BLACKS IN LATIN AMERICA
4 X 1 hour episodes for PBS

Presented by Professor Henry Louis Gates Jnr.

Series Produced and Directed by Jon Blair

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“I want this series to unveil an entire world that has remained hidden from the vast majority of Americans, most certainly, but also from most Europeans and Africans as well. 12.5 million Africans were shipped to the New World, and all but 400,000 or so went to the Caribbean and Latin America. This fact astonishes Americans, even scholars of American history and African and African American Studies. Yet these people made a world embedded in their African heritage within Hispanic, Francophone and Lusophone cultural frameworks. Despite their great numbers, the world that they created has remained repressed, buried, subterranean; so I want to unveil it now to the rest of the planet in the first systematic documentary about the African presence in the New World: its art, music, religion, and culture, but also the very palpable presence of anti-black racism that has kept it from view. And I want us to unveil it through the faces and voices of the descendants of the Africans who created this world. I want to show how it is similar, and how it is different, country to country, and how the New World manifestations are rooted in, but distinct from, their African antecedents.”

Professor Henry Louis Gates Jnr., November 2007

Latin America and the Caribbean have the largest population of people with African roots outside Africa today. Up to 70% of the population of some countries is made up of people with slave ancestry, and Skip Gates is on a quest to discover how Latin Americans of African descent live now, and how the countries of their birth deal with their African past.

Race remains the defining factor in almost every one of these countries, but the way that each has responded to its history is remarkably different.

- In Brazil, he delves behind the façade of Carnaval to discover how this so-called ‘rainbow nation’ is waking up to the legacy of the world’s greatest slave economy.
- In Cuba he finds out how the culture, religion, politics and music of this island is inextricably linked to its resistance to colonialism.
- In Haiti, he tells the story of the first-ever black republic, and finds out how liberation became a double-edged sword.
- And finally in Mexico and Peru he explores the almost unknown history of the significant numbers of Mexicans and Peruvians who owe their heritage to their slave pasts.

In America: Beyond the Color Line, Skip Gates examined the fortunes of the black population of modern-day America. In Wonders of the African World, he embarked upon a series of journeys to reveal the history of African culture. Now, he brings that quest full-circle in an effort to discover how Africa and Europe combined to create the vibrant cultures of Latin America, with a rich legacy of colourful characters whose stories have remained untold until today.

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N.B. In this document the treatments for Brazil and Haiti have been extensively researched on the ground in the late autumn of 2007. The Cuban and Mexico/Peru episodes are awaiting further development research during pre-production

PROGRAMME 1
BRAZIL: The End of the Rainbow

Once a year Rio de Janeiro's world famous Carnaval erupts to life on the streets of this seaside city.

Hedonistic, frenetic and deeply, deeply irreverent Carnaval is perhaps one of the most exuberant symbols of unity on earth. For just over a week all sections of society – the rich, the poor, the black and the white - come together for a non-stop celebration of life through dance and music.

Yet in many ways Brazil's Carnaval masks a disturbing truth: that Brazilian society is in fact deeply divided along racial lines.

Today's samba schools are indeed composed of a mix of cultures and classes. But when the Carnaval parades are over, the status quo quickly returns. The impoverished, largely Afro-Brazilian members of the schools return to their shantytown homes on the hilltops over-looking the city. And the wealthy, largely white samba enthusiasts flock back to their beachside homes in the city's chic South zone.

Slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888, following the passing of the Aurea Law. But in the intervening one hundred and thirty years how much has really changed? Skip intends to find out.

THE FILM
The screen explodes with colour and noise. The sound track is the throbbing base line, the heavily amplified drums, and the horn section, of a samba school. It's Carnaval. We are in the Concentracao, the area where the various Samba schools gather before they parade down Rio's Sambodromo, a vast, purpose-built samba stadium packed to the limits with sweaty revellers. Among the squadron of foot soldiers behind the floats, in the body of one of the winning schools as they get ready for the Parade of the Champions on the last night of Carnaval, is the perhaps unlikely figure of Skip Gates in full Carnaval costume. As Skip sways to the rhythms of the music he is instructed in some of the niceties of the more complicated moves by the man next to him, a master of Capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian dance with its roots deep in Africa.

For Skip's journey begins right here in Rio during Carnaval. In amongst LATIN AMERICA 12
the enormous parading floats, many of which allude to samba's African heritage, with gyrating, unfeasibly scantily dressed women, and men in equally unfeasibly elaborate costumes, he gets a taste of just how central the role of black culture is in Brazilian society; in the music, language, religion, food, politics - in fact the total way of life.

The Afro-Brazilian capoeira 'master', Skip's guide for the moment, and the man who has been involved in preparing the dancers of Mangueira, Rio's oldest samba school, is Baiano. He is a black activist originally from the northeastern city of Salvador, with a son called Malcolm X. Once he travelled the world for the Hilton Hotel chain as a dancer. Now he lives in a Rio slum, and, apart from his work with the Mangeira samba school, he is also involved in a number of social work projects whose aim is to draw children, most of them young Afro-Brazilians, away from a life in crime which otherwise inevitably beckons.

Skip notes the apparent harmony between blacks and whites at the Carnaval parade. Watching the floats go by – filled with Brazilians of all imaginable colours – it is not hard to understand why Brazil is often described as a 'racial paradise'. Baiano, however, wants to show him the other side of life in Rio – one that is far from the bright lights of the samba parade or the beaches of Copacabana.

**LIFE IN THE GAZA STRIP**
After Carnaval's closing ceremony Skip heads across town to Baiano's neighbourhood, an area considered so violent that locals have nicknamed it the Gaza Strip. The community, called Manguinhos, is one of the most deprived districts of Rio where around 50,000 people are crammed into less than one square kilometre. A recent UN human development survey of 161 districts in Rio placed Manguinhos at number 155. Baiano is also keenly aware of the violence in his part of town. Several years ago, one of his sons was shot dead here.

PHOTO REMOVED

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To reach Baiano's home the two men have to pick their way through streets where many of the walls are pockmarked with gunfire. Baiano shows Skip the building right next to a primary school where police and gangsters held a gun battle just recently, while the children cowered on the floor. Kids play soccer on an open patch where pigs and goats snuffle in the garbage alongside an open sewer.

"What hurts me is that when I look around I see that even today slavery still goes on," Baiano tells him during a visit to the social work centre where he gives dance classes three times a week. "These children have no chance, none at all, of escaping this world."

That night Baiano takes him to a church service in a tatty, second floor community centre. He explains to Skip about the importance of religion to the country's Afro-Brazilian population, whether it is Catholicism, Afro-Brazilian religions, or the increasingly popular evangelical churches.

The visit to Manguinhos leaves Skip deeply aware of how the shackles of slavery continue to haunt many Afro-Brazilians, over a century after abolition.

Far from being the 'racial democracy' proclaimed by Brazilian academics in the 1920s and 1930s, Brazil is beginning to appear to him a deeply prejudiced place; where the life expectancy for the Afro-Brazilian population is drastically lower than for their white counterparts and where employment opportunities and access to health care are grossly skewed against Afro-Brazilians.

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Afro-Brazilians form almost half Brazil's 180 million strong population yet account for 63% of the poorest in society. The 2000 census found that 62.7% of Brazil's white population had access to sanitation

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compared with just 39.6% of its Afro-Brazilians, while a recent UN report found that black men earned on average 50% less than their white counterparts in Brazil. Human rights campaigners underline the racial dimension behind Brazil's staggering murder rates. The majority of victims, like Baiano's son, are young black men aged between 15 and 24, who live in the impoverished favelas of Brazil's large cities.

On the other side of town Skip pays a quick visit to Rio's horse races, the Joquei Clube in the leafy neighbourhood of Jardim Botanico. Here he sees upper class Brazilians lounge in the afternoon sun, placing bets and sipping expensive cocktails. Unlike in Manguinhos, at the Joquei Clube there is hardly a black face in sight, apart from the security guards, the waiting staff and the men taking bets that is.

**RIO'S HISTORY OF SLAVERY**

Rio de Janeiro is a place with inescapable ties to the slave trade. During the 19th Century this South American city is thought to have been the world's busiest slave port.

On arrival in Rio the slaves were either sold at portside markets or sent to the so-called casas de engordo or fattening houses. Many others died and their bodies were discarded at a seaside wasteland that became known as the Cemiterio dos Pretos Novos, Portuguese for Cemetery of New Blacks. This cemetery was a mass burial ground for African slaves who died before they could be sold at the local markets to the coffee and sugar plantation owners.

For nearly a century the exact location of the cemetery was unknown to local historians. Then in 1996 Ana de la Merced Guimaraes, a local businesswoman stumbled across some bone fragments while renovating her home in the Gamboa neighbourhood. Guimaraes tells Skip how her neighbours were furious to discover they were living on a slave burial ground. House prices plummeted and locals urged her to keep her mouth shut about the archaeological find. Ana de la Merced says she believes this is typical of the attitude of many Brazilians towards their African history, but she has turned the site into a museum.

The museum's curator – the musician and former president of Rio's Black Human Rights Council Antonio Carlos Rodrigues - shows Skip around the small museum at the Cemeterio. It contains replicas of the torture instruments used on the slaves and sketches of the bustling markets where they were sold to plantation owners. Antonio Carlos complains of the difficulties they have faced in finding funding for the museum's activities. Most people, he says, would rather sweep Brazil's black history under the carpet.
**Júlio César Medeiros** is the author of a new book about the 'new blacks' - slaves whose bodies were abandoned under the Gamboa district after they had died on board the slave ships, either during or immediately after their gruelling journeys from Africa aboard squalid, overcrowded ships.

He talks Skip through the gruesome details of the African newcomers whose naked bodies were discarded onto the streets around Merced's house and burnt once a week. Medeiros – an Afro-Brazilian former paratrooper – tells Skip that between 1779 and 1831, some 6,119 bodies were abandoned in the 110m2 graveyard.

"The cemetery of the New Blacks is a classic example of the suffering that the slave system imposed on thousands of Africans, who were buried without even having the right to a traditional burial," Medeiros says. The graveyard was abandoned, he believes, not because the influx of slaves completely stopped after abolition, but because the colonial powers realized they could no longer justify throwing the bodies of newly arrived slaves in such an obvious place. So, does another slave graveyard, yet to be discovered, lurk somewhere else in Rio?

Of the estimated 12 million or so Africans who were sent as slaves to the New World between the 17th century and the end of the nineteenth century, one and a half million are thought to have died during the so-called Middle Passage, and of the rest just under 5 million came to Brazil. Skip compares these figures to the 500,000 or so who were shipped as slaves to the United States.

**THE HISTORY OF RIO'S FAVELAS AND SLAVERY**

Slavery was officially abolished in Brazil in 1888, shortly before the foundation of Rio's first shantytown. Today there are around 700 such favelas in Rio de Janeiro – places that have always been linked to slavery.

Rio's first shantytown was the **Morro da Providencia**, a hilltop slum that towers over the port district where hundreds of thousands of the nearly 5 million slaves that were shipped into Brazil arrived. Following the abolition of slavery in 1888 thousands of freed slaves and unemployed soldiers – many of them Afro-Brazilians or former slaves - flocked to Providencia in search of a place to live.

Skip heads up to Providencia to visit a stone staircase constructed by the area's first residents in 1892. Today the staircase is lined by graffiti paying tribute to the Red Command drug gang. His guide, the local dustbin man Jurandir Souza, tells him that shoot-outs between police
and local traffickers are almost a daily occurrence.

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Many of Providencia's residents today are the black descendents of the original freed slaves, yet Jurandir is emphatic in telling Skip that he believes this is not a racist country. "If I see a black guy in the street I'll shout at him, 'Hey you big Creole, what's up?" he says. "How can you say we're racist when we say things like that?" “And Lula (the President), he's black”. But examine a photo of Presidents Bush and Lula together and their skin color seems identical.

This leads Skip to contemplate the meaning and nature of “blackness” in Brazil and realise that here things are perhaps less straightforward than in the US. In the US, whatever the shade of blackness, a person sees themselves and others as either “black” or “white”, but here in Brazil shade of color is everything. So, attempts by the government to introduce measures of positive discrimination in the universities for example have met with chaos as people have sought to redefine themselves as black to gain favor.

THE PLANTATIONS

Part of the problem is that today many Brazilians are reluctant to accept that their country might still be influenced by slavery's legacy. But the
mark that slavery has left on this South American country is hard to avoid.

To learn more about the conditions in which slaves were kept Skip heads to the **Fazenda do Paraízo**, a vast colonial manor house 160km from Rio where Portuguese masters presided over a coffee plantation where around 500 slaves toiled away in the fields. The manor house was also the setting for the notorious debauched parties attended by Princess Isabel, who eventually went on to sign the law banning slavery in Brazil. The plantation was one of many in this region, now known as the Coffee cycle; thousands of shackled slaves worked in the hot sun creating vast wealth for their masters who looked down on the squalid senzala slave dwellings from their magnificent casa grande, literally big house.

Here Skip meets **Paulo Roberto** who tells him about the conditions in which these slaves were kept. Such were the horrors of life on the plantations he says, that those who could, simply fled.

**THE QUILOMBOS**

We find Skip in a 4 x 4 on a remote jungle road in the northern state of **Macapa** in the Amazon rainforest as he travels to a community called the **Quilombo de Conceição de Macacoari**, deep in the world’s largest tropical rainforest. As we travel through the forest Skip tells us that autonomous communities of runaway slaves were established throughout Brazil, even here in the remote rainforest. These communities were called quilombos and the most famous was Palmares, a vast slave camp located in what today is the north-eastern state of Alagoas.

Palmares was led by Zumbi, a warrior leader known for his struggle against the colonial slave masters. Until his death in 1695 Zumbi was the leader of Brazil's biggest community of runaway slaves, the Quilombo dos Palmares. Legendary for his struggle against the Portuguese slave masters, Zumbi is a hero to this day with statues of him scattered across the country and a bank holiday named after him in November. Black activists in Brazil see him as their answer to Malcolm X or Nelson Mandela.

Almost nothing remains of Palmares so Skip has come here to the banks of the Macacoari River in the Amazon to see a surviving Quilombo. It is believed to have sprung up in the 1860s when a slave called Pai Mane who was being taken to the battlefields of the Paraguayan war but managed to escape. He took refuge in the area around Conceição do Macacoari. Today around 60 black families, many of them descendants of Pai Mane, still live here.

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Skip meets Ana Rita Picanço, the local community leader and her aunt, Doralice Jesus Ramos. The two women tell Skip how their community's rights were recognized in 2006, giving them protection from the land grabbers trying to push them off their ancestral land.

At Conceição de Macacoari, Skip also learns that quilombos are actually increasingly part of modern day Brazil. Even in Brazil's large urban centres, like Salvador and Rio, a growing number of slave descendents are fighting for land rights as a means of trying to recover the rights of their ancestors.

**SALVADOR**

Skip's next stop is the seaside city of Salvador. Today Salvador has the country's biggest Afro-Brazilian population, as well as reportedly being the most "African" city outside of Africa itself. It is also the birthplace of Brazil's black pride movement and is home to a number of well-known Afro drum groups such as Olodum and Ile Aiye.

His first stop is the Feira de Sao Joaquim – a vibrant street market that locals describe as a modern day quilombo because of its large black population. The market's narrow streets are lined with shops selling a vast selection of spices used in African cooking and a host of stuff including fetishes, statuettes and sacrificial animals relating to Afro-Brazilian religious practices such as Candomble.

It is easy to understand why locals describe the market as a quilombo. The influence of Africa is everywhere; in the brightly coloured spices, the animals ready for sacrifice as part of Afro-Brazilian religious ceremonies, in the faces of the impoverished, predominantly Afro-Brazilian, children who scuttle through the market's filthy streets in search of money to help support their families, and in the sound of African style percussion as young children hammer out rhythms on pots and pans.

Skip is taken to meet Regina, a local bar owner whose great-great grandparents were slaves. She tells him that she has no idea where her forefathers were from in Africa and that she has never tried to find out. He asks her about the ways in which slavery has affected modern day Brazil. "Just look around you," she says.

We cut to the pulsating rhythm of a drum display coming from a large group of Afro Brazilians in brightly colored costumes in a square in historic Salvador. These are the drummers of Oludum, a group that has performed around the world with artists such as Michael Jackson, and which today runs a host of social projects for young Afro-Brazilians.

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For Salvador is a city at the heart of a race revival in Brazil. It is the home of Brazil's black pride movement, which grew up in the late 1970s spurred on by cultural groups such as Olodum. Skip meets the group's president, João Jorge, to find out more about the growing black pride movement and the challenges facing it. Jorge tells him about the importance of what he calls the "aesthetics of blackness" – a revival of Afro-orientated fashion, music and dance that has helped recover black identity in a country that seemed keen to erase its own roots. As Jorge tells of the socially and politically inspired work of Olodum, he and Skip are then deafened by the drummers taking up their instruments again. In a brief moment of silence Jorge tells Skip that thirty years ago, this kind of cultural manifestation would have been outlawed.

The next day Skip meets with one product of this 30-year battle for black consciousness. Raised during the black revival of the 1980s Ana Carla Portela is a 28-year-old black activist and primary school teacher. She is the first person in her family ever to go to university - (on a full scholarship, part of Brazil's attempts to uplift the nation's blacks) - where she became head of the student union. Her braided hair is a visible sign of her ties to the MN or Movimento Negro (Black Pride Movement) put in place by men like João Jorge.

A descendent of slaves, Ana was raised in one of the most violent suburbs of Salvador. Her brother was murdered last year, joining the long list of murder statistics largely made up of young black men from the city's impoverished outskirts. Ana leads Skip to the place where her brother died and explains how his death relates to the history of brutalization in Bahia (the province in which Salvador is situated) since the days of slavery. Even today, she believes, a deliberate extermination of black Brazilians like her brother is taking place.

While many of Brazil's public black faces work in the arts or in sport, Ana is attempting to rise from poverty through a different route - as an academic. She splits her time between studying for a masters degree and teaching in four different schools. She takes Skip to one state school in her local neighborhood where she is trying to encourage more young Afro-Brazilians to carry on in school and perhaps apply for university.

Skip wants to understand how young Afro-Brazilians such as Ana are dealing with their roots. Ana takes Skip to the Mercado Model, a portside market that conceals a grim past. In 1984, following a fire that devastated the building, workers discovered an underground network of tunnels where slaves who had been shipped in from Africa were kept.
"It gives me goose-bumps just being here," she says, leading Skip into the humid cavern where slaves were kept chained up for weeks on end, as the water in which they stood or sat ebbed and flowed with the tide. Skip now hooks up with Marilene Rosa Noguera da Silva, a descendant of black slaves who has dedicated her life to studying the Brazilian slave trade. She shows him how the quaint colonial architecture of Salvador conceals its dark history. Salvador was the capital of the Portuguese colony established in 1500, after an agreement that split the New World with the Spanish. Nearly five million Africans – mainly from Angola and Nigeria – were imported through ports like this on the Brazilian coast to serve the sugar and coffee plantations of the Portuguese settlers. On the Pelourinho, the main street of the town, the newly renovated Museum to Jorge Amado was once the central slave-auction house. Pelourinho itself means 'whipping post', and slaves were whipped at the stake here until 1835.

The things Skip sees are further brought to life by excerpts from the accounts of the slaves themselves. A slave called Augustine relates the terrible conditions aboard a slave ship in the 1840s, and Gardo Baquaqna paints a vivid picture of the fevered activity in the slave market. He also describes how he was tied to a stake and beaten. Salvador even had slaves called 'Tigers' whose entire job was to pick up the excrement in the streets, Rosa says. They carried it on their heads down to the beach. As they did this, the acid from the waste would dribble onto their faces and arms, causing great blotchy sores from which they got their nickname.

Rosa also tells Skip the story of Anastacia, a semi-mythical slave woman who refused to submit to her master's lustful advances and who was tortured to death for her resistance. Her plight highlights another key feature of Brazilian slavery. Prostitution was more than just commonplace; it was positively encouraged by the Portuguese authorities.

If the reality for slaves in Brazil was horrific, the journey from Africa almost beggars belief. Castro Alves, a 19th century Bahian poet who died aged just 24, was responsible for one of the best-known records of
the journey of slaves from Africa to Brazil. A reading of the poem on the Salvador docks transports Skip back to the period, in shocking detail. The poem, “Slave Ship” includes these lines:

"It was a dantesque dream...the deck with lanterns reddening the glow, Washing with blood, Clink of iron... snap of a whip,"  
"Black women, holding to their breasts, Scrawny infants whose black mouths, Are watered by the blood of their mothers...  
"Imprisoned in the bars of a single jail, The famished multitude shudders... One is delirious from rabies, another is going mad. Another, brutish from martyrdom Sings, groans, and laughs!"

Religion

We mix from Skip on the dock to the baroque interior of the extraordinary Igreja de Sao Francisco in Salvador, the “Golden Church”, where mass is being held for the multi racial congregation.

Brazil is home to the largest Catholic population in the world but, today at least, parts of the Catholic church here are heavily engaged in social work projects aimed at righting past wrongs.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the Church found itself at the frontline of slavery, justifying the system and responsible for waging a campaign against the “pagan” traditions brought from Africa by the slaves.

With the blessing of Rome priests strove to eliminate all traces of the slaves' African past: their traditions, their languages and, most of all, their religious practices. In their place came Masses like the one Skip is bearing witness to: the saints, and Jesus on the cross.
We next find Skip observing a quite different religious ritual. For he has come to the terreiro or temple of Dr Rosangela Araujo, or 'Janja' as she prefers to be known. 38-year-old Janja is the grand daughter of capoeira legend Mestre Pastinha. She was raised in a favela but she now has a sociology doctorate from Brazil’s prestigious university in Sao Paolo. In addition to her academic work she instructs children in capoeira, as well as officiating as a priestess in candomble, the Afro Brazilian religion that is enjoying a revival currently.

During the slave era, those who had come from Africa were forced to invent tactics to cover up their continued involvement in the tribal religious traditions of their homeland. The solution they found was to use Catholic saints as representatives of African gods. That way the slaves would not be punished by their masters for what was effectively considered devil worship.

Janja tells Skip how her forefathers managed to trick the slave-masters, and of the significance of the Afro-Brazilian religion candomble, both then and now. During the candomble ceremony in her temple or terreiro – in which Skip sees one young man enter a trance as he receives the spirit of an African god - she explains that even today the religious movement is an integral part of the fight for equality.

**AFRO BRAZILIANS AND POWER**

In the quiet of his hotel after the ceremony Skip is looking at a recent edition of Brazil’s equivalent of Time or Newsweek. It has a feature with photographs of Brazil’s 100 most important people. He can’t help but notice that only two of them are black. One is a basketball player who plies his trade in the US, the other is Joaquim Barbosa, the first black Brazilian to become a high court judge and one of the few black faces in Brazilian politics.

In search of answers to some of the questions raised by what he has seen so far, Skip goes to see Barbosa, together with another prominent Afro Brazilian who has managed to break into the cultural mainstream despite this racial divide, the singer turned minister of culture Gilberto Gil.
Gil was born in Salvador and raised in the impoverished interior of Bahia state and has risen to be a cultural icon and a key proponent of Afro-Brazilian culture. He is a follower of the Afro-Brazilian religion candomble, an articulator of issues affecting Brazil's black population in his music and work as culture minister, and also the man behind a Bob Marley tribute album called Kaya N'gan Daya. Gil tells Skip that as he was making his name as a musician, Afro-Brazilian colleagues were few and far between. He also speaks of what he has learned as a politician trying to bring social projects to impoverished, often black communities across Brazil: racism, he says, is alive and well.

Barbosa was born to a bricklayer and a housewife in the interior of Minas Gerais state, a gold mining area that was also central to the slave trade. He says he believes that change is coming, albeit slowly.

At the end of these meetings Skip and Gilberto Gil meet with a group of young Brazilian musicians in Rio's cultural centre Lapa to hear what they have to say about race issues. Amongst the group are the black percussionist Junior de Oliveira, the grandson of Silas de Oliveira, one of Brazil's most famous samba composers and the singer Thais Villela, whose roots lie in Portugal, Africa and in Brazil's indigenous populations. Junior tells Skip that even in Rio's music scene institutional racism is evident. Those who earn the highest salaries from shows are white musicians, he believes, even though they are playing black music. He recalls how even the most famous black samba composers were exploited by white music executives and musicians during the 1940s. Desperate for cash, the slum-dwelling black composers such as Cartola and Nelson Cavquinho from the Mangueira shantytown sold their songs for next to nothing and watched others take the credit.

Together with the group, Gilberto Gil performs an informal gig for Skip at a venue in Rio's port district where punters now pay large amounts to witness samba shows in the exact spot where slaves were once buried. They play 'Aquarela do Brasil' (Water Colour of Brasil), Junior's grandfather's best known song which has been voted the best samba of all time and paints a rosy picture of Brazil's natural glories. The song, notes Junior, contains no mention of racism or prejudice. Back then, says Gil, these were things one didn't discuss.

Skip's journey has taught him that this much at least is changing; that the supposed racial democracy is beginning to confront some ugly truths from its past and moving towards a less divided future. While it may be decades before Brazil has a black president, he concludes, change is certainly taking place in the form of young educated activists like Ana Carla Portela and Dr Rosangela Araujo.
PROGRAMME 2
CUBA
(NB: The treatment for this episode is to be re-visited during pre-production)

No one foreign country in modern times represents a greater enigma to North Americans than a small island just off the shore of Florida – Cuba. Virtually every American has a view on Cuba, its people, and its government, but how much do they really know about one of the most important aspects of its history that has forged this island nation into what it is today? No, not the revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power on January 1\textsuperscript{st} 1959, but a much earlier phenomenon – slavery.

Skip starts his journey on the beach at Cabo Cruz in Granma Province. It was here on 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 1956 that Fidel Castro and 81 compatriots (among them Che Guevara) landed to start the revolution that would oust the dictator Batista, who had bled his country dry for over 20 years.

In the nearby Parque Nacional of Bayamo, Skip meets Victor Dreke, one of Castro’s earliest officers. Victor grew up in the racially segregated province of Santa Clara, where he joined the rebellion against Batista when he was 15. In 1956, he fled to join Castro in the hills above Bayamo. He tells Skip that this part of the island is revered in Cuban folk memory because it was here that all of the great revolutions in Cuba’s history have begun.

Victor shows Skip the statue of Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, the father of Cuba’s First War of Independence in 1868, known as the ‘10 Year War’. He was a Creole landowner who liberated his 147 slaves and rose up against the Spanish owners of the island at that time. Within a month, 12,000 Cubans had joined the rebels, mainly ex-slaves. They were led by the escaped slave Antonio Maceo, who fought the Spanish to a standstill for 10 years. But the

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Creole landowners were afraid of all the slaves being freed, and accused Maceo of wanting a ‘black republic’, so they cut a deal with the Spanish.

Maceo fled into exile, where he joined the other great revolutionary figure in Cuban history, Jose Marti. If Maceo was the military brains of Cuba’s first revolution, Marti was its intellectual heart. “This will be the revolution in which all Cubans, regardless of colour, will participate,” he once said. “In Cuba, there is no fear of racial war. Men are more than white, more than mulatto, more than black.”

On April 11th 1895, Marti landed just down the coast at Niguero, to herald the Second War of Independence. This is where Fidel had intended to land, Victor tells Skip, but his boat, the Granma, was leaking and they were forced to beach 15 miles further south. Batista’s men hunted them as they split up and headed for the hills. Of the 82 rebels on board Castro’s boat, only 12 made it to the mountains, where Victor joined them. A similar fate awaited Marti. He was shot and killed in his first skirmish with Spanish soldiers, leaving Maceo to lead the revolution.

Marti’s embalmed body is on display at the Cemeterio Santa Ifigenia in Santiago, just down the road, and it is here that the next dramatic chapter in Cuba’s revolutionary history was played out. Marti had long warned that the US was interested in Cuba, and in January 1898 he was proved right. The war of independence was deadlocked. Maceo had been killed at the end of 1896, and the Spanish were exhausted. If the Americans wanted to step in, the time was right.

There is a story that the newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst told his illustrator in Cuba not to come home for Christmas 1897, saying: “You provide the pictures, I’ll provide the war.” One month later, the USS Maine blew up in Havana Harbor, giving the United States the pretext to declare war on Spain; and it was at San Juan Hill, above Santiago, that the decisive battle of that war was played out.

The self-proclaimed hero of that battle was Theodore ‘Teddy’ Roosevelt at the head of his famous Rough Riders. But, Victor tells Skip, what many people don’t know was that storming up that hill ahead of the Rough Riders were the Buffalo Soldiers, the first regular regiment of black Americans in the US army. Their victory at Santiago broke the back of Spanish resistance, and on 12th December 1898, the Spanish signed a treaty agreeing to abandon the island. The largely black army of independence was not invited to the proceedings.

Just down the road from Santiago is the reason the Americans were so interested in Cuba. The now infamous naval base at Guantanamo Bay was established soon after the Americans took control of the island, to maintain strategic control over the Caribbean. It covers a 45-square-mile stretch of land that is still in American hands to this day. Its motto, emblazoned all over the base is ‘Honor Bound to Defend Freedom,’ but Victor thinks the Americans betrayed the black slaves for their own strategic ends. They were afraid that Cubans would create another independent black republic like Haiti, and with their occupying forces, they brought with them policies of segregation and discrimination.
For Victor, Fidel’s revolution was different. Fidel wanted to uproot the class distinctions that had created the institutional racism of the past, and Victor was at the forefront of trying to do that. “It wasn’t as grave as it was in America,” he says, “but blacks in Cuba didn’t have the same rights as whites. I was not a Socialist – or even a Communist – but in the face of abuse you become rebellious. From night to day, things changed for black people in Cuba.”

To find out more, Skip travels up into the hills around Santiago. There he meets Gloria Rolando, whose feature film ‘The Roots of My Heart’ documents the massacre of 6,000 black members of the Independents of Colour in 1912. The Independents of Colour were a party founded by Evaristo Estenoz in 1908, as a reaction to the marginalisation of the black ‘Mambi’ freedom fighters who had risked their lives in the War of Independence. The government of the United States’ puppet, Juan Miguel Gomez, responded by banning racially based parties, and instigated a purge on blacks in the security forces. But as the Independents became more strident in their demands, both the US and Cuban governments became ever more nervous. The US even landed marines on the east coast ‘to protect American citizens’ in the area.

In June 1912, 5000 men of the Cuban army under General-in-Chief Jesus Monteagudo mounted a systematic pogrom in Oriente Province around Santiago to eradicate the Independents of Colour, who had fled into the hills. Over 6,000 men, women and children were killed in a massacre that has echoes of the Hutu atrocities in Rwanda. Estenoz was hacked to death, and his maimed body was displayed in Santiago (we can see the photograph). It is a ‘forgotten’ piece of Cuban history, but it has never been forgotten by Cuba’s black population.

Skip begins the long drive towards Havana, following the route that Castro and the rebels took in 1958. As he travels, we learn that America was not officially ‘in charge’ of Cuba, except for 2 periods of military occupation in 1898 and 1906. However, it intervened constantly in Cuban affairs during the 90 years of its hegemony. US companies owned two thirds of Cuba’s farmland, US businesses ran the sugar industry and the US Navy maintained a constant and often menacing presence. Even after Batista took over in the 1930s, he governed with the tacit approval of the American government. And alongside American control came implicit assumptions about race.

This is part of the reason why Castro was so successful. Black people made up 70% of the population of Cuba, and most black people were enthused by the rhetoric of equality that Fidel Castro was preaching. Skip reflects on Fidel’s victory speech to a group of factory workers in Havana. “It should not be necessary to dictate a law against an absurd prejudice,” he said. “That which should be dictated is the public condemnation against any people so filled with old vices and prejudices that they would discriminate against Cubans over questions of lighter or darker skin. We are a mixed race from Africa and Spain. No one should consider themselves a pure race, much less a superior race.” Nice sentiments. Skip wonders how true to life they are.

In Havana, Skip hooks up with the man who will be his guide for the rest of
his journey, one of Latin America’s most celebrated authors, the novelist, poet and academic Miguel Barnet. Barnet is part of Cuba’s elite having been a confidante and compadre of Castro’s since he was a student in the late 50’s. However, though he is white, from Skip’s point of view, he is an invaluable source for this journey because he is Cuba’s leading expert on the history of Cuban slavery as well as on Afro-Cuban religions.

(N.B. This part of the Series has been partially explored already with Miguel Barnet, but there will be more research during pre-production when the detail will be refined. For the moment the intention is that this should be the section of the Series which gives us the intimate detail of daily life as a slave.)

In 1963 Barnet first started the work for which he is perhaps best known. That year he read in a newspaper about a nursing home, some of whose residents were over 100 years old. Esteban Montejo was 103 years old when Barnet conducted his first interview with him. The relationship that ensued between the highly educated anthropologist and the illiterate former slave, and the book that documented Montejo’s life, has probably shed more light on the detail of day-to-day life as a slave in Cuba, and for that matter anywhere where Africans were enslaved, than any other single work.

Barnet proceeds to take Skip through the life of Montejo as together they visit the relevant sites around the island. Montejo was born into slavery in 1860. He had no recollection of his parents as he was sold off shortly after his birth, as he put it, “like piglets”. As he grew older he worked in a sugar mill which Barnet shows Skip as they talk about the living conditions for slaves. Barnet talks of Montejo’s memories of the different African peoples who had been sold into slavery – the black skinned Congolese, the Mandingo’s whose skin by contrast was reddish brown and who were “all brave and strong” but “were crooks and a bad bunch”. Then there were the Gangas who were “good folks” and the Carabails who were “fierce like the Musongo Congolese” but who were very good at business. And the Lucumis who didn’t like to work with sugar cane and who were the most rebellious and the bravest, often running away to seek freedom.

Gradually Skip builds a picture of the day-to-day detail of life as a slave. The bad times, the torture, the over-work, the sodomy. But also the good times, the music, the dancing, the games of tejo (played with a corn cob split in half, a stone and a coin), the drinking in dark and smelly taverns, and the religious rituals.

Barnet then takes Skip into the forests and caves of Cuba to tell him the story of the runaway slaves and the lives they made for themselves. For Montejo had himself become a Cimmaron and had shared all the details of his life on the run with Barnet, stories of living like a hunted animal trying to escape the attentions of the slave catchers who would be paid an ounce of gold for each runaway they brought back to slavery.

From the country Skip and Barnet move to the sugar mill where Montejo eventually worked after he gave up his life as a runaway after the abolition of

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slavery in Cuba in 1886.

Barnet’s other main academic interest has been Afro-Cuban religion and he takes Skip to a Santeria service. Santeria, which is still widely practiced in Cuba but should more correctly be known as the Regla de Ocha, is a system of beliefs and rituals centred around the worship of the orishas of the Nigerian Yoruba pantheon and their Catholic saint counterparts. This religion is widely practiced in Cuba, having its greatest hold on the population in Havana and Matanzas, and has as its basis the Nigerian Yoruba concept of the supreme trinity of Olofi, Olludumare and Olurun. These three have authority over the other orishas but are not themselves the objects of worship nor do they have a direct cult. The orishas are deemed to be their subjects and messengers on earth, and they are worshipped directly, and have personal cults. They intercede before Olofi on behalf of human beings through Obbatala, the Supreme Judge or Principal Messenger and can either reward or punish them depending on their conduct. These beliefs have their direct counterparts today in Nigeria’s Yorubaland and are emblematic of the close relationship between Cuba today and its African past.

Skip and Barnet talk about what has happened to Cuba’s citizens of African descent and how, even now, there are huge strides to be made before there is equality. Over a traditional Cuban meal that includes food like Moros y Christianos (Moors and Christians: black beans and rice), he talks to Skip about the strong influence that black slave culture has had on the food, art and culture of Cuba. After the meal is over they bid each other farewell.

Skip is walking through the streets of Alamar, a suburb of Havana not visited by tourists in search of old American automobiles or music made popular by the Buena Vista Social Club! There is no denying the poverty of what he sees. Skip finds the building he is looking for, the home of grass-roots hip-hop producer Pablo Herrera. Herrera is at the forefront of an underground movement of rap artists articulating the frustration of the young, poor black community. Bands like Freehole Negro are writing lyrics saying: “The government speaks of our paths in life, but the government doesn’t know my Cuba. The Father of our government is not one of us, he doesn’t know our music, he doesn’t know our people.” Initially, the Castro regime tried to clamp down on this expression of discontent, but they couldn’t stop it. Herrera is excited. He sees this as an entirely new music that is ‘only the tip of the iceberg.’

We end the episode with Skip looking out at the ocean from Havana port, where in 1873 the last slave ship disembarked its sorry human cargo on Cuba’s shores. Skip contemplates one final little known fact. The ships that had passed though the port of Havana carrying their slaves were held together by hard wooden pegs called clavijas, from which were derived the musical instruments today known as claves. These are two small wooden sticks that are hit together to produce a high-pitched sound. They are very important in Afro-Cuban music like Salsa, but can also be found hitting out the rhythm in school orchestras around the world.
INTRODUCTION
If ever there was a country that was stigmatized, it is Haiti. Nearly
everything we are told about this nation is negative: poverty, violence,
street gangs, drug traffickers, coup d’etats, murderous henchmen, venal
dictators, desperate boat people, zombies, voudou curses, rampant
disease, unchecked malnutrition.

The average American or European knows little of Haiti’s rich and
unique history and culture. Haiti became the world’s first black
Republic and Latin America’s first independent country, the result of
the only successful slave revolution in history. Some of the leading
revolutionaries had learned how to fight in the American Revolution
under the command of Lafayette. After 13 years of scorched-earth
battles, an island of uneducated and poorly armed slaves drove
Napoleon’s armies back to France. Napoleon had planned on using
Haiti as a launching pad to consolidate France’s hold on North America.
Instead, the humiliating and costly defeat forced him to sell Louisiana
to the United States. It is little known that if not for Haiti, Midwesterners
could be speaking French today, or that thousands of Haitian refugees
migrated to New Orleans at the time of the revolution, infusing the city
with the rhythms of Africa long before it was known as the birthplace of
American music.

Every aspect of Haitian culture can be traced back to Africa, in large
part because the country won its freedom at such an early stage of its
colonial development. At the time of the revolution, more than half the
population was born in Africa. Today, Haiti’s African roots are more
evident than in any other country in the New World. But Haiti is not just
an amalgam of African cultures passed through a Francophone filter.
Haiti is a testimony to the human spirit. A people who once suffered the
most hellish conditions of slavery emerged having forged a new culture
bursting with vigor and creativity. Haiti’s roots are in Africa, but its soul is
Creole.

THE FILM
It’s night, blackness penetrated only be a small shimmering light in
the distance, the silence of night broken only by the steady beating of
drums. Skip is walking on a path towards the source of the drums and
the light. Finally he sees a bare-footed Haitian peasant pounding a
hand-carved drum capped with cow skin. The man sits on the mud floor
of a peristyle (voudou church), a wooden pole in the centre holding up a
roof of palm fronds. Around him, men and women dance, while the rest
of the congregation watches from the edges of the peristyle. A voudou
deity, or lwa, possesses one of the dancers and she writhes on the
ground uncontrollably.
Later, the *houngan*, or voudou priest, talks to Skip about the significance of the ceremony. Two hundred and sixteen years earlier, in a similar ceremony on a hilltop called *Bwa Kayiman* (Caiman Woods) not far from this little village in northern Haiti, this island’s slave revolution began. A voudou priest and escaped slave named *Boukman* declared war on the French colonial regime, leading a revolt that burned down plantations and incited the slaves into rebellion. The rebellion was the beginning of 13 years of guerrilla war that ended in defeat for Napoleon’s military machine and victory for the slaves. Voudou would play a key part in the Haitian Revolution. Soldiers worshipped Ogoun, the deity of metalworking and battle who is also venerated in West Africa, while the religious community’s cellular structure and secret language aided the underground resistance against French occupation.

Haiti’s identity was forged in rebellion against foreign powers and in rejection of the most brutal and perverse colonial system in the Americas. The cane fields south of *Cap-Haitien*, known as *Cap-Francois* until independence in 1804, appear idyllic. It was the rich soil of these rain-soaked plains that made the colony of Saint-Domingue France’s “Pearl of the Antilles,” the producer of three-fourths of the world’s sugar and half of its coffee. But the vicious inequalities in Saint-Domingue that helped it become one of the world’s richest colonies also made it a tinderbox. At the time of Boukman’s revolt, 32,000 French colonialists ruled 500,000 slaves as well as 28,000 mulattos and freed slaves.

The latter were treated as second-class citizens, while conditions for the slaves were straight out of Dante’s Inferno, explains *Ari Nicolas*, the son of Haitian peasants from the mountains above the cane fields.

*Ari* heads an organization called *N a sonje* (We will remember) that takes foreigners and Haitians through a “Memory Village” where they relive the slave trade and plantation life. He tells Skip that he was inspired by a dream in which his ancestors appeared, telling him that Haitians could not move forward until they understand their past. *Ari* takes Skip to the plantation where Haitian revolutionary leader *Toussaint Louverture* was a slave and explains conditions at the time of the revolution. *Ari* tells Skip how the slaves worked from daybreak until evening, were fed barely enough to stay alive, and were tortured mercilessly on the slightest pretext. Colonial archives describe tin masks strapped to slaves’ faces to prevent them from chewing sugar cane and red-hot irons burned on their buttocks. Some slave owners poured boiling wax into their slaves’ ears and exploded gunpowder inside their rectums.

*Ari* tells Skip how the slaves worked from daybreak until evening, were fed barely enough to stay alive, and were tortured mercilessly on the slightest pretext.
There are few physical remains of plantation life as buildings succumbed to the withering Caribbean climate, but the tribulations of slavery are still etched in the souls of the Haitian people. So too are their African roots. Ari now takes Skip to the village of Balan outside Cap-Haitien. On the surface, it looks like any other village, but secret societies conduct ceremonies here where the language spoken is West Africa’s Mandinka, and prayers to Allah are mixed with blessings to the Catholic Saints. The cemetery, where the dead are buried without coffins, is off limits to outsiders. Throughout Haiti, the souls of the dead are said to have returned to their spiritual home of Ginen, or Africa.

Skip visits the national museum in downtown Port-au-Prince to meet with Grégoire Dienguélé Matsua, an African anthropologist who has spent more than twenty years in Haiti studying voudou. He shows Skip around the museum, and explains that every aspect of Haitian culture can be traced back to Africa, in large part because the country won its freedom at such an early stage of its colonial development. At the time of the revolution, more than half the population was born in Africa. Today, Haiti’s African roots are more evident than in any other country in the New World. But he warns Skip that Haiti is not just an amalgam of Francophone African cultures, but a testimony to the human spirit. A people who suffered in the cauldron of the most hellish slavery emerged having forged a new culture bursting with vigor and creativity. Haiti’s roots are in Africa, says Matsua, but its soul is Creole.

In downtown Port-au-Prince, another Haitian anthropologist Bayyinah Bello takes Skip to see the monuments of the revolutionary heroes near the national palace. She shows Skip the statue of the Neg Mawon, which represents the slaves like Boukman who escaped and waged guerrilla war from the mountains against their former masters. Skip and Bayyinah walk past the statue of Toussaint Louverture, the father of the Haitian revolution, who led the slaves in rebellion against the French, while fighting the Spanish and British along the way. Louverture had held a privileged position of servitude, working as a coachman and veterinarian for a French count, and the plantation steward had taught him to read and write. He is said to have participated in the Bwa Kayiman ceremony, and at the age of 45, he helped lead the first rebellions again the French colonial regime. Known for his small stature and mighty charisma, Louverture was a military mastermind who built a disciplined army of thousands of former slaves from scratch. While he is credited with ending slavery in Haiti, he still sought to maintain ties to France. He was ultimately deceived by Napoleon and died, alone and sick, in a jail cell in the French Alps.
Nearby, is the monument of Jean Jacques Dessalines, who took command after Louverture and helped defeat the French, declaring independence on January 1, 1804.
Bayyinah Bello then accompanies Skip into the mountains to speak with a woman who claims to be well over 100, whose grandparents were alive during the time of the revolution. She speaks with us about the stories she heard as a child about Toussaint and Dessalines, and how their memory lives on today.

Skip walks through the historic center of Cap-Haitien, the seat of colonial power, with octogenarian Haitian historian Jean Philippe Borge. Borge explains to him that the world’s first black republic, founded on the ideals of liberty and justice, soon degenerated into a venal and despotic dictatorship. Dessalines ordered the massacre of nearly every French citizen in Haiti, eliminating the few people in the country with the education and skills to help lead the reconstruction of the war-torn country. Dessalines, was a self-proclaimed emperor, the first in the Americas since Montezuma, but he could not read or write and his legendary fighting skills did not translate into effective governance. Meanwhile, Haiti was subjected to gunboat diplomacy and economic blockades from France, Great Britain and the United States, which saw the revolution as a dangerous precedent for their own slave-owning regimes, explains Borge. France would later blackmail the Haitian government into emptying the treasury to compensate French slave-owners, and the United States refused to recognize Haiti until the US Civil War. By 1840, the country’s plantation-based economy was in ruins. Haiti exported no refined sugar and only a fraction of the coffee and cotton that had been sold under Louverture. Meanwhile, the elite was deeply divided into two factions – the mulattos who monopolized business and politics, and the black soldiers who rose through the ranks of the military.

The sun rises over the top of the Citadelle, with a view of the cane fields, Cap-Haitien and the ocean in the distance. Haiti was born with a siege mentality. There was no reason to think the French would give up, or that the British, Spanish or Americans would not take their place, and forts were constructed on mountaintops across the nation in preparation for another foreign invasion. The most impressive is the Citadelle, the largest fortress in the Western Hemisphere, constructed on this mountaintop by freed slaves under the command of Henry Christophe, a revolutionary hero and self-proclaimed king after Dessalines’s assassination in 1806. But Christophe ruled only half the country and was at war with the mulatto revolutionary Alexandre Pétion, based in Port-au-Prince. The Citadelle eventually fell to Pétion’s successor, Jean Pierre Boyer, without a shot being fired. The struggle for power between Christophe and Pétion, blacks and mulattos, poor and rich, has been the defining dynamic of Haitian politics to this day.

Mussa, an artist from the Port-au-Prince slum of Bel Air, which was the epicenter of violence between armed groups and police just a few years ago, shows us the murals he has painted on the city walls not
far from the national palace. Dessalines is represented everywhere, while Petion is absent. Mussa explains that Petion was a traitor who killed Dessalines, and who cared only for the wealthy mulatto elite, the “bourgeois,” as they are called disparagingly by the Haitian poor. Mussa blames the bourgeois for greedily hording Haiti’s wealth and keeping the masses in perpetual poverty. He shows us a copy of the newspaper Le Nouvelliste, which like all Haitian newspapers and official correspondence is in French even though it is a second language for nearly the entire population.

Mussa leads Skip through the slums and marketplaces of the downtown – Bel Air, Solino, Fort National, La Saline, Cite de Dieu. Streets are dirt and houses are made of sheet metal, cinder blocks and cardboard. Unemployed young men sit on the carcasses of gutted cars and malnourished children with swollen bellies are everywhere. Vendors line muddy streets and shout prices at passers-by, flies buzz around stacks of raw meat, shirtless men soaked in sweat pull enormous wooden carts stacked with goods and children carry five-gallon buckets of water balanced on their heads.

Mussa also takes Skip to the Episcopal Church, a sanctuary of art in the chaotic downtown. The church was founded by African-American missionaries in the 1860s, and nearly 100 years later, Haitian painters were hired to paint huge frescos on its walls. The scenes are from the Bible, but they are filled with references to voudou and Haitian life in the countryside. Christ is painted in blue and red, the colors of Ogoun, and Christ’s baptism takes place at Sodo, the waterfall where thousands of Haitian pilgrims visit every year to make offerings to Damballa, a snake deity that lives in the water. Protestant evangelism has boomed in Haiti in recent years, but its practitioners have adapted it in accordance with local sensibilities. Supported by American missionaries, evangelical pastors vociferously condemn voudou as work of the devil, but their music, rituals and beliefs are uncannily similar to those of voudou.

Nearby, Skip visits the noisy and gritty Avenue Jean Jacques Dessalines, known as the Gran Ri, or Main Street. Tap-taps, trucks and buses painted in blaring colors and packed with passengers, belch exhaust as they crawl through endless traffic jams. Right off this bustling street, we meet a community of modernist sculptors inspired by Gede, the voudou spirit of the dead. At the entrance to this slum area, is a 40-foot sculpture with a giant bouncing penis, which according to sculptor Andre Eugene represents the hidden desires of the poor. The area has been transformed into a permanent art installation, with sculptures made from recycled materials leaning against the walls of shacks.

On the other side of town, Skip sees a quite different Haiti. In Petionville, a mountainside suburb of Port-au-Prince where the elite live, and near Place Boyer, a plaza named after the mulatto president,
wealthy Haitians and foreigners shop in lingerie boutiques, frequent art galleries, dine in French restaurants and work out in Gold’s Gym. The mostly mulatto upper class live in mansions behind high walls and concertina wire, protected by heavily armed security guards. They speak French and English and send their children to study in Miami, Montreal and Paris. Few of them pay taxes, and most make their money importing goods and dealing in contraband. In the age of democracy, the poor will not easily elect the mulattos to office, so they exert power from behind the scenes.

The Boulos family is one exception. Reginald and Rudolph Boulos are two of the most powerful people in Haiti. Like many of the new elite, they are descendants of Lebanese immigrants who came to Haiti at the turn of the century. Rudolph Boulos was just elected senator and his brother openly campaigns for the position of prime minister. Their interests include pharmaceutical laboratories, supermarkets, car dealerships, newspapers and radio stations. They travel frequently to Washington, where they are closely connected to policymakers on both sides of the political spectrum. Like most light-skinned elite, they praise Petion, while they think of Dessalines as a murderous tyrant. They blame Haiti’s problems on corrupt leaders and demand crackdowns on crime in poor neighborhoods.

Skip is travelling in Haiti’s mountainous countryside again. Far from the elite enclave of Petionville and the political battles that eternally shake Port-au-Prince, life goes on in the countryside as it has for more than 200 years. Around the mountain villages outside Jeremie, peasants work the fields with a single tool, either a machete or a hoe. They work together in konbits, the system of shared labor that has its roots in Africa. Here, family life revolves around lakou, a cleared courtyard around which the family’s huts are situated. Women use giant gourds to hold water and do their washing in the river beating their clothes with a wooden paddle called a batwél. Meetings are held under a tree, the most sacred being the Mapou tree, where the spirits, or lwas, reside.

Skip is introduced to 85-year-old Justina St. Fleur, who sits under a tree in her lakou and tells a group of children sitting on the ground near her about the history of the area and the region’s folklore. St. Just uses a call and response tradition before beginning her stories. “Krik?” she calls, and the children respond “Krak!” meaning they want to hear the story. It is a tale of Ti Malice, the wily trickster who perpetually fools his lazy Uncle Bouki. She tells of how Ti Malice convinced Bouki to fertilize his yams by slaughtering a fat pig and cooking it and burying it in the fields. Ti Malice then digs up the pig and yams and eats them. St. Fleur’s language is littered with proverbs that have their origins in Africa but are uniquely Haitian. Creole is rich with proverbs that give insight into the country’s history and the wisdom of its people, such as dye mon, gen mon (Beyond mountains there are more mountains, which

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explains how every time a problem is solved, another one presents itself) and konstitisyon se papye, bayonet se fe (The constitution is paper, bayonets are steel).

Back in Port-au-Prince, Skip meets Max Beauvoir, a famous Haitian houngan who explains that 80 percent of Haitians are catholic, but 100 percent practice voudou. Beauvoir takes Skip to Souvenance, a holy site in the Artibonite region that was founded by a group of freed slaves from Dahomey, now part of Benin. Every Easter thousands of adherents make the pilgrimage to Souvenance to give offerings to the spirits and ask for their protection. Beauvoir guides Skip through the ceremonies, including the sacrifices of chickens and a goat, and a ritual bathing in a pool of water to appease Damballa.

On a dirt road nearby, a marching band of drums and bamboo horns charges past the camera followed by dozens of madly dancing peasants kicking up a cloud of dust. Leading the procession, a man wildly cracks a long whip, directing the band down one road or another, and another person runs around with a hat collecting money. This is rara, the music inspired in African rhythms that brings news from the voudou temple to the street, and from the street to the temple. It is intensely fun and brazenly sexual, and a cathartic release from the drudgeries of life in the countryside and the slums. But rara is also used by the poor as a political weapon. Street protests are usually driven by a rara band, while the lyrics often indirectly criticize or poke fun at local or national leaders.

In Haiti, music has often threatened the powerful. Richard Morse is the son of a Yale professor and famous Haitian dancer. He grew up in the United States, attended Princeton and then moved to Haiti in the 1980s to form a band. Morse explains to Skip that the Duvalier dictators favored konpa dance music, and suppressed cultural expressions that were linked to Africa. When “Baby Doc” fled Haiti in 1986, racine, or roots music, exploded. Morse’s band “Ram” was one of many that emerged, fusing voudou drums, electric guitars and politically charged lyrics to demand democracy in defiance of the US-backed military rulers that succeeded the Duvaliers.

Skip then watches a concert given by Morse and Ram in a crumbling 19th century gingerbread mansion, the famous Oloffson Hotel, which was the setting of Graham Greene’s novel The Comedians. Morse’s music almost cost him his life during the military dictatorship when a seemingly innocuous song (“I’m a leaf/Look at me on my branch/A terrible storm came and knocked me off/The day you see me fall is not the day I die) sparked protests by the Haitian masses and infuriated the junta.

Prompted by the setting, Skip leafs through Greene’s seminal novel and finds a particularly chilling extract about Papa Doc and his feared
henchman, the **Tonton Macoute**.

We next see Skip as he approaches an abandoned building filled with squatters and surrounded by shanties. It is **Fort Dimanche**, the notorious political prison and killing chamber of **Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier**, explains **Patrick Lemoine**, a former prisoner here who later wrote a book called **Dungeon of Death**. A medical doctor who had won acclaim for helping fight yaws and other tropical diseases among the peasantry, Duvalier marginalized both the military and the mulatto elite, consolidating tyrannical power through his feared paramilitary force called the tonton macoute, or bogeymen. Anyone who opposed his regime ended up dead, or even worse, as a prisoner in Fort Dimanche, says Lemoine.

In 1973 Duvalier was succeeded by his 19-year-old son, **Jean-Claude or “Baby Doc,”** who was known as much for continuing his father’s brutal rule as for his notorious corruption. Baby Doc would finally flee the country in the face of massive street protests that would continue until the 1990 electoral victory of a radical slum-based priest named **Jean-Bertrand Aristide**.

In the enormous slum of **Cite Soleil**, Skip walks past a wall pocked with bullet holes and sprayed with graffiti calling for Aristide’s return. A nearby street vendor tells Skip that Aristide is still popular here because he was the only politician who ever cared for the poor. Aristide was swept into power by a massive margin in Haiti’s first democratic elections despite strong opposition from the elite and the United States. Seven months later, he was overthrown in a military coup. He returned to the presidency in 2001, but three years later was once again removed from power, this time by US Marines who whisked him into exile in Africa amid an armed rebellion. Port-au-Prince tumbled into violence between armed Aristide supporters and a brutal police force commanded by a de facto regime propped up by the United States, Canada and France.

Skip climbs into a white armored personnel carrier manned by Brazilian soldiers from the slums of Rio De Janeiro. They are peacekeepers charged with patrolling the streets of Port-au-Prince and especially its slums. As the personnel carrier rumbles through **Cite Soleil**, the soldiers proudly tell Skip that they have arrested pro-Aristide gang leaders and brought peace to the neighborhood which was racked by violence just one year ago.

Later in the day, Skip visits the neighborhood by foot, walking through muddy alleyways to talk with slum residents. Some of them tell him they resent the presence of the peacekeepers, and call them “goat stealers,” an accusation that is both playful and pejorative.

While the Haitian poor have revolted against their corrupt leaders,
the country’s history has been shaped by resistance against foreign aggression. The Haitian Revolution represented a dangerous precedent for the slave-owning powers of the day, and Haiti was subjected to gunboat diplomacy and economic blockades from France, Great Britain and the United States. France blackmailed Boyer’s government into emptying the treasury to compensate French slave-owners, and the United States refused to recognize Haiti until the US Civil War. In 1915, US marines invaded Haiti and stayed for nearly 20 years. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan summed up the US attitude towards the Haitian elite they had co-opted: “Dear me, think of it, niggers speaking French.” A puppet regime revoked a law that had stood for more than a century prohibiting foreign ownership of Haitian land, while US soldiers burned drums and brought back slavery in the form of chain gangs forced to construct roads. The Haitians revolted, led by Charlemagne Peralte, a nationalist who joined guerrilla fighters called the Cacos in resistance against the US occupation of Haiti. The rebellion was smashed and Peralte executed, but he became a martyr who is celebrated as a hero to this day.

Skip meets with Paul Farmer, a renowned American doctor whose organization runs a major hospital in the middle of the Haitian countryside. While Americans knows little of Haiti, says Farmer, Haitians are acutely aware of how much their history is intertwined with that of the United States. Some of the leading Haitian revolutionaries had learned how to fight in the American Revolution under the command of Lafayette. Later, Napoleon planned on using Haiti as a launching pad to consolidate France’s hold on North America. Instead, the humiliating and costly defeat forced him to sell Louisiana to the United States. Farmer tells Skip that it is little known that if not for Haiti, Midwesterners could be speaking French today, or that thousands of Haitian refugees migrated to New Orleans at the time of the revolution, infusing the city with the rhythms of Africa long before it was known as the birthplace of American music.

Farmer laments that if ever there was a country that was stigmatized, it is Haiti. Nearly everything we are told about the country is negative: poverty, violence, street gangs, drug traffickers, coup d’etats, murderous henchmen, venal dictators, desperate boat people, zombies, voudou curses, rampant disease, unchecked malnutrition. Once again, in late 2007, we were informed, wrongly says Farmer, that Haiti was the entry point for HIV/AIDS into the United States.

Today, United Nations tanks and troops patrol the streets of the capital. They are here with the support of Haiti’s democratically elected government and they have imposed a degree of peace since arriving amid political turmoil and violence three years ago. But the poor overwhelmingly resent the presence of the peacekeepers, and throughout the country they are referred to as “goat stealers,” an
accusation that is both playful and pejorative. The major powers continue to dictate policy in Haiti. Skip stands and wonders at the new $74 million-dollar fortress-like US Embassy which is the biggest building in the country.

The various modern economic experiments to improve the way of life of Haiti’s people, who are amongst the poorest on earth, have been almost universal failures. It seems that the peasants often turn on the obvious scapegoat for these failures, and anti-US sentiment runs strong. In 1978, the US government forced Haitians to eradicate their pig population fearing that an outbreak of Swine Fever would spread to the United States. It was a blow for the peasantry, which used the pigs quite literally as piggy banks, prized assets to be sold in case of an emergency. The American-bred pigs that replaced them had difficulty adapting to the conditions in Haiti and many of them died. Today paradoxically, far too many of Haiti’s black population see their only escape from the grinding poverty as emigration to the place the blame for their woes, the country “discovered” by Columbus, the USA!

Waves crash against the pier at Cap-Haitien, Haiti’s second biggest city and the heart of colonial Saint-Domingue. More than five centuries ago, Christopher Columbus’s Santa Maria sunk in this city’s bay. Now, rickety wooden boats leave the coast near here overloaded with Haitians seeking a better life in the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and the United States. We talk with Patrick Jean-Louis and his brother, who are building a boat in preparation for their voyage. They say they fear the dangers of the trip, but feel it is the only way out of misery.

For all the poverty and subjection to foreign powers, Haitians remain an intensely proud and resilient people with a rock-hard sense of national identity. Underneath their misery is vitality, behind their sickness there is strength, and despite their lack of raw materials, industry or economic infrastructure, they exhibit remarkable resourcefulness and perseverance. Every Saturday, in the Port-au-Prince slum of Pele-Simon, a group of young people, some students and others unemployed, organize in a konbit to clean up trash from the streets. One of the street cleaners, 23-year-old student Harold Hyppolite explains that he continues to find inspiration in the example of his ancestors who broke the chains of slavery, and that Haiti is still a symbol of freedom for the rest of the world.

Skip is on board a plane flying back to the US as he gives his own take on what Hyppolite has just said about freedom. He then looks out of the window and sees something quite extraordinary for he is looking down on the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, two sovereign nations occupying this one island. From the air the border could not be easier to trace. It is where the smouldering charcoal pits and desolate landscape of Haiti abruptly cease to be replaced by the dense forests.

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on the Dominican side. It is a visual metaphor for the different states of these two nations whose history has been intertwined since Europeans first set foot upon the island. For it is in Dominica that Christopher Columbus first arrived before he ever reached the mainland, and thus the place that slavery first arrived in the Americas.

PROGRAMME 4
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, MEXICO AND PERU: THE AFRO-HISPANICS

(NB: The treatment for this episode is to be re-visited with further research on the ground during pre-production)

On 5th December 1492, Christopher Columbus landed at Mole St Nicholas on the western tip of the northern peninsula of what we now know as the Dominican Republic. Thus began a Spanish Empire that in the next three centuries was to expand from a few early small settlements in the Caribbean, to include Central America, most of South America, Mexico and what today is the South Western United States.

Columbus named the island where he had landed Hispaniola and dreamed of establishing a brave New World where Spaniards and natives would work together to create Utopia. That dream had turned sour within a year, because the Spanish Conquistadors Columbus had brought with him had no intention of sharing this new world with anyone.

Columbus established his first colony in Isabella in the Dominican Republic. Off the coast are the wrecks of three of Columbus’ first ships, and in hidden caves along the shore are the relics of the pre-colonial past. Skip goes to the Las Caritas or Cave Jose Maria, where he finds cave-paintings of the Taíno Indians that had lived on this island for thousands of years before Columbus arrived. Among them is an image depicting the Taíno Indians taking food out to Columbus’ ships. Their hospitality was not rewarded well. By 1550, something like 1 million native Indians had been reduced by miscegenation, slavery, war and illness to a population of less than 500. This was genocide on the grandest of scales.

Skip then travels to Santo Domingo, the oldest city in the New World. Today it is perhaps the most bustling and diverse city in the Caribbean with a population of over 3 million inhabitants in the metropolitan area and its neighbouring province. His first port of call is the house of Nicolas de Ovando, governor of Santa Domingo in the early 1500’s, and a ruthless killer of the Taíno Indians. He then takes in the Museo de las Casas Reales, the restored 16th century palace of the Spanish Court. This building and the neighbouring Alcazar de Colon which was built for Columbus’ son Diego and his wife Maria de Toledo, who

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was also Spanish King Ferdinand’s niece, who together governed the colony between 1509 and 1514, show the luxury that the colonial masters enjoyed in this, their first colony. By contrast, thousands of slaves were shipped in from Africa through Fort Ozama and up the cobbled Calle de Las Damas to work in the gold mines of the interior. They were so expendable that they were not even expected to survive long enough to have children.

The first documented voyage of men and women from Africa to the New World took place in 1501 and relates to a group of slaves destined for the mines of Hispaniola. Shortly after 1500 the volume of slaves leaving Africa for Europe for Europe or the New World passed 2000 per annum for the first time, almost all of whom were shipped on Portuguese boats. Interestingly, throughout more than 350 years of the official Atlantic Slave Trade from 1510 to 1867, the Spanish government never dirtied its own hands by engaging in the slave trade itself. This was left to the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and of course the English. In the early years between 1510 and 1640 the Portuguese held the Asiento, or official license, to trade slaves from Africa to the Spanish colonies.

An Italian visitor to Santo Domingo in the 1540’s described it as a “second Guinea” so great was the concentration of Africans. A 1545 census of inhabitants under Spanish control in Hispaniola revealed 3,827 African working on sugar engines, making up nearly 40% of the population. Another Spanish record for the six-year period from 1544 to 1550 shows that the Crown issued licenses for a total of 9,242 slaves to be imported into Santo Domingo. All of these came from the Cape Verde islands and the nearby African mainland coastal regions of what is today Senegal and Sierra Leone.

For all this, the colony was not a success. The gold ran out early and the sugar plantations were also largely abandoned by the end of the sixteenth century. From now on the bulk of slaves destined for Spain’s colonies were sent to the mainland, starting with Mexico. A century later, in 1697 Spain was content to cede Hispaniola to the French, whose ‘buccaneers’ had established a colony there. Indeed, by then Spanish interest in the New World had moved on to the American mainland. However it had not always been plain sailing there for the Spanish slave-owning colonists either.

The slave trade to Spanish America did not proceed as an even flow over the centuries. Just over a quarter of all slaves from Africa, something like 350,000 in number, arrived in the first 130 years until 1640, initially to the Caribbean but then to the mining colonies and sugar estates of Mexico and Peru. For the rest of the episode Skip
intends to explore the history of these peoples about which, like most Americans, he knows next to nothing.

When Cortes and his various armies conquered Mexico in the 1520’s he held several hundred slaves, while close to 2000 slaves appeared in the armies of Pizarro and Almargo in the conquest of Peru in the 1530’s and in their subsequent civil wars in the 1540’s.

Skip is in the modest city of Yanga in the Mexican state of Veracruz. It is August 10th, the Feast of San Lorenzo, one of the most important events in the city’s annual calendar. On this day the townspeople (and indeed many migrants who have returned home for the event from the USA) celebrate the founding of “the first free African town in America”. It is a noisy, even riotous event involving fireworks, a costume parade, open-air dances, cockfights, and a bullfight. But this is no ordinary South American carnival for this is a celebration in honour of a runaway slave called Yanga who led a slave rebellion that resulted in the defeat of the mighty Spanish army in 1609.

The carnival Skip is watching has today taken on a further new meaning: it is a celebration dedicated to black African culture. Yes, here in the middle of Hispanic Mexico they are paying tribute to their African past. It may be that the facts surrounding the man they are celebrating are somewhat vague and confused amongst the people, but everyone understands his importance as a symbol. This black man of Africa, this runaway slave who led the first anti-colonial rebellion on the continent was the catalyst of freedom in the Americas. Big signs and T-shirts bear the slogan “Yanga, the first free town of America.”

The next day Skip seeks out an enormous bronze sculpture of Yanga in the city’s central park. With him is Professor Sagrario Cruz-Carreterof of Veracruz University and Mexico’s leading expert on Afro-Mexicans, who tells him of the man who gave this place its name.

No one quite knows how many slaves came to Mexico from Africa but from the earliest days of Mexican slavery in the sixteenth century, many sought relief from the appalling conditions in flight. The mountains of Orizaba in the central part of the state of Veracruz were the perfect hideaway for these cimarrones. They were led by Yanga, an old first generation runaway who had lived in the mountains for more than 30 years who claimed that had he not been enslaved he would have been a king in Africa.

Yanga’s followers survived by holding up the Spanish coaches that travelled the road from Mexico City to Veracruz and by attacking neighbouring farms. To supplement their income from this brigandry they also farmed subsistence crops and raised poultry and other livestock.
Then in 1609 the Spanish Crown sent an army of Spaniards and indigenous archers from West Mexico to “pacify” the area and to crush the fugitive slaves, but between the difficulties of the terrain and the cunning of the guerrilla tactics employed by the *cimarrones* the Spanish were defeated. Yanga demanded that the Crown allow him to establish a free town to be inhabited exclusively by black runaway slaves who had escaped prior to 1608. The Crown had little choice but to agree so the *cimarrones* established a temporary camp on a hillside called Palmillas. Then in 1630 the Africans officially established the free town of San Lorenzo de los Negros. In 1930 San Lorenzo changed its name to Yanga in honour of its founding father.

Skip has travelled to the nearby city of Mata Clara, also in Veracruz province. Unlike much of Mexico, many people here are obviously what a North American would call “black”. He hears from the Municipal President of Cuitlahuac, Veracruz about an incident in the early 1990’s. A group of people from Mata Clara were jailed in Mexico City. Apparently the police believed they were illegal immigrants from Central America. Surely no one who looked like these people could be Mexicans and, if further proof was needed, they carried no identification papers. It was only when Skip’s interviewee intervened on their behalf with the full force of his official municipal office to confirm that there were indeed black people in the territory, and that the detainees were from Mata Clara and not some unspecified Central American state, that they were released. Without any sense of irony the Municipal President tells Skip that he really recommends that blacks carry identification when they travel out of the area as they may well be stopped and forced to sing the national anthem to prove that they are Mexican.

Skip is now in Acapulco. Apart from the tourist beaches and the glamour, the people he sees are testament to the fact that Mexico’s population is for the most part very much now mixed race. This is a country that makes a great deal of its indigenous and its European origins, but where are the Africans in this national narrative?

The official policy of successive Mexican governments for more than a century has been to emphasise the fact that Mexico’s heritage is the result of a mixing of indigenous peoples and Europeans from the time of the Spanish Conquest onwards. But this narrative contains a serious falsehood.

Acapulco, together with Veracruz, was one of the two ports authorised for the importation of slaves during the colonial period, but unlike Brazil and several of the other countries covered in the series, it is almost impossible to be sure about the exact number of Africans brought here in chains. One factor contributing to this uncertainty is the severe under-counting of slave imports due to the prevalence of clandestine
slave trafficking. However one thing is known for certain that heavily determined the future of these slaves.

The regulations decreed that every slave shipment should be comprised of one-third females to two-thirds males. As a result there was a significant scarcity of women amongst the slaves which meant many had to seek elsewhere for partners, permanent or otherwise. There was also a further inducement to seek out a “free womb”, in other words a mother for your children who was not enslaved, in order to ensure your future generations were born free.

Thus purebred African children of slaves were extremely scarce as the black African population sought out marriage alliances mostly with the indigenous population. This led to an elaborate system of classification by colour which became known as the caste system. This was only abolished after the Mexican War of Independence in 1824, although by then nearly three centuries of intermingling of races had led to a population who for the most part were unclassifiable as anything except mixed race.

But one question remains in Skip's mind. He has certainly found out more than he ever expected about how Africans have contributed to making Mexico what it is today but is it possible that Africans actually once came to Mexico as free men not slaves before the arrival of Europeans?

He visits the **Museo de Anthropoligia en Xalapa** in Veracruz where he confronts the seven-foot plus tall sculpture known as Olmec Head 8. The head has features that look to be clearly what we now call “African”. Skip also looks at another famous Amerindian sculptured head, The Black One, which has been carbon dated back to 800-600BC. Are these ancient images of Africans carved by Amerindians or is there another explanation for their Negroid features?

Skip acknowledges that it is a controversial issue for which no conclusive proof has been found either way but maybe studies of the human genome which are making great progress may one day unveil the mysteries of possible contact between Africa and America before the 15th century Spanish conquest.

For the moment though he is prepared to content himself with finding out more about the conditions for the modern day sons of Africa in Mexico. So he travels to the town of **El Ciruelo** in the state of Oaxaca to meet with **Father Glyn Jemmott**, a Catholic Priest originally from Trinidad and Tobago who has worked here in a parish of a dozen pueblos since 1984. Father Jemmott’s organization, Mexico Negro, is responsible for a victory in the courts whose significance has yet to reverberate through the rest of Mexico. Thanks to his work, Oaxaca is

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the only state in Mexico where Afro Mexicans officially exist. In the rest of the country there is no such thing as an Afro Mexican!

Father Jemmott tells Skip of the on-going racism and racial conflict in Mexico, with Afro Mexicans suffering a real conflict of identity, whilst also being at the bottom of the social pile. As a group they are the most illiterate, the poorest, and the most likely to be discriminated against when looking for work. But there are also signs of a more optimistic future.

Father Jemmott takes Skip to the Museum of Afromestiza Cultures, the only museum of Afro Mexican heritage in the country, which has been set up as a centre to develop awareness of the importance of African culture in Mexico’s past. Finally that evening Skip goes to a festivity of one of the communities in the Costa Chica, maybe in Morelos, Collantes, El Chivo or San Nicolas, where a group of young people are practicing a dance for their next fiesta. Whether it is La Tortuga, Los apaches, El Toro de petate, or Los diablos, all of these dances are accompanied by instruments which are clearly of African origin such as the marimbol, the cajon, the bote, or the quijada de burro. The names may be Spanish, but the instruments themselves clearly owe everything to Africa.

Skip has a question which he needs answering. Since the first colonisation of the Caribbean and Latin America between the early sixteenth century and the 1830’s, more Africans than Europeans crossed the Atlantic annually, and as late as 1750 some 4.5 million of the estimated 6.6 million people who had come to the Americas since 1492 were African slaves. Why, since there was apparently an abundant supply of local labour available in the form of some 20 to 25 million American Indians throughout the New World, did the European colonists turn to Africans to work in their mines, factories and farms?

To help find an answer to this conundrum Skip decides to travel to a place not normally associated in the minds of Americans with slavery, a country which stretches from the coastal Pacific to the high Andes. Peru.

Here in Peru, as in the rest of Mesoamerica, the Spaniards found powerful peasant based empires that could be exploited without actually destroying their political and social systems. In addition, the Spaniards who conquered Latin America were already used to employing the slave labour of Africans and Muslims back in Europe, and after an initial period of enslaving everyone they encountered amongst the Indians, they eventually turned to Africa as a cheap source of slave labour whilst allowing the Indians to remain free.

An additional factor was disease. After the European conquest Peru lost
a progressively higher proportion of its population to European diseases in areas which were otherwise ideal for such European crops as sugar and grapes. The answer for the Spaniards was obvious – bring in slaves from Africa who were bountiful and cheap. So by the mid 1550’s there were some 3000 slaves in Peru, with half of them in the capital city, Lima. Unlike the majority of slaves in North America, slaves of African origin in Peru were as likely to live in a city as a plantation and, together with Spaniards, they were the most urbanised group in Spanish American society. By the second half of the 16th century the need for slaves within Peru increased dramatically as silver production increased radically, making Peru and Lima the wealthiest zone of the New World.

"Los Primeros Mulatos de Esmeraldas" a group of Africans from a shipwreck who came to dominate an Indigenous community in Peru.

As he arrives at his hotel in Lima, Skip discovers that the doorman at his hotel is a strapping, dark black man in an elegant colonial uniform. When he talks to the doorman, Skip discovers that this is typical of Lima. Every good hotel has a black doorman, it is seen as a symbol of prestige.

In fact, Skip discovers that Lima has a thriving black community which works in a whole list of service trades that are virtually a closed-shop for black people in Peru: butlers, maids, cooks, pallbearers. Skip is introduced to 73-year-old Augusto Chevez, whose family have been carrying the coffins of the rich for as long as he can remember: “We are so strong and so serious, yet we look so elegant. Who else could do a better job?” Augusto has carried 7 presidents to their graves. Yet as Skip probes further, it becomes clear that while Augusto is justifiably proud of his profession, the prospects for himself and his family are severely limited. Augusto has never buried a black Peruvian president, and the likelihood of his sons ever being able to become lawyers is severely limited.

To find out more, Skip travels out to the black coastal barrio of Chorillos close to Lima, where he meets Peruvian diva Susana Baca. Susana grew up in this area, she tells him, surrounded by music and her mother’s good cooking, where the descendants of black slaves have lived since the days of the Spanish empire. As she introduces Skip to the pleasures of Afro-Peruvian cuisine, Susana talks to him about the African roots of many aspects of Peruvian culture. For her, the most compelling is the music. Her mother, who worked as a household servant, taught her the zamacueca rhythm that was traditionally danced by the servants at the end of the night, and this began her life-long love affair with African music. She has travelled all over Peru, gathering tribal folk songs and African instruments – among them a strange gourd-like instrument that she now features in her act – and

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merging them with modern musical influences to create her distinctly Afro-Peruvian sound. “I express myself with the songs and poetry of my people,” she says. “I have traditional songs about the life of our grandparents… and there are songs more tied to city life.”

So a rich seam of African culture runs through Peruvian life; but black people are separated from mainstream Peruvian society, living in coastal communities and restricted to jobs at the high end of the service industry – doormen, butlers, pallbearers, and cooks.

As Skip now understands, a distinct characteristic of Peruvian slavery is how much of it was urban. Slaves were a vital economic element in all the cities of the Spanish empire. In the skilled trades they predominated in metalworking, clothing and construction, and they were well represented in all the crafts except the most exclusive like silver smithing or printing. They were coastal fishermen, porters, food vendors, and even armed watchmen in the Lima police force. Every major construction site had skilled and unskilled slaves working alongside white masters and free blacks.

This is not a picture of slavery as Americans know it. By the middle of the 17th century free and slave Africans and Afro-Americans in the Spanish Empire were dominant in many trades and could exercise master status without opposition. Thus of the 150 master tailors in Lima, 100 were blacks, mulattoes or mestizos. Of the 70 master shoemakers in Lima in the same period, 40 were blacks or mulattoes.

At the same time whole factories employing only slave labour grew up. In 1630 there were 18 hat factories employing between 40 and 100 African slaves each. Unsurprisingly in these circumstances the slave population of Lima grew rapidly, from 4000 in 1586 to about 20000 by 1640 and Lima was a half black city by the last decade of the 16th century and would remain that way for most of the 17th century. Equally all the other northern and central Andean coastal and interior cities had black populations that by 1600 accounted for at least half of their total citizens. Although their proportion dropped as one went south into the more densely populated Indian regions, black slaves could still be found in their thousands in places like Cuzco and even Potosi, which in 1611 is recorded as having 6000 blacks and mulattoes, both slave and free.

The Peruvian model of slave ownership was what came to dominate all of Spanish, and most of Portuguese America. Slave rental was a common phenomenon. Most skilled artisans were rented out by their owners, who might be an institution or a widow living off the income of renting her slave to a skilled artisan. In many cases the skilled or semi skilled slaves maintained themselves by renting out or selling their services, absorbing their own expenses for housing and food while paying a fixed monthly sum to their owner.

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Another characteristic of the Peruvian labour scene that Skip discovers was the existence in every region and every craft of free black and mulatto workers, employed alongside of slaves. Some of these were freed slaves, some of them even coming from Spain itself. In a familiar story they were often discriminated against on racial grounds by whites competing for the better jobs, but they nonetheless were to be found at every level, from unskilled to master positions. In some cases they were paid wages equal to white workers, in others they were paid less than the rental wages of slaves. By 1600 these free blacks amounted to 10-15% of the local black population and these numbers rose steadily through the century.

In another familiar story, free blacks and mulattoes were disproportionately represented in Peru’s jails throughout the 17th century.

A mulatto man in Peru in the 1780’s

In the final part of his journey to Peru Skip travels south, to the ancient city of Cuzco, where he hopes to find a few more answers to the many questions he has has raised for him in this strange journey through a kid of slavery he has never before encountered.

In Cuzco, high up in the Andes, he meets Dr Humberto Rodriguez-Camilloni at Saqsaywaman, the Sanctuary of the Sun. This Inca monument, with its three sets of concentric walls, was so impressive and intimidating to the first Spanish conquistadors that they thought it was a fortress and refused to believe that it had been built by the natives. Both assumptions highlight the motivations and prejudices of the conquistadors under Francisco Pizarro, who came here to conquer in 1533. Most especially, the Spanish came to pillage. In Cuzco itself, Humberto shows Skip the Qorikancha Sanctuary. Once, the mortarless masonry of this temple to the Inca sun god was covered in gold, but the Spanish stripped it away and built a church on top of it, imposing their religion as they robbed its wealth. They brought with them black slaves, who served in their armies and who were used as intermediaries between the Spanish conquerors and the native Indians.

This set a precedent in the minds of the natives that has never been fully eradicated. Peruvians of African origin continue to be seen as both inferior and dangerous, cast into the role of upper-class servants to the colonial masters. So when Peru became the last Spanish colony to be liberated by Simón Bolívar, its black community found itself pigeonholed into the roles it still occupies today.

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Something is now clear to Skip which he had not previously appreciated: one of the central reasons why the history of Hispanic Africans on the mainland of the Americas has been generally ignored – in Mexico and Peru, just as in the remainder of the mainland colonised by the Spanish – is that the great era of African slavery in these countries was in the 16th and 17th centuries. After that few slaves came to the Spanish mainland colonies from Africa, whilst the massive inflow to the Caribbean, North America and Brazil really took off just as this earlier era of slavery was dying out. This has meant that for the last 200 years or so the Africans of Hispanic America have become more and more diluted racially as their original African identity got subsumed in the dominant Hispano-American culture.

To end the series we mix from Cuzco’s extraordinary Andean landscape to an unlikely urban setting. Skip is watching a game of soccer on a beat-up field in Pasadena, California. The contrast between this place and where he has just been could not be greater.

The team he is watching are called Costa Chica, named for the picturesque coastline which Skip has only recently visited in Mexico. The team are no slouches and they have captured three championships in two years in the immigrant-dominated league in Pasadena.

These players are talented. More importantly, now we are not surprised to find that they are not what they look like – maybe Hondurans, Dominicans or even perhaps African Americans. For of course they and the women folk supporting them are black Mexicans, dark in complexion with puchunco (curly or kinky) hair.

Some 300 or so Afro-Mexicans from Costa Chica now live in Pasadena and thousands more can be found throughout the greater Los Angeles area and Orange County. Some are legal, many are not, and all are part of the massive wave of Mexican immigrants who began fleeing economic hardship in their homeland in the 1980’s.

After the game Skip joins a group of these immigrants for a party hosted by 42-year-old Roberta Acevedo. Roberta tells Skip of how things have changed since she first came to the US nearly 20 years ago. She also tells of the identity crisis for black Hispanics like her and her friends. Despite a shared racial heritage Afro Mexicans in Southern California have little interaction with African Americans, the relations hindered by religious, language and cultural differences. And cultural bonds with other Latinos are equally dominated by issues of regional and racial preferences.

“Negro, Chimeco y Feo” (Black, Dirty and Ugly) is the title of a popular song from Costa Chica that many of the guests sing along with. The lyrics describe the life of a man who is born in a shack on the Mexican
coast and then grows up looking after pigs and fishing for shrimp with an old net. Because he is poor he lives in rags. But the lyrics go on to explain that his soul is pure, unlike those who were “born in clean diapers”, in other words those with a lighter skin.

As he walks off into the neighbouring streets in this poor part of Pasadena Skip is prompted to muse on a few final thoughts about what he has learnt during this journey through Latin America’s African past – the surprises, the emotions that it has aroused in him, and his sense of pride in his own African roots, and what Africa has contributed to the diverse cultures and nations throughout the entire New World.