

**LEAP
BEFORE
YOU
LOOK**

-MR.GAME

I have always understood the genius of Wynton Marsalis in the full light of a particular genealogy of African American letters. I will leave it to others to describe his musical influences, but the way he thinks and talks about American culture and Black folks' central place in it bears the markings of writers like Ralph Ellison, Albert Murray, and Stanley Crouch. These complicated men offer searing commentary on the contradictions of American democracy, especially when it comes to race, but all hold an unshakable faith in its ideals—"with its image of hope, fraternity and self-realization," as Ellison put it. For each of them, jazz embodies the spirit of this place, at once critique and aspiration, constraint and individuality. Theirs is not a naïve embrace, and they have shaped the voice and sound of Marsalis. One can hear echoes of them in the depth of Marsalis's understanding of Black vernacular culture when he talks about American life and how that becomes the raw stuff for his art. Listening to his vast body of work, you can grasp his sophisticated use of symbol and myth as he explores the sinewy features of American history and its beautiful and terrible underbelly. Marsalis composes and blows with his trumpet those insights with a mastery of craft and passion rarely seen. He has dedicated his life to this artform, and he has fought for its continued relevance to our national self-understanding, no matter who listens to the music.

The Ever Fonky Lowdown reveals some fundamental truths about the American project. Through the voice of the album's narrator, Mr. Game—a character who is a slick combination of politician, hustler, and snake oil salesman who cajoles and evangelizes—Marsalis reveals that our ideal of democracy isn't simply about individual freedom and liberty. With brutal and brilliant clarity, he shows us that these democratic virtues are tethered to an unrelenting pursuit of power, success, and money. These are the vices, along with an uncanny ability to sacralize hatreds, that have enabled *some* to rule the world. With cunning and charisma, Mr. Game offers the listener not only insight into the base values that undergird our way of life, but he tempts us with the golden

apple—extending an invitation to those who would listen to be winners no matter the costs to their sentimental freedoms or to their general moral sense.

Mr. Game insists that we fulfill our obligation as members of this democracy by confronting honestly, and without the need of illusion, the hard reality of who we actually are. He does not speak on the lower frequencies to reveal the messiness *and beauty* of American democratic life (sentimentality is only a weapon in his hands); instead, he provides a kind of scandalous wisdom about how the whole game of American democracy works. It's funky, and it is lowdown.

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**This jazz music
has to be played in
these times when
America's myths and
legends crumble all
around us.**

.....

Ellison, Murray, and Crouch often invoked jazz as an apt metaphor for American democracy. A way of ordering chaos, the music illustrates the freedom evidenced in improvisation *and* in the consent to the ensemble necessary for its expression. In America, like jazz, there is a fierce individuality *within* community, but that community is shot through with evils that all too often cut short dreams and promises. With *The Ever Fonky Lowdown*, Marsalis uses jazz not to illustrate democratic virtues,

but to disclose America's dark underside. The irony of the artform that best illustrates democracy gives way to the bitter irony that the same music exposes the grand lie of the American ideology. Dream and buy into the promise of America and witness it all become a midden dumped at your feet.

Mr. Game offers an account of America rooted in power, leisure, and consumption that knows no boundaries and promotes itself as the greatest gift to humankind: America *is* the greatest show on earth, with its carnival barkers who keep our eyes on the so-called prize while the winners rob us blind. He reveals how Black folk have been caught up in it all: how the horrors of slavery shaped the country and how our sounds and musings have come to make this ghastly place swing. In Mr. Game's hands, or Wynton Marsalis's, jazz exposes the ugly truths of American life. He wants us to see it clearly, the Apostle Paul be damned.

As you listen to the music and take in what Mr. Game says, one cannot help but feel a sense of pervasive sadness here. (The sadness may very well be my own, and it colors the music and his words a deep shade of blue.) Marsalis has seen a lot over his many years. His, one might say, is an *earned* insight into this particular American calamity. He does not seem angry or bitter. He has been saying something like this for decades. But, if I am right about *The Ever Fonky Lowdown*, there is something different here: he seems resigned not so much to his fate, but to the fact that America is what it is. That we are who we are. And no matter what we say or how we fight—I love the glimmer of hope he offers with the example of Fannie Lou Hamer—the power of the *idea* of America continues to overrun everything.

Democracy requires something more of us than simply taking the bribe of the likes of Mr. Game. For it to work, we have to be capable of critical reflection and have a kind of moral sense that allows us to step outside of ourselves and recognize the worth and needs of our fellows as equal to our own. But, as Marsalis put the point to me, it may be more a question of, "Are we even

up to democracy?" Understanding that possibility fully may very well be the ever funky lowdown! It certainly sent me to my liquor cabinet.

This jazz music has to be played in these times when America's myths and legends crumble all around us. A generation has come of age amid calamity: 9/11, unending war, devastating hurricanes, mass shootings, economic collapse, and global pandemic. They do not need sweet stories or music that affirm the inherent goodness of this place or encourage them to stick their heads in the sand. They need truths, straight no chaser. Beauty can be found there. *The Ever Fonky Lowdown* is unvarnished truth, and it is beautiful music.

It may be the case that we are not up to what democracy demands. No matter. We must keep trying to live up to what genuine democracy requires of us. That struggle is worth it. In fact, the struggle itself might be the thing of ultimate value. I suspect that is why, in part, Marsalis keeps playing. "When we sit down to play," he once told me, "we make [tangible our] belief." He keeps playing, because he believes we can be otherwise. We keep fighting for the same reason even as Mr. Game tries to convince us to join his side.

 **EDDIE S. GLAUDE**
Princeton University
March 25, 2020



THE EVER FONKY ★ LOWDOWN ★

All compositions and libretto written by Wynton Marsalis
(Skaggs's Music (ASCAP))

Based on decades of conversations with my brother Ellis.
For my mother and father, Delores and Ellis.

—WJM

👉 PART ONE 👈

👉 Mr. Game:

Mr. Game, here at your everlasting service. I'm here for your edification, elucidation and your education. Here's the situation. I run a game of numbers, though I'm not a numbers man. I inspire and sell confidence. Don't laugh—confidence determines the direction of the markets. And there's nothing in the world more important than money, especially if it's yours.

We are **here** tonight, but this is an international hustle, baby. It has played out many times across time and space and is not specific to any language or race. It takes on different flavors according to people's taste, but always ends up in the same old place.

Since we here like to talk about freedom, that subject will set tonight's pace.

I want you to sit back and hear me out. What I show you will eliminate all doubt. I'm a gourmet chef and a short order cook, the author of a best-selling book called, *Leap Before You Look*. For the first time, tonight, I'm going to give you the opportunity to buy into the method for pursuing what we all call 'democratic freedoms'—for yourself and for resolving nasty stressful conflicts with others.

I teach it through this timeless game, but you will learn just the same. That's right, a game played by me, Mr. Game, and you, O, Glorious People, complete with a wildcard which I will choose for you when the time is right.

This game tests your aptitude for accepting the revelations and democratic opportunities I will make available. If you embrace these concepts and emerge with your sanity, vanity, and humanity intact, you will be awarded some very liberating prizes. You all are so great. I'm sure there will be many winners here tonight. Lest you think I'm a happy rhyming fool, this is a game that took Solomon to school. I'm your host but no TV star. Though we play, the subject is war, but the point is power! Pure power and only power!

It starts with a predilection for absolute slaughter, becomes a call for order. It ends with the opportunity for greatness, wealth and fame for all time. Beat them, make them work to increase yours; defile and control their sexuality; ruin their experiencing of life and birth them into shame for what was done to them (in the name of a righteous God); redefine their place in history; teach them that they deserved all that was done to them; corrupt their children by rewarding them for their aptitude in regurgitating their pathology according to your narrative; and finally, sit right down and entertain yourself with their mocking and shaming themselves by singing and dancing about it. Well... that's just too much fun to go undone.

There 'tis. It's the rebound after the beat down, the hump on the brown round, and the 'green you-lost', I found. It's Ever Fonky and it's all the way Lowdown.

Did I tell you that my number one hustle is winning? I am a winner, and everyone **loves** a winner. Even the losers of a very bitterly fought war will try to join the winners. And y'all are all winners. You are the greatest people in the world. And we, together, are the best ever. ➤➤

WE ARE THE GREATEST

Oh, we are the greatest
The world has ever seen
And we are the greatest
That there has ever been
Oh, I am the greatest
No, you are the greatest
No, we are the greatest
And we are the best of the best

If you're not with us
Then you're back in the pack with the rest
Oh, we are the greatest, everybody knows
You are degraded, that's just how it goes

I, me, mine, myself
Me, I, mine, myself
Mine, me, myself, I mean
We are the greatest in the world
We are the best that's ever been

We know that you know
That we know that we're number one
We see that you see
That we see that we've just begun
Let's talk about I, me, mine, myself
We, our, us, ourselves
We are number one

Our crimes are much better
Our water is wetter
Our lies are much truer
Our sorrows are bluer

Oh, we are the best in the world as beginners
And we are the never say never again-ers
And we are the grinning-est grinners
The winning-est in the whole wide!

Mr. Game:

Yes, you have to believe in yourself to be successful. I see you have accepted that concept quite well.

Too much negativity and reflection are like all vegetables and no cake. Follow me while I explain what this is gonna take. I'm Mr. Game. Success is my middle name. I became famous for my financial twerking that showed folks how to make money, without **even** the money working. We could go on and on about me, but we have a lot of stuff to do and tonight's proceedings are all about **you**. Believe me, O, Glorious People! You are great and we are **sooo** fantastic. But have you noticed a growing population of 'others' who look suspicious?

They seem to be everywhere. Who are they? Count them, I think they may soon outnumber us.



THEY/LET'S CALL THEM THIS

They are over here
They are over there
They are everywhere
What's that in her hair?

What are their children playing?
What's that baby saying?
Can we ask them?

They are over here
They are over there
They are everywhere

Let's call them this
Let's call them that
Or something funny
Maybe this and that

Where do they live?
What do they eat?
What do they talk about when they meet?

What do they think?
What does it matter?
What's with their crazy, noisy, silly chatter?

Let me ask
I wouldn't broach it
Now's the perfect time
To approach them

Don't look for trouble
I want to meet them

Don't even greet them
Let's take a seat, then
We're here to count them
What's the amount, then?

Three fifty-three
Oh, let them be
I have to see

Let's call them this
Let's call them that
Or something funny
Maybe this and that

Where do they live?
What do they eat?
What do they talk about when they meet?



Mr. Game:

Yes, yes, well now, there's quite a few of them. We must keep an eye on them. They may want to challenge our greatness. How are they different from us? How many are there again? Hmm... I think that's a lot. They may want to take our things.

O, Glorious People! The world is divided into haves and have nots, strong and weak. It is a struggle between right and wrong, a battle for supremacy. Are we not winners and are we not the greatest? Do those people accept that? With God as my witness. We need to watch them!! Beware. **They're going to cause problems.**

THE EVER FONKY LOWDOWN IN 21

★ Solo: Ryan Kisor trumpet ★

*It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the fonky, fonky get-down*

*Oh, can you see
Oh, can you see
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the lowdown fonky throw-down*

*Oh, can you see
You and me
The Ever Fonky Lowdown
What can you see?*

*Ever Fonky Lowdown
Ever Fonky Lowdown
Ever Fonky Lowdown
Ever Fonky Lowdown
Ever Fonky Lowdown
Ever Fonky Lowdown
Ever Fonky Lowdown*

Mr. Game:

I'm a preacher and a teacher, a soul-reacher and a defense-breacher. As I feared, there are about to be more of them than us. They're like rabbits. Are we going to let them sit there breeding away our freedom? We are winners. We can't have them competing with us, because competition is an act of aggression.

Some have suggested talking to them, but talk is a waste of time. And we don't have time. Every second wasted is a second given to them. Believe me, O, Glorious People! I think I heard they have been committing nefarious crimes, and—they don't believe in God. We must hold them accountable. Let me take care of this. Please folks, don't take our freedoms for granted. Thank you for your trust. You're doing quite well.

I DON'T LIKE NOBODY BUT MYSELF

*I don't like black people
I don't like fat people
I don't like white people
I don't like short people
I don't like old people*

*I don't like people who talk
I don't like the way they walk
I don't like people who tell
I don't like when they yell in the streets
On they cell because*

*I don't like loud people
I don't like women
I can't stand men
I don't trust laughter and
I hate a silly grin, you see*

*I don't like the rich people
Oh, I don't like poor people
I can't stand no holy people
I hate roly, poly people*

*I don't like tall people
I don't like small people
I don't like nobody at all*

*That's why I'm, gonna take
As much as I can confiscate*

*I can't stand whities
I can't stand blackies
I don't have to choose
I don't like Muslims
And I don't like Jews*

*I don't like people who walk
I don't like people who talk
I can't stand people who can
When they stand like they stand
I don't like
I don't like
I don't like nobody but myself*

Mr. Game:

Yes! We are truly something the world has never seen. These people are killing each other and jailing their opposition leaders. We can't abide this. They torture people, they steal from each other, live in chaos and soon... that chaos will be here!! We have to liberate them from themselves. O, Glorious People! We must strike first to prevent what they may be trying to do to us, and to save them. Their leaders must feel our power. Believe me. Trust me.

We will spare no measure or expense in the pursuit of their salvation. Can you find it in your hearts to save these poor people? **Yes. I knew you would agree!** Your position will be made clear when I represent you to our governing body. They will

understand. Our greatness has burdened us with this struggle. We will meet its demands. We must "extend" our principles to take this action. Then, we will no longer be constrained by worrisome teachings and archaic customs that have suppressed our ambitions.

Congratulations, our government has agreed to make a few small changes to our laws. The path is now cleared for us to liberate these people, extend our dominion and increase our wealth, it's a win, win, win for us. And in this game, winning is the only thing.



THE DRUMS OF WAR

*It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money
It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money*

*It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money*

*It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money*

*It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money
It sound like the drums of
Stealing of money it's the stealing of*

*It's the stealing of
It's the stealing of
It's the stealing of
It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money*

*Where did our money go?
No, no, no, no one knows
Where did our money go?*

*It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money
It sound like the drums of war
But it's really the stealing of money*

*It's the stealing of
It's the stealing of
It's the stealing of
Stealing of, stealing of, stealing of
Money*

CONSIDERATION BLUES / I KNOW I MUST FIGHT / THE DRUMS OF WAR RETURN

How many did they say?

*They were what?
Their own people?
What weapons?*

*How do you know?
But the Lord said—
But weren't they—*

353,000

*I thought they—
But didn't we?*

Well...

*When did we?
But we would never—
But didn't the Savior—
I guess—*

*I really don't—
Well they must have—
I guess we should—
Help me to—
Did our Lord say?*

*I just don't—
Yes, I think—
I guess so*

*Well, I don't—
I guess it's too—
Here we go—*

There's no choice—

Mr. Game:

To fulfill the mandates of our democracy, O, Glorious People, we've set aside a specific time and space for you to voice your uncertainties and to consult with your leaders. These are very serious actions we have taken.



*I know I must fight I know I must fight
I know I must fight I know I must fight
I know I must fight I know I must fight
I know I must fight I know I must fight*

*It may sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money
It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money*

*It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money
It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money*

*It sound like the drums of war
But it's actually the stealing of money*

*Won't you tell me?
'Bout that enemy
Won't you tell me?
Where's that enemy*

*Won't you tell me?
'Bout that enemy
Won't you tell me?
Where's that enemy*

Won't you?



➔ **Mr. Game:**

We have handled these people very honorably and executed this war heroically. We lost very few people.

➔ **Innocent Bystander:**

Who is we?

➔ **Mr. Game:**

'We' is participants. This is your will, O, Glorious People!

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WHAT WOULD THE SAVIOR THINK?

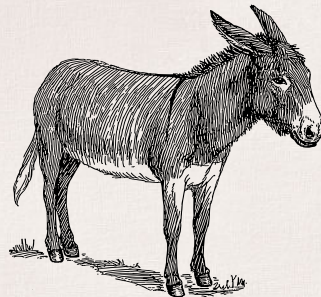
★ **Solo: Marcus Printup trumpet** ★

*What would the Savior think?
(Am I not a brother and a sister, too?)
What would the Savior think?
(Remember the golden rule)
What would the Savior think?*

*Hallelu—
Hallelujah
What would our Lord have done?
See the world anew. Create the right
Instead of avenging the wrong.
Love each other.*

*What would the Savior think?
What would the Savior think?
Hmmmmm...*

.....



➔ **Mr. Game:**

That's so naive, it makes me want to puke. Too much thinking and praying will give you a headache. Winners don't reflect, we celebrate. We don't have time for all this Savior nonsense and questioning whether you're with us. You should have questioned who we were before their innocents became **collateral damage**.

There is only one savior: Power!!! and **money** is his lone disciple. You may question our conquests but they are **your** prosperity. Why, all across our landscape today, you see the result of past glories against others. You see them destitute and half insane, not working or working in service to us. You must agree, that's far better than us serving them. You see, trust me, you are thinking about right and wrong and all that *Savior* nonsense. **Everything is relative.**

Some for me, some for you,
Some for you, some for me, some for me, none for you,
Some for me, some for me, some for me,
None for you, none for you, none for you.

.....

SOME FOR ME, SOME FOR YOU

★ **Solos: Jason Marsalis drums,
Ryan Kisor trumpet** ★

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➔ **Mr. Game:**

Let me break some history down for you. We created a community based on freedom. In the name of freedom, we defeated some uncivilized people who had never heard of freedom. Because there was work we needed done, we were forced to enslave them, and then... we freed them. They were living wrong. These people didn't believe in God. Some of their own people sold them to us. We were right in liberating them from being themselves, we were only wrong in waiting so long to do it. And hey, we were so absolutely right about deserving nice things for ourselves.

Now you, O, Glorious People, may not get any of the spoils of this war, but you're winners. A winner shouldn't let the vicissitudes of money dampen their euphoria. You don't get any Super Bowl money when your team wins, but it still feels so damned good to wear their jersey you bought. It just feels so right: We won! We won! We won! And... we're number one!!!

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THE EVER FONKY LOWDOWN IN 5

★ Solo: Dan Block tenor saxophone ★

*It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the dirty, lowdown smack-down
It's the smack-down,
It's the crack-down
It's the fonky, fonky back-down
It's the ever-dirty showdown
It's a lowdown, dirty smack-down
It's a fonky, fonky back-down
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown*

*Oh, can't you
(Ever Fonky Lowdown)
Oh, can you
(Ever Fonky Lowdown)
Oh, can't you
(Ever Fonky Lowdown)
Oh, can you*

*It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown*

➤ Mr. Game:

Ah, yes, we are all in this together. O, Glorious People. The war was executed with such professionalism, the governing body has granted me the privilege of writing the official record. We all know what happened: they attacked us... we defended ourselves. They deserved everything they got, they abused their own people, and they were living in filth too, with a bunch of unkempt children.



If they believed in God, and if God was on their side, they wouldn't have lost. O, Glorious People! Our people were heroic in battle, as always. Let me find the right words, so the official records and textbooks will show that the good are celebrated and the bad are rightly punished. This act solidifies our bond. We are truly a community fighting for freedom. Do you agree to the wealth these actions have brought to us? Well, don't ask 'who is we'? Enjoy the spoils of war. Even if it's only the acquired air of superiority that comes with identifying with winners, you got something for nothing, something for nothing. And there's always more.

I'm a seer and a mind freer. Cash is my middle name, but I'm called Mr. Game. It all happened just as I said.

When the books are read about the dragons we slayed, and all our golden trophies are displayed, the world will gape at the fortunes some of us have made. The memory of our greatness will last and last, but we still have to keep moving fast, fast, fast. We have won the day but must also master the night. Don't worry about your money, it's gon' be right. We will increase your green under the cloak of night when the amateurs sleep. What I earn, we get to keep. I work for you like a Grey Ghost Raider, trust me baby, I'm a night trader.

Always remember: The speed of consumption far outruns the pace of corruption. I have to stay ahead of your appetite.

NIGHT TRADER

★ Solos: Doug Wamble guitar, Ted Nash alto saxophone, Wynton Marsalis trumpet, Elliot Mason trombone ★

*Sleight of hand by trade
Sign a bill, don't even read the bill
I sign a bill, don't even read a bill*

*Enforce a law, a law I never saw
I enforce a law,
A law I never even saw
Put 'em in jail
Did they commit a crime
Put 'em away for a long, long time
I'm a night trader, baby
I'm a night trader, sleight of hand by trade*

*I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader*

*Sell you a home, I'll give you a loan
Sell you a loan, I'll give you a home
Sell you a home, I'll give you a loan
Give you a loan that'll take your home*

*Gimme some stock on private prisons
Don't you worry, we'll get good bids
I'm a judge—sending kids
Night trader, baby, I'm a night trader*

*I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader*

*Sign a bill, don't even read a bill
Enforce a law, I never studied law
Who cares if they committed the crime
There's money to make, give 'em some time*

*There's no time for all this
"Who struck John?"
Time is money, I'm moving on
Night trader, baby
Sleight of hand by trade*

*I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader
I'm a night trader*

➤ Mr. Game:

Let me teach the children: we beat other people; **therefore** we are better than them. Group thinking baby, we are the greatest nation in the world, we are right and they are wrong; the world is black and white and of course, because we won, God is on our side. And the Ever Fonky becomes deep down skunky when you see the terms of surrender for the defeated. Remember, O, Glorious People! They, too, want to be winners. That's right. When we hear songs celebrating our victory pouring from the mouths of the very people we defeated, we know that they have made peace with our supremacy.



O, Glorious People!

Let me take you back to the schoolyard: Most kids just give in and follow the bully, but a few back away threatening some type of retaliation. Whether subservient or resistant, each will adjust their philosophy to accommodate defeat. That's the illusion of choice. Haha, the old binary hustle. Tutsi versus Hutu, God-fearing versus heathens, Democrats versus Republicans.

Yes, there are two sides to every coin, **but it's still the same coin.**

Losers have two choices: entertain us by playing out our vision of them as meek, emasculated jesters... or excite us, playing out our vision of them as dangerous captured savages. Well, it's natural to the defeated, all of that bowing and scraping, but it's also okay to let a little pressure out of the system and listen to the most aggressive ones roar and shout insults about what they think we've done to them... and so on. I love the anguished fiery testimonials, I love them owning the bad names we called them. I just can't figure out why they think all of that noise and blaming inspires guilt or shame—it's actually therapeutic for me. Tell us again. What did we do to you?

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➤ **MR. GOOD TIME MAN** ◀

★ **Solos: Victor Gaines clarinet,
Wynton Marsalis trumpet,
Christopher Crenshaw trombone** ★

*Do you remember
Good and glory days
When sloppy, happy minstrels
Traveled 'cross the land
Bringing such joy
And cheer with every song*

*And when they danced
The buck and wing
We knew they missed
The old plantation
And our hearts did burst with sorrow
At the telling of a tale from old Dixie*

*Oh, come and play
Mister good time man
Make us feel everything's all right
Oh, let me smile your blues away
I'm ready*

*Yet there's another type of fellow
And he turns my legs to Jello
When he brags about the violence
And the crimes he has committed
He is such a dashing fellow
All bedecked in golden chains
And though the years have passed
The story is the same*

*Oh, can I buy a ghetto song
So I can dance and sing along
We'll share a rhyme
While you do time
I'm ready*

*And, so, the Janus headed minstrel
That has filled our lives with glee forever
Whether he be happy grinning
Or an angry lion spinning
Either way I love the ghetto
And the old plantation cause
The good ol' time attracting
Character detracting stories
And the acting is for me*

*Oh, won't you play
Mister good time man
Oh, can you bust a gangsta rhyme
So we can have you both on hand*

*Oh, mister good time man
Oh, mister bad, bad man
Smile, mister bad man
Smile, mister good time
Scowl, mister bad man
Smile, mister good time
Show us your grill*

Mr. Game:

Yes. There's only one more step to complete the dispositional portion of this game. You must understand and embody the easy attitude of entitlement that comes with freedom and wealth. Our riches affirm that we are the greatest of the world. Everyone knows it. That's why they want to be us.

Shame is for losers or for those who have done something wrong. We only did to them what they would have done to us, if they could. Don't think about it, just follow the stories in all the books, movies, and everything else. We are number one. If you're not us, you're them. They will complain, but don't look back, don't look around, history is now. Can you accept this? I **knew** you would. It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown.



BECAUSE I WANT TO, BECAUSE I LIKE TO, BECAUSE I CAN

★ Solos: Doug Wamble guitar and vocals,
Marcus Printup trumpet ★

*My brother
My sister
Why? Why? Why? Why?
Why do you keep doin' it to me?*

*Because I want to
Because I like to
Because I can*

*My sister
My brother
Why? Why? Why?
Why? Why? Why?
Oh, why do you treat me so bad?*

*Because I want to
Because I like to
Because I can*

*Oh, tell me why
Why-y
Why-y-y tell me, won't you, oh why-y*

*Because I want to
Because I like to
Because I can*

Mr. Game:

That's a ridiculous plea. This is how it all seems to me.

I WANTS MY ICE CREAM

*I wants my ice cream
So good to me
I loves my ice cream
Oh, can't you see*

*Oh, yes I see you
Sleeping in those streets
It makes me wonder
What a poor man eats*

*I likes my ice cream
Would you like a lick?
Oh, now I'm playin'
Just a dirty trick*

*I see you eyeing
My brand new shoes
I wants my ice cream
Got the sidewalk blues*

*I hear you, brother
I feel your pain
I wants my ice cream
That's my refrain*

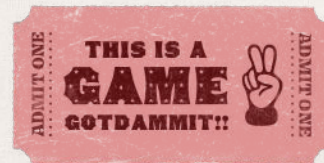
*Ain't got no money
Even if I could
I wants my ice cream*

*Don't think I would
What's all this hollerin'
And stumblin' down the street?
Can't you be quiet?
I'm trying to eat*

*I see you eyeing
My ice cream cone
But you can't have none
'Cause I'm on my phone*

Mr. Game:

Somebody's got to rule. It might as well be us.



THE EVER FONKY LOWDOWN IN 6

★ Solo: Dan Nimmer piano ★

*It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
Oh, can't you see
'Bout you and me*

*It's the ever fonky fake down
It's the ever fonky breakdown
Why can't you see
What it could be
'Bout you and me*

*It's the ever fonky takedown
It's the ever fonky shake down*

*It's the ever fonky shake down
It's the fonky, fonky break down
It's the ever fonky blow down
Of the fonky, fonky brown round*

*Across time, across space
Across the whole human race
Across time, across space
Across the whole human race
Across time, across space
Across the whole human race*

REPRISE: WHAT WOULD THE SAVIOR THINK?

➤ **The Homeless:**
*But what would the Savior think?
What would the Savior think?*

*(The word is the will of God,
Not the will of the people)*

➡ PART TWO ⬅

THE EVER FONKY LOWDOWN IN 5 & 6

★ **Solos: Dan Block soprano saxophone,
Victor Goines soprano saxophone,
Vincent Gardner trombone ★**

*It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the nappy, nappy slap down
It's the fonky, fonky trap down
It's the lowdown dirty dap down*

*Oh, say, can you see
It's right, can't you see
To fight, fight to be
You and me*

*It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the never nappy hoe-down
For all to see
It's the never nappy no down
For all to see*

*It's right, can't you see
The fight just to be
Be free you and me*

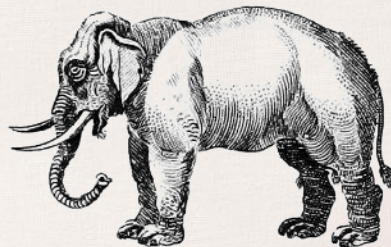
➤ **Mr. Game:**

Mr. Game, back for your international delight. Though our game has been played across time and space, I give out prizes of value to only **this** time and place. You will receive five gifts of various sizes, each enlivened by hand-picked surprises which further apprise you of what was earned and learned from our handling of 'others' and their brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers. What we did to them or **for them** taught us how to achieve prosperity and order.

Each prize is accompanied with a clear explanation. Generally, I give some local history. Then, I tell you exactly what's happening (that's called the breakdown). Explain how our choices worked out over time (that's the hand me down) and finally, we look underneath the sheets where the big dog eats (that's the lowdown).

FIRST PRIZE:
Here's some historical fact.

These people weren't doing anything productive and our lives gave them purpose. To serve us. We gave them separate living quarters and encouraged them to pursue that same type of housing after we freed them.



What you do is what you *will* do and *that* you do makes it true.

Try as we might, most have proven to be beyond rehabilitation. Look around. You see them hanging around always involved in some type of mayhem and madness.

Here's the breakdown:
Nothing is more important than living in a comfortable environment. Just seeing them can bring up fear and bad feelings. We've got to keep them largely out of sight and mind. They are, however, very good at games and at playing things.

Here's the hand me down:
O, Mighty People! We must be inhospitable to them and to **any** group of outsiders who come here disrespecting our flag and our beliefs.

Here's the lowdown:
Keep them down. Keep them away. Let no wound be too small to inflict. Quietly make sure they are slowly strangled by all of the systems across this mighty nation.

Your first prize, great and glorious people, is the **freedom** of segregation, segmentation and homogenization. Everywhere you look, you will only see yourself. Congratulations!!

➤ **ISMS, SCHISMS** ⬅

★ **Solos: Victor Goines clarinet,
Ted Nash piccolo ★**

*I GOT isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
All for me*

Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
I can't see

Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
All day long

Isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
Loud and strong

We don't want the aggravation
Does not matter what they know
If I see one anywhere around my place
Our police may shoot them dead
And win the case

We've got racism, sexism, textism—wow
Leftism, rightism—hit me now
Classism, snobism, fakism—true
Malism, hoodism—love them too

Fakery, snakery, never-awakery
Bribery, takery—what you say?
Racism, ageism, racism, sexism
Racism, classism—every day

I'm just happy
In these run-down places
And our segregated schools
If they see us anywhere
Around their homes
Our police will beat us back
Where we belong

Isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
All for me

Classism, snobism, fakism—true
Malism, hoodism—can you see?
Racism, ageism, racism, sexism
Racism, classism—what you say?

Isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
Isms, schisms
Every day

I'm just happy
In these rundown places
Does not matter what they know
If they see us anywhere
Around their homes
Our police will beat them back
Until they're gone

Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms
Schisms, isms



➔ Mr. Game:

Each of our five prizes comes naturally from the last. The battles we've won over these last years to segregate ourselves have led to purity in education, housing and employment. Just look around. All of that winning is addictive, but **if you don't fight, you can't win**. When you beat one group of others, you must use that inspiration to go on to the next and the next, until you work through **all** the groups that displease you.

SECOND PRIZE:

You will enjoy endless campaigns: old versus young, smart versus dumb, fat versus skinny, Democrats versus Republican. Finally, you will work your way all the way up to the most sacred battleground: your own home. For drama and intensity, nothing surpasses a passionate, extended domestic battle. Don't forget the binary narrative: others are wrong and you are right. It's a wonderful way of understanding that keeps you on the battlefield.

Here's a snapshot from our history: **We broke their families up** for centuries and consistently destroyed the bond between their men and women. However, they were very productive for us as workers, as stock and as property. It was gloriously efficient and effective. We learned to value human beings economically. **With the passage of time, the accurate valuation of people is just in our DNA, and their home life has still not recovered.**

Let me free you from old thinking. Families are no longer what they were. Kids are disrespectful. Men and women at each other's throats all the time.

Let's consider, if you will, the poetic demands and uncertain terrains of romance. Think about all of the time it takes to develop a relationship with another person. Now, add the investment required to properly raise a child. You see, a traditional family just takes too much damned time and effort. The modern family is mobile and you need that mobility to make more money.



O, Mighty People! Let me explain: life is just a big transaction. Look around. It costs to be born, it costs to die, it costs when you get sick, it costs 'in case' you get sick and everything in between is bills and taxes. Try paying for some food with the depth of your humanity. **Nothing is more important than money.**

Here's the breakdown:

A winner buys the life he or she wants to live! (Everyone else will fall in line based on their payout).

Here's the hand me down:

Romance interferes with fighting. When the other is the enemy and everything becomes a transaction, intimacy is too nuanced. Who has time for love when the most important victory is yet to be won?

Here's the lowdown:

Now you are free to purchase all the personal space you want. If you get lonely, just swipe a picture on an app, or buy a robot. Your prize is **freedom from the rigamarole of romance and escalation of the domestic war in the court of transaction.**

YES/NO

★ Solos: Ted Nash *alto saxophone*,
Christopher Crenshaw *trombone* ★

Yes No Yes No
Yes No Yes No
Yes No Yes Yes Yes No Yes
No Yes Yes No Yes Yes No
No No No No
Yes Yes Yes No Yes Yes Yes
No

No Yes No Yes
Yes No Yes No
No No No No
Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes
Yes No Yes No Yes No Yes
Yes Yes Yes

No No No No
Yes Yes Yes No Yes
Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes
No No No No No No No No
Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No



WHERE HAS THE LOVE GONE? ↗ ↘

Where has the love gone?
Where has the love gone?
Where has the love gone?
Where has the love gone?
Where has the love gone?
Where has the love gone?
Where has the love gone?

➔ Mr. Game:

Our next wonderful prize is actually two in one. We touched on the difficulties of contemporary parenting. Now, consider the impossibility of accounting for members of your community. **It's all so involved**. If we just strip away needless complexity, we can sell more of our ideas. What are we selling? **Well... participation**. The new community accepts everyone that can buy in. You can join the church. Don't worry about reading the book. Send some money! That's the sole requirement. "If you **bring** a check, we **will** not check."

THIRD PRIZE

Hear me folks, just as today's community is more fluid, the family of now doesn't need all of those old restrictions with the draconian nonsense of parents telling their kids what to do. You can now be the parents you wish **you** had. Your youngsters should be free to define their world with other youngsters, a momma should be free to be with her group and a daddy free to be with his. When the generations, genders and preferences are separated, they are unencumbered to create the exact environment they want and can purchase. Then, we can enjoy **real** participation.

O, Glorious People! All this freedom must have a purpose. What greater purpose than selling? What better to sell than perfectly

crafted entertainment products with a little sexual electricity (from the world of taboo) targeted at everyone in your home.

The only thing that feels better than selling is being liberated to give full expression to the cathartic euphoria of **buying**. It's powerful and it feels so good. The real world will be delivered to your home, for a nominal monthly fee, when everyone is together... or at any time on your mobile device. Our hard-fought freedoms have allowed us to make available all of the things you were unjustly denied in the past.

Folks! We're going full throttle, a candescent cocktail of freedom tailored to excite the group it targets. Look around. The kids love it! Choice and culture!

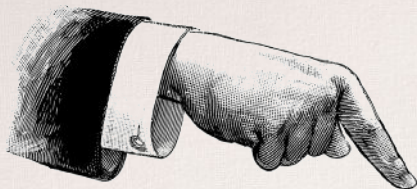
Here's the breakdown:
Give the people what they want.
Shake your money maker.
Don't sit on it, sell it!!

Here's the hand me down:
Trash piles up if no one takes the garbage out. That's why we pay people to clean. Everything is for sale—even a community. Like an old New Orleans auction house.

We used to sell and buy them as a community so's all the mommas and daddies and children and all the relatives could be bought and sold in a very grand public spectacle. You know, selling and buying is in our DNA. **What you do is what you will do and that you do makes it true.**

Here's the lowdown:
Don't let other people exploit you. Own your **own** identity. We all have something worth selling. This prize gives you permission to sell whatever you have to whoever is willing to pay for it. Forget about shame.

Your prize is prime time pornography and the commodification of community.



CONSIDER THIS → 'BOUT THE ← FILTH WE LOVE

*Consider this 'bout the filth we love
Consider this from a view above*

*We love it
We like it
We sell it
Ooo*

*Consider this 'bout the filth we make
Consider this 'bout the filth we take*

*We like it
We love it
We buy it
Ooo*

*Consider this 'bout the filth we love
Consider this from a view above*

*We like it
We love it
We buy it
We sell it
We believe it
We achieved it
We live it*

*And we just got to have got to have
What we need what we want now*

*We love it
We love it
We love it
We love it
We love it
We love it*

*Everything is for sale
Everything is for sale
Everything is for sale
Everything is for sale
Everything is for sale
Everything is for sale
Everything is for sale*

*Consider this 'bout the filth we love
Consider this 'bout the filth we make
Consider this from a view above
Consider this 'bout the filth we take*

*Oh, we won't see
The reality
Oh, we won't see
The reality*

→ **Mr. Game:**

Our greatness has created jealous enemies everywhere. There are menaces within and without. We have a wide-open country with very, very porous borders. O, Glorious People! **We intend to protect every square inch of our homeland...** but we can't do it without your help, folks.

FOURTH PRIZE

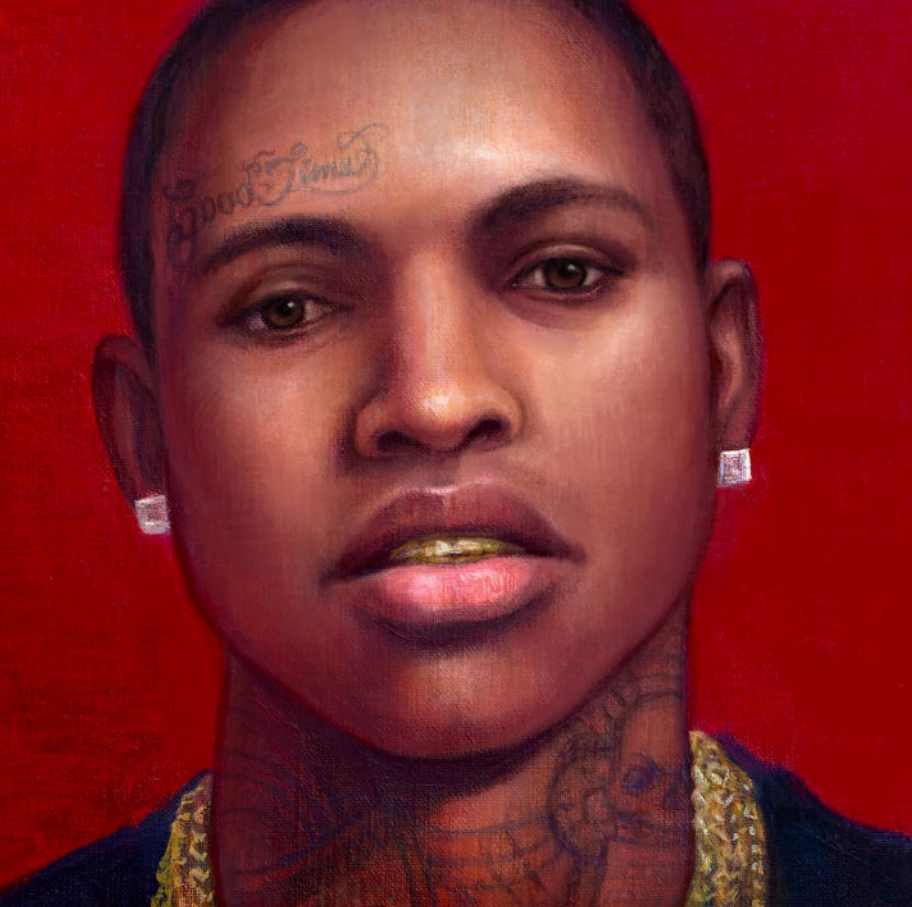
We need you to register all pertinent personal, medical and financial information; to obtain the standard identification card which allows you to get in and out of public spaces; and please!! Keep your phone with you at all times, or get an implant. It's for your safety! We already have access to your spending habits, entertainment preferences, daily routines, **and** the tendencies of your most frequently called friends. These last bits of information will enable us to completely protect you.

Here's some history:

When we owned them, we would issue papers that accounted for **them**. For the very few who were able to ascend from their God given position, we issued freedom papers. **If you didn't have those papers, you weren't free.** We really kept track of those people because you couldn't have them out spreading public mischief and mayhem.

Sometimes, to avoid work, they ran away. We posted the most beautiful descriptions of their person complete with dispositional observations. These advertisements allowed our citizens North and South to repatriate them back to their owners. We all participated and were very successful. When we all come together, success is guaranteed.

If it was important to account for a runaway, you can imagine, O, Glorious People! **You are far too important to go unaccounted.** Register now so we can protect you!



Folks, these are troubled times. Corruption is all around us in the form of deception. Open your eyes: doctors addicting you to drugs they're paid to prescribe, heads of stock exchanges running Ponzi schemes, priests molesting kids, citizens supporting criminals over our officers, I could go on and on. Let's not even mention the minorities and the terrorists, Lord save us!! Look around at all the public violence. You cannot have enough surveillance and security. Our technological devices are far more trustworthy than the judgment of a person, a camera does not lie.

Here's the breakdown:

You are the only one you can trust.

Anyone could be doing anything at any time. "Be afraid—Be prepared."

Here's the hand me down:

Surveillance equipment is steadily improving. Soon, we will be able to surreptitiously record every interaction, in every home, so that each accusation can be supported or contested with accurate documentation. Be amongst the first to participate.

Here's the lowdown:

It's important to know more than what everyone is doing. We need to know what's on their minds. Privacy is an enemy of freedom.

This wonderful and timely prize grants you: **Freedom through constant surveillance and relentless security.**

.....



✶ **EVERYBODY** ✶ **WEAR THEY MASK**

★ **Solos: Vincent Gardner trombone, Sherman Irby alto saxophone, Victor Goines clarinet, Wynton Marsalis trumpet, Christopher Crenshaw trombone ★**

*I said everybody wear they mask
Why ya got to be like that?
I said everybody wears a mask
Why ya got to be like that?*

*I said everybody wear they mask
Why ya got to be like that?
I said everybody wears a mask
Why ya got to be like that?*

*Everybody wear they mask
Why ya got to be like that?
Oh, everybody
Oh, everybody be like that*

*Everybody wear they mask
Why ya got to be like that?
Oh, everybody
Oh, everybody be like that*

*Everybody where your mask?
Why you gotta make me ask?
Er' body wear that mask
You hear me?*

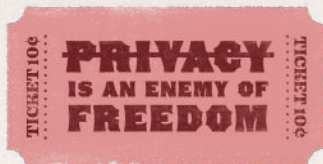
*Everybody where your mask?
Why you gotta make me ask?
Er' body wear that mask
You hear me?*

We got to see what you're doing
All the time
We got to see what you're doing
All the time
We got to see what you're doing
All the time
We got to see what you're doing
All the time
We got to see what you're doing
All the time
We got to see what you're doing
All the time
We got to—
Why ya got to be like that?
Everybody wear they—
Why ya got to be like that?

➔ Mr. Game:

O, Glorious People! I know you love these prizes because you live them.

This is the Ever Fonky Lowdown and you are getting rewarded for being winners. Big winners!



THE EVER FONKY ➔ LOWDOWN IN 7 ➔

★ Solo: Wynton Marsalis trumpet ★

*It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown
It's the Ever Fonky Lowdown*

*Oh, do you see?
It's the low-down, fonky beat down
It's the shake down, fonky breakdown
It's the ever fonky get down*

*Oh, say, can't you see
'Bout us, you and me
Our fight, fight to be*

*Ever Fonky
It's forever fonky
It's forever fonky
It's forever fonky
It's forever fonky
It's forever fonky
It's forever fonky
It's forever fonky*

➔ Mr. Game:

I can't just give away this final prize so easily. There's one more test to determine if you are indeed the best of the best. It's my wildcard. Unpredictable and capable of catapulting you to the top of the food chain or thrusting you down to the dungeon in chains, the wildcard fights against our understanding of freedom and is called a "freedom fighter."

Though not believers in our winning ways and traditions, they are formidable persons of courage, clarity and charity. These battlers challenge us to stay in winning form. I respect 'em.

If you can survive exposure to this freedom fighter by maintaining your defense of the freedoms we have secured for ourselves across time, you will receive the final and greatest prize. If you waver, however, you could lose everything.

This particular wildcard is a lady, and I mention her now, because I'm confident in your confidence. Hear me, O, Glorious Ones! All the other wildcards who have tried to defeat us, have failed: Harriet Tubman, saved hundreds but tens of thousands remained slaves, Lincoln Steffens uncovered corruption in our politics and won awards for it. But has the corruption ever slowed down? Hell, even Jesus failed in front of the people, they chose Barabbas.

Oh, Judicious People! You want and deserve to be free to do what you **want to do**. Nobody wants to hear no mouthy preaching about whether we can see what's wrong or not. We want the things that **make us feel good! Money!!** That's our stuff. Forget all the judgement, we're not interested in sharing our resources with others we can't stand.

Some history:
Real freedom fighters come from a long way off. They bring a lot of history with them. We had the enslaved well in hand or under our thumb, everything designed to keep them deaf, mute and dumb. It was illegal for them to read but not to breed, to write but not to fight, to say but not to pray. Somehow, they all got a hold of words from our Bible and created songs of survival, disguised as prayers, they applied our sacred learning to their wretched affairs.

Here's the breakdown and the hand me down:
All this singing about salvation was not good for their spirit. We had to encourage music that was more real to their condition and

pull the old bones and tambo out. As was their way, they began to **self-deprecate** and the popularity of their music began to appreciate. As it was then, so it is today.

Here's the lowdown:
While we were so focused on stamping out those damned drums, these people had created their own notions about "our" freedom. Coming from a book they couldn't even read. And they filled the air with this noise as they worked.



I GOT A NAGGING ➔ FEELING ➔

*I got a naggin' feelin'
Deep down in my soul
I said I got a tale to tell
Can't rest 'til it's told*

*Gonna lift up that heavy feelin'
Let that light shine inside
Oh, this life don't bother me
Soon I will be free*

*I was a bitty baby
On my momma's knee
When Jesus angel told me
I was meant to be*

*I got a naggin' feelin'
Deep down in my soul
I've had some mighty troubles
Since my kids was sold
I said I got a tale to tell
Can't rest 'til it's told
Gonna lift up that heavy feelin'
Let the light shine inside*

*Oh, this life don't bother me
Soon I will be free*

➔ **Mr. Game:**

From this absolute din came a feeling of hope. As time passed, that hope became belief which eventually became action in the person of a freedom fighter. She was determined to remake the world according to the dreams and struggles of her ancestors. Even though it was a failing cause, this particular woman was remarkable. I'm talking about someone who came from the absolute bottom of our society and grew up picking cotton as the eldest of twenty kids.

As a youngster, she was a voracious reader. She learned to understand and believe in our system. In the same way that the enslaved had twisted our religious intentions to serve their purposes, she figured out how to use our system to fight for her people's version of freedom.

Here's the breakdown:

She believed she could defeat democracy as we mean it to be and was willing to try.

Here's the hand me down:

People of now don't have the time to jeopardize their health on no poor person's dream. Why risk life and limb when you can

just get online, and anonymously express your mind or open your heart to friends and neighbors in less than 280 characters?

Here's the lowdown:

She was unwavering in the execution of her duty, refused to be silenced, followed the word and held to it. Her name was Fannie Lou Hamer.



THE BALLAD OF FANNIE LOU: PART 1

★ **Solo: Doug Wamble vocals and guitar** ★

*Fannie Lou was born
In a fertile land
Oh, Fannie Lou came up
Workin' harder than any man
And when they dropped down
Fannie, Fannie she would stand*

*She could see
'Round Saturn's rings
And she heard
Songs that the angels sing
When she spoke
Every word had wings*

*Fannie, Fannie
Oh, sweet Fannie Lou*

*I'm a Southern boy
From a Southern town
I used to see Fannie
Well she used to be around
Boy, she was something
Something touch you
Way deep down*

*Oh, Fannie Lou
With your eyes so clear
Voice so strong
It drew the people near
When she spoke
She calmed the people's fear
Fannie, Fannie
Oh, sweet Fannie Lou*

*In a Southern style
They beat Fannie blue
And they did things to her
As it was their Southern way to do
That didn't stop Fannie
From doin' what she was here to do*

*On freedom farm
People pickin' poke
Fannie Lou*

*She liked to laugh and joke
What she did
Cause folks to count their vote*

*Fannie, Fannie
Fannie, Fannie Lou
Fannie, Fannie
What they do to you
Oh, Fannie, Fannie
Fannie, Fannie Lou*

THE BALLAD OF FANNIE LOU: PART 2

★ **Solos: Camille Thurman vocals,
Ashley Pezzotti vocals,
Christie Dashiell vocals** ★

*Fannie Lou Hamer
Fannie Lou Hamer
Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou
Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou*

*Fannie Lou Hamer
Fannie Lou Hamer
Fannie Lou*

*Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou
Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou Hamer
Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou
Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou
Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou
Fannie Lou Hamer*

*Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou
Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou Hamer
Fannie Lou Hamer*

→ **Mr. Game:**

Yes Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou! She was truly something. Too bad she was on the losing side. We **invented** freedom. We're not about to fight **against** the freedoms we abundantly enjoy because somebody with no money is uncomfortable! And when the people get behind something, it's a done deal. Who wants to face public ridicule and humiliation for defending a position that gives them less than what they have?

Here's the breakdown:

You almost never have to kill a freedom fighter; just let memories of them die. There's no need to bury information no one cares about. Put it on the front page of the paper. They'll be wrapping fish in it the next day. Put a game on and everybody loses their mind.

The hand me down:

You have done well in this game. You overcame Fannie Lou's overtures to the point of forgetting her very name. This is a great moment for our way of life. We should reflect in honor of her sacrifice.

→ **WHY DO WE PICK SLAVERY OVER FREEDOM?** ←

Why do we pick slavery over freedom?

→ **Mr. Game:**

...Well, that was that.

O, Glorious People!

This is your last prize and it's the best one.
Now we're really about to have some fun.

When you act against your best interest to attack a remote enemy with no power to do you any harm; when you're ecstatic about identifying yourself as a winner even though you never get a single spoil; when you are happy to accept far less than your participation could have earned and honored to be rewarded for the achievement of staying home, congratulations! You've won one game of the Ever Fonky Lowdown... and you're the donkey.

O, Glorious People, My People, Our People, The People, hear me, this game was never about **"them."** It's been about **you...** and all of what has been sold to **you.** I'm talking about the machine, the system, the grind, the chart from birth to the grave. It's all figured out for you. One hustle after another designed to analyze, paralyze, bind and blind you. O, can't you see? Corrupt laws, endless litigation over trivia, ridiculous rules, bureaucratic incompetence; pay to live, pay to die, pay to get married, pay to divorce, pay for school, pay for the hospital, pay pay pay, ha ha! Indifferent government wasting and stealing piles of your money that you can't even and don't even want to trace, endorsing tribal policies that violate your self-interest as you all swallow the fake binary narrative of Democrat vs Republican, white vs black, man versus woman, haha. Fools!! Games, games, games!

Here's some history:

Did you know that over 700,000 people died in the American Civil War... **"Us and Them"**?



JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS

2019–20 Concert Season

REEDS

Sherman Irby – alto saxophone, clarinet,
flute, and piccolo

Ted Nash – alto saxophone, clarinet, flute, and piccolo

Victor Goines – tenor and soprano saxophones,
bass clarinet, and clarinet

†Walter Blanding – tenor saxophone

*Dan Block – tenor and soprano saxophones
and clarinet

Paul Nedzela – baritone saxophone, bass clarinet,
and clarinet

TRUMPETS

Ryan Kisor

Marcus Printup

Kenny Rampton

Wynton Marsalis

TROMBONES

Vincent Gardner – trombone and sousaphone

Christopher Crenshaw – trombone and vocals

Elliot Mason

RHYTHM SECTION

Doug Wamble – guitar and vocals

Dan Nimmer – piano

Carlos Henriquez – bass

Jason Marsalis – drums and tambourine

SPECIAL GUESTS

Wendell Pierce – narrator

Camille Thurman – vocals

Ashley Pezzotti – vocals

Christie Dashiell – vocals

Bobby Allende – congas

Ricky “Dirty Red” Gordon – percussion

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCES

Sam Chess – trombone (track 7)

Adam Birnbaum – piano (tracks 7, 35, 42, 51)

Charles Goold – drums (track 35)

*Did not perform at this recording session

†Substitute orchestra member

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PRODUCER Todd Whitelock

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