

Ray

useful phrases from the screenplay; note examples of “nonstandard” English

- never let nobody or nothing turn you into no cripple [*“invalid,” disabled person—in this case, a mental attitude as well as physical condition*]
- on the dot [*right on time*]
- what axe you play? [*axe=musical instrument other than drums*]
- Vice is on my a** for letting you underage kids in. [*Vice=Vice Department of police*]
- new blood [*fresh faces, new talent*]
- score big [*achieve a big success OR obtain/use a large amount of narcotics*]
- double scale as leader plus 10% [*scale=standard rate of payment per union contract*]
- he can flop at my place [*flop=couch surf, be a short-term guest resident*]
- as green as a blade of grass [*a complete noobie*]
- you keep me high while they talk the business?
- straighten out and fly right
- scratch a liar and find a thief
- you two have been gaming me since I got here [*gaming=deceiving, exploiting, or manipulating*]
- Y'all got to learn to read and write real good, so you never have to work for people like that.
- don't tell mama nothing
- the place where the Negro comes to spread his wings [*act and feel free, relax*]
- give me some skin [*здорово*]
- the Lord done took him home [*i.e., he died*]
- I'm not playing no more
- This ain't no weed, Ray. And we ain't snorting no bitch. This is boy. Boy'll make your a** null and void. [*weed=marijuana; bitch=cocaine; boy=heroin*]
- it's his funeral [*i.e., he will have to deal with the consequences himself*]
- I won't beat around the bush with you [*i.e., I'm going to tell you directly, honestly*]
- we call it “country dumb”
- every now and then
- to make a living
- stride piano [*jazz/blues piano style; left hand “strides” up and down the keyboard*]
- sharecropping [*farming someone else's land for a share of the harvest*]
- she passed away [*i.e., died*]
- she didn't want me carrying around no tin cup [*i.e., begging, panhandling*]
- there's only seven cats on this record [*cat=musician*]
- you're turning God's music into sex
- without the church attitude
- you can talk 'til you're blue in the face
- I really dig your sound [*dig=admire*]
- [if] we try to make it through these cracker speed traps [*African American slang: cracker=white person, or ignorant white person, or Southern white person*]
- ain't nothing free in this world but Jesus
- and then you bend some crazy note
- he's got that junkie itch . . . he's totally hooked
- your slip is hanging
- I've gone middle-of-the-road [*i.e., conventional; no longer innovative or avant-garde*]
- I'm never playing to Jim Crow again. Ever. [*Jim Crow=nickname for institutionalized racial segregation*]
- “hit the road, Jack” [*i.e., get lost*]
- I won't have you living hand-to-mouth, like me [*hand-to-mouth=in poverty, barely able to feed oneself*]
- I'm not playing to Jim Crow joints ever again
- to lose your fan base
- if I want to shoot up, I shoot up [*take narcotics, especially by injection*]
- Ray Charles was banned from performing [*placed on a list of those not allowed to perform*]