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Between Cultural Essence and Stereotype: a Visual Analysis of Childish Gambino's This is America

Sommario | Abstract

Focusing our attention on its setting, its choreographic choices, the protagonist's gestures, the stage costumes and through the lenses of visual and communication, we develop a critical analysis illustrating the political and social discourses provided by *This is America*. As the song's lyrics do not explicitly deal with topics such as gun control, police brutality and racism, this essay focuses on visual theory in order to assess the emergence of these themes along the visual images of the videoclip. In this sense, this research effort focuses on two main critical aspects: on the one hand, it assesses the visual strategies adopted by Gambino and Murai in order to produce a critical discourse on race relations in America without falling into the usual clichés associated to Black culture. On the other hand, it looks at the multiple cultural references to black culture, from pop music to the cinematic production of Spike Lee and Jordan Peele, and how these are weaved into the video clip of *This is America*, though the adoption of inflated images, allegories, metaphors and symbols.

In this essay, we provide a visual analysis of Childish Gambino video clip *This is America*, directed by Hiro Murai in 2018. We attempt to understand the multiple interpretative layers and contents of Gambino's video and song.

Parole chiave | Keywords

Childish Gambino; Hiro Murai; *This is America*; Black American

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In an interview with the monthly magazine *GQ*, Hiro Murai, director of the videoclip *This is America* (2018) and of several episodes of the TV series *Atlanta* (FX 2016-) both created by Donald Glover (alias Childish Gambino), observed that their intention was not to turn *Atlanta* into a "soapbox to stand on and just preach about racism" (Greeley 2018)[1]. In *Atlanta,* Alfred 'Paper Boi' is neither the typical street rapper like Tupac Shukur nor an entrepreneur like Jay-Z. He does not boast about his financial wealth and refuses to have an Instagram life. Instead, his cousin Earn, interpreted by Glover, is a dropout Princeton student who attempts to reinvent himself as a musical manager. The life episodes of the two cousins stem from a "weirdness of life" (Greeley 2018) that does not only concern "stereotypical black people" but also those who attempt to live by fighting

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stereotypes[2]. Indeed, in *Atlanta,* Glover and Murai have found creative ways to represent the contradictions of blackness in contemporary America – from Earn becoming a nightclub's "cash cow" at a poker table to Paper Boi being assaulted by a group of adolescents while walking around the hood without protection. Yet, they are harvesting the fruits of their work with *This is America*, Childish Gambino's successful video clip.

Just like one would hardly define *Atlanta* as a conventional TV series, it would be almost impossible to consider *This is America* as just another musical hit. Instead, Gambino's song is the peak of a brilliant artistic career in the entertainment industry. His most successful works include TV representations such as *30 Rock* (NBC 2006-2013)[3], *Community* (NBC 2009-2015), *Atlanta*, cinema productions such as *The Martian* (*Sopravvissuto – The Martian*, Weir 2011), *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (Watts 2017), *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (Howard 2018), *Guava Island*, and his musical projects. Childish Gambino is a successful example of a polyhedral artist, able to appeal well beyond his fan base. Since its first apparition, his videoclip *This is America* has provoked different reactions, criticisms and even parodies[4].

Gambino has consistently refused to provide a reading of a videoclip able to "disable imperial paradigms of the central conflict, isomorphic identity and linear history" (Ponzanesi & Waller 2012: 9). Nevertheless, *This is America* provides provoking visual content and engaging political insights related to events and episodes characterizing American history. While it would be a daring task to unveil the clip's numerous critical perspectives in just one text, this article analyzes its symbolic images as a mirror of Gambino's career interest in social and racial issues and his reflections on the condition of black artists.

First, exploring the videos' setting, music, and choreographies, the text discusses Gambino's positions on violence and gun control debates. Although the song's lyrics and images

present strong political connotations which openly criticize racial crimes and violence, they also deepen reflections on the ambiguous state of black arts.

The article's second part analyzes *This is America* as a visual and artistic product deconstructing mainstream imaginaries of blackness and black art. Specifically, looking at the dichotomy between the "Black Monster" and the "Big Dawg", it underscores Gambino's attempts to redeem black artists and reflect on his role as such.

Finally, while it is almost impossible to separate black and mainstream culture in present-time debates, the text analyzes the essentialist assimilation of the "black signifier" in popular discourse (Hall 1993: 109-110).

Using Childish Gambino's video and song as a primary source, the essay also takes a closer look at the complex symbologies employed by Gambino through the lenses of visual and communication studies (e.g. Bavelas, Gerwing, Healing 2014; Kendon 2004). In particular, it adopts the concept of "signifying monkey", a rhetorical mechanism typical of "he who dwells at the margins of discourse, evener punning, ever troping, ever embodying the ambiguities of language" (Gates 1983: 686). The "signifying monkey" is, therefore, an elusive technique leaning toward complexity, considering that it "[tals] around a subject, never quite coming to the point [and] it can denote speaking with the hands and eyes, and in this respect encompasses a whole complex of expressions and gestures" (Abrahams 1970: 51-52).

A second essential methodological reference is the historical and socio-anthropological academic corpus on race relations in the US (Du Bois, ed. 1994; Fanon, ed. 2008; Roediger, ed. 2010; Williams 1944) and their influence on artistic representations (Locke 1999; Sexton 2011; Smith 2015). The adoption of this heterogeneous theoretical corpus of sources is motivated by the

need to outline Gambino's multilayered critique. Always on the verge of pure schizophrenia, his mimicking reaches beyond simplistic assumptions about society and blackness, referring to artistic production from the past and philosophical debates linked to Afro-pessimism and post-blackness.

1. *Setting and Images: A Visual Critique of Race Relations*

This is America's videoclip is set in an industrial warehouse, enlightened by light blue neon lamps. Concrete pillars painted in white and flying pipes create a vast scenery (**Fig. 1**). It could remind that "metropolitan society" (Said 1985: 103) where certain stereotypes are repeated by subaltern individuals as "unpeople" and "Others" (Chaudhuri 2012). The wide setting represents a rationalized natural space that conveys an idea of belonging (Smith 2002: 408). At the center of one of these spaces, the camera zooms in on a chair and an acoustic guitar taken up by a black musician.

Fig. 1 – Industrial warehouse in *This is America*.

The musical refrain playing in the background echoes an African American spiritual singsong. The combination of this

tone and the presence of a barefooted man wearing cotton clothes produce an initial juxtaposition. The musician's partial clothing – especially his bare feet – epitomize African American heritage. They constitute an essentialist attempt depicting a "primitive nature upon which a white man's education has never been harnessed" (Barnes, ed. 1999: 19). During the first thirty seconds, the musical refrain echoing in the background and the stage scenery recalls the dawn of black music in the United States. The choirs in the background remind the religious songs played by improvised musicians attempting to reconnect with their lost heritage to escape slavery (Du Bois, ed. 1994; Baraka 1999; Moten 2013). As the camera zooms out from the musician, it positions on Gambino, a jittery, shirtless figure, only dressed in shoes and pants. Compared to the guitarist, Gambino's image conveys the idea of a "modern" black man disconnected from his roots. Adopting Locke's terminology (1999: 1-9), it could be tempting to define the musician's image in *This is America* as an "old negro", while Gambino could represent a "new negro".

Yet, such a statement would simplify the symbolic contents produced by Gambino. A crucial difference between the two individuals is the partial display of nudity. While academic scholarship has looked at black bodies as historical places where nudity represents a shameless reality (hooks 1992: 141), Gambino's shirtless image does not recall this symbology. Instead, it depicts the vulnerable masculinity of black men, an awkward "way of relating to the body that is unique to the experience of subordinate men" (Randolph 2006: 210) (**Fig. 2**).

While some stylish rappers today design their brands (e.g., Kanye West and his Yeezy merchandising), the research of masculinity through nudity has well-consolidated examples in the musical tradition of rap (Jackson II 2009: 124). Today, many contemporary rappers continue to prefer shirtless exhibitions,

Fig. 2 – Vulnerable masculinity of Black men.

especially those who owe their success to clouding and home-made production. The choice of nudity is a stylistic strategy that represents an effort to differentiate from mainstream rappers. Their attempt to "keep it real" is often rewarded by fans, who appreciate the authenticity of their image (Jones 2005: 59).

Yet, nudity also conveys a feeling of vulnerability, depicting a contradictory picture of a self-assured macho and fragile individual. As an example, XXXTentacion's short life (1998-2018) alternated violent episodes and convictions, mitigated by a strong display of sensitivity (Burford 2018). These are the types of artists that Gambino's oxymoronic image attempts to depict in *This is America*. Black artists whose hip-hop image constitutes their main idea of blackness (Kwame Harrison 2015: 191). The violence-vulnerability oxymoron finds its peak when Gambino shoots with a gun at the black guitarist – now wearing a KKK resembling white hood – uttering "This is America!" (**Fig. 3**)[5].

Gambino's fictional murder deserves a further hermeneutic analysis beyond the rap music scene. It problematizes the role of black people within contemporary American society. Such

Fig. 3 – The violence-vulnerability oxymoron: holding a gun in nudity.

a display of unmotivated violence could remind the mockery minstrel show character impersonated by white people at the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet, Gambino's lanky posture weakens this possible analogy. Although meaningless, Gambino's odd moves fit with Kendon's definition of "cinetic medium", where "facial gestures, such as eyebrow movements or positionings, movements of the mouth, head postures and sustainments and change in gaze direction" (2004: 310) don't necessarily hold a status of "conversational gestures" (Bavelas, Gerwing, Healing 2014: 17) (**Fig. 4**). In this sense, Gambino's brutal act, preceded by joyful poses, bestial contractions, and schizophrenic facial movements, represents a spatial takeover, a metaphorical liberation (**Figg. 5-6**).

The murder perpetrated occurs in an oscillation between rageful agitation and peaceful calmness. The incoherent moves that lead Gambino to murder convey the idea of an individual following a default life path, leading him to violence and alleged self-confidence. In line with the vision that faces plasticity "excel[s] at enacting any imaginable face, that is,

Fig. 4 – Facial movements with no "conversational" meaning.

demonstrating anything that any face can look like" (Bavelas, Gerwing, Healing 2014: 19), Gambino's figure mirrors a manipulable identity. The easily committed violent act equals the difficulty faced by black people in avoiding a predetermined destiny. The fatal act committed by the fictional rapper hints at a destiny that dramatically differs from the secular self-celebratory "manifest destiny" that constitutes the civil foundation of the United States of America. Gambino's murder mirrors social issues among marginalized minorities – the idea of manifest destiny opposes that of a predetermined faith, just like social inclusion contrasts segregation (Roediger, ed. 2010). Here, what Du Bois would define as the "color-line" crossing American history – namely, the racialization of society – constitutes the foundation of a nation built on slave labor (Du Bois, ed. 1994: 9; Williams 1944). Recalling slavery, Gambino explicitly references to Afro-Pessimism, namely the "disposition that posits a political ontology dividing the Slave from the world of the

Figg. 5-6 – Metaphorical liberation before brutal act.

Human in a constitutive way" (Sexton 2011: 23). This image hints at the country's contested history by explicitly referring to a significant caesura in contemporary American society.

Soon after the shooting, the visual narrative is for the first time accompanied by actual lyrics, although its content is not as expressive as the video's visuality:

We just wanna party
Party just for you
We just want the money
Money just for you
I know you wanna party
Party just for me
Girl, you got me dancin' (yeah, girl, you got me dancin')
Dance and shake the frame.

With a "Michael kills Sollozzo and McCluskey" gesture tributing the cinematographic tradition of gun firing and release (**Fig. 7**), Gambino touches one of the hottest issues in the United States today: gun control. However, the initial killing of the musician only anticipates two other significant references occurring in the middle and at the end of the video clip: an AK-47 burst hitting the gospel choir (**Figg. 8-9**) and the singer's final gun gesture[6] (**Fig. 10**).

Fig. 7 – Reference to *The Godfather*. "Sollozzo and McCluskey" killing in *This is America*.

Figg. 8-9 – Gospel choir and AK-47 in *This is America*.

Just like the first one, the second murder also concerns black people. On both occasions, weapons suddenly appear on the scene, although their uses differ. The first killing epitomizes the open wound of racial discrimination and its epistemic violence

Fig. 10 – Gun gesture.

(Collins 1998). The assault on the gospel choir reaches beyond the black community, as the singers represent only one of the possible victims of gun violence. Referencing Dylann Roof's racist shootings on June 17, 2015, at Charleston's Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Gambino's mass killing problematizes a crucial social issue in present-time America: weapons supply threat society in general, especially for black communities (Cheng, Ickes, Kenworthy 2013). The choice of a gospel choir, a recurring leitmotiv in Murai's clips (see Flying Lotus' *Never catch me*'s 2014 videoclip), also challenges mainstream pop narratives of happiness and thoughtfulness. The second killing scene responds to the "goofy New Black Anthem" (Osman 2018). Pharrell Williams' pop song *Happy* (2013, **Fig. 11**), whose attempt to entertain a vast audience through "a sweeter sound, a smoother look, and more soothing lyrics", recalls 1950s rock-blues sonorities aimed at overriding *jimcrownism* (Altschuler 2003: 56). Instead, Gambino's song openly addresses the controversial

Fig. 11 – Gospel choir in *Happy*.

relation between American society and blackness through "[a] sharp contrast between jolly, syncretic melodies and menacing trap cadences" (Kearse 2018). In this sense, the murder of an entire gospel choir constitutes an attack on the so-called "black optimism" – that is, the negation of a "historic antiblack world" (Sexton 2011: 26), in favor of a de-historicized and de-politicized idea of blackness. While Pharell Williams' *Happy* represents only one of the many examples of black optimism, Gambino's gospel choir image serves the purpose of illustrating "the lack of real progression in how society deals with race as a whole" (Smith 2015). By creating a sharp contrast between different musical themes accompanied by images in sharp contradiction with each other, Gambino's clip offers a critical perspective on race relations in contemporary America. As the song goes on, the issues outlined in the video clip first scenes progressively drift towards a specific debate on the condition of black artists today.

2. *The "Big Dawg" and the Black Artist's Dilemma*

However, Gambino's problematic relation with blackness does not necessarily align him to "afro-pessimist" thinkers. *This is America* invites the black community to reflect on its role

in society and implicitly criticizes many people who "refuse to look at [their] present condition" (hooks 1992: 6). This proposition is clearly expressed not only by the lyrical passages where Gambino hints at police brutality and the need to carry a gun for survival[7]. It also emerges through his criticism for lack of political awareness among both older and younger generations:

> Grandma told me
> Get your money, black man (get your money)
> Get your money, black man (get your money)
> Get your money, black man (get your, black man).
> [...]
> Look how I'm geekin' out (hey)
> I'm so fitted (I'm so fitted, woo)
> I'm on Gucci (I'm on Gucci)
> I'm so pretty (yeah, yeah).

As the lyrics indirectly state, the temptation to achieve success through the de-politicization of African American identity should overcome social inclusion. Gambino's Rwandan and South African dances – performed with a group of students while chaotic guerrilla scenes loom in the background – symbolize another instance of the de-politicization of Black culture (**Fig. 12**). The racial connotation of these dances is dismantled for the sake of mere entertainment (Moore 2012). Gambino's primary choreographic model is the South African *pantsula* dance, a style developed as an alternative communication pattern to entertain many people in chaotic and degraded urban environments (Brookes 2014: 67). Just like turning this dance into simple entertainment deprives it of its central meaning, black people should not regard their art as simple entertaining, allowing their artistic practices to become a "manifestation of commercial homogenization" (McClury and Walser 1994: 79). The explicit reference to African dances

Fig. 12 – Dances in *This is America* as act of de-politicization of Black culture.

is thus intrinsically linked to debates surrounding the origins of hip-hop music and other significant forms of African American artistic expression or black art. Gambino's musical choice explicitly references the solid ties between black art and its African heritage. It directly traces back to "the slave ships, as African people who brought their ways of expression with them as they landed on the shores of North America, South America and the Caribbean" (Thompson 2015: 71).

Similarly, the group of dancing students who accompanies Gambino since the first killing does not dramatically react to the singer's violent actions. Instead, they continue to dance their Gwara-Gwara, Shaku Shaku and other so-called *#trendingdances*. These choreographies revolutionize traditional choric relations with space, as they happen in isolation from the external environment. However, these dances also represent "the overt kind of spectacular violence that often accompanies

sovereign power" (Browne 2015: 35). The violence still taking place in the background does not stop the choreographies. Therefore, the reality of entertaining needs to continue regardless of whatever happens in the external world (**Fig. 13**).

Fig. 13 – Dance and violence in background. The power of entertaining.

Interestingly, the only real moment when the dancing group stops its "non-political" dances is when Gambino folds his fingers mimicking a gun. However, what seems to upset the dancing folks is the absence of an actual weapon rather than its presence (**Fig. 14**). Here, Gambino's political criticism moves from gun control to the association of black artists with stereotypical gangster figures. As soon as they abandon their socially accepted role of entertainers making an unconventional and daring gesture, the bias of racial stereotype plays in, generating dramatic – if not deadly – consequences. It only takes one motion to leave the socially accepted figure of entertainer, descending into what Fanon would have defined as the "veritable hell" of black people (ed. 2008: xii).

Fig. 14 – Scaring and destabilising absence of guns.

In mimicking a typical scene of gun violence in America through a fake gun image, Gambino utilizes what Doran and Jaikumar likened to a surrealistic nuance able "[to present itself as] a dark commentary on what appears to be normal" (Ponzanesi & Waller 2012: 9). Aside from symbolic representations, he is also explicitly referring to violent episodes that have resulted in the death of African American citizens, such as Philando Castile, killed in June 2016 by the Falcon Heights (ME) police for a suspicious' gesture[8]. The scores of racial prejudices resonate in the terrified expression of the dancing students. At the same time, the absence of the actual weapon produces an odd situation, providing fertile ground for racial stereotypes to thrive (Clair & Denis 2015: 858). The contrast between merry and entertaining conditions and the terror generated by an inoffensive yet unusual gesture provides a litmus test to understand blackness's leading social and psychological representations. On the one hand, the bizarre entertainer "adapting"

their traditional artistic expression to a broader audience while depriving it of its political meaning, a process that goes back to minstrel shows and Black vaudeville (Thompson 2015: 74). On the other hand, the cultural demonization of black individuals is a constant threat to public order (Smiley & Fakunle 2016: 352).

Gambino's discussion of racial hatred and artistic representation also returns to a long cinematographic tradition depicting the dualism between blacks as entertainers and monster figures (Smith 2015). One example is Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (*Scappa – Get Out*, 2017), representing "[the] underlying bigotry of rich liberals" (Lee 2017) and "the fractured myth of a post-racial US" (Bakare 2017). A tradition that goes back to Spike Lee's politically engaged movies *Do the Right Thing* (*Fa' la cosa giusta*, 1989) and *Jungle Fever* (1991). Indeed, both Peele and Lee's films explicitly blame the "corporate-controlled mass media and culture of Hollywood" (Ponzanesi & Waller 2012: 3) that create stereotypical representations of black people. In particular, the image of the black gangster has "become [a] predictable media sideshow" (Vognar 2013)[9]. Another recent example of Black movies trying to decolonize a stereotypical image of the Black man is Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight* (2016). Deconstructing hyper-virilism clichés often used to represent Black Americans, *Moonlight* offers an alternative representation of black people. As remarks Hilton Als, both Chiron and Juan must be considered new black movie characters, weakening the typical image of the man "in-the-streets" with new meaning (Als 2016; Gould 2021).

All these movies share Gambino's song will contrast an aesthetic depicting black people as "cartoon-like creatures only interested in drinking and having a good time" (hooks 1992: 90). Such a stereotypical image has often depicted them as "the sick man of American Democracy", far away from the *New Negro* acclaimed by Alain Locke (1999: 11). While these cinematographic references have addressed this issue in the short

term, *This is America* displays the longstanding existence of such a contradiction. A contradiction that refers to the double identarian construction of blackness, constantly oscillating between the "Big Dawg" and the "Black Monster". Hence, perhaps Gambino's ultimate message. The "Big Dawg" might be able to evade the constriction of racial stereotypes. However, they must not de-politicize their own culture, becoming a sterile commercial product. Otherwise, Black culture will continue being a disarticulated, aimless wandering in the dark, just like Gambino's character in the last scenes of the video directed by Hiro Murai (**Fig. 15**).

Fig. 15 – Gambino wandering in the dark.

3. *Between Cultural Essence and Stereotypes*

"In a time of actual viral black deaths being so routine due to police brutality and intimate partner violence" (Johnson 2018), Gambino's choice to adopt a profile unusual to Black art is both

meaningful and transgressive. His sublimation of racial and social messages in successful musical hits emerges throughout the clip, echoing a long tradition going from Chuck Berry's subtly provocative rock and roll hits in the 1950s to Beyoncé and Solange's gender and racial equality campaigns. Although Gambino's clip does not disrespect Black rap tradition, the disenchanted and almost nihilist fashion adopted in *This is America* serves the symbolic purpose to liberate black artists from the obligation to produce "morally sound and healing music" (Johnson 2018; Wallace & Costello, ed. 2013).

At the same time, the stereotypical oscillation between the image of black Americans as just entertainers and monsters does not constitute an excuse to hold a pessimistic vision on the future of race relations in the United States of America. In its challenging dualism between the black entertainer ("The Big Dawg") and the dangerous criminal ("The Black Monster"), *This is America* does not simply criticize American art but adds an extra nuance to future horizons of artistic expression. Its primary purpose is undoubtedly to contribute to intellectual debates deconstructing some of the most contradictory assumptions that permeate daily American life – what Sexton would define as "a calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago" (2011: 22-23). However, his message is undoubtedly extendible to all the excluded and exploited minorities trapped in stereotypical constructions and searching for redemption through artistic expression.

Notes

[1] Hiro Murai has directed the episodes 1-5, 8, 10 for Season 1 (2016) and the episodes 1-3, 6, 8, 9, 11 for Season 2 (*Robbin' Season*, 2018). Donald Glover has directed the episodes 6 and 7 for Season 1 and the episodes 5 and 10 for Season 2.

[2] This is a rather recurring theme in the Gambino-Murai collaboration. *Atlanta* and *This is America* are not the only movie production of the Gambino and Murai duo. Before *This is America* and *Guava Island* (Murai, 2019), Murai has directed three video clips from Gambino's second studio album, *Because the internet* (2013). These are *3005*, *Sweatpants*, and *Telegraph Ave*. The *Because the internet* project is a multilayered experience that has its focus on existential loneliness and fear of growing old. For example, in *3005,* the infinite loop of the ferris wheel and the giant fire flaming in the background are aesthetic tools depicting how childhood is a recurring age that has to stop in order to truly reach maturity. Similarly, in *Sweatpants,* Gambino's presence in a diner as a social place depicts the loneliness of respected members of society. The clip's protagonist represents a link to the short movie *Clapping for the wrong reasons* (2013), once again written by Gambino and directed by Murai. Inspired from a statement in Salinger's classic *The Catcher in the Rye*, it has a surrealistic nuance on the Internet world and the painful consequences of popularity and the fragility that it entails. In *Telegraph Ave* Gambino's lonely swimming mirrors in a manatee.

[3] For this TV series Donald Glover has been also writer and executive story editor.

[4] From *This is Nigeria* (Prodigeezy, 2018) by Folarinde 'Falz' Falana ("This is Nigeria/ look how Imma living now/ look how Imma living now/ everybody be criminal"), to *This is America: Womens' Edit* (2018) by Nicole Armour ("We just wanna be pretty/ pretty that's the goal/ we just wanna smile/ get a mammy home"), to the song *Non siamo in America* (2018) by Fabri Fibra ("Non siamo in America/ quindi non dire *bro*. […] qui non c'è Hollywood/ allo show non ci credo/ io nemmeno, #metoo").

[5] It is interesting to notice that in the videoclip *This is Nigeria* the murder is made with a machete.

[6] The reference is to a scene from Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972). Regarding this scene, it is interesting to notice the different state of mind with which Michael Corleone and Gambino commit their murderous act. While in Michael's gesture, and in his facial expression when leaving the crime scene, one can see the pain of a character losing his innocence after receiving official initiation in the world of crime (see Cawelti 1975: 344-346; Hollyn 2009: 35-38; Boddu 2015: 8; Weinstein 2017), Gambino commits his

crime in a light-hearted sprit, and his facial expression only regards the physical fatigue resulting from the resistance of his gun.

[7] "This is America (skrrt, skrrt, woo)/ Don't catch you slippin' up (ayy)/ Look at how I'm livin' now/ Police be trippin' now (woo)/ Yeah, this is America (woo, ayy)/ Guns in my area (word, my area)/ I got the strap (ayy, ayy)/ I gotta carry 'em".

[8] He was simply looking for his documents in his pocket.

[9] As an example, the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences was criticized by Black American associations for giving the Oscar to Denzel Washington for *Training Day* (Fuqua 2001), who played the role of a crooked cop. Similarly, Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown* (1997) was criticized by Spike Lee for the use of the n-word in the movie (Archerd 1997).

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