

FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

BLACK FLAG

A short one by Idris Goodwin
Jan 2018 Version

FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

CHARACTERS (2 F, 1M)

SYDNEY – 19 or 20, Caucasian from Georgia, has an accent.

DEJA– 19 or 20, Black from Detroit, has an accent

HARRY – 19 or 20, Caucasian from North Cali, absolutely no accent

SETTING

A University, today

DEVELOPMENT

Black Flag was first produced Off Broadway in 59E59's Summer Shorts New Play Series, July 2016

1.

SYDNEY enters a spare dorm room with boxes and bags

She begins unpacking

SYDNEY

(to us)

Fall Semester, late August

Eventually DEJA enters with boxes and bags

They recognize one another

“Hellos” and “Heys”

Do we hug? Hand shake?

They hug

SYDNEY

Finally in the flesh---

DEJA

I know!

SYDNEY

I'm so used to your Facebook picture and now here you are!

DEJA

So good to finally meet you.

SYDNEY

Yes

So, you ready for this!?

DEJA

Cant wait.

They settle

SYNDEY

Okay roomie. First things first---You mind if I take this side? Just felt right to me.

DEJA

All yours.

SYNDEY

We can always switch after Christmas break—I mean, winter recess

DEJA

You can say Christmas break here.

SYNDEY

You got any more stuff? I can help?

DEJA

Nah I thought I'd start light. Gonna be hitting mom up for them care packages on the regular.

SYDNEY

My mom sent me with everything!

DEJA

Really?

SYDNEY

Oh yeah I got jars of peaches. I got peanut brittle. I got moon pies

DEJA

Lord no. Keep all that away from me.

SYDNEY

(holding a moon pie)

Oh you mean these?

DEJA

Yes I mean those.

SYDNEY

(shaking the pie)

You don't like these?

DEJA

Sydney

SYDNEY
(making it fly around)

This right here?

DEJA
(snatching it)

Damn you

..
..

So you going to the mixer?

SYDNEY

Yeah . You?

DEJA

I don't know.

SYDNEY

Oh come on you gotta come. I won't know anybody there.

DEJA

But wont you meet people? Isn't that the point?

*Sydney has unveiled her Confederate
Flag Wall hanging*

.....

DEJA

I guess....your mama really did pack everything for you

SYDNEY

She wants to make sure I don't forget
Says "don't you get lost out there"
She uh—she's got a lot of pride.

DEJA

Lot of pride?

SYDNEY

Its where I come from, you know.

.....

.....

SYDNEY

It's okay right? I mean I know it's a little---you know, southern girl, rebel flag but---I don't know you seem like a rebel to me.

.....

DEJA

Your side of the room.

*Discomfort lingers like a rich fog
Sydney starts hanging the flag and of course*

SYDNEY

Uhm
Would you mind giving me a hand?

.....

SYDNEY

Uh, You know what....
Actually I think I...

She manages on her own

SYDNEY

Hey I saw they have soft serve in that cafeteria.
Wanna come down with me?

DEJA

Uhm nah, I got a lot of stuff here

SYDNEY

Okay
You have my number so text me if you change your mind and wanna meet up...

DEJA

Yeah I'll uh---do that.

SYDNEY

Alright

Sydney exits

Deja looks at the flag

2.
DEJA
(to us)

Fall semester, November

Sydney holds a piece of paper

*Deja enters and immediately senses
that something aint kosher*

That's mine. DEJA

It was under my bed. SYDNEY

But it's mine. DEJA

Well I thought It was something of mine. SYDNEY

Well it's not so--- DEJA

You didn't read it did you?

Clearly she did

You shouldn't have read this. Once you saw that it wasn't somethin' of your's you shouldn't have read it. DEJA

Well. I did. SYDNEY

So...

She says we have to write about what we're feeling. And what's on our mind and--
We gotta be honest. DEJA

SYDNEY

(holding up the paper)

So this is what you really think?

DEJA

You really shouldn't have read it

SYDNEY

Its soooooo secretive but you read it to your entire class and your professor!

DEJA

Come on Sydney didn't you ever think for a second---maybe just maybe I might---be uncomfortable by this?

SYDNEY

But I don't mean it like that, like in a ...

DEJA

It's your side of the room and you have a right to have whatever you want on your wall

SYDNEY

You said it assaults you.
(reading from the page)

*This cross burning it's confederate history
Into my nightmares...*

Deja snatches the page back

SYDNEY

Deja.
You don't think I'm like---one of those dumb redneck assholes you read about or see on--

DEJA

I never called you a dumb redneck

You have the poem in your hands. I never said anything about you.

SYDNEY

This poem is called "To my roommate"

DEJA

It wasn't --- "to you", "to you". It was a free write and in a free write you're supposed to just---let all the thoughts fall out of your brain—She says "don't censor" and---I didn't.

SYDNEY

I just didn't realize that— When I put it up--.I didn't even think of it as something---that could be a problem for you.

DEJA

Of course you didn't

SYDNEY

I don't mean it as ---it represents, you know, my home and my culture—the good things though - --I don't mean it like---

DEJA

Its whatever okay—your side of the room.

SYDNEY

I don't want you to be uncomfortable

DEJA

I said it's whatever.

....

SYDNEY

Okay---alright

DEJA

Alright?

SYDNEY

Alright.

...

Some moments

Sydney reaches down, retrieves the final moon pie

SYDNEY

Last one?

Deja considers

DEJA

S'all good. You have it.

3.

HARRY and Deja burst into the room, each holding red cups, stumbly, tipsy making out

They fall into bed

They fumble

One of the red cups spills!

Lights on

Harry sees the flag

HARRY

Oh

DEJA

Yea

HARRY

(to us)

Fall Semester, December

HARRY

(regarding the flag)

Is that--?

DEJA

Yea.

My roommate is from the south and she has a lot of pride.

HARRY

Was this up when you moved in?

DEJA

She actually asked me to help her put it up

HARRY

(chuckle)

..
..

Oh. Really?

DEJA

Yup.

HARRY

No.

DEJA

Yup. First day. She pulled it out of her bag and hung it up.

HARRY

Ironically?

DEJA

It's her side of the room she can put up whatever... as long as its not like gory stuff or porn.

HARRY

So it doesn't bother you?

Deja shrugs

HARRY

Ok.

They start to make out again but--

DEJA

Look----I know how it looks

HARRY

Yeah--It looks ...kinda racist.

DEJA

Her mother gave it to her so she wouldn't forget, you know where she came from.

HARRY

Ah...didn't want her to get lost out here with all these weirdos and God-less heathens.

(fake southern accent)

“Now hunny when you git out thir
dontcha go fraternizing with them
Ho-mos and A-Rabs “

DEJA

Stop.

HARRY

You can bring this up to the school you know. Tell em you want a different room. I'm for real.

DEJA

(sigh) I thought of that---at first but---

HARRY

But?

DEJA

Its not ---this is gonna sound like I'm trying to make a pun ---but it's not so black and white. I see one thing and she sees something else. It's not clear cut. I see ---slavery obviously but she sees her mama and ---just like---being country and southern

you know you see this flag on like country albums and belt buckles and what was that TV show with the car?

HARRY

I don't know.

DEJA

My grandpa was always watching it. Something with a car

HARRY

I don't know

DEJA

She sees like-----country pride---in a real generic way—it just means, "I'm from the south."

HARRY

Where they used to enslave African Americans.

DEJA

You are----too much---

HARRY

Tell me I'm wrong?

DEJA

(breath)

I don't wanna---I just got here you know. It's my first year of college. I worked my ass off. And it's hard enough just trying to---I mean cant I just go to my classes and parties and just---do I have to be starting a whole thing just because I see something different on her side of the room. I don't like it. I don't. But I don't like a lotta things I see and hear from white folks.

HARRY

No, No, I feel you but—

DEJA

“But” “But” You're always with that---Why do you even care? You aint black?

HARRY

Well, Deja, for starters, uh, I hate slavery

DEJA

You sure it's not some prejudice against southerners?

Based on a buncha stereotypes?

You just assume they're all racist and want slavery back? That's not fair.

HARRY

No but—

DEJA

A flag is just colors and fabric. The meaning changes depending on like, who's holding it and who's looking at.

I just gotta make it through this first year and then I can try and get reassigned for some other arbitrary ass reason. But no, I'm sorry, I'm not gon be the black girl ---the angry black girl who started some shit over a flag. Especially if the girl who put the flag up is this sweet bubbly girl who is just trying to stay connected to home. Uh uh. It's gon start a whole thing. People gon be all over yik yak and facebook and putting my picture all over the internet. Giving they opinions and ...No---nuh uh---

HARRY

You've given this a lot of thought.

DEJA

The brochure aint say nuthin' about this.

....

*They look at the flag together a while longer
They drink*

HARRY

The boys of Hazzard!

What?
The show! The show you were—
No—no – it was Hazzard ----Hazzard---- Hazzard---

DEJA

HARRY

DEJA

HARRY

Dukes?

DEJA

Dukes of Hazzard!

HARRY

Right
Yup
Yup

High five

Deja just looks at him

He grins back

Doey eyes....dumb grins....sexual energy returns

But alas....Moment broken!

A drunk Sydney bursts in

Oops!

She tries to back out and closes the door on her own foot

She falls over laughing

Jesus Sydney

DEJA

SYDNEY

(through laughs)

I'm so so sorry ...Deja... I didn't know you were studying ... who's this Dej?

HARRY

I'm Harry

SYDNEY

(getting to her feet still chuckling)

I'm so sorry.

DEJA

Sydney. What you been drinking?

SYDNEY

Just iced tea.

DEJA

Just iced tea?

SYDNEY

It's from just up the ways
This wonderful place they call Long Island

(laughter)

DEJA	HARRY	SYDNEY
Oh mi god Sorry Harry I think I might have to— Sydney why don't ya just lay down Come on just lay down You should really...	No it's alright No No I can help you if... I can just.. You might wanna get a bucket	No Mo No no no...you two...I don't wanna mess things up I just came to uh...uh....what'd I come here for I'm okay. I'm okay.

SYDNEY

What'd you say?

Herman?

HARRY

Harry

What'd you say?
SYDNEY

I don't --What did I say?
HARRY

Sydney
DEJA

Something about a bucket?
SYDNEY

Yeah. You just...look pretty messed up
HARRY

Uhm maybe you don't know me
But Sydney Blanchard does not puke
SYDNEY

Uh huh
HARRY

Oh God.
DEJA

Okay
Deja
I'll call you.
HARRY

Hey hey hey
No no no
No
Don't go—I didn't mean to interrupt
Look I want you two
SYDNEY

She goes for both their hands

Come here, damn it.
SYDNEY

She makes them hold hands

There.
SYDNEY

Lovely.

*She gives them both a hug
She kisses Deja on the forehead*

SYDNEY

Ah!

I remember what I came for.

She grabs a jar of peaches

SYDNEY

Bye yall

HARRY

(fake accent)

Bye

DEJA

(through gritted teeth)

Harry

SYDNEY

What the hell accent was that supposed to be?

HARRY

I wasn't doing an accent

SYDNEY

No?

Sounded like you were trying to parrot me

DEJA

He wasn't Syd

SYDNEY

I know what a fake southern accent sounds like
See cuz I come from Georgia
And when we say bye we say it like how I just said it
"Bye"
But you sounded like you were from Texas or something
You said "Bye" See the difference?

HARRY

Thank you

Okay Sydney---Bye girl

DEJA

Oh wait...I'm so sorry. Yall want one of these peaches?

SYDNEY

No

HARRY

No Sydney

DEJA

Suit yourself.
(she eats one)
Ooooooh little taste of home right there

SYDNEY

Yup. You got your home all over this place
Peaches and your flag

HARRY

Stop it

DEJA
(through teeth)

Whats that Harry?

SYDNEY

Now she remembers my name

HARRY

We're gonna go too
Lets all just get out of this room

DEJA

No. I think I wanna stay. Right here
Here with you and Harry in my room

SYDNEY

With your flag

HARRY

Yeah and---and your flag
(pointing to his shirt)

SYDNEY

HARRY

This is a shirt.

SYDNEY

But it's a flag. And you're walking it around everywhere. On your shirt.
California Bear revolt all up in everybody's face! Mine lives right here in my space.
In MY private space

DEJA

Calm down

SYDNEY

I don't like this guy Deja
This guy is a---
He's a---

DEJA

Syd.

SYDNEY

You can do better than this idiot.

HARRY

Ha!

SYDNEY

Is that right? Idiot!

HARRY

Don't call me an idiot you drunk—

DEJA

Stop it! Both of you Stop it!

HARRY

Callin me an idiot. Least I aint racist.

SYDNEY

You don't even know me
You don't even know me

HARRY

I know what this is (gesturing to flag)

DEJA

Sydney, maybe you just wanna calm down—he wasn't

SYDNEY

Oh don't gimme that DEJA! You're the first one who started this crap!

SYDNEY	HARRY
<p>You're turning everyone against me Making me out to be some kind racist. I'm not. My best friend in high school was black And my track coach was black A racist ? You're the one talking about race--</p>	<p>Don't yell at her! You're the one who is so insensitive—bringing this flag You are a racist You have a racist mentality That's what you have</p>

SYDNEY

AHHHH!!!!
 I'm not a racist!

Sydney suddenly gets sick –dry heaves

Deja and Harry just look on concerned

And sure enough Sydney vomits peaches

4.
DEJA

(to us)

Spring semester, early January

Sydney and Deja in the room.

SYDNEY

Over the break...the winter recess...

My whole family. Cousins and Aunties we meet up in uh---Stone Mountain Park
Just outside Atlanta

We have this tradition you know

Day after Christmas we always go up there and have a picnic

Catch up with each other

Its real nice. Trees. Lots of land

And of course—big old plantation house

And a museum about the plantation house

Where they tell you the stories about the old times

How things *used to be*

And then there's Stone Mountain.

There's an actual Stone Mountain right there staring down at you

And chiseled into the side its got like all the civil war guys

Jefferson and Stonewall and Robert E

We grow up hearing about these guys like they're saints

our whole lives. And you know, I mean, really my family is not....

Anyway, so we're at the park and there's this other family ---really there's a lot of family's out there that day but there's this one that I keep over hearing

Two guys really

And one of him say that it was right there on that Stone Mountain
was where the Klan...

They jump started the Klan there.

Like the second coming

They met there on Stone Mountain

They don't share that fact with you in the old plantation museum

And these guys were talking about...

Action

How these guys weren't afraid to act

And how Dylan Roof

DEJA

The South Carolina shooter?

She nods in the affirmative

SYDNEY

They were saying how they thought

he was just a mixed up kid

And they don't agree with murder but

Didn't he have some balls

He wasn't afraid to take some action

DEJA

OhmiGod

SYDNEY

Yeah and I just---wanted to walk over there and say a million things to them

But I was ---look I'm not gonna lie to you Deja and pretend like

A lot of these so called liberal kids here do...

I've heard shit like it before

But what really really—hit me

They started complaining about how

After Roof, killed those people, they took the flag down

DEJA

(pointing to it)

Your flag?

SYDNEY

Yes, this flag.

They took it down in South Carolina

And these guys

Kept saying

“they better not try and do that here in Georgia”

That “Big eared Sum bitch Obama better not try and take my flag”
And it just kept going from there

And I swear Deja
I thought about you
And that night with that...Harry

DEJA

He’s not so bad

SYDNEY

Whatever, I know you guys are .. “boo’ed up” now
But I thought about what happened here in this room
And that poem your wrote
How you wrote
“its arms blocking off history from evolving past its scars”

My mama gave me this so I wouldn’t forget her and how she raised me

But now when I see it ...all I see is those guys
Talking about Dylan Roof
And “taking action”
And
God Deja...it’s time

(a breath)

Its got to come down.

DEJA
(gesturing again)

Your flag right here?

SYDNEY

Yes.

DEJA

Good.

Sydney looks at the flag

SYDNEY

But---Can you help me?

DEJA

How?

Help me...take it down

SYDNEY

Help *you* take it down?
or take it down *for you?*

DEJA

I know you don't want this here
Every day —You gotta be thinking “Ugh. I just wanna yank that damn thing”

SYDNEY

Sydney

DEJA

And I get it now.

SYDNEY

Sydney

DEJA

Do it. Take it down. It's okay with me

SYDNEY

But it's not okay with me.

DEJA

But I--

SYDNEY

Wait wait---just listen

DEJA

I don't wanna take your flag down *for you*

See if I take it down for you then the story is:
It came down because you have a black roommate.
Because your black roommate was uncomfortable

But It should make you uncomfortable too! It should makeanybody uncomfortable

I want *you* to want to take your flag down

I want those guys in Stone Mountain Park, to want to take it down. I want---

SYDNEY

Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay

DEJA

It has to be you

....

*Sydney faces the flag
Cant move*

SYDNEY

Why cant I bring myself to move?
Why does it hurt when I try...

DEJA

It's like you told me

It's where you come from

It's pride.

*Deja touches her shoulder
Exits*

Sydney just looks at the flag, trying to move

Lights out

End of play