

TWO FIFTH

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This is a book with 12 fiction short stories.

Please enjoy my book that I wrote.

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Chapter 1

3A

Just because I'm 6 years old and four feet doesn't mean I don't know what crack smells like or what reefer smells like. People call me Shake Ski, when I was 2 years old I use to shake when I was hungry, ski I don't know. I like to listen to Run-DMC's F-R-E-S-H, I love the song, my uncle Eli has turntables set up in the living room and that's the only record I play because that's the only record that was left on the turntables. My uncle Corey bought me a du-rag yesterday, I want a bee hive like him, uncle Corey is fly, he has all the sneakers, he plays basketball real good, he is tall, and he has the best chain I ever seen. Uncle Eli don't play, he will kill, he know how to do graffiti, all the trains you see he did it, he nice, Uncle Eli can draw anything and he can DJ better than Jam Master Jay. My mother be working, she can cook, and buys me anything I want. My mother gave me six dollars when I turned 6, I still have it, my uncle said save it until I get a million dollars, I think that's make believe money, but I will save it until I get a million. My favorite show is double dare on nickelodeon we just got cable. I

know how to write cursive, I know how to write my mother's name in cursive. My uncle's friend Fat Keith bought me a rope chain with Jesus on the cross, my mother said I can't wear it to school because I might lose it. My grandfather bought me a blue shirt but I think it's for girls because the buttons are on the back I told him thank you, but I'm not wearing it to school. Every time Uncle Corey picks me up from school in his beige car he always feeds me sardines with mustard, tuna fish, or franks, we never go to McDonald's . When Uncle Eli picks me up from school he takes me to McDonald's, I always get a hamburger, Uncle Eli gets a cheeseburger , that's nasty I only eat grilled cheese. I won't put it on a hamburger. My uncles took me to Toy "R" Us and said point to everything you want Santa Clause to get you and then when Christmas came everything I wanted was under the tree. Uncle Eli bought me a black and white fur coat and Uncle Corey bought me Air Jordans. On the weekends my uncles have their girlfriends and friends over the house and I like to sit and listen to them talk it's fun plus I learn a lot because kids my age only know about cartoons, some can't

even read. Uncle Eli reads to me the Malcolm X book, that's how I know how to read, my mother doesn't want me in the living room with them because she said what they talk about is not for children, I tell my mother give me five more minutes because I'm having fun just listening. My mother fell down the steps the other day we live on the third floor sometimes we take the elevator sometimes we walk. My mother had on high heels and tight jeans, I don't know why her jeans were so tight, she could barely walk in them, she fell. I was at the top of the stairs and I said I'm going to call 911, my mother said no come down here and take the elevator back up, I was holding my mother's hand and she was limping, I said I don't have to go to school right? Because you hurt yourself, my mother said you can stay home with me. My mother broke her ankle and didn't go to the hospital, my uncles called her the terminator, she just be limping, she said she will be okay, she said that's why you have to drink milk with your dinner Shake, sometimes I drink grape ginseng with my dinner like Uncle Eli. Uncle Eli drink the grape ginseng before and it had a roach in it, I told him and he said

roaches are good for you. Uncle Corey is 6'6 and he scared of mice like me, I was in Uncle Corey's room with him watching Cheer's and my mother screamed Corey come here he got up quick and I followed him she said get this mouse it's under the stove on the mouse trap, me and Uncle Corey ran back to the room real quick. I remember Uncle Eli killed a mouse with a big dictionary he seen it running around and just threw it down on top of it. The other day Uncle Eli got into a fight at work and the dude followed him back to where we live. Uncle Eli chased the dude around the neighborhood, Uncle Eli took his dress shoes off so he can run faster. Fat Keith saw what was going on but he is too fat to help, so he seen my Uncle Corey and there other friends and they all beat the guy up. Uncle Corey had blood all over his brand new Avia's, I was mad, I said Uncle Corey you messed your sneakers up he said I'm going to clean them with a toothbrush and soap it will be okay. When you come to my house there is a closet right in front of you then the living room is on the right and the kitchen is on the left, we have two refrigerators and a washer machine and dryer in the

kitchen. You go down the hall and turn right is the bathroom where I brush my teeth. I stand on the toilet and lean towards the mirror to see. It's Uncle Corey's room next to the bathroom then it's me and my mother's room, then you go down the hall it's Uncle Eli's room, he has a chin up bar, my Uncle Eli looks like Rambo, he even got a knife with a compass, sometimes I sharpen his knife he just say Shake be careful. I was playing basketball in my living room, and the small ball got stuck between the window bars, when I took the ball out the window, I looked outside and I seen Man Man walking in the grass, then I seen Man Man pick up a cigarette and started smoking, I yelled out the window Man Man put it down, he looked up but didn't know who said it and he started running.

Chapter 2

Red Apple

Rappers step to me they want to get some, but I'm the Kane yo! So what's the outcome, they can't get with me and your history and with blah, blah, your history, that's my favorite song. I have Al B. Sure poster, Big Daddy Kane, Salt and Pepper, Spinderella look the best, and Slick Rick. I'm the only child me and my mother Wanda, my mother is 35 years old. My mother is Spanish, I don't know what kind of Spanish, she just be speaking it all the time, I'm black like my father, but he don't live with me, I just seen his picture, I never seen him in person only when I was baby. I'm named after him, my name is Randy Leon Meyers Jr. My mother said he suppose to come see me soon. My mother works for sanitation she do clerical work. I have a girlfriend her name is Takeya, I don't talk to her on the phone, we just be talking in school and playing tag. She be letting me feel her butt, but she don't never want to kiss me, I think she scared, I be telling her don't be scared. We took school pictures yesterday and she wore a red

dress, and I said you look like a model, she started smiling. She be writing me letters all the time, but act shy when we are face to face, I don't know why. I was on the bus going to school this girl smelled just like Takeya, I kept looking for Takeya but it was the girl. We played 7 Up in class the other day and Takeya came by and pulled my thumb down, when it was time to guess who put your thumb down, I purposely said someone else because I didn't want anybody to think we have something going on. Takeya's cousin is in the third grade named Simone, we went to day care together back in the day, we use to go in the bathroom together and kiss each other, but Takeya won't kiss me. When I be seeing Simone she just be saying what's up, she know Takeya is my girlfriend now. Pepperoni, milk, sazon, eggs, apple juice, 2 cans of tomato sauce, oxtails, this is my shopping list, this is what my mother gave me plus \$20 to go to the supermarket. The cashier there is real pretty, I always stare at her and she be looking back at me, I don't never say nothing because I don't know what to say. Sometimes she don't even be at the supermarket when I go. Me and my mother went

downtown to the clinic for my check-up and the supermarket girl got on the bus with her friends, her friends wasn't even pretty like her, they had their book bags on, I didn't go to school that day. Me and my mother were sitting in the back of the bus, the supermarket girl was like sitting in the middle, she kept looking back at me. She got off the bus before us and I turned around in my seat and was staring at her outside the window, she was looking back at me too. When the bus started to drive off, I waved by, she waved back at me, I was dumb happy. I asked my mother how old is she my mother didn't know who I was talking about, because she was reading her Jet magazine the whole bus ride, I told my mother the supermarket girl and my mother said 15, my mother said she is too old for you. I said to myself, why she be looking then, I know she like me, a lot of girls be liking me, they be in school talking to me like my friend said you cute, or they be writing me mad letters and when we go out for lunch they be hitting me and running away. I be liking real pretty girls though, this lady at my mother's job, always be talking to me smiling and all that, I don't be saying nothing but smiling

every time I see the lady at my mother's job, I be wanting to kiss her and rub her legs, she be wearing skirts and stockings, she be making me feel a type of way. She like the ladies on Cinemax on late night, she black, she not white. If I tell my mother I like the lady at her job my mother is going to be upset, and she is not going to let me watch cable anymore. I tried to give myself a line with my mother's razor and I cut my middle finger, it wouldn't stop bleeding. I started crying and showed my mother, she started to give me a spanking and I started crying more. My mother bought some Chinese food the other day, it was beef lo mein, I didn't finish it and my mother didn't finish it. When I went to the refrigerator the next day to eat some more, it smelled like horse do-do, I told my mother, she threw it in the garbage, and said I'm never buying Chinese food again, I said I'm never going to eat it if it smells like do-do the next day. I'm going to be a vampire for Halloween, I told Takeya she should wear her red dress with vampire teeth and she can be my vampire wife. I forgot to say the Nike Air Force came out, high top's and my mother took me to Vet's Sneaker Store and they were

sold out, then we went to Buster Brown's and they didn't have my size, after that we went to X-Press, they was about to close, they had the gate half down, they still let us in, my mother said the only reason they letting us in because they want that money. It was a man on line in front of us buying the same sneakers, he had a lot of singles paying for his sneakers, my mother whispered to me, he is a drug dealer, be a doctor Randy not a drug dealer, I said I know Ma, I don't want to get shot.

Chapter 3

360

I was in P.A.L. all summer and didn't get hurt, I ran around, jumped, climbed and swam. We went to Orchard Beach with the crabs in the water, I didn't get clawed. I ran across a wide open street and didn't get hit by a car, Kendell did, his mother was real mad at him. I played two hand touch football and nobody can catch me, I'm too fast. I was riding bikes, doing bunny hops and everything, didn't get hurt. I rode on the back of a city bus from Lexington to Broadway with Samuel and didn't fall down, Sam did though, the bus left him I was riding by myself. I went elevator surfing with Philip in my building and didn't get crushed, Phil almost did, I told him to jump to the other elevator. I be mad wild, nobody should dare me, I can do anything. I did a back flip off the UPS truck, into the street, everybody I was with was scared, they was scared because they thought I was going to land where the cars were driving at. I be jumping from building to building sometimes up on the roof, it be real fun, I don't think I'm going to fall be-

cause the buildings are real close together. I jumped in a wishing well the other day, people thought I was going to take change, I just was jumping off the lion and diving into the water, I wanted to swim it was real hot outside. The fourth of July that just passed I got into a roman candle fight, I didn't even get hit, I was tagging everybody, they was crying too. On the news they said a kid blew off his thumb and pointer finger lighting up a blockbuster by keeping it in his hand too long. I have all my fingers. I remember when I had jumping jacks in my hand for a long time, it just burned my finger a little bit, I didn't even get a blister, and my fingers didn't blow off. Me and Roger jumped one whole flight of stairs from the eleventh floor all the way down to the first floor. We were tagging up in the staircase and housing police saw us but I didn't twist my ankle like Roger, housing police caught him. I remember this girl from school dared me to ride between two train cars when the train goes outside the tunnel and it's raining, I did it everybody else was scared to do it, I'm not scared of anything, except snakes, I remember I was on a trip with P.A.L., we went the zoo and I went through this part

with lizards, frogs and a lot of snakes, I was real scared, it felt like snakes were crawling all over me even when we went back on the cheese bus. I kept dusting myself off like Mr. Alfred the drunk, he smell like onions and beer every time I walk by him. Mr. Alfred is like my complexion with gray eyes but his eyes is always red and he don't have no teeth, he be moving his mouth like my little sister, she 3 months. Mr. Alfred is stupid we telling him to go get his coat, scarf, and hat because it's about to snow, he goes and gets his coat when it's summertime. I remember Henry peed inside his water gun and sprayed Mr. Alfred, Mr. Alfred was so drunk he just fell asleep, we were dying laughing. That's why I'm never going to drink alcohol, and be like Mr. Alfred, he stupid and dumb. Guess where I'm at right now? Bored like I don't know what, that's why I'm writing. My mother took me to my cousin's house on Labor Day weekend for a cookout. My cousin gets on my nerves, Larry he always think he better than me because he live on the eastside and go to catholic school. I'm better than him in Basketball, I'm taller than him, his girlfriend likes me, she always be rolling her

eyes at me, my mother said that's when a girl likes you, she just scared to say it. Larry always saying what new sneakers he just got and what new games he got for GameBoy, it don't bother me, my mother's friend works at KB toy store in Yonkers. I know Larry never been to Yonkers. Larry was trying to do tricks on the skateboard in front of everybody, I was looking at him, like you don't even know how to do tricks. I jumped on the skateboard and started doing all these tricks, everybody was like do that again, how you do that, he better than you Larry, Larry started sucking his teeth, and he said I bet you can't do no 360, I was like watch me stupid. I started doing it, I'm spinning around and I felt myself falling off and falling back, it happened so quick but so fast. I thought I was going to bust my head wide open, so I put my left arm behind my head, so I don't hit it on the ground. When I was laying on the ground, it felt like I was dreaming, I seen my cousin and his friends running away. I looked at my arm and it was bent in half like the letter U, I didn't even cry because it felt like I was dreaming. I got up and put my arm on my shoulder and went to my cousin's house, I told my

mother I fell, she said call the ambulance to my aunt, I said no I'll be okay, let me just take a nap, my mother said you in shock. My mother told my uncle to take us to Mount Sinai and I been here for four days know, they did surgery on me, and they was asking me all these questions with my mother and father not there, my father came to the hospital right away with my sister but he couldn't find my mother, and he didn't know I was in surgery. When I woke up in recovery I started bugging out, it was all these people around all these sick people, and I kept yelling for my mother, I was crying and everything. My father bought me a ham and cheese sandwich, with orange juice, he put mustard on the sandwich, I told him I don't eat mustard he told me he told the guy mayonnaise. My father left to take the sandwich back and got a new one. I got a headache, and now I have to go back to school with a cast on my arm.

Chapter 4

You a Sucker

I was 5 years old when I told my mother to go to the hospital and get another baby and make sure it is a boy. My mother said it doesn't work like that, I know what she means now. My father died in a car accident before I was born, my mother was actually pregnant with me and in the passenger seat when it happened, a drunk driver ran a stop sign. My mother went into labor right there on the spot, my mother was 7 months at the time, I was born premature. My mother decided to keep the car, I seen it, it's crushed you can't drive, I told my mother you was in that, how you alive, she said God and to raise you. My God father has a junkyard, he works on cars, and my mother told him to keep the car in one of his empty garages. My mother works for the government and she met this guy named...well I'm going to call him Sucker. My mother said she knew Sucker for a year before she introduced him to me. Sucker was short, he was taller than me but he was the same height as my mother, because I have a picture of my

mother and father and my father is mad taller than my mother. Sucker smokes cigar's all the time and they stink. I really never was raised with a man being that my father is dead, so I looked at Sucker like a step-father. He picked me up from school and I gave my mother a secret password which was spaghetti, so when I see him outside the school, I be like what's the password and he would say spaghetti. He will take me to Blimpie's and I will get a regular turkey and provolone with mayonnaise, lettuce, onions, salt and pepper and vinegar with a fruit punch. He would take me to the after school program after I eat and pick me back up in his black Lincoln with burgundy seats, everybody was like you be knowing cab drivers, they said this because his car looked like a cab. Every time we would be riding somewhere, people would try to flag Sucker down, thinking he was a cab. Sucker was real nice to me and my mother I can tell they really liked each other, I always use to say when we would be riding in his car when y'all getting married, I would always sit in the backseat. Sucker would say we will get married soon. I was so happy, my mother was so happy. One day my

mother told me she is pregnant, I told her, I thought you had to get married first, my mother said not all the time. I asked my mother so when are you going to start to get fat, my mother said real soon, I said is it a boy or a girl, because I want a little brother, my mother said she would find out in a few months. I said where is Sucker he didn't pick me up from school in a long time. My mother said he is very busy at work. As time is moving a long my mother is mad fat now she don't even look the same, she almost ugly for real. I found out I'm having a little brother, I'm mad happy. I'm going to teach my brother everything I know, I'm going to teach him how to play loadies because I'm nice, I'm going to teach him how to play basketball because I'm nice, and I'm going to teach him how to ride a bike. When my brother is born, I'm going to wrestle him, so he can be tough and know how to fight. I never lost a fight, all the fights I had, I be winning, people think they can beat me because I never go to school looking like a welfare or SSI child, I be looking fresh all time, I'm never dirty, I always have a fresh cut, fresh kicks, and fresh clothes. My God father that works in the junk yard always

told me stay fresh and clean, he said look at me, I'm fresh and clean and I work on cars all day, it's all about presentation. He said I don't know what that means, all I know is that I'm fly. After we came home with my little brother me and my mother, my little brother's name is Sayjohn. I told my mother to call or beep Sucker because he wasn't at the hospital at all to see his son, my little brother, my mother said I will call him. My brother got like four teeth now, and now that I think about it, I haven't seen Sucker since my mother told me she was pregnant, and she was pregnant a long time, it was a real long time like Christmas passed and everything. One night I was sleeping and Sayjohn was sleeping in the bed with me, I kept hearing things, I thought it was Sayjohn crying but it wasn't, I got up out the bed and went to my mother's room she wasn't there, then I heard whispering coming from the door, all the lights was off and it was pitch black, I couldn't see, but it sounded like Sucker talking, then I seen my mother whipping her tears away, I never seen my mother cry, I was about to cry but I didn't know for what, the next thing I heard was Sucker saying I told you not to have that ba-

by, I told you, you on your own don't call me or page me anymore he said, then my mother closed the door. I ran back to my room laid in my bed looking at the ceiling, I was real mad, so mad I couldn't go back to sleep. I started to fight the sheets and pillow I was so mad. I stayed awake the rest of the night watching the sun come up, I never seen it change from night time to day time. A lot of days past and my mother came to me and said ___ is dead, someone robbed and killed him by Grant Projects it was on the news. I said for real, I asked my mother did they catch the person, my mother said no. Later that night my mother was on the phone talking to her girlfriend saying look how God works, God don't like ugly they robbed and killed him, God is good. I don't know who robbed him but I killed him, I will never tell my mother and I will never tell my brother. The both of us, I mean both of our father's is dead. All my friends carry box cutters now just in case someone robs us. I lost my box cutter, so I carry a pocket knife my God father gave me. When I came out of school and waiting for the afterschool van to come pick us up, I smelled that cigar that Sucker be smoking, I

was looking around and I seen Sucker walking by the projects. Sucker isn't that tall, so when I walked between two buildings it was just me and him, I was behind him, then I tripped him and he fell to the ground. When he fell I had my pocket knife out and I stabbed him in the neck 3 times very hard, he wasn't even bleeding right away, he looked up at me and said why did you do this to me, I said because you a Sucker!

Chapter 5

Nomad

I'm living in my sixth apartment in 2 years, my father is moving us again, it's four of us, including my father is five. It's me and my twin sister plus our two little sisters one of them can't walk yet. My father is a creator of his jobs, he doesn't go to work every day like everybody else, or gets paid every two weeks. My father is a plumber, electrician, a barber and a cook. You see my father could make three hundred dollars in 2 hours cutting hair, but that three hundred dollars is not every day, it's out the blue so he has to stretch it. I be wanting to help, but he just want me to continue my education. When someone calls him for a job, it depends on what time it is, if me and sister are out of school we are watching our little sisters, if we are in school my father takes my sisters with him. That's why people don't be calling my father because he be bringing his kids with him. My father has business cards saying what he does and every day if he not on a job he is outside handing out his business cards, and his menu on what he ca-

ters. We be moving a lot but we stay in the same school, education is real important to my father he didn't finish school, the highest level of education he completed was the 8th grade. He wants all of us to go to college and he wants all of us to be a doctor or a lawyer, because he said everything else isn't going to a make you close to a millionaire. My father said if you are not making over a hundred thousand dollars a year, you are struggling. He said before we were born, he was pimping women not too far from where we live now and he was a thief , he said he knows what it's like to have one hundred thousand dollars cash in your pocket once a month. My father said he was young and dumb at the time, he never thought he would fall in love with one of his hoes, and he never thought he would have four children by her. My mother is addicted to heroin, and my father said she has AIDS now, I haven't seen my mother in a long time, my father said she be on the East side of Harlem. My father doesn't come from any family both of his parents are dead and he was the only child. My father said when they died, that's when he stopped going to school, and that he

lost touch with some of his cousins and aunts because he was young running the streets. He said my mother was a runaway and that he never met or even seen a picture of any of her family members. My mother is from Seattle my father said and she came to New York to model. My father said he met my mother in front of the state building on 7th. He said she already knew the business she just needed some assistance and guidance. My father said every hooker in Harlem was his or until the runaway, when my father met my mother he had 15 hoes and my mother was 16. My father said it was about a year went by after he met my mother, that he realized he wanted to marry her. He said my mother reminded him of himself, so they got married and my father bought a brownstone on Convent, everything was all good he said until after she had my youngest sister, my father said she started to bug out, and everybody in Harlem knew her, my father said people wanted to kill my mother, so my father had to pay, he said she got kidnapped 2 different times and that he had to pay to get her back. My father said he lost the brownstone because he had to bail her out of jail for at-

tempted murder, she stabbed another woman in the street over heroin my father said. This is why we keep moving around because my father can't afford the rent anywhere, we either get kicked out or we move before we get kicked out. I'm very proud of my father, yeah me and my sister don't have a lot of clothes, but when it's cold we have a coat and it's hot we have shorts. Being my father can do hair our hair is always fresh, and we always eat good. My father is still a thief , he told me that, he won't steal anything but food, he said you shouldn't have to pay for food all the time. When my father steals food, I don't know how he does it but we eat good, then he be selling dinners that's how me and my sister can play video games. One time my father didn't have any money and my sister got her period, so my father went to Duane Reede to steal some pads or tampons I don't know. He got caught and he called us from the precinct and said he would probably be home in 5 days, there is enough food in the house and to knock on people's door in the building so my sister can get some pads instead of wearing toilet tissue to school tomorrow, I told her she is going to

smell like fish and chips, so we got the pads. When my father came back to the house I said all these people called for you for different jobs I said. I stayed home with the girls and Deja went to school. My father was proud of me, he said he was in the precinct, they arrested drug dealers and got their money, guns and drugs. My father said he seen where they put the money, and being that he wasn't in a cell when they released him, they asked him did the police confiscate any of your personal belongings he said, yeah that black Jansport. My father thought the police was going to open the book bag before he gave it to him but they didn't, my father said he took the book bag and hopped in a cab and dropped off somewhere so he can count the money, my father got \$205,000 cash he said we are going to move again because the police have this address and we will be straight for two years.

Chapter 6

9 Blocks Away

I didn't know Columbia University was in Harlem, it is? That's what someone asked me. Also that restaurant they always show in Seinfeld that is also in Harlem, that same person couldn't believe it. I'm thinking to myself what are your thoughts on Harlem, you think Harlem is some third world country, people honestly forget Harlem is just a section in Manhattan. Harlem is Manhattan there is no separation. Columbia University is a gold mine for young Harlem kids like me, these well off Jewish, Irish, German, Italian and Spaniards come to Columbia thinking shit is sweet forgetting to realize you are on Harlem soil 9 blocks away from the projects a block away from Morningside and two blocks away from St. Lukes mostly where black Harlem babies are born and victims of shootings get patched up or die. My foster guardian's biological grandson told me he used to go to Columbia and steal bikes and break into some buildings and steal computers and anything else he can pawn or sell. He said some students use to

go closer to the projects because that's where the closest Chinese food restaurant was at and they would get stuck up. There were Most Machines around campus, but not by the projects, people were cashing checks, not depositing them into some bank account. These white college kids had bank accounts and credit cards, a stick up kids dream. Before I started selling drugs I would approach a boy or a girl and asked them if they had a bank account or a credit card and they dumb ass would smile at me like a clown and say yes I do, I would take them to the Most Machine and withdraw whatever I can at one time. Maybe because it was broad daylight, they didn't suspect a 12 year old boy is capable of harming a 19-22 year old college student, especially not on Columbia University's campus. I couldn't stick up Black People or Puerto Ricans because it just isn't fair they are in the struggle, it's just we come from two different cultures. A white kid right now that is 12 parents aren't dead, he isn't in foster care waiting for someone to adopt him, he wasn't a orphan since he was 18 months old, he knows his real name. I don't have any proof what my first, middle

or last name is, I just go by what they tell me. If a social worker said my name is Mayo Mustard then that's my name. You see since birth my back was already against the wall, that 12 year old white boy goes everywhere with his parents and they know where he is at all times. When I was 10 I ran away from a foster home and slept in a movie theater for 2 days, that 12 year old white boy will never be able to handle or see what I saw as a black boy being the same age. This is why I do what I do. These foster guardians are just looking to get paid they are ex-junkies anyway or just plain ol-lazy muthafuckers who don't want to do anything with their life except collect checks, with really no plan on how they would spend their money. I remember when I was 9 years old, I had this foster woman take care of me, she looked like a light skinned Grace Jones and she smoked these brown, skinny long cigarettes, this bitch would lock me in a closet for hours, it felt like days. I pissed and shitted on myself in this closet over different time periods. She thought I was dumb because I didn't speak, and when she had people over the house, I was her Ginny pig she would make fun of. The last

time she locked me in the closet I called 911 and told them everything, they locked her up and sent me to a group home/orphanage. The Grace Jones look alike had a lot of expensive jewelry, so when I left her house I took it and held on to it, diamonds and pearls. One day I was sitting on a bench on Columbia's campus looking for my next victim, I didn't care if the same people saw me that I robbed before, they were too scared anyway to do anything, so I wasn't worried about that. This dude came up to me and asked me where he can score some pot, his exact words. I said from me, this same spot, same time tomorrow. I didn't even sell booda, but I'm going to start. I went back to the projects, started walking in the staircase until I smelled it, I knew it would be someone smoking, I asked them where they got it from, they told me. I remember in school they showed us this drug special, one of those just say no movies and they had a bunch of white kids sniffing coke and rubbing it on their teeth, see when I bought booda, I asked the dude if he had coke too, he told me to go see somebody else. The money I used to be getting from the Most Machine I be saving, I

got a stash were I hide it at, I don't spend it. When I turn 18 I'm going to get a car and my own crib and maybe go to Columbia University. So the dude said he wanted \$500 for the coke. I didn't have enough, I paid \$220 for the booda, that's all I had, I gave the dude Grace Jones diamond ring and he gave me the coke. I was selling trey bags, nicks, and dimes of booda and only twenties of coke. On campus I was selling out of the coke dumb quick, them college kids must be under massive stress or they are just bored out of their mind, I was making close to \$1,000 a week and I only come to campus every Friday so it's like a \$1,000 every Friday. I knew early no one can teach me anything, I don't even know where I come from, I just know this money is real, and I have to save it because all I have to look out for me...is me.

Chapter 7

Kenny & Tony

I'm a tenement dude, I really don't know a lot of people because on your block not everybody is your age and people your age may not even live in your building. I live in a walk-up building, we don't have a elevator nor do we have an incinerator. We take the garbage out ourselves put it in garbage cans. To get in my building, if you don't have a key, you have to ring the intercom, and someone will buzz you in. If it's a fire in my building, we have fire escapes, it's like latter's or a staircase in front of your building. When my grandmother pays the rent she mails it to the landlord. There is a Laundromat in the basement of my building and if something is broke the Super comes to fix it. My apartment isn't renovated it's old fashioned, my bedroom door really looks like a window, but my grandmother painted over the glass with white paint, so you can't see through the door. My grandmother put a police lock on the door, it's a metal pole that you place on the floor and lean it against the door. We have radiators for heat

and 2 fans for summertime and 1 A/C in my grandmother's room. We have a window in our bathroom and our shower head is on the side of the wall, it is not facing you when you take a shower. I have carpet in my apartment and hardwood floors. Kenny and Tony are project bastards literally, they don't have a clue who their father's are. They are 2 boys no relation who have a lot in common. They smoke weed, they drink St. Ides, they smoke cigarettes, they don't go to school. Kenny and Tony should be sophomores in high school by now, but they always hang around my junior high school. Kenny is tall he has a boxer face, his face always looks swollen. Kenny is the type of kid who will always look dirty no matter how many times he takes a shower, his clothes are always dirty, but every now and again he has brand new Jordans or Barkleys. I can tell Kenny is dumb, and five years from now he will be in prison or dead. Kenny doesn't speak properly, when you listen to him, you have to ask yourself is he speaking English, he talks really fast and always says like, whatever, or you know what I'm saying. For example, Kenny would say "come with me to the piz-

za shop like hurry up”, if a girl would say what’s your name he would say Kenny or whatever. Dummy! Then don’t get him to tell you a story he will say nothing, sort of like this “it was raining that day, you know what I’m saying and then after that you know what I’m saying, I was over there”. What? Dumb ass Kenny, but everybody I know is scared of Kenny. Just recently I was in the Chinese restaurant getting \$1 fries and \$2 rib tips as I was putting hot sauce and ketchup on my French fries, Kenny comes in and throws a hard snowball in my face and ran out. There was a mirror in the Chinese restaurant and my face was red. The three kids I was with acted like nothing happened and they just acted like they didn’t see what happened. The next day Kenny was roaming the halls in my school, I seen Kenny through my classroom door, I asked the teacher for the pass to go to the bathroom. The pass is a hard piece of wood that says bathroom pass. I seen Kenny and I had a big grin on my face, I said Kenny I got Ms. Karim pocketbook, I hid it in the bathroom, he said give it to me, I’m still grinning, I said come with me to the bathroom, as soon as we got in the bathroom, I

cut the lights out beat Kenny's ass with that bathroom pass. Kenny's co-defendant five years from now Tony is another dirty, welfare, project kid, now Tony stink's he always smells like corn chips and always got shit on his face whether it's dry snot or cheese doodle stains on the crack of his mouth. Tony has dirty braids with colorful rubber bands and he is short and husky. One day Tony pulled my homeboy's Earl head down to his ass and farted in his face, Earl was heated I can tell, but he was too scared to do anything. Earl's older brother went to the high school up the street, so at lunch time Earl told his brother what happened. I remember Tony pushed me in the street and a Mack Truck grazed me, I still fell to the ground but no serious injuries. I knew Earl's brother was going to fuck Tony up and I needed to be right there. Just so happen when Earl was talking to his brother I seen Tony across the street by himself without Kenny, I told Earl's brother that's Tony right there. Earl's brother went over to Tony asking why he did what he did, I'm standing there with my fist balled looking Tony dead in his face, and while Earl's brother is talking to Tony, I snuffed him,

then Earl and his brother started decking him too. One thing about these 2 dirty project kids is that they are mad dumb and kids are scared of them for no reason, I can't be scared of a dummy, I will always win. Their project lifestyle is totally different from mine, their way of living is the total opposite, I have family in the projects and they are just as stupid as Kenny and Tony. If Kenny and Tony were raised in a tenement like me they would be totally different, I drink apple juice and orange juice, Kenny and Tony still drink Kool-Aid, just like a welfare recipient, they don't know any better, I eat baked chicken they still eating fried chicken they don't even know what baked chicken taste like. The reason Tony is husky is because he pays \$2 for his dinner every day, in my house \$2 can only get you a loaf of bread. My grandmother told me food makes you dumb be careful what you put in your body she said.

Chapter 8

Ma

I'm on punishment for talking back, now that I'm older I feel just cause you say something doesn't necessarily mean you are right. I was on the phone talking to my girlfriend and my mother heard me cursing, when I got off the phone, my mother said she doesn't want to hear the use of profanity ever again. I said why the fuck not, and my mother smacked me. I said why is cursing wrong, you don't smack me when I say Ma we don't got anymore milk, you just say it's "don't have". I said to my mother how is got and fuck different from each other, I can tell by my mother's facial expression, that she realized her son is special, you can't just say whatever to him and he will just be satisfied. At that moment my mother knew I will question everything, my mother said nothing she just stared at me and said you are on punishment for a week usually I would say for what, but I just left it alone because I knew my mother had no answer for me, even my mother was raised not to curse but I didn't know why. Being on punishment, I

can't go outside and chill, I can't talk on the phone, I can't play my TurboGrafx 16, I can't do anything, I can't even watch T.V. or listen to 98.7 Kiss f.m. I'm the only child and I like it like that, I get everything I want, mostly everything, I live in CO-OP across the street from Grant, it's cool over here but all the girls are in Grant, chicks over here be fronting, they mad stuck up because they got, I mean they have a little money. Failing to realize if a poor person can go to the same Supermarket you go to and by their food with food stamps and the both of you's are on the same line, that means you are not that rich like you think you are. I never met my father or his side of the family for that matter. My mother comes from a big family, I have a lot of cousins, aunts and uncles. My mother told me she was very promiscuous in college and her early teen years, even though that's my mother she was a hoe. My mother said at the time she got pregnant with me she was sleeping with six different dudes on a regular basis, that means one out of those six dudes can be my father. When my mother found out she was pregnant, she finished that semester but didn't return to that

school, she said she felt embarrassed. My mother was a sophomore in college at the time she got pregnant, she went to school in Atlanta then came back to Harlem and went to City College to finish her degree. My mother said she wanted to go to law school, but I was born and she had to take care of me, my mother has been a paralegal for 14 years now and currently taking classes in law school, the firm she works for is paying for her to go to law school. My mother has never brought a man around, I don't know if she goes on dates or not, I know no one calls the crib for her. I want my mother to find a husband, and even though I like being the only child, I wouldn't mind one other sibling. I believe the reason I respect my mother so much is that she could have gotten rid of me with an abortion or could have put me up for adoption. My mother stuck it out, she is a very strong woman, I never seen my mother cry and she taught me everything I know. She taught me how to cook, wash clothes, iron, clean the crib, movies, read, pray, and basketball. My mother is nice in ball too. My mother is my mother and father it's nothing I can't speak to her about, who you think taught me

how to tie a tie, my mother. I thank God everyday for my mother, if she wasn't in my life or even better if she was still promiscuous, a drug addict or a mental case, I don't know where I would be. I don't like when I may disappoint my mother, the last thing I want to do is break her heart, she doesn't deserve that. That's why I do excellent in school, I stay out of trouble and I don't experiment with drugs. My mother doesn't know one little secret and that is I'm having sex, I can't help it. The Box be playing all these freaky Too Short and Luke videos, I be getting dumb horny. The first time I had sex was with this girl in my class named Michelle, I wore a condom, my homeboy Charles gave it to me in the 6th grade I just held on to it, it probably expired but that's all I had. It was a half day of school, it wasn't planned at all, I seen Michelle waiting at the bus stop and for some strange reason she was looking extra good. She had a jean skirt on with white tights and white fifty four elevens, she had her book bag on and it looked like the straps were making her chest poke out. I never sucked tities before but my mouth was watering and all I heard in my head was Sir Mix-a-Lot "Put'em on

the Glass” song. Michelle was the candy girl in class, she always had candy, always the latest candy too. She had cry babies before anybody was up on them, she had the class buggin’ when she brought the cry babies thru. I went up to Michelle and asked her for some candy, she said she didn’t have any more, I said where you going? I thought you take the train home. She said she’s going to her mother’s job, I said me too, I have to get some money. It got real quite we was just standing there not saying anything, then Michelle said do you and Tiffany go out, I was like no, she too skinny for me. Michelle started laughing, I said you not skinny, you want to go out with me? Michelle said yeah if you don’t tell nobody, I told her I wasn’t going to tell, she said promise, I said I promise. There was a tenement right behind us, I was joking when I said it. I said you want to go in the building and kiss, Michelle didn’t say a word she started walking to the building. When we got in the building we got on the elevator, I pressed the 6th floor, my hands started sweating and my dick was mad hard. I wanted to kiss her in the elevator but didn’t know how to ease in. We got off the elevator and I

said you want to go to the roof, and she said for what, I pulled my bus pass wallet out my jeans and took the condom out. She said you want to have sex? I said yeah, she said you had sex before, I said yeah, she said with who, I said it was a while ago you don't know her. I was lying. She said I never did it before, don't tell your friends. I said I won't, like they need to know I'm getting pussy. We got up to the door to the roof when I opened it she said I don't want to be on the roof, I was saying to myself don't front now, so I closed the roof door and started kissing her, it felt like we was kissing for hours, I was feeling all over her, I was squeezing her butt when I was kissing her. I said to Michelle lay down, she laid down, and I pulled her tights off, it was dark up there, I just know her pussy was mad hairy, I put the condom on and went to work, she started sucking on my neck telling me to do it slow, I thought I was going slow enough I couldn't go any slower, I was too hyped. When I bust, I never felt nothing like that before, it was like I was peeing but I didn't want to stop, it felt so good. Michelle pussy smelled like onions, I hope all pussy don't smell like that, till this

day my finger tips still smell like onions, I even put Clorox on my fingers, it's still there. As long as I wear these condoms and don't have any kids at a young age my mother won't know I'm having sex, but it's my mother she was my age when she started being promiscuous. She probably is going to talk to me about sex any day now.

Chapter 9

White Owl

I played for Gauchos, Riverside Church and YMCA Junior Knicks, now I play for Stone Gym. I don't play for my high school because the coach doesn't like my attitude, he says I show boat too much when I play and I'm not a team player. I can see if my grades were poor, but I'm on the honor roll, no one on the team is on the honor roll, and never was on the honor roll. I don't want to play for a coach that rather have kids failing classes, but winning games. He is a fish market dude. The coach is married too, I think to myself if he is like this at school I can't imagine how he is at home, like your wife likes you kid? I was playing for the team at the beginning of the semester, then he decided to let me go, I just think he doesn't like me. In the hallways at school I give him the head nod or I may speak, he be ignoring me like I'm some bum on the street. I admit, I'm not the star of the team, but I can play, I'm not going to say I'm nice, but my handle is on point, and I can score. I don't play defense that well, I barely rebound, I

pass sometimes, if ever, but I can dribble my ass off and my jumper is always cash. My homeboy Johnny quit the team because he said practice don't be paying the bills, and he said he doesn't want to go to the NBA anymore because he don't like playing ball like he use to. Johnny said he is about them duckets fuck buckets, he also said all he think about is trying to knock out box, not trying to box out. I never smoked before and Johnny just started, we be rhyming sometimes after school or in practice together, he was like ever since he started getting high his rhymes are better and better. He had his little radio with him playing the "Well, Well, Well" beat and we went to this black owned vegetable stand/store, you already know the business. Black People not even known for having vegetable stores, that's a Korean thing. We go to the back of the store, it was tinted glass. Johnny slipped 5 singles to the dude, like he was getting a movie theater ticket. I can't see and Johnny said Chocolate. I never seen a vegetable store that gets no business, probably because everybody knew this was a front except me. We walk out, go next door and Johnny copped 2 White Owl's from

the O'Yay's. We went to the park behind our school. Johnny split the White Owl with his long thumb nail, emptied out the guts and put that Chocolate Ty inside. I took one pull, I thought my eyes were going to come out my head I was coughing so hard. After that was over I got use to it, Johnny taught me how to roll the second one, I'm chilling and rapping my ass off, he was right. It seemed like I couldn't do anything without being high, I started smoking before I went to school believe it or not my grades were excellent, they were already good it's just that weed really had me paying attention to detail, it did the total opposite for me I was chillin' and analyzing everything. After me and Johnny get high we always go to Jimbo's. On our way to Jimbo's I stop to get bottled water because I be parched. Johnny gets sunflower seeds or a 3 Musketeers, sugar or salt is his thing, I don't like sweets. From Jimbo's I get a turkey cheeseburger deluxe with cheese and ketchup on the fries with salt and pepper. My burger has fried onions, mayo, ketchup and lettuce no tomato. Johnny just gets a cheeseburger with ketchup and salt. For the past month I smoked every day. Just today I

smoked, I'm high right now, I went to the library to return this book I took out for school, and bumped into this chick I went to junior high school with, I forgot her name but when I seen her, her eyes were mad chinky, I said you got more for me, can I live. She showed me this fat Godfather she had inside of a McDonald's napkin. I said where you want to go, she said she has a free crib, it was just me and her, that was the first time I smoked Hydro, it came in one of those Muslim oil jars and it was like water at the bottom of the jar, she said it cost 10 cash. She put me on to some weed on Lenox called Pee R and I already knew about Bee R on one fifty something, I told her me and my homeboy tried to cop, and they said we needed like a members only I.D. Guess what? She showed me the I.D. I paged Johnny 911 he called back, I said meet me in front of Key Food right now. Still dumb high off the Hydro we chipped in to cop the Bee R we walked from 7th to Amsterdam and got on the 101 bus to the heights. Bee R was 20 cash, that's all I want to smoke now, Chocolate is for the birds. Johnny has a cousin in California an older cousin, he UPS Johnny some marijuana lollipop's.

He sent strawberry, cherry, grape, orange and apple. One Sunday when my mother, father and I left Church I threw the apple one in my mouth, my father asked me if I had another one, I said no. I can't believe I'm getting high in front of my parents right now, they would never guess. Johnny was telling me he is going to California for the summer and if I want to come he got me. I told him I'll let him know, I started thinking I'm not going to play at Rucker this summer because last summer them Polo Ground dudes want to fight after every game, I don't have time for that. The other day I got bagged by the cops, I was on my way to Shorty crib so me and her can cop from Uptown but I had a White Owl on my ear, the cops arrested me even though they didn't find no weed, I told them I bought this cigar for my grandfather, I was in the precinct for like 45 minutes, I'm a minor so they let me go. If I don't play Rucker, I'll probably play King Dome or Milbank. I'm definitely not going to Cali, I want to go to the NBA, Johnny doesn't. Smoking weed was a experience, it was fun, but I'm over it, I'm glad I'm not a addict, I can't see myself blowing my rent money on weed, like I'm a dope fiend

or something. To be an excellent athlete or an excellent ball player I have to watch and be careful of what goes inside my body. I might stop eating meat and just do fruit and vegetables because I was on the train and I heard this white girl talking to her friend about how bad meat is and what it does to your insides, she was making me sick just listening to her. No more trees' only 3's.

Chapter 10

My 1st Job

I live with my aunt for right now, my mother and father joined the Army ten years ago on some buddy system. They were both unemployed at the time, I have no siblings, just mad cousins. Right now my parents are in Germany but my father is going to Korea for 11 months next Thursday. My mother calls me once a week and my father writes me once a week. I miss them a lot, they are my best friends. My aunt is my mother's little sister she has one daughter one year younger than me, we are cool, but she never hooks me up with any of her friends, her friends are bad too. She has this one friend named Lezzette she is Puerto Rican and Black, caramel complexion. Last winter she use to come by the crib wearing Nautica fleece sweats, a purple North face, black leather Vasque and her doobie pins still in. She use to wear this Polo Sport perfume, it use to drive me crazy, I use to tell Lezzette all the time spend the night, she always would be like I will but her and my cousin stopped speaking, my cousin

didn't tell me why, but I know it's over a dude probably. Someone my cousin really liked and Lezzette knew it, and homeboy is feeling Lezzette. My mother and father send me \$400 a month, my Coogi's cost \$360 with tax, so I really get \$40 a month. My father won't give me extra money but my mother is soft, she knows I just got \$400 on Monday and I will call her Tuesday and tell her the truth, Ma I'm trying to be fly out here, you know how it is, you from Harlem, I need sneaker money too, my mother would give me a extra \$300. Now that I'm getting older I need my own money, last year I applied to McDonald's, HMV, F.A.O. Schwarz, Gap and Banana Republic, they all was saying I need experience, I was like how can I get experience if everyone says that and doesn't give me chance. I really said that to all of them, and they just looked at me like I was speaking Spanish. The last day of school I went to Pan Pan and got a beef hot sausage egg and cheese on a roll with mustard, as I was eating, I said to myself I'm going to apply to Harlem Hospital they were directly across the street. I walked over there and told security I want to apply for a job, he said go out the door

make a right then another right at the end of the block, you would see the building on your left side. He said when you get there go to the 2nd floor. I got to the second floor, a receptionist was at the desk, I told her I would like to apply for a job, she said I'm not going to ask your age, but you are too young to work here. She said apply to summer youth. I'm like for what, be on a waiting list, and they tell me my parents make too much money, or I do get the job and I don't get the first check until the summer is damn there over. My Coogi vest is worth more than a summer youth check. I didn't say this to her I was just thinking it as I was waiting for the elevator to go back down. When the elevator came, this man got off looked at me smiling and said how are you young man, I just looked at him and got on the elevator. He was holding the elevator door open with his hand, he stuck part of his body in the elevator and said, I said how are you young man, I said fine thank you, he said oh you do have manners, I said I have to go can you let the door go please. He said step out for a second son, I stepped out and said what's up, what do you need, he said no my friend what do you need?

I said a job, he said what kind of job be specific, I said I just want to make more than minimum wage, he said how old are you, I said 16, he said wow you are too young, but I'm the director of Human Resources, and I'm going to place you in my summer intern program with college students. I said cool, he said Karen (that's the receptionist) we have to get this young man a job, he said I'm sorry what's your name, I said Siphadean Abdul-Salem, he repeated it, I said yeah that's correct. I started work that following week working in the Records Management Department doing filing and clerical work. My 1st check was \$301.05, so that's what I make once a week after taxes, that's cool. My aunt wants me to give her \$50 every time I get paid, talking about how she is saving it for me, I know she is spending it on herself. My Nautica is off the hook, I stay at the Nautica store on 72nd & Columbus once a week, they know me in there. I already had Coogi's now I have 36 sweaters, next pay day I'm buying a Marmot for the winter, nobody is up on them yet. I wore a North Face in 9th grade, it's played out to me, people still going to be wearing it, not me though. I have a little Polo

and a little Tommy Hilfiger, but Nautica is Harlem. Biggie died this past March and I started selling this best of Biggie mixtape for \$5, I've been pumping the mixtape a 1,000 miles per hour like it's crack. My aunt doesn't know about this income. I take a bulk of tapes to Harlem Music Hut, once they sell out, they call me and pay me for more. I made \$40,000 over the summer selling these best of Biggie mixtapes, I guess people are still numb to his passing. I put \$10,000 cash in my sneaker box, that's just my just in case money. I blew \$10,000 on Nautica sweat suits, jewelry and Coogi's, I get my Coogi's from Apollo Express or Bloomingdale's I don't mess with Century 21, they joint's is wack, plus that's where all the broke people go. I put 20,000 cash aside for the Legend, I just have to get my driver's permit, because next summer I'm going to be pushing that Legend. When school starts I will probably get a job at the movie theater, to keep caking it. I'm too fly, chicks be sweating me like crazy. I didn't even tell you Lezzette is my Shorty now, she said I was her first. We took this picture at Grant's Tomb together with matching Coogi's, she had on the sweater dress, I

had the short sleeve sweater, I just mailed a copy each to my mother and father. And my aunt gave me my cash, she was saving the 50 cash this whole time. I wrote on a few of the bills just to see if she gave the cash to me or my cousin to get some groceries with, but she didn't. It was all here. I'm going to open up a savings account at Chase with this bread from my Aunt.

Chapter 11

It Has My Name On It

I met Courvoisier in C-Town, she kept starring at me, her cousin came up to me and said my cousin wants your number, she thinks you cute. I told her give me her number, the cousin gave me her beeper number. I paged Courvoisier about 4 days after, she called me back right away, we was talking on the phone for a minute, she said she was 4 years older than me, I was so gased and couldn't wait to tell my homeboys I bagged a old joint. She was going to college in Old Westbury, she said her major was Business Management. She comes to Harlem frequently. When we was on the phone, she was in her dorm room looking in the mirror at her new Victoria Secret bra and panties, she was telling me all she wear is thongs, I was holding my dick the rest of the conversation. We decided to meet up the following day she asked me to meet her on 145th & St. Nick in front of the train station. I just bought a smooth cream long-sleeved polo shirt from Today's Man, I wore that, she was coming from the nail shop, she gave me

a hug and I guess one of her nails weren't completely dry and nail polish got on my smooth cream polo, I was tight. We went downtown to the movies, I took her to see Players Club, I already seen it in the barber shop. She barely got a chance to see the movie in it's entirety because I was kissing and finger popping her the whole time. After the movies we went walking through Central Park, we found a bench that was in the cut, it was kind of dark in the area and no one was around. I was sitting down on the bench when I pulled Courvoisier's jeans down half way, and she sat on my lap. I put the condom on dumb quick, I got about 13 strokes in and she wanted to stop, she was shook, she thought the cops was going to catch us. We sat next to each other on the bench talking and getting to know each other, then I started kissing on her neck, and before I know it her titie is in my mouth, I'm sucking, not long though and titie milk came out, that never happened to me before, I kept hog spitting, trying to get that unfamiliar taste out my mouth. I said you pregnant? She said she got an abortion last week. I went to go visit Courvoisier at school for the weekend she had a

Chinese roommate with dreadlocks, but her roommate broke out. Courvoisier has nothing but matching bra and panty sets from Victoria Secret. I'm used to chicks with purple bras and red panties, if her bra is purple her panties are purple and she don't wear cotton little girl drawers, all her sets are lace, she turned me on. I never been with a chick with a shaved box, I just see it in the porno's she got me open. Every chick I bussed got that bush. Her semester is over before mine, I don't get out of school until the end of June. She lives with her grandmother in 1295, her grandmother is a registered nurse at St. Luke's, so her work hours be kind of crazy. That box had me cutting school, I was over there about once a week and on weekends, I was spending the night. Courvoisier was the first chick to give me head, I've been trying to get the bologna washed for a minute, all the chicks I know be fronting, I thank God I got me a old joint, my homeboys be asking me to hook them up with some of her friends, she said all of her friends deal with dudes who drive and get money. I was like, I don't know how to drive, and I make \$125 every two weeks at C-Town stocking

shelves, so how am I exempt, she said I'm not my friends. She told me she got an unexpected refund check in the mail, and she wanted to take me shopping for my birthday. I told her let's go to Dollar Bills on 6th avenue, Courvoisier got me this red and gray Iceberg History sweat suit with a gray bucket to match. After shopping she wanted me to come with her to Champions, she got a tattoo of her name on her arm. She called me at mid-night on my birthday, I have my own phone line and she said get in a cab and come over to her crib I have a surprise for you. It was a school night so I had to tip toe out the crib before my mother and father start buggin'. I got over there she had all the lights off she said go in the room and take your sweats off, I'll be right there, she came in the room with a cup of ice, I'm like oh shit she about to do something freaky. I said what's my surprise, she stuck her long tongue out, I was like you got your tongue pierced? She said yeah just for you. She started going to work, I was in space, then she put ice in her mouth, spit the ice cube back out, it made the tongue ring cold, then she started licking my ass, I was squirming around, then

I started peeing out of nowhere, dick mad hard with piss coming out, I said I never got my ass licked before I'm sorry, you made me nervous. She was laughing. Courvoisier started to give me two feet, I be paging her, she don't return the beep, or when I spend the night she don't want me to touch her, this has been going on for two months, it's summer time and she not letting me hit. I remember what my Uncle Charlie told me a long time ago, he said when that pie is yours, you know it's yours, but when she give somebody a slice, that pie is not yours anymore, bounce. She called me and told me to meet her by Florida's. She told me in person she started talking to her ex-boyfriend again and that she's pregnant. She said she wants to have his baby, and that she shouldn't have gotten rid of the first one. I was speechless, I didn't even blink my eyes, it felt like my stomach was in my mouth, I felt I was going deaf, I was about to say something, I started stuttering, my feelings never been hurt like that in my life. I never hit a chick, but I wanted to fight her right there on the spot like she was a dude, I just wanted to fuck that bitch up! Like Uncle Charlie said chicks

are like buses, another one is coming.

Chapter 12

Down South

One of my homeboy's brother went to Clark, he would come back to Harlem for the summer and show videos on his camcorder and pictures of Freak-Nik. I was too young at the time to travel down there and hang out, my grandmother wasn't having it. I love Harlem, but it's time to leave and experience life on my own out of my state. My grandmother was born in Harlem and she is going to die in Harlem, she has only been to New Jersey and that's because they don't have any tax, that's where she shops. My grandmother never been on a plane, so what if I move to the west coast, she can't drive and she doesn't like riding long periods of time and scared to fly, she will never visit me, all of that is stopping her. She will never see how her grandson is living. For a woman to be as old as she is, who complains 24/7 about dumb shit doesn't go out of state and you can forget about going out the country. I don't want to be like her, this is my ticket to get out, I need to see more than just Harlem, I was raised on television and all

the places I know about is because I seen it in a music video, movie, or a talk show, but never been to these places. I'm tired of going to the number spot, playing numbers for my grandmother, she wishing for this make believe money and when she gets it she doesn't do anything with it, I sleep on the same bed, sit on the same couch and look at the same T.V. my mother did when she was a little girl. My grandmother goes to Church every Sunday, not to praise Jesus, but to gossip and talk about everyone there, with her big stupid Church hat, she don't even know the same people she is dissin' they dissin' her too. I know more about the Bible than my grandmother, she has been going to Church all her life, praying everyday and still living in the projects, she fails to realize you can pray all day every day, but you have to get off your ass and make it happen. Jesus doesn't keep the lights on, you keep the lights on, but my grandmother doesn't think like me. It's this Martin Luther King way of thinking, when my generation has a Tupac way of thinking. I hate the projects, this ain't living, I want to live downtown in a Condo, Townhome, or Brownstone. My grand-

mother's way of thinking is that she can never move there, you been in N.Y.C. your whole life you have a head start before all these people moving here and living better than you. The atmosphere is unhealthy for my mind, I see why my mother bugged out and left. I love my grandmother with all my heart and will do anything for her, but she just lacks knowledge and believes everything the news says. If the six o'clock news said Blacks don't consider yourself African-Americans anymore consider yourself as A.A., it's much shorter to write and easier to say. My grandmother would be the first one on board telling everybody and the first one at the DMV getting a new I.D. card. That's just an example why I have to leave. I'm about growth and evolving, living here is a hindrance, I dread going home sometimes, it's just the same thing every day, my grandmother watching soap-operas, smoking on Salem's, to gossiping on the phone with her friend Bertha, the shit is annoying, when I was younger I guess it didn't bother me, now that I'm getting older it's so much clearer. I'm understanding life and realize I don't have to settle for this. I applied to all the Georgia HBCU's, but

I haven't heard anything back yet. Teddy Riley is from St. Nick projects, I remember seeing him in the streets, he use to be cool with my mother too, I heard he lives in VA now, so I applied to all the Virginia HBCU's. I figured if a Harlem dude is living in VA and didn't bother to come back, then VA must be all good. So far Virginia State University accepted me, I'm going to check out the campus in person next week while classes are still in session, just to see how it is and see if I want to go there. Harlem is in my blood, but I have to make moves, that's life.

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