLAVE

WHAT YE' DOIN' TO ME' CHILD! GET OFFA HER!!!

MODERATOR AS TEEN SLAVE

DADDY!

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER

GET BACK TO YER HUT PIG AN' MIND YER BUSINESS.

Luce fucks her looking right at him, smiling. Slave man wants to run but can't.

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER

SHE'S FINE MEAT. GOOD RIDE. YOU SHOULD TRY HER YERSELF.

MORPH AS SLAVE

GET OFFA HER I SAID SHE'S BUT A CHILD!!!

MODERATOR AS TEEN SLAVE

GET OFFA ME!

She pulls away, and falls to sitting. Luce moves and pushes his penis into his pants, we do not see his penis.

She runs to her father. Luce is angry. He pulls out a revolver, aims at the Father, and shoots him dead. Slave man falls over, dead, slave teen runs to him.

The Shot is deafening and we see smoke rising from the revolver tip. Slave teen kneels upstage of her father wailing with pain and terror.

MODERATOR AS TEEN SLAVE

DADDY! DEAR LORD... WHY'D YA SHOOT HIM FOR YOU BASTARD!
OH DADDY... M' DADDY...

Luce puts his gun away.

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER

He's my property I do what the fuck I want with him an' you too, you give me any more lip you little bitch, and I'll shoot you. I can buy me 50 more slaves, I don't need you. I'll throw you out like the garbage you are. Now get your young hot black ass over here. NOW!

She rises, standing, looking down at her dead father, and at Luce as Slave Owner. He pulls his gun out again and fires over he head. The sound resonates; we feel the danger.

LUCE AS SLAVE OWNER

Next shot's in yer head. You don't believe I'll shoot ya? He's dead. So will you be. Are you roaches that fuckin' stupid. GET OVER HERE I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU.

She starts to walk towards him. Lights out on Morph as Slave on the floor.

As she moves towards Luce, a thick rope with a noose at the end lowers Center Stage. She moves her head into the noose, and stands facing the audience with the noose around her neck.

Light on Luce fades out as Luce moves behind his Podium removing his shawl and hat.

She stares at the audience with her head in the noose - this shines in the light, ominously, the rest of the stage darker.

MODERATOR

(to Luce but looking at the audience)

Don't... Call.. Me.. A... Nigger.

Light fades on the Noose which rises out of sight slowly and unnoticeably. Moderator returns to her table removing her costume pieces of Mary Turner.

MODERATOR

RACISM. Mr. Presi...

(clears her throat unable to say it)

...tell us about your Plans to remove racism from our system once and for all.

LUCE

Oh I like you feisty felatio.

EXERPT 3 - SONG AND DANCE

Pause. Stares of disbelief from Moderator and Morph.

MODERATOR

You just lied to the entire world about...

LUCE

...But it was entertaining. Ask them...

(points to the audience)

...what do Americans really want - Truth or Fun? Come home from their second miserable underpaid union-less job they need a little giggle. They're so desperate they'd suck my cock in the middle of Fifth Avenue if I had a terminal case of puss-ridden bloody crab-gonorrhoea gone amuck. Because I'm their Fun President. Giggle-Maker-In-Chief. Keep them watching while I pick their pocket and they love me for it. Give a little, take a little. You know?

Luce pulls out a black cane with a white tip, and black top hat with a white band around it and puts it on while starting to tap dance. He dance-exists from behind his podium as a song and dance man.

LUCE

(to offstage band)

HIT IT MAESTRO!

Music starts for "SINGING IN THE RAIN" - lights fade out as a follow-spot illuminates him - he tap dances and spins, while singing.

LUCE

I'm singin' in the Pain
Just singin' in the Pain
What a glorious feeling
I'm happy to Rein 2

I'm laughing at the crowds
As they Share Covid drops
No mask on their face
Makin' massive death rates

'cross the land I control
Freaks're hiding in their house
Like a whimp or a coward
or a demented old mouse

(MORE)

LUCE (CONT'D)

Don't care if they're sick
Don't care if they die
What a glorious feeling
To hear them all cry

I'm singin' in the Pain
Just singin' in the Pain
What a glorious feeling
I'm happy to Rein

Makin' money, Killin' people
Autocrating, dictator frating
Keep 'em Congesting and Arresting
Suffering and then expiring
While I keep

*Big Musical Theater Ending Kicking Legs
and waving hat...*

LUCE

LYINNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNGGGGG
AND
SMILINNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNGGGGG
WHILE THEY'RE
DYINNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNGGGGG

*BIG MUSICAL THEATER ENDING kicking his
legs and waving his top hat.*

LUCE

IN THE PAAAAIIIIINNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN...

*Smiling boldly at the audience, he does a
dance spin and a little tap ending in a
happy pose down stage center. Holding
his top hat up high he winks at the
audience and taps the cane on the floor
three times - on the third tap - BLACKOUT.*

End of Act I

End of Writing Sample