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THE HARLEM ANGELS

by

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Project Philosophy, Synopsis, Character Breakdowns and Weekly
Opening Sequence.

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The goal of THE HARLEM ANGELS is to put forth positive, intelligent and empowered multi-cultural role models in an early prime-time, cross-over, live action, half-hour (or one hour) dramedy with music. A sort-of Hip-Hop Highway To Heaven meets an Urban Charmed. A trio of funky, urban, apparitional, Hannah Montana's with an educational bent.

THE HARLEM ANGELS

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THE HARLEM ANGELS, a singing group of three bright, beautiful and talented teen-age girls from Harlem, who, on the pinnacle of break-through success are killed in a car crash on their way to give a performance. The situation is further complicated by the presence of Eddie Ex, an inner city Hip-Hop record entrepreneur and owner of EX Records. Both his street name and the name of his company are Edwin's misguided attempt to link himself to the "hip and commercial cachet" of Malcolm X. Eddie blew his opportunity with both THE HARLEM ANGELS and their manager, Miss Robinson, when he made a disingenuous attempt to help them in their music career. He believes THE HARLEM ANGELS' unexpected death has cost him any chance with Miss Robinson or of recouping his investment. After all, he says, "They ain't Tupac." His self-serving gesture of giving Miss Robinson the master tape and tearing up his contract is his unknowing, one charitable act.

Ironically, as a result of THE HARLEM ANGELS' tragic end, Miss Robinson, now controls their recording rights. She is then unknowingly thrust into an "angel-aided" heroic act which provides a platform for some local interest in Miss Robinson and the music that she feared would never be heard. Due to the interest their first and only CD/album slowly, but surely, gets more and more publicity.

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The music then gets picked up by a legit record company, and goes to #1 on the charts, more readily and more widely distributed than it would have even if Eddie had not decided to shelve it -- which was what he had intended in the first place.

She accidentally, and unwittingly, first "summons" her late charges when she drops the original and precious CD and polishes the scratches from it. She does not learn this until later. However, now devastated by their loss and feeling guilty from the profits she is making from THE HARLEM ANGELS' posthumous success, she seeks to mollify her pain by helping "turn things around" for troubled individuals/families, etc. in Harlem.

However, Miss Robinson, learns that money alone is not the answer. While depressed and melancholy, perhaps frustrated at taking on a humanitarian task that is more than she can handle alone, plays a song from THE HARLEM ANGELS' CD and is surprised to find that she has summoned THE HARLEM ANGELS who have "come back" to help her in her quest to be a force for positive change. Miss Robinson comes to realize that whenever a situation is beyond her own single effort all she needs to do to summon the help of THE HARLEM ANGELS is to play a song from their CD (or demo tapes from their unreleased second recording) and they will be there.

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The girls sometimes rely on un-earthly powers as well as the powers of kindness, logic, truth and self-determination, (sometimes expressed through song) with a little help from their previous (and continuing!) hard-earned learning skills and education, natural talents, raw energy, and good looks.

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As a clue to their personalities their names are:

ANGELINA: 13-15 y/o African-American girl. Nicknamed Lena, sometimes teasingly called Dangelina or Strangelina by the other two because she always manages to do some strange or dangerous thing that seems to get them into sticky situations. The potential vamp of the trio, a devil of an ANGEL. Comes from troubling and unfortunate circumstances.

ANGELIKA: 13-15 y/o Hispanic girl. Nicknamed Lika because she's so likable and sees the good in everyone. "Miss Congeniality." Comes from troubling and unfortunate circumstances.

ANGELALA: 13-15 y/o African-American girl. Nicknamed La-La for her laid-back L.A. personality and just a little slower than the others to get "it" - whatever "it" happens to be at the time. Sometimes teasingly called Agita-Angelala because she can be so exasperating. Comes from troubling and unfortunate circumstances.

MANAGER/TEACHER: Late 20's - early 30's African-American woman. Miss Antoinette Robinson (although her first name is never used or known for a long time), the relatively young and very attractive school teacher/choir-director/mentor who rescued these girls from their predicaments and then discovers their talent in her school/church choir.

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Miss Robinson slowly and patiently works with them until the concept of The Harlem Angels comes to be.

EDDIE: Late 20's - early 30's African-American man. Edwin M.L.K Simon a/k/a Eddie Ex. Record company owner. In his late 20's to early 30's, Eddie is an inner city entrepreneur, always on the make, hustling and just this side of legal. He has found ready cash available in hardcore, sexist, and violence laden hip-hop music with virtually no redeeming social value other than the dirtier and nastier it gets the more money he seems to make. Though highly intelligent he is exploiting his community's weaknesses rather than playing to its strengths. He is a virtually unredeemable character until he meets Miss Robinson.

PRINCIPAL CLAIRE CLIFFORD: Early 40's. Miss Robinson's officious, immediate supervisor. Sometimes a bit too hands-on with a penchant for a malaprop or two or inverting parts of words or phrases. Doesn't always communicate what she means the way she intended to. Not always as helpful as she thinks she is. Miss Robinson will soon have to try to start offering plausible explanations to Principal Clifford for strange happenings.

DONNIE (THE DJ): A local DJ who sees the tribute website that Miss Robinson created for THE HARLEM ANGELS.

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He emails Miss Robinson, inviting her to an on-air interview where he gives Miss Robinson the opportunity to tell the story of THE HARLEM ANGELS and play some of their music. Donnie's broadcast is heard by a legitimate record mogul, Lester Daniels, who is the owner of PolySlam records.

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THE WEEKLY, OPENING SEQUENCE:

MUSIC STARTS on, initially, gray screen. OPENING CREDITS BEGIN. The song (for now) is Eric Clapton's Change The World performed by a female, R&B singer (Patti LaBelle?) in a pop/hip-hop/gospel style - or THE HARLEM ANGELS will have their own, unique theme song in this vein.

FAST FADE IN and we are going quickly through some rooms of a bleak apartment in obvious disrepair. There are no adults around although there is a SPRING-ACTION RAT TRAP with a few COCKROACHES crawling over the MOLDY CHEESE and RANCID COLD CUTS being used as bait. As we move swiftly through the rooms with BROKEN WINDOWS (which open only to brick walls or other depressing vistas), BROKEN FLOORBOARDS and PARTS OF WALLS MISSING, TATTERED FURNITURE, etc. we see a 1 YEAR OLD, FEMALE INFANT of AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE (it is ANGELALA as a baby). She is OUTSIDE of her PLAYPEN that has a GAPING HOLE in it. We can see a whole section of the room from FLOOR to CEILING with her sitting, baby-style, on the floor. PAINT is PEELING and HANGING from the BLUE ceiling and RED walls. There are BRIGHTLY COLORED PAINT CHIPS scattered around her. She reaches for one and as she is about to put one in her mouth we

CUT TO:

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AFTERNOON, OUTDOORS, IMPOVERISHED, URBAN STREET SETTING, DEPRESSED AREA. There is some GARBAGE in the streets and on the SIDEWALK just outside a BROKEN-FENCED, VACANT LOT which is LITTERED with URBAN REFUSE, from common GARBAGE to SOFAS, OLD MATTRESSES, etc., to a BURNED-OUT HULK OF A CAR. We see the BACK of a MALE STRANGER attired in a TRENCHCOAT. He moves furtively and approaches a 7 YEAR-OLD AFRICAN-AMERICAN/HISPANIC GIRL (ANGELIKA as a child) who is self-absorbed playing HOPSCOTCH by herself. We never see the stranger's face as he holds up a TATTERED PHOTO of an ADORABLE PUPPY in one hand and a some CANDY BARS in the other. The girl takes one tentative step forward, then two steps back. As she starts to turn away the stranger sweeps her up and in one motion throws her into his CAR and as the car speeds away we.....

CUT TO:

.....a different neighborhood, although not much better. It is DUSK. A PIMP-MOBILE pulls up to the curb and a MASSIVE HAND, ADORNED WITH GAUDY, TWO-FINGERED GOLD RINGS AND JEWELRY, shoves a young, barely, TEEN-AGE AFRICAN-AMERICAN GIRL (it is a near contemporary ANGELINA) out onto the sidewalk. She is dressed much too provocatively for her years and her make-up, which is supposed to make her look older, only makes her look more pitiful. She is left standing there as the car drives off.

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LIGHT RAIN begins to fall. She makes a half-hearted attempt at trying to solicit a car or stranger when the light rain turns into a TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR. She is getting SOAKED and her make-up is RUNNING. She seeks shelter in the TRANSOM of a DOORWAY. She is SHIVERING and CRYING. She doesn't see it but, behind her, the door OPENS and the MUSIC gets LOUDER as she is bathed in a WARM LIGHT from within. A FEMININE HAND reaches out and pulls her INSIDE. We IMMEDIATELY CUT TO INDOORS to the RECREATION ROOM of a CHURCH. She has been pulled inside by MISS ROBINSON. Inside the rec room, a CHOIR of some 15 to 20 mostly ethnic/minority girls ranging in age from 6 to 16 is the source of the music. Simultaneously, the SONG ENDS. Angelina COLLAPSES, SOBBING from EXHAUSTION, HUMILIATION and now, RELIEF, at the feet of Miss Robinson who CATCHES her before she can hit the floor. They sink to the floor.....together.....embracing. They are immediately surrounded by the concerned girls from the choir.

END CREDITS. FADE OUT to COMMERCIAL.