

WHITE MIRROR

A Film About Looking Inward

By Taj Kokayi

LOGLINE

A young Black man stumbles upon a mystical mirror that transforms him to look like a white man.

SYNOPSIS

After stumbling upon a mystical mirror that transforms him to look like a white man, a young Black man must decide if he would rather spend his life free of the struggles that come with his dark skin, or remain true to himself and his identity.

JAMAL

Everyone has dreams of success. They say if you work hard, your work will pay off. Jamal has tried to live by that mentality, but there's one problem.

Every job he goes to, he feels as though he is being kept down by his race. He is constantly overlooked for promotions he knows he deserves.

So when presented with the opportunity to eliminate the anchor of his race, Jamal is faced with the question:

Would you sacrifice your true self if it meant you could have everything you've ever wanted?



JAMES

James is the white man that Jamal appears as. He is Jamal's **White Mirror**.

He represents what Jamal's life could be like. The safety, opportunity, and privilege he could have if he completely shed his Black skin.

So James is a symbol of Jamal's internal conflict.

His life may be easier as James, but **would he still be the same man inside?**



JAZZLYN

Jazzlyn is Jamal's younger sister and his closest friend. Jazz represents family, their community, and the struggle that Jamal faces as a Black person in America. She represents everything Jamal would be giving up if he became James. And she is the **angel on his shoulder** who tries to get him to remain his true self.

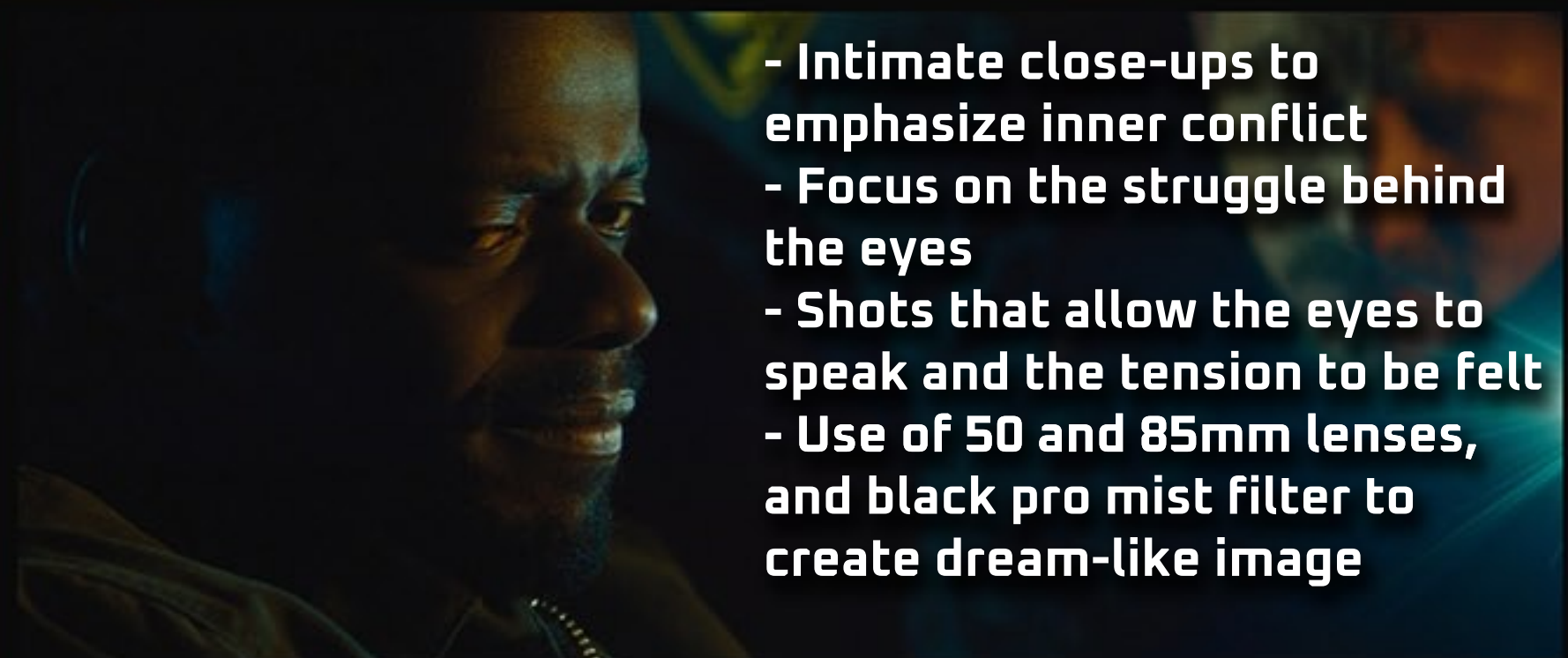


CINEMATOGRAPHY



- Shots of characters through mirrors and reflections
- Lighting for both the physical character and their reflection
- Framing centered around sources of reflections
- Symmetry through blocking





- Intimate close-ups to emphasize inner conflict
- Focus on the struggle behind the eyes
- Shots that allow the eyes to speak and the tension to be felt
- Use of 50 and 85mm lenses, and black pro mist filter to create dream-like image



CINEMATOGRAPHY



MIRRORS

Mirrors and reflections will be a key form of imagery. They will allow us to see both James and Jamal in the same scene. The mirrors will also symbolize **self-reflection and looking inward**. As the story goes along, our protagonist will struggle with his identity, and we will see if he is more Jamal or more James.





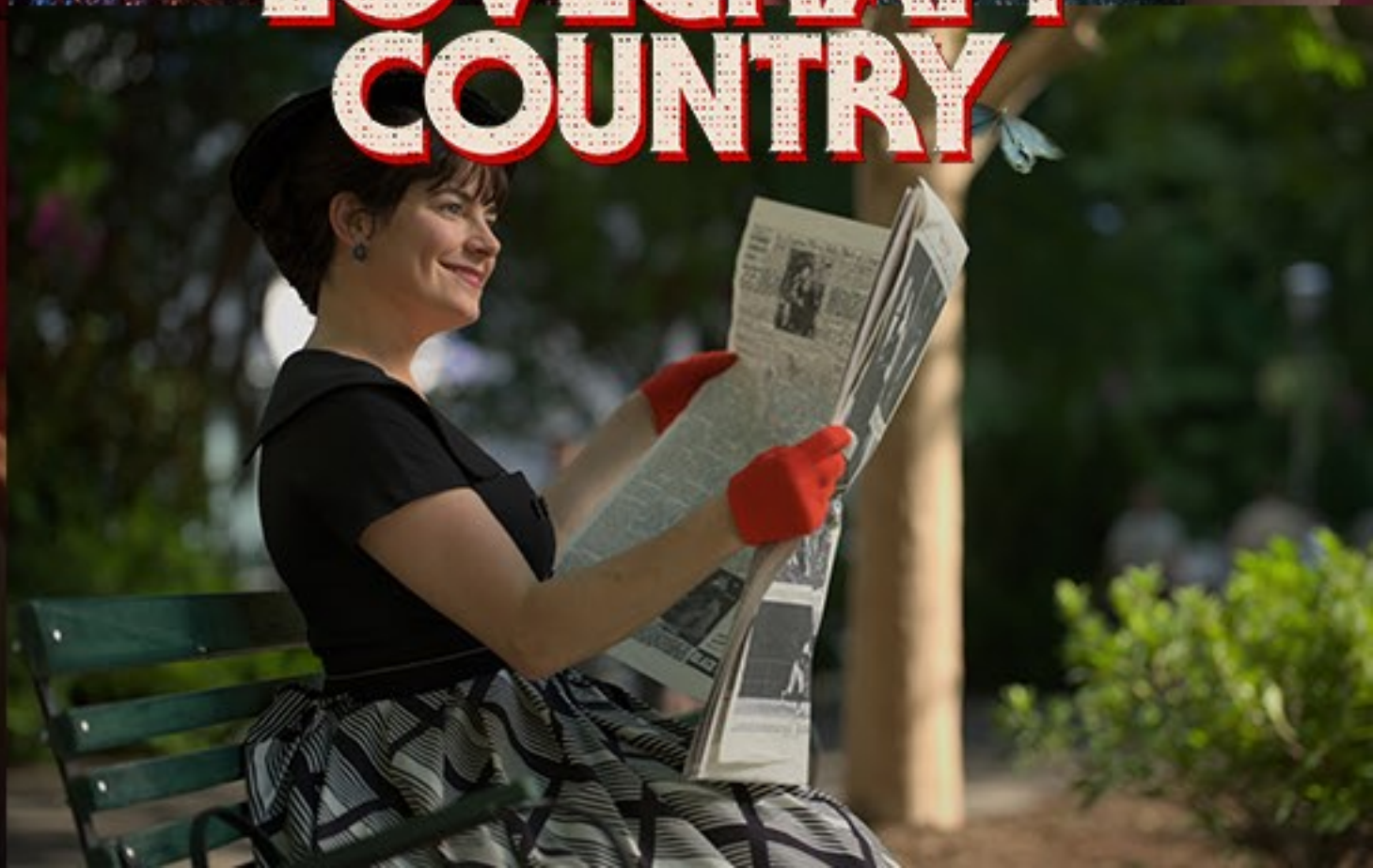
INSPIRATIONS



CANDYMAN

LAST NIGHT IN SOHO

LOVECRAFT COUNTRY



INSPIRATIONS

The
TWILIGHT
ZONE

My film is a **'Twilight Zone'-style** story. The characters exist in an otherwise normal world, **except for one strange thing.**

The film will visualize seeing someone you don't recognize in the mirror, like the films **'Last Night In Soho'** and the new adaptation of **'Candyman'**.

And it will navigate political topics in a similar manner to **'Black Mirror'** or **'Lovecraft Country'**.

The film also takes inspiration from a **'Lovecraft Country'** storyline where Ruby Baptiste, a Black woman, is **transformed into a white woman** as she attempts to get a job in the 1950's.



THEMES

Covert racism
Identity crisis

Micro-aggressions
Self reflection

How society informs race and
How race informs society



SCRIPT TO SCREEN

Without missing a beat, the reflection does the same. He mirrors Jamal's every move. Jamal raises his arm, turns his head, everything's a perfect reflection.

In this film, we see **Jamal** through mirrors and reflections, and we see **James** in the real world.



Under the sink, he sees a rusty old switch. Above it reads: "KAREEM WAS HERE", but "KAREEM" is ex-ed out with "KARL" above it.

He sees beneath it are the words "SO WAS SHANAE" with "SHANAE" crossed out and "SHANNON" above it. More names surround it....

The switch is the device that brings someone's **"White Mirror"** into the real world. Beside it are the names of people who have used it, with their new names above it, symbolizing **they chose to stay as their White Mirror**. **Will Jamal make the same choice?**

TARGET AUDIENCE

This film is partially targeted to white audiences who do not understand how **multi-faceted racism is**. It isn't always something as overt as police brutality. Sometimes racism comes in the form of your boss making subtle comments. And it is intended to show how deeply white conformity is layered into corporate America, and how that can affect someone's identity.

But most importantly, **this film is for black audiences** who have felt anchored by their race. It's meant to show black audiences how they should **take pride in their Blackness**. They don't have to feel the need to become someone else just to succeed.

WRITER/DIRECTOR

Taj Kokayi is an artist-activist, who studied Film at George Mason University. He's received the **Black Artist of the Year Award** from GMU for his commitment to the advancement of diversity and representation. He creates stories exploring themes of **social and racial justice**, that work outside the confines of traditional filmmaking.

His previous film, Woken From A Dream, was selected to **15 festivals (including best of film at mason)** and won awards including **Best Experimental, Best Student Film, & Best VFX.**



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a Black person, there are many challenges I face and even more that I'll face throughout my life. Big things that people know are wrong but accept as cultural norms. And small things that my white friends don't notice or understand and I have to keep to myself. Particularly as a creative, working as a Black person in a white dominated industry is frustrating and challenging. There are days where I know that my life and my career would be easier if I were a white man instead of a Black one. Days I know that no matter how hard I work, or how much I exhaust myself becoming better than everyone around me, my white counterparts are still going to be 10 steps ahead of me without ever lifting a finger. And despite all of that, **I still wouldn't trade in my Blackness.** I am who I am. My experience defines me. My culture molds me. And my people embrace me. I am a Black man and I would never give that up. This film is about a man who, through a bumpy and emotionally taxing road, comes to that same realization.

DIGITAL PITCH

DIGITAL PITCH

WHITE MIRROR

A FILM ABOUT LOGGING IN
BY TAJ KOKAYI

Taj Kokayi
Video Producer

FILM
PRODUCTION

THANK YOU

Would you **sacrifice who you are** to
achieve what you've always wanted?

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