

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Master Of The Universe: Glenn Close

Christopher Siders · Saturday, January 22nd, 2022

We are going to rewind time all the way back to the second day of college in the Chapman Science Center for a remedial math course on the second floor of the building. My professor, O'Shea, was cool, but had a very monotone voice. O'Shea is a slim, tall, old white woman about 50-60 years old. She has strawberry blonde type hair with an attitude like Dolores Umbridge if you pissed her off.

She's literally putting me to sleep. Blah blah math this, you need this in the real world that. BLAH. Waking up, a guy sitting next me wearing a funkadelic shirt, a blue jacket, black pants and some timberlands looking like he came from the DMX era of rap, attempts to get my attention

"Hey you listen to J Dilla?" noticing my gray and white J Dilla shirt.

"Oh.. Uh.. yeah! He's dope. One of my favorite producers."

"Gentlemen!" O'Shea shouted at me and him as if we were kids in a middle school class talking a lot and eating glue.

"Now this is important, because if you don't pass this math course, you will have to take it again next semester. And if you don't pass next semester you will be kicked out of CSUMB!"

The room got quiet. O'Shea starts walking to the other side of the room.

"Now... as I was saying...."

"Hey, are you doing anything after class?" I whisper.

"Na I'm not. Wanna hangout?"

"Sure. What's your name by the way?"

"My name is Chris. Yours?"

"Oh shit... My name is Chris too."

As soon as me and Chris got out of class we headed to the Otter Express, which was just a couple minutes away from the Chapman Science Center building. The Otter Express looks like an old mom and pop shop you would find in Los Angeles. Except it had two cash registers in the middle of the room when you walked in.

Behind the registers were counters where you pick up or order food. Going left from there you would see all the drinks you can get. The Otter Express also had a bathroom and a huge lobby on the right side of the building for students to eat and lounge until they realized they were about an half hour late to class.

After we were done getting our food we headed to Chris' place in Yarrow Hall. Yarrow Hall is the "substance free" residential hall in area two directly across from the student center. Chris lives in room 110 on the first floor.

"Welcome to my natural habitat."

"Oh dope!"

Chris has a ton of hip hop and music posters on the wall, a desk shelf full of books, a 24-inch flat screen TV on his clothes drawer and a crate full of vinyl, which I started digging through as soon as I saw it.

"El DeBarge?"

"Booooooi what you know about El DeBarge? Alllll thiss love, is waiting for you dun, dun, dun DUN." Chris sings in a high pitched voice attempting to match the singing on record.

"Man, this is the only thing my mom would bump on the way to high school. Other than Lauryn Hill, Ginuwine, Erykah Badu, Jill Scott and Anthony Hamilton."

"Yo mom would let you listen to Ginuwine in the car with her?! Mans is--"

Chris' roommate walks in mid conversation.

"Hey dude, how are you doing? I'm Carlos, Chris' roommate."

"Hey Carlos, my name is Chris too. I'm from Los Angeles."

"Huh? Damn we got two Chris' on our hands....uhh... ummm. Chris--"

"Yeah." We both said

"Oh- I mean.. Ugh-... blah. New Chris, what's your last name?"

"Siders."

"Are you ok with you going by your last name?"

"Uh... sure?"

"Ok cool... Siders. Welcome to our home. You are welcome to come over at any time, as long as it's not super late."

"Alright, cool."

"C'mon let me introduce you to my girlfriend and her roommate."

Carlos walks out the room. Me and Chris just looked at each other and shrugged and followed Carlos. Carlos' girlfriend Carmen was only a couple doors down the hall from where they stay. When we got there the door was just wide open. Carlos ran in and leaped on Carmen's bed while she was sitting on it.

"Hey Babe!" Carlos said as he lunged to kiss Carmen.

"We made a new friend, his name is Chris. But we shall call him Siders."

"Sliders?"

"It's Siders... with an S. No L."

"Oh ok I'm sorry about that Siders. My name is Carmen, and this is my roommate Sofia."

Carmen is Latina. She's tall, wears glasses, and seems like the type of person that's always full of energy. Sofia is also Latina. She's short, seems a bit quiet and reserved.

"Hi Siders, nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you as well. Where are y'all from?"

"We are actually all from Rialto back in SoCal and went to the same high school. Carmen and I

have been friends for years.”

“And Carmen and I have been dating for about a year now.”

“Oh dope.”

The next 20 minutes consisted of me being that extremely awkward friend and not really speaking to everyone I just met. Chris is playing around with Sofia, and Carlos is in the cupcake factory with Carmen, so I was the fifth wheel leaning on the wall, like a fish chilling in its tank on top of that table everyone forgets it exists.

“So Siders... Where do you live on campus?” Carmen asks.

“Oh, I live in Cypress hall, area one.”

“Cypress? Hmm, I’ve been hearing some crazy things about Cypress hall.”

“It’s not that bad... plus it’s only the second official day of school... what in the world did you hear?”

“People getting into fights, wild neighbors, raccoons coming in and out of the building-“

“Trust.. it’s not that bad. I’ll prove it...Let me show y’all my dorm!”

“Uhhh....” Carmen starts to look at Carlos nervously.

“Carlos, why won’t you and Chris visit Siders’ place?”

“Hell no.” They both said at the same time.

“Aw c’mon let him show y’all two around while I make dinner... wait.. as a matter of fact, Carlos, did you get your clothes ready for our trip?”

“Oh shit-” Carlos whispered to himself nervously.

“Sorry I was quick to get to level 59 on runescape and-” Carmen pushes him off the bed.

“Damn it Carlos! You spend too much time on that fucking video game! Go with Siders and get out once in a while!”

As the argument heats up, Chris signals me to walk out with him. A few minutes later, Carlos met up with us in the hallway of Yarrow and headed to Cypress hall. Walking past Asilomar Hall in area one, Me, Chris and Carlos heard a loud pop sound.

“Wait... What the fuck was that?” Chris jumps

“I-I don’t know.” I said

“See man..this that grade A bullshit.”

We look around for a second like the cast of Scooby Doo trying to figure out what may have caused the sound. Getting to the stairway of Cypress Hall, climbing to the second floor, we heard someone blasting that loud ass obnoxious electronica music. When we got in the hallway leading to my room, we could hear my neighbor, Alina’s loud conversation with her roommates.

“I don’t feel too comfortable here.” Carlos said, shaking. Man these fools acting like it’s the mothafuckin’ projects or something. Getting paranoid over every little sound coming from the walls and raccoons screaming. Going to my room I totally forgot I didn’t clean the room. There’s popcorn on the floor on my side of the room along with piles of dirty clothes. Philip and Derek aren’t home.

“Please excuse the mess.. but this is it.”

“Well...this is pretty cool-” Carlos expresses before being interrupted by a loud bang on the wall from our next door neighbor.

“... I guess.” Chris continues to judge.

Then we all started to hear the sound of bed springs squeaking.

“What...the fuck... is that...” Chris pauses immediately.

“Oh that’s the neighbors above me. They always have sex hella loud.”

“...sex?”

“Yeah, I hear them every night. Since I moved in.” We all start to hear moaning coming from the floor above us.

“Well then...” Carlos said, looking around the small room. Chris noticed a red notebook on my desk that has the words “Standard Diary” in plastic gold on the front cover.

“This is your Diary?”

“Na it’s my poetry book.”

“Oh shit you write poetry? I’ve been meaning to get into writing, but I don’t know man... Can I read some?” Chris asks.

“Yeah sure. You can borrow it. I just need it back soon.”

“Sure.” An awkward silence ensues.

“So...thank you for showing us your dorm... but Siders, God bless your soul.” Carlos sarcastically blurts out.

“Uh... thank you..” I follow them to the door and I shut the door after they walk out.

About a week later I met up with Chris in his room to play video games. As we were playing Marvel vs Capcom IV, he said.

“Oh yeah bro I got around to reading some of your work, it’s really good!”

“Thanks bro!”

“Yeah man real shit, I think you should perform for the campus open mic night.”

“Man, I don’t know...”

I used to be really passionate about writing poetry. I started writing in the 11th grade with the help from my mentor, Mike the Poet, and inspiration from seeing how my cousin Jamal Carter uses crazy flows in his pieces. I also saw how much his poems greatly affected people’s lives around him. I wanted to do the same thing, so I started writing and performing at the daily poetry lounge at my high school, View Park.

During one performance I was doing, a student was laughing at me and that really destroyed my confidence. On top of that, a couple weeks prior I auditioned for HBO’s brave new voices and they didn’t like the fast paced style. The same one my cousin used. So coming into college I’m not too sure what I should do, but poetry wasn’t in my list of options. So I just declared a Music major until I figure out what I would like to do.

“You’ll do great bro! Trust.”

“What piece stood out to you?”

“To be honest I liked all of them.”

I don’t believe him. Not on some low self-esteem shit, but you know whenever someone doesn’t have any type of criticism on your work they’re lying.

“Hmm.. Ok. I guess I’ll perform then.”

“That’s my boy!”

September 9th, the night of the open mic, the loud chatter from eager students awaiting to perform

and watching is making me nervous as hell. There must be at least 100-150 people in this tiny ass cafe of Peet's Coffee. The lights of the cafe keep going in and out as the Residential Housing Association officers finish setting up. I see this night going horribly wrong.

"Good Evening Everyone! Welcome to RHA's first open mic night event of the year!" The MC welcomes. The crowd cheers in excitement. This actually makes me feel even more nervous and excited. In Los Angeles, people tend to not get excited for a damn thing. You tell them to put their hands up during a rap show. They'll stare at you like they're a zombie and you are a platter of brains on a thanksgiving meal.

"Okay here are some house rules for tonight. Each performer has a maximum of 5 minutes. Please be respectful of each other's time as we already have a very long sign up sheet. With that being said, ARE YOU ALL READY?!"

"WOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!" the crowd cheers loudly again in excitement once again.

"Okay so our first performer of the night is going to be Gabriella! John, you are on Deck!"

It's literally nothing, but guitar player, after guitar player. No other poets. I think I'm the only black person here. I don't see any other black people here.

"Next up we have Brett!" I feel my heart beginning to drop.

"Good Evening everyone! My name is Brett. I am 18 years old. I am a hip hop artist, I have been rapping for a few years. Y'all ready for some real hip hop?!" Audience erupts in claps and screams. I, on the other hand, am nervous. Aside from the obvious that I have to perform after this guy, I have a personal rule of thumb of not trusting any white guy that uses the phrase "real hip hop."

As if this nigga from the suburbs understand what the fuck Ice Cube when he said, "*Fuck the police coming from the underground/ A young nigga got it bad' cause I'm brown.*"

"Alright so this first song is called The System. Fuck the government. Fuck the system. You know what I mean? The man be watching us and shit. So walk with me. DJ drop that shit." The beat starts to play.

"Uh.. uhh... yo-yo." I can tell already this is about to be some shit. Not in a good way.

"Fuck the system, they on to me. With these rhymes they can't see me. Fuck the government they see me give a middle finger in these... uhh.... Blue jeans. Sorry I lost the rhythm everyone. I'll pick it back up like a quarterback." What kind of bar is th-

"Hold up Imma pull my phone out." As the beat continues to play, this guy is just missing all his cues. After 5 minutes of my ears bleeding he finally finished.

"Thank You Based God." He got off stage and the crowd was damn near silent. Brett really blew it.

"Everyone give it up for Brett!" Crowd bare clap or cheer.

"Oh shit.." This is like an Apollo audience, but instead of causing a ruckus they're blatantly just silent.

“Don’t worry bro, you’re gonna be fine! You’re definitely gonna be better than Vanilla Ice over here.” Chris says in an attempt to comfort me.

“Uhhh..... Gaaaahhh..... Man maybe I shouldn–”

“Okay...Up next, is Christopher Sniders! Destiny, you’re on deck!”



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