

00:00:00	Music	Transition	“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:00:06	Morgan Rhodes	Host	Hello, I’m Morgan Rhodes. I am riding solo this week. My companion, my co-conspirator, Oliver Wang will be back. But you are listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> . Every episode we invite a guest to join us to talk about hot lava, combustible material, and today we will be revisiting D’Angelo together and taking a deep dive into <i>Voodoo</i> .
00:00:28	Clip	Clip	<i>[Clip of an interview, with car horns and the sound of a busy street in the background.]</i> Speaker 1: You know what I’m saying? This is like a funk album, man. The natural progression from soul, the next step to soul was funk. Early Sly, a lot of early James Brown, a lot of early Funkadelic or Parliament. You know what I’m saying? A lot of the early progression, when the music was just starting to change, and the culture was changing. <i>[A guitar begins strumming, and then fades out.]</i>
00:00:52	Morgan	Host	That is how Michael “D’Angelo” Archer described the beauty called <i>Voodoo</i> . The album, his second, released on New Year’s Day was a welcome sight after what was a grueling test of patience for those like myself who had been wooed by a shy, smoldering young’un from Virginia, who was quite nice with the Hammond organ. According to the album’s sound mixer, Russell Elevado, the goal was to pay homage to the sounds of albums by Stevie, Marvin, JB, and Funkadelic, by performing live and then recording everything to tape. To bring this concept to life, they needed both a soul and a spirit, and they had them. An old soul like D’Angelo, who was raised on gospel but in the time of recording had fallen in love with Sly, Jimmy, JB, and the blues. And spirit, the spirit of excellence that hovered in and around Electric Lady Land Studios, where both history and magic had been made. If this album was a color, it would be brown. Brown skin like the ancestors conjured up over 13 tracks. Brown like the dark liquor surely needed to accompany listening. Brown like “Africa”, the final track. Brown like the Soulquarians. Brown like me. <i>Voodoo</i> came into our lives at the apex of neo-soul. Heads were no longer internalizing pain, struggle, strife, or heartache. They were singing about it, as <i>Mamma’s Gun</i> , <i>The Colored Museum</i> , and <i>1st Born Second</i> would bear witness to.
00:02:22	Morgan	Host	And like so many heat rocks discussed on this show before, this album tells us some things. Most particularly, it tells us a lot about spirituality, that it is both centered around ritual <u>and</u> relationship. That there’s actually nothing new under the sun, and that perhaps those connected with making these tracks were servants of a spirit, like Voodoo practitioners. And just like the album’s star, <i>Voodoo</i> gave us something precious, a good thing that came to those who waited, and yes, a thing of

beauty. How I describe *Voodoo*, an album released in the wee hours of the dawn of a new decade.

00:02:59	Music	Music	<p>“Send It On” off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D’Angelo. Mid-tempo, grooving funk.</p> <p><i>Send it up</i> <i>Send it through</i> <i>Send it right back, to you</i> <i>Send it up</i> <i>Send it through</i> <i>Send it right back, to you</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:03:19	Morgan	Host	<p><i>Voodoo</i> was the album pick of our guest today, Terrel Wallace, AKA Tall Black Guy. I’m not sure who to credit for my discovery of our guest’s music. I’d like to say I was always in the know, but then again I always like to say that. But in the spring of 2012, I happened upon an EP called the <i>Brazilian Chronicles</i>, and was changed when I heard this track.</p>
00:03:39	Music	Music	<p>“O Fim da Viagem” off the album <i>Brazilian Chronicles</i> by Tall Black Guy. Funky, psychedelic, fun instrumentals. Plays for several moments, then slowly fades under Morgan.</p>
00:03:57	Morgan	Host	<p>Several plays later, I had the opening song for my set that night. I broke “O Fim da Viagem” on the air, the studio phones started blowing up, and a fanship was born. Tall Black Guy was built in the Motor City, spent a good while in the U.K., and is back stateside making his particular blend of magic that tastemakers get lit for.</p> <p>Influenced by Madlib and Preemo, he’s reimagined songs for Moonchild, Diggs Duke, Miles Bonny, and other cool kids, and in the process racked up a zillion plays and streams on these internets.</p> <p>Over the last couple of years, he’s been one of the featured guests at Jazzy Jeff’s PLAYLIST Retreat, a musician summer camp where some of the best and brightest converge to collaborate. To put it mildly, he’s good with the beats. Real good with the beats.</p> <p>Welcome to <i>Heat Rocks</i>, Tall Black Guy.</p>
00:04:47	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<p>How you doing? Thank you for having me on the show. I appreciate it.</p>
00:04:50	Morgan	Host	<p>So glad to have you. I have to ask you, um, how did you come to know this album? It came out in 2000. Tell me where you got it, when you got it.</p>
00:05:03	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<p>Okay, so this is in 2000...? Yeah, I had just graduated high school. During that timing I was really into like, a lot of the underground stuff. So like, ruckus and all that stuff. So I knew of D’Angelo’s work from, you know, <i>Brown Sugar</i> and stuff like that, but I just seen the album, went into the store and bought it, and was blown away. And I think I listened to it for literally like, at least six months. Like, just</p>

nonstop. I don't even know how many times I played the "Playa Playa" joint.

[Morgan responds affirmatively and laughs.]

00:05:31 Music Music "Playa Playa" off the album *Voodoo* by D'Angelo. Grooving neo-soul with multilayered vocals.

*Playa tryin' play me
We dyin' to set it oh
Marlon, Slick, and Weasel
Can hardly wait to ball*

[Music fades out as Tall Black Guy speaks]

00:05:44 Tall Black Guy Guest Yeah, that there, this album was crazy. And then right after that, then Common's *Like Water for Chocolate* came out, then *Mamma's Gun* came out, then *Welcome to Detroit* came—I mean like, there was just so much music around that time. But this one definitely stood out, at least for me anyway. It was like the first of the batch of the many albums that came out that year.

00:06:00 Morgan Host Sure. If you can recall, what were your very first impressions? Like, the first thing you said about the album. What were your first, like initial, first play, first listen?

00:06:12 Tall Black Guy Guest I mean, I just thought musically, this was some other stuff. You know, I mean, because back then, people were like, at least in the soul stuff, they weren't really heavily relying on the live instrumentations. There's a lot of programmed stuff, so. Like, it just sounded like, really organic.

And then, obviously, when you hear D'Angelo sing over it, I mean it was—that marriage between the music and his voice was just absolutely insane. And then you find out later that they spent like five—anywhere from five to seven years just studying before they actually even actually made the record.

00:06:45 Morgan Host Sure. There was some time, because heretofore we had had *Brown Sugar*, and I remember thinking at the time—'cause I loved *Brown Sugar*. We actually had DJ Monalisa, she guested with us, and that was her pick, so we spent a lot of time unpacking *Brown Sugar*. And there was a long wait, at least to me, from *Brown Sugar* to *Voodoo*. How much were you into *Brown Sugar*, the album, when that came out?

00:07:13 Tall Black Guy Guest Uh, I was—you're talking—so that had to come out what, '94?

00:07:18 Morgan Host '95.

00:07:19 Tall Black Guy Guest I would've been like, in 8th grade or something like that.

00:07:22 Morgan Host Sure. So it wasn't as attached then.

00:07:24 Tall Black Guy Guest I wasn't as attached, and my understand wasn't as much as it was when I got a little bit older. You know what I mean? Like, I knew

dope stuff, but, you know, it really didn't capture me like that. I'm trying to think what was even cracking at that time in '95. I think I was still heavily into like, Snoop, real heavy.

[Morgan responds affirmatively.]

I still liked soul music, but I remember at that time, Snoop, like the *Doggystyle* joint was like—that was my end all to be all right there.

00:07:50 Music Music

"Gin and Juice" off the album *Doggystyle* by Snoop Dogg. Up-tempo rap.

*With so much drama in the L-B-C
It's kinda hard bein' Snoop D-O-double-G
But I, somehow, some way
Keep comin' up with funky ass shit like every single day*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:08:03 Morgan Host

You talked about some of the production in the album, and we're gonna get into that a little bit later. But first I want to ask you about the album art, because we find sometimes when we sit down and talk to people that that stuff has a significance. This is the time when buying records and buying CDs was a big thing. Did you have any impressions of the album art itself? Either the front side, or of course the pictures on the back.

00:08:28 Tall Black Guy Guest

I think at the time, when it came out, I wasn't as—I really didn't understand the artwork itself. Like, I liked—I mean, when you look, I think—'cause I had bought the CD, so—

[Morgan responds affirmatively multiple times.]

—so I remember in the insert, like, it had some beautiful women, and I do remember that. But then it had—but on top of that, it was like some type of script or some type of font of different things that they were saying in the back. I couldn't really tell what it was. I thought it was dope. You know what I mean?

And then obviously when like, later, they showed like, the sessions and what he—what they did to actually make the record. Can't remember exactly what. Did they go to Brazil to make that?

00:09:04 Morgan Host

[Tall Black Guy affirms multiple times as Morgan speaks.]

Uh, I think they made it here, but I think they drew largely on—of course, the title of the album is *Voodoo*, which is a spiritual practice developed from the traditions of the African diaspora, of course. And uh, has a great tie between Caribbean and African traditions and Catholicism and such. A largely misunderstood religion, and maybe a surprise for some people, because D'Angelo grew up in a religious family.

00:09:32 Tall Black Guy Guest

Yeah, he's a Pentecostal. He's a Pentecostal, right?

00:09:33 Morgan Host

Yup. Hebrew Pentecostal. And so I remember thinking, looking at

the artwork, like, oh. Because it looks like—there’s a part where he’s dancing, which reminds me a lot of, you know, the Scriptures David, David dancing before the Lord. But also to, you’ve got a woman that’s—her eyes are closed in a trance-like movement, and then drums. Which is something I do want to get into, is the drums and percussions on this album.

I know you and I’ve known you for a long time, and I love how many drums appear in your remixes and how you tend to pull drums from what you sample. What appealed to you about this album musically, especially in the areas of percussions?

00:10:18	Tall Black Guy	Guest	I mean, if you got this album around this time and you were just learning how to make beats, Questlove did a great job of letting you listen to the album and get all the kicks and snares, percussions. I mean, I think he knew what he was doing when he did it. But yeah, just the textures of the drums and different snares and all that type of stuff.
			I remember—I know on “Chicken Grease”, in the beginning of it, it’s a snare that is famous for a lot of like, more major, mainstream pop songs, but it came off of “Chicken Grease.”
00:10:50	Music	Music	“Chicken Grease” off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D’Angelo. Funky drums and piano play for several seconds and then fade down, playing quietly in the background as Tall Black Guy speaks again.
00:10:55	Tall Black Guy	Guest	That’s the one right there. Everybody’s used that snare before, yo. <i>[He laughs.]</i>
00:11:01	Music	Music	<i>[“Chicken Grease” increases in volume]</i> <i>Let me tell you' bout the chicken grease Stuffs and things to make the people get out ya seat</i> <i>[Music fades out as Tall Black Guy speaks]</i>
00:11:10	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Yeah, so it’s been on so many—it’s been in um, I don’t even want to talk—I don’t even want to speak his name. I mean, we already— <i>[Morgan responds affirmatively with “oh sure”.]</i> But Chaney used it. I mean, it was—there’s so many people that have used that snare. Track mashes, they put that snare on fire, so, you know. But yeah, like the whole album, it was just full of jams.
00:11:28	Morgan	Host	And that song, of course, D’Angelo and also James Poyser, who is essential to the Soulquarians. To those who don’t know about the Soulquarians, the Soulquarians, they squadded up. They’re at Electric Lady Studios, which is very famous for Jimi Hendrix and his albums. And they were comprised of a lot of talents, including Questlove, you got Bilal, you got Roy Hargrove, Common, Erykah Badu, Poyser, Pino Palladino and such.

And they got together and produced not just *Voodoo*—’cause they’re all over *Voodoo*. And that also includes J Dilla, as you mentioned—but they also did The Roots’ *Things Fall Apart*. I know you—one of your picks to talk about was Common’s *Like Water for Chocolate*. They were behind that album. They were behind Slum Villlage’s *Fan-Tas-Tic, Volume 2*.

And once you know all of those albums they produced, there’s a lot of common themes amongst all those albums. Percussion is one. You mentioned at the top of the interview instrumentation, which is heavy. Saxophone. Roy Hargrove was all over this.

00:12:38	Music	Music	<p>“Feel Like Makin’ Love” off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D’Angelo. Chill, funky neo-soul.</p> <p><i>That’s the time I feel like making love...</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:12:56	Morgan	Host	What do you hear in the album, if any, that has an influence on your sound and your production, how you do music?
00:13:04	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<p>For <i>Voodoo</i>?</p> <p><i>[Morgan responds affirmatively.]</i></p> <p>I would say the instrumentation for sure, ‘cause I kind of employed it a little bit later. But yeah, I could definitely say probably the live instrumentation is a big thing. Like, I try to do it a lot more now. I mean, I still sample, but it’s more for like texture. But like, all the other stuff is usually either, either I add it, or I’ll get some, you know, a musician to come in and add it in the flavors.</p> <p>It was great songs too, though. It was really great songs.</p>
00:13:34	Morgan	Host	Can you talk a little bit more about when you say texture, what do you mean by that?
00:13:39	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<p>Texture means—because the thing is like, when you have these records that came before me, in like, you know, 1975 and I’m listening to this Ahmad Jamal record like, that recording right there, like we can’t reduplicate that, but the texture of it and the chords and all that stuff is a good base to start with.</p> <p>You know what I mean? And you can at least be influenced by it to create something that can be like it, but you can’t do the same thing. But I just like, I’m obsessed with a lot of the 70s stuff. You know what I mean? ‘Cause the sound of it is so—is just so crisp and clean, you know what I mean, and then warm. There’s a warmth to it.</p>
00:14:20	Morgan	Host	I mean, these songs are long by comparison to today. “Playa Playa” is seven minutes long, right? The shortest song on here is still like four and a half minutes, and that would be considered a long song today.

[Tall Black Guy affirms multiple times and laughs.]

You know what I'm saying? A really long song. Like, sort of, if we can get three minutes out of an artist now, we praise God for that. These songs are very long, and I think that has to do a lot with the instrumentation. I want to get into some of these tracks, because you mentioned you listened to it incessantly when you first got it.

Did you listen to it cover to cover without skipping a track?

00:14:58	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Oh, of course. Yes. I still do that today, shoot. <i>[He laughs.]</i>
00:15:02	Morgan	Host	Really?
00:15:03	Tall Black Guy	Guest	You can still do that today. You can still listen to <i>Voodoo</i> today and still not skip. That's what you call a great album.
00:15:10	Morgan	Host	Absolutely. No disagreement there. Was there a song that stuck to you more than others?
00:15:17	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Aw, man. Probably "Spanish Joint". <i>[Morgan responds emphatically.]</i>
00:15:21	Music	Music	"Spanish Joint" off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D'Angelo. Fast, up-tempo neo-soul with vocalizations. Plays for several seconds, then fades out as Tall Black Guy speaks.
00:15:40	Tall Black Guy	Guest	"Spanish Joint" was one, and then I used to love "The Line". "The Line" was my joint.
00:15:44	Music	Music	"The Line" off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D'angelo. Mid-tempo, funky, grooving neo-soul with smooth vocals. <i>And we haven't got much time I've gotta put it, put it on the line</i> <i>[Music fades out as Tall Black Guy speaks]</i>
00:15:59	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Yeah, "The Line" was my joint. One of the songs I remember, I ended up taking the lyrics and writing to a girl, but— <i>[He breaks off, laughing.]</i>
00:16:04	Morgan	Host	Okay, we gotta hear that—listen, Tall Black Guy, this— <i>Heat Rocks</i> is a safe space for confessions, alright? You gotta tell us about that.
00:16:14	Tall Black Guy	Guest	It was, uh, it was "One Mo'Gin." <i>[Morgan responds emphatically.]</i> Yeah, and I ended up taking some of the—I mean, I don't know off the top of my head, but I remember I ended up lifting some of the first verse to write to my then-girl that I was digging, or something like that.
00:16:32	Music	Music	"One Mo'Gin" off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D'Angelo. Slow, grooving,

smooth neo-soul with a steady drumbeat.

*I know some things have changed since the last
I've seen you, some good
Some for the bad, baby
Bad, baby*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:16:48 Morgan Host How'd that work out for you, brother?

00:16:49 Tall Black Guy Guest Oh, it was—it worked. *[He laughs again.]*

00:16:51 Morgan Host Okay. Alright then, listen. Success.

Uh, “Spanish Joint” was actually the second song I fell in love with. It is—tempo-wise, it’s different from a lot that we hear on here, and I think I thought because of the title that it was going to be more Spanish. But it’s so soulful, of course—

[Tall Black Guy affirms.]

Super super soulful. This is not to say that Spanish music isn’t soulful, but it sounds very much R&B soulful in a way that I wasn’t expecting based on, you know, the title. But I know that there’s a lot of, you know, diasporic music is diasporic music, and there’s a lot of crossover between Afro-Cuban, Afro-Peruvian, Afro-Spanish. You yourself have dabbled into Brazilian music many, many times in your own projects.

What appealed to you about “Spanish Joint”?

00:17:42 Tall Black Guy Guest I mean, it was just initial, the percussion, you know? And the tempo was a lot different than anything he ever, you know, that he released before, and then on this album.

00:17:50 Music Music “Spanish Joint” plays again

00:17:57 Tall Black Guy Guest When the bass comes in.

00:17:58 Music Music “Spanish Joint” continues to play.

00:18:05 Tall Black Guy Guest And then it—they just let the rhythm kind of catch you for a little bit, and then he comes in with the verse.

00:18:10 Music Music “Spanish Joint” continues to play.

*Whenever it rains I feel this way
A little somethin' to get me through this day
Give me a little that*

[Music fades out as Tall Black Guy speaks]

00:18:26 Tall Black Guy Guest That’s definitely one of my favorites.

00:18:28	Morgan	Host	<p>There's a lot of that on this album, and I think the patience and with where the song starts, and even how D'Angelo himself rides the beats with his own vocals has a lot to do with the fact that this live instrumentation. It's the time that you take and the patience that you have because you have all those instruments and and musicians in the room, whereas now, after a few, you know, a couple of bars and maybe some 40ooh's and aah's, that's the song. Which is hard, because you know you only got three minutes anyway.</p> <p>So this is—I thought this was a great build of the song. "Spanish Joint" is one of my favorites. I played it down on the radio. I'm sure my listeners are probably like, "Please, please Morgan, please don't play 'Spanish Joint' again."</p> <p><i>[Tall Black Guy laughs.]</i></p> <p>Uh, but it was one of my favorites. The song that—I did listen to this cover to cover. I bought this album at Virgin Records. I didn't buy it when it came out. I bought it on my birthday. I got a gift card to Virgin Records. My birthday is in February, so.</p> <p>I couldn't wait to get this album, and I listened to it, but I got stuck on "Greatdayndamornin."</p>
00:19:40	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<p><i>[Emphatically]</i> Aw, yeah. Yeah.</p>
00:19:41	Music	Music	<p>"Greatdayndamornin'/Booty" off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D'Angelo. Mid-tempo yet energetic neo-soul.</p> <p><i>Good days, bad days, halfway days Good times, bad times, halfway times Good days, bad days, halfway days</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:19:59	Morgan	Host	<p>Again, that song in particular, I hear J Dilla all over, and that drum. It isn't just that it's drums. It's a particular type of Dilla drum, as you well know, which is so precious and heavy. Not overdone, but just enough to accentuate the point. It's almost like J Dilla puts everything in bold.</p> <p><i>[Tall Black Guy laughs.]</i></p> <p>His drums, right, put everything in bold.</p>
00:20:30	Music	Music	<p><i>["Greatdayndamornin'/Booty" fades back in]</i></p> <p><i>But I'm still looking for a great day in the morning</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Tall Black Guy speaks]</i></p>
00:20:44	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<p>Yeah, I mean, he coached Quest to a T.</p> <p><i>[Morgan responds emphatically with "oh my gosh".]</i></p>
			<p>You know what I mean? He coached him to a T, and they—and</p>

Quest, he got it. 'Cause, you know, Quest was more on the grid, so he didn't even understand, you know, a little bit more lackadaisical. Almost like kind of lazy, you know what I mean? But it makes sense. That's what actually sounds good to the natural ear, when you really think about it.

00:21:09	Morgan	Host	When you're looking for things to sample, is your attraction the drums? Is that your first point of entry?
00:21:17	Tall Black Guy	Guest	My ear now goes straight to chords.
00:21:20	Morgan	Host	Really?
00:21:21	Tall Black Guy	Guest	I'm a chord fanatic, yeah. If drums are—they're the color, for sure, but I particularly look for the chords because then I know where I'm gonna take the drums, you know what I mean? But I'm in search for those chords that make you, you know, just cringe and, "Yo, what is that?" 'Cause there's some type of major to minor type of situation, you know what I mean, is just the heartfelt of it. I'm really attracted to chords for sure.
00:21:44	Morgan	Host	We'll take a quick break, and we'll be right back with <i>Heat Rocks</i> . Don't go anywhere.
00:21:49	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:21:51	Promo	Promo	Music: Intense sci-fi music.

Narrator: Friendship is tough, especially when you're constantly slaying carnivorous hellbeasts bent on your destruction.

[Squishing sounds are audible in the background.]

Morgan Kay: Hey, make sure to clean the tub. I might actually need to shower today.

Annie Powell: Oh, don't give me that. You've been wearing the same pair of track pants since Tuesday. I mean, they still have the size sticker on the leg.

Morgan Kay: Oh, yeah, they do. Well, still, I was thinking today might be the day.

Annie: Yeah, yeah—oh, it's still alive! Kill it!

Morgan Kay: I don't have any weapons!

Annie: Hit it with the showerhead!

[Yells, grunts, and splatters.]

Annie: Ugh. Shit. My burrito got some gunk on it.

Narrator: But that's just Fairhaven. We make it work. *Bubble*, the sci-fi comedy from MaximumFun.org. Just open your podcast app and search for *Bubble*.

00:22:45	Promo	Promo	<i>[Computer beeping.]</i>
			Music: Light, inspirational music plays.
			Jean-Luc Picard: Nearly two decades ago, Commander Data sacrificed his life for me...
			<i>[The clip continues in the background, inaudible under the dialogue.]</i>
			Ben Harrison: The Greatest Discovery is also about Star Trek: Picard.
			Adam Prancia: Jesse Thorn won't let us stay on the network unless we do all the Star Trek series.
			<i>[Ben chuckles.]</i>
			Adam: And so, here we are, doing a show about maybe our favorite Star Trek character of all time.
			Ben: If you're excited to watch the new <i>Star Trek: Picard</i> series and you'd like some veteran Star Trek podcasters to watch it along with, we're your guys! Sorry you're stuck with us.
			Speaker 1: The hell are you doing out here, Picard? Saving the Galaxy?
			<i>[The clip continues in the background.]</i>
			Adam: So, subscribe to <i>The Greatest Discovery</i> . You can find it anywhere you find podcasts.
			Ben: Or at MaximumFun.org .
			Speaker 2: <i>[Screaming, distant.]</i> Jean-Luc Picaard!
			<i>[The beep of a communicator.]</i>
00:23:29	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:23:32	Morgan	Host	Let's get into—let's get back into the album and talk a little bit about how successful this album was. Not only was it a personal jam for me and you and most of Black America, but the critics loved it, alright? It got the Grammy, uh, for best R&B album that year.
			<i>[Tall Black Guy responds affirmatively.]</i>
			<i>Rolling Stone</i> has listed it as one of the 500 greatest albums of all time. <i>Pitchfork</i> has it as one of the top 200 albums of the 2000s. So he burst on the scene with <i>Brown Sugar</i> , he gave us <i>Voodoo</i> , and then we waited.
00:24:07	Tall Black Guy	Guest	For 15 years. What was it, about 15-16 years?

00:24:09	Morgan	Host	A 15 year wait for <i>Messiah</i> . We always joke around the music business that there are very few artists that can afford to take breaks in between albums like this, and if you take a break, they have to be fantastic. Sade is one. Sade does something every 8 or 9 years.
00:24:25	Tall Black Guy	Guest	That's fine.
00:24:26	Morgan	Host	She— <i>[Morgan breaks off, laughing.]</i> Doesn't bother you?
00:24:29	Tall Black Guy	Guest	She can do that. No.
00:24:31	Morgan	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> But one of the things, one of the changes between <i>Brown Sugar</i> and <i>Voodoo</i> which was significant is he started playing the guitar.
00:24:39	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Yes, he did.
00:24:40	Morgan	Host	He started playing the guitar. <i>Brown Sugar's</i> claim to fame, or his particular introduction to us all, was the world of the Hammond B3 organ. And if you didn't grow up in church, or grew up outside of church, you wouldn't be as familiar with that instrument. In an interview, he said that when he was coming up in the church he was told when you get up there and play, you play without no form and no fashion, which in layman's terms is you just play—you just imbue the spirit that comes within you, and—
00:25:05	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Free. Right, free.
00:25:06	Morgan	Host	—right, and you don't do it for yourself. Between <i>Brown Sugar</i> and <i>Voodoo</i> , he learned a lot about the guitar, specifically by hanging out with Jesse Johnson and Raphael Saadiq. You can hear a lot of guitar on here, but I think where you hear it the most is “Left and Right.”
00:25:26	Music	Music	“Left and Right” off the album <i>Voodoo</i> by D'Angelo. Funky guitar under rapping. <i>Yo, yo My flows remarkable Doc walk like Caine from Kung Fu 'round the globe Throw obstacles I'll hurdle them Herb and whack MC's, Drum racks to the rims...</i> <i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:25:46	Morgan	Host	Now, at the time Method Man and Redman were killing.

00:25:49	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Yeah, they had just dropped “Da Rockwilder.”
00:25:52	Morgan	Host	They sure had. They sure had. So it was nice to hear them on this production. “Left and Right”, he said one of the things present on this album was a lot of rock chords. He wasn’t as familiar with the bass guitar but was getting into the bass guitar. And then the guitar. “Left and Right” is one of my favorite songs on here, and I didn’t think I could love it any more until I heard it reinterpreted.
00:26:15	Tall Black Guy	Guest	By who?
00:26:16	Morgan	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> By a beatmaker and a producer named Red Astaire.
00:26:21	Music	Music	“Follow Me” by Red Astaire. Grooving hip-hop. <i>If you dream to be free I can take you there Just follow me Baby I won’t</i> <i>[A series of chimes join the instrumentals]</i> <i>And if you dream to be free I can take you there Just follow me If you dream to be free I can take you there Just follow me</i>
00:26:34	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<i>[Speaking under the song]</i> Wow.
00:26:44	Morgan	Host	<i>[Music continues for a moment, then fades out as Morgan speaks]</i> A lot of us were playing that on the air for a while. That thing bangs from start to finish. It’s interesting, the parts of the song that he took from, and he released it on a record label called Gam Records. And they do a lot of interpretations and terprelations of songs. He took it to a different, really different direction.
00:27:06	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Yeah, it sounded like he got it off of the live album. That’s what it sounds like.
00:27:09	Morgan	Host	It does sound like that.
00:27:11	Music	Music	“Follow Me” plays again.
00:27:24	Morgan	Host	Let’s talk a little bit about D’Angelo, and him as a sex symbol. And let’s talk about that in relationship to “Untitled”. Did you see the video for “Untitled”?
00:27:35	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Oh, of course. Yeah. Yeah, it was a great video.
00:27:39	Morgan	Host	It was a great video.

[Tall Black Guy laughs.]

It was a great video, but I remember—

00:27:42 Tall Black Guy Guest

And a dope song, too.

00:27:43 Morgan Host

A very dope song.

00:27:44 Music Music

“Untitled (How Does It Feel)” off the album *Voodoo* by D’Angelo. Slow, melodic, grooving neo-soul.

How does it feel?

How does it feel?

I want to stop

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:27:59 Morgan Host

I need a moment, you know what I mean? Just thinking about—

[Tall Black Guy laughs uproariously.]

—thinking back about it. Give me a moment, Christian, to pull myself together. Um, there’s a great debate about, did D’Angelo really want this to become a sex symbol outside of that, was this meant to be that, or was it unintended?

I think it depends on your perspective and how you feel, you know, about that. I think on the one hand, coming from a religious background, as we know about him, and as what we’ve heard about him being a really shy guy, it’s easy to believe that this might not have been his decision. This might not—he might not have been in favor of that.

But however, the song is called “Untitled (How Does It Feel)” and the subject matter leads me to believe that at the very least he knew this was gonna be a very intimate, sexy, you know, sexual song. Maybe he didn’t intend the video.

But I like the song because of its similarity to a lot of Prince songs. And as we know about D’Angelo, he is a huge Prince fan, and in fact he covered Prince’s “She’s Always In My Hair”.

00:29:07 Tall Black Guy Guest

“Always In My Hair”, yeah.

00:29:08 Morgan Host

Uh-huh. There are similarities, and I want us to listen to both versions. If we could listen to both.

00:29:13 Music Music

“She’s Always In My Hair” by Prince. Psychedelic pop with a slow, steady drumbeat.

Whenever my hopes and dreams

Are aimed in the wrong direction

She’s always there

Tellin' me just how much she cares

[Music fades into...]

00:29:26 Music Music “She’s Always In My Hair” off the album *Scream 2* by D’Angelo. The same tune as before, but with a distinctly neo-soul flair.

Tellin' me, she's always in my hair (always in my hair)
She's always in my hair, my hair

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:29:38 Morgan Host Love the two. I think uh, D’Angelo’s has sort of a grimy element that takes it to a different place. But he has said on more than one occasion that Prince was a heavy, heavy influence on him.

00:29:54 Tall Black Guy Guest To make your point, or to run your point on that “She’s In My Hair” joint, there’s a remix out by one of my good friends, 14KT—

[Morgan responds emphatically.]

—that I—I have to send you this joint. But when I say that KT captured all of the emotion in that joint, yo. Aw, that joint is so sweet.

00:30:14 Morgan Host Did he?

00:30:15 Tall Black Guy Guest I have to send it to you.

00:30:16 Music Music “She’s Always In My Hair” by 14KT. Similar to the last version, but with a nearly gospel touch.

Tellin' me just how much she really cares (she cares)
She's always in my hair
She's always in my hair
My hair

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:30:34 Morgan Host Wow.

00:30:36 Tall Black Guy Guest *[Laughing]* You gotta listen to that.

00:30:37 Morgan Host That’s fire.

What do you think this album offers that we can’t get today in production, or that production today is lacking, in your own opinion?

00:30:47 Tall Black Guy Guest This album would be kind of hard to make now, because people—the patience. You know what I’m saying? Like you’re ready to get something now. Like, they sat with this record, you know, with all this stuff for five to seven years before they even released. You know what I mean?

In today’s time, that would be too long. Like they ready. Soon as you put out a record, “Where’s the next one?” And that’s in like,

three months. “When’s the next one? When’s the next one?” You know what I mean? So it’s always just—everything now is so disposable, you know? You know, you don’t let records just—you don’t sit and breathe with records for over a year, you know, I mean six months, let alone a year or more. You know what I mean? So.

- 00:31:29 Morgan Host I think also, too, because of the fact that we’re not patient—I mean, patience is one thing, but we’re not patient as listeners.
- 00:31:36 Tall Black Guy Guest No, not at all.
- 00:31:37 Morgan Host If you’re not back in a couple of years, we are quick to declare you washed and we’re quick to move on, and I can’t remember the last album that I’ve sat with and listened cover to cover.
- This one, to me, has really no skippable tracks. But if there is a track on here that you think is a sleeper, that doesn’t get the attention that it’s due or doesn’t get as much hype. Is there a track on here that you think doesn’t get the attention that it’s due?
- 00:32:04 Tall Black Guy Guest No, I think—I mean, I think you have to—I don’t think you can really single out any one track. For me, my own personal opinion, I think you have to listen to it from song one to song thirteen. Like, you have to do that. You have to do yourself justice and you have to listen to this record from front to back.
- 00:32:22 Morgan Host I think you’re so full with the first twelve tracks that by the time you get to “Africa”, you’re just so worn out.
- [Tall Black Guy laughs.]*
- Because the album is just so much fire when you get there, but “Africa” is not the one to skip. It’s gorgeous.
- 00:32:35 Music Music “Africa” off the album *Voodoo* by D’Angelo. Slow, ardent neo-soul.
- I dwell within a land that is meant
For many men not my tone*
- [Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*
- 00:33:00 Morgan Host It’s the benediction. It’s the benediction. You have been in a service with D’Angelo, with the Soulquarians. You’ve been with Method Man, Redman, Angie Stone, Roy Hargrove, Raphael Saadiq. By the time you get to this, it is D’Angelo pronouncing the benediction on this album. He’s giving everything. It is his prayer, and it very, very much feels like a complete—a complete work.
- 00:33:28 Music Music *[“Africa” fades back in as several voices vocalize. Music continues for several moments, then fades out again]*
- 00:33:47 Morgan Host I had the opportunity to see him while he was pushing *Messiah*. We’ll talk a little bit about *Messiah*, but he—I was in the bleeders. You know, I’m not ashamed to say I had one of the cheap tickets. I mean, I was so—so far back, I just, I couldn’t even see my future, okay?

[Tall Black Guy laughs.]

But at some point, the way that he broke the band down, it became two concerts. It was just D'Angelo with the band—and it was just the band. And both elements were so full that it was like, it could have been just one group, the Vanguard, which is his band for *Messiah*, and it could have been just D'Angelo.

And he did it so—the way that he ended the show was he had the band, and one band member left one at a time, until it was just him. So each singer left, and then the drummer left, and then the bass player left, until it was just him. And he did a really long adlib—it might have been a 10 or 15 minute adlib with just him and the band, just the instrumentation.

And so it drew me right back into *Voodoo* and the making of *Voodoo* and all these elements that we've been talking about. And then my sadness, because I thought, "I don't know if we'll have another moment like this, or another album like this, which is just full." For good, for bad, or for whatever. I think this is a moment in time, where we won't get back there again.

Did you find yourself as engaged with *Messiah* as this?

00:35:12 Tall Black Guy Guest

This is the thing. I like it just because I'm a fan. You know, I mean, I had actually gotten some of those songs, because you know, a lot of those—some of those songs are like over ten years or more, and I remember, I had some of them.

Because, you know, obviously he was putting everybody—he was getting everybody's hopes up about, you know, possibly putting out the new record. You know what I mean? So I just kept on that hope. Then when I actually listen to it, like, I love it for the instrumentations. It's even crazier than *Voodoo*. The only part I'm not really enjoying is the fact you cannot hear what he's saying.

[Morgan responds affirmatively.]

I can't hear what he's saying. He's not very clear. His clarity is off.

00:35:55 Morgan Host

It's very muted. And I've been wanting to ask, if I ever had a chance to sit down with him, was that on purpose? The sound is very muted, and I don't know if it was supposed to feel like an echo, because it sounds like an echo. And it is really hard to uh, to figure out what he said. I mean, I love—my jams on there are obviously "1000 Deaths" and "The Charade".

And I think a lot of it was going on in his world, in his observations, and what was going on in culture. Prayer, politics, society. So it very much feels like an echo. And of course, the songs are way shorter, um, than this. But, to your point, I'm a tried and true D'Angelo fan.

00:36:33 Tall Black Guy Guest

Yeah, you can't not be with that. You have to support a brother, even—I can still deal with him taking this long this time. Do I want something else that you can actually hear him? Of course, but—

[Morgan responds affirmatively.]

—I'm cool with just doing those two records. He made one of my top five albums of all time.

00:36:52	Morgan	Host	Really? So <i>Voodoo's</i> in your top five?
00:36:56	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Oh, yeah. Most definitely.
00:36:58	Morgan	Host	Can I ask about some of the others?
00:37:00	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Uh, I would have to think about that, because it moves around a bit.
00:37:05	Morgan	Host	Okay. But <i>Voodoo</i> stays on the list?
00:37:07	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<i>Voodoo's</i> gonna always stay on there. It has to.
00:37:10	Morgan	Host	Is this album—was this album right on time, was it ahead of its time, or was it timeless? Just when you think of <i>Voodoo</i> in general.
00:37:18	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<i>[Morgan responds affirmatively several times.]</i> I mean, you can't really—no, you can't—up until that time, up until 2000, I mean, there wasn't really—I mean, outside like, the stuff in the 70s. But I'm just saying, like, I'm born in the 80s, so like, anything from my generation upwards, we had never heard nothing like that before. You know what I mean? I mean, it's a timeless joint for sure, but at the time when it came out it was, you know, at least in the soul and what dope hip hop was at that time, this fit right into the mix.
00:37:53	Morgan	Host	Right into the mix. And it still goes, and so in my opinion, it's timeless. Because, to your point, as you said, you can go back and listen to—you can listen to this right now and it still goes. I put this on in preparation for this chat and it sounded just as fresh as when I heard it when it came out, January 11th of 2000.
00:38:17	Tall Black Guy	Guest	When was the last time you listened to this album?
00:38:19	Morgan	Host	Uh, today. In prep for the chat.
00:38:21	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Today was the last time—in prep for today. You haven't listened to it any other time, other than that?
00:38:25	Morgan	Host	Oh, no no no. I always listen to it, because as I said, I played "Spanish Joint" on the radio as a part of my set in every station I've been on, and I've been on four, okay? And everywhere that I've gone, "Spanish Joint" was always, always, always apart of it.

And I love "Send It On". I love "The Root." My favorite on here is "Greatdayndamornin'," and that's just a jam that gets played all the time. It's a mood album. You know, when I'm feeling a certain way or feeling very melancholy, I want to think, or even if I want to write, I play this album.

D'Angelo said in one interview that some of the best musicians come from the church, and I think—

00:39:06	Tall Black Guy	Guest	I could say that.
00:39:07	Morgan	Host	Yup, yup. I grew up in the church, too, and I know a lot of people that have made that transition. You know, there used to be a time where you didn't want to tell anyone that you were playing secular music.
00:39:17	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Secular music?
00:39:18	Morgan	Host	Secular music was just uh—that was not cool. But I do think there is a lot of to be said about growing in the church and learning how to play church music and making that transition. And uh, no matter what album, be it <i>Messiah</i> , <i>Voodoo</i> , or <i>Brown Sugar</i> , you still hear that Hammond B3 and those gospel chords.
			If you had to describe this album in three words, what would they be?
00:39:45	Tall Black Guy	Guest	<i>[Laughs]</i> Can I curse?
00:39:47	Morgan	Host	Yes.
00:39:48	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Awesome as shit.
			<i>[Both laugh.]</i>
00:39:52	Morgan	Host	I love it. I love it.
00:39:54	Music	Music	"Send It On" plays again.
			<i>Tell me what will I do Send it right back to you</i>
			<i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:40:15	Morgan	Host	Tall Black Guy with us—joining us to talk about D'Angelo, Michael Archer, and this thing of beauty called <i>Voodoo</i> . So glad we had a chance to sit down and talk to you about this. Can you let us know what you're working on now? What's coming up next for you?
00:40:32	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Um, actually I'm—actually I have to put together this instrumental. It's an interim between my actual, official like record—I have to put together something for Fab Beats, so I'm gonna be a part of this uh, producer series called Baker's Dozen.
			And basically it's just like, I release instrumentals I've had, you know, I've never put out, or stuff I've put out and don't—you know, obviously because of the way album music goes, where it—you put it out and then it kind of falls to the wayside. So I'm just putting it into a collection of joints I had all on one record.

00:41:08	Morgan	Host	Where can people get in touch with you on socials? What are your social media handles?
00:41:11	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Uh, Twitter is @SirTallBlackGuy. Um, Instagram is @TallBlackGuyProductions. Facebook is Facebook.com/tallblackguyproductions . Pretty much if you just Google Tall Black Guy Productions, I come up. That's it.
00:41:25	Morgan	Host	Tall Black Guy.
00:41:28	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Yeah. I'm on all of them. Instagram, Soundcloud, Twitter, Facebook, everything.
00:41:33	Morgan	Host	Tall Black Guy representing the city of Detroit. It was a wonderful day when I came to know his music, as I was a DJ there on KPFK. It has blessed me, as it will bless you, so find him on iTunes, Bandcamp, and all digital stations and get into what he's doing. Thank you so much for being with us to talk about this gorgeous album, <i>Voodoo</i> .
00:41:53	Tall Black Guy	Guest	Thank you, sister Rhodes, for having me on the show.
00:41:56	Oliver Wang	Host	You've been listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.
00:42:00	Morgan	Host	Our theme music is "Crown Ones" by <i>Thes One of People Under The Stairs</i> . Shoutout to Thes for the hookup.
00:42:06	Oliver	Host	<i>Heat Rocks</i> is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Dueñas, who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.
00:42:13	Morgan	Host	Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.
00:42:18	Oliver	Host	We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studios in the West Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles.
00:42:30	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:42:32	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:42:33	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:42:34	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.