



The Hip-Hop Series

*Word Works by, for and in the Language of
the New Urban Generation*

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Sincere

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by
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Dedication

I'd first like to thank Snake, Double R, and Clay for motivating me to accomplish something that I didn't think possible, something positive. I'd like to thank Ernest for not treating me different and Mr. Redmond for believing in my vision. Much love to the Four Corner Hustlers for molding me into a man beyond my years and the Blackstones, Lks, Bds, Gds, New Breeds, Vls, and MCs. Without you all, this soldier would not know his strengths. Cuso, Tru, Soney, Sco, Head, and Dorian, mere words can't do justice. Pistol, you are appreciated. Boogie, J.C., Twin, and Pop, I won't forget. Special shouts to everybody that inspired *Sincere*. Don't be mad. And finally, I'd like to give a special thanks to you, the reader, because without your eyes and ears, my voice would not be heard.

You Always Told Me That None
Would Ever Love Me Like You.
I Now Know That To Be True.
That Is Why This Book
Is Dedicated To You.
I Love You, Momma.
R.I.P.
Beverly Ann Henderson

CHAPTER 1

“Simon! Simon! Boy, I know you hear me! You better quit playing possum and get your ass up for school!”

That annoying voice that you hear is from my mother. She’s cool people, but she stay stressing me about this school shit since she had to drop out at such an early age, 14, when she got pregnant with my oldest sister. There’s three of us, now. Alexis, my oldest sister, is 19, Nikki is 17, and I just turned 16, last week.

Growing up, life for us was rough. Off and on, up until I was 7, we lived in the Bungalow projects with my great-grandmother, until one day, she got tired of my mother coming in at 3 o’clock in the morning, if at all, high from her crack habit, so that when my sisters and I returned home from school, one evening, we were greeted by a locked steel project door, with three trash bags of clothes in front of it. She had kicked us all out.

Over the next two years, we lived in project stairwells, abandoned apartments, shelters, or literally on the streets. Not once in those two years did we stay in a friend or family member’s home, seeing as though none fucks with the downtrodden.

After my mother kicked her addiction, we lived the basic hood life, having our lights turned off and getting them turned back on in me or my sisters’ names, stealing cable, boiling hot water for baths, and once having our door kicked in and everything of resale value being taken, by some dope boys, because of some money of theirs that my stepfather had fucked off.

Fortunately, my mother was smart enough to leave him, and our saving grace came when my mother met an ex-pimp by the name of Sweet Sammy. Imagine that, an ex-pimp being some poor family’s

savior. Well, Sammy lived up to the first part of his name when he moved us out of a 2-bedroom apartment in Terror Town, into a 4-bedroom house in the south “suburbs” of Chicago. You’ll see why I put quotations on suburbs later.

So, 1 gang initiation, 2 bullet wounds, 3 ex-step-fathers, 50-11 trips to the Audi Home, and a hangover from a fifth of VSOP, that I drunk with my niggas last night, later, I lay in my bed, not wanting to get up for my first day at this new high school.

Not wanting to hear my mother’s mouth again, I sluggishly got dressed in my black Pelle Pelle jeans, gold Pelle Pelle shirt, solid black Air Force 1s, and a matching Pirate’s Starter coat and fitted cap, cocked to the left side, covering my shoulder length braids.

As I entered the school, my stomach began to feel a little queasy. Not only because I hadn’t eaten anything since yesterday evening, but also because, for the first time, I realized that I didn’t know but about five people that went to this school, since I had just moved out here a couple of months ago.

Walking into my first period class, I received mean-muggs from the niggas, and curious stares from the females, all wondering who was this new nigga entering their domain. Midway through first period, formal introductions were made.

“What up, Joe? I see you got all that black and gold on, what chu is?” asked the mean-mugger to my left. This was gang talk for which gang was I in.

Before answering, I made eye-contact with him for an extra second, letting him know that I didn’t appreciate his line of questioning, and then responded, “I’m a Four Corner Hustler. What chu is?”

He held my eye-contact while throwing up the pitchforks, his gang sign, and emphatically stating, “I’m GD, nigga! Larry loves you even

after he put slugs in you.” “Larry loves you,” is a slogan used by Gangster Disciples referring to their founder, Larry Hoover, who’s currently serving a life sentence in ADX, Colorado, for starting, arguably, the most notorious gang ever.

What the mean-mugger had just said was a direct invitation to beef, but because, as far as I could tell, I was already out-numbered 7 to 1, and the mean-mugger hadn’t called me the ultimate disrespect word, hook, I let his comment slide, knowing that we would cross paths again at another time.

The next three classes were similar to my first. So, by the time that fifth period arrived, which was my lunch period, I was ready to hurt somebody!

“Sincere! Sincere! Come over here, Solid! We eat over here!” yelled Fatal, from across the cafeteria.

Fatal was the first person that I had met when I moved out here, and we have quickly become the best of friends. Fatal was a wild nigga. Even though he only stood 5'8", 165 pounds, he didn’t back down from no nigga. I guess that’s why he and I clicked so hard. He was waving me over to join he and the rest of the 4s, in our reserved section of the cafeteria.

I smiled gleefully to myself, happy to finally see some of the brothers. Of the ten 4s sitting at the table, six of them I had already met, so I shook up with them all, in our customary fashion, and was introduced to the four 4s that I didn’t know.

“Damn, Sincere. Where you been at all morning, Solid? I thought that we was all gonna walk up to school together?” asked Fatal.

“Man, I woke up late as hell this morning, still fucked up from last night.”

B-Dub co-signed my statement in his trademark speech pattern. “Fashizzo ny nizzig. I was drizzunk as fizzuck last night. Sin, as soon as you left, me and Fatal paid that hizzype Glenell to run a trizzain. She bent her ass over, doggy-stizzyle , put Fatal’s dummy in her mizzouth, and I get her from the bizzack, finna go in her gizzut, and end up, earling all over the bitch!” said B-Dub, causing everybody to bust out laughing at him throwing up all over a crackhead, while he and Fatal were trying to run a train on her.

“Sincere, none of the brothers got no classes wit chu, so where the fuck they got chu taking classes at?” asked J-Mo.

J-Mo’s question caught me off guard. I took classes in A building, which were all honor’s classes. In retrospect, I know that it sounds crazy, but I was self-conscious about being book smart since I prided myself on being so street. I knew that I had to answer J-Mo’s question, but I decided to change the subject, as quick as possible, afterward.

“Four, they fucked up and put me in A building. But what’s up wit these GDs coming at a nigga all bogus and shit?” I asked. This got everyone’s attention, and immediately changed their security mode from relaxed, to alert. Four Corner Hustlers barred none. No nigga. No pity.

“Who the fuck came at chu bogus, Solid?” asked Fatal, ready for drama.

“Four, you know that I don’t know these marks. I just remember that he a dirty looking nigga wit a 6-pointed star, tattooed on his hand” I responded.

“Oh. Fatal, he talking about that hoe-ass nigga, Skillet,” said Miles.

“Yeah, I know him,” co-signed Fatal. “That mark swear he hard. He ain’t gone learn until he get burned. Don’t trip, Solid. On the Four, I’m a check that nigga on that shit”.

Just then, the bell rang for us to change classes. As Fatal, J-Mo, and I waited at the cafeteria door for a momentary break in the traffic entering the lunchroom to exit, Skillet and Charlie walked through the door. Fatal was in Skillet's face before I even registered their faces.

"Skillet, what the fuck you coming at my nigga wit that bogus ass shit for? If y'all wanna send it, then lets send this bitch up!"

Skillet was caught off guard by Fatal's anger and menacing tone. He wasn't prepared to fight, and couldn't punk out in front of his G, so he decided to save face, and try to diffuse the situation. "Fatal, chill out Gangster. It wasn't even like that. I ain't never seen your peoples before, so I was just wondering who he was," replied Skillet, with a devilish grin.

"Yeah, A'ight" Fatal responded, giving Skillet that same smirk. "Well, you know now. And for the record, I ain't no Gangster! I'm Solid, niggal 4 of 'em," Fatal concluded, throwing up four fingers, with his right hand, in representation of our gang sign.

"GD," Skillet and Charlie responded, in unison, while throwing up the pitchforks, and walking away.

Fatal warned me to stay on my Ps and Qs, when I returned to class, but contrary to his worries, my final three classes went by without incident.

"Come on. Tell another one," Danny begged.

"A'ight. Hold on" Miles answered, preparing to tell yet another of the long list of jokes that he had been telling during our long walk home from school. He looked towards the GD Queen, Sally. "This one is for you, shorty," he said, dedicating the joke to Sally. "A'ight. What do you get when you mix a donkey, with an union?" he asked.

We all shared dumb looks at each other.

“Once. Just eeeevery once in a while, you get a piece of ass that brings tears to your eyes.”

Fatal, J-Mo, Danny, B-Dub, Sally, and I all fell out in the middle of the street in uncontrollable laughter. After laughing for what felt like forever, B-Dub’s unusually serious tone brought us back to reality.

“Dizzamn, Fizzo. Who the fuck is all them niggas coming through the pizzark?” he asked. We all looked to our left at the crowd of dudes, appearing to be walking in our direction, when a 1982 Chevy Malibu, flew past us and screeched to a diagonal halt, blocking our path.

We walked around the front-end of the Malibu, onto the sidewalk, while looking into the car, trying to assess the situation. As we continued walking up the block, crossing an intersection, the Malibu was again creeping past us to the left. This time we got a good look inside of the car and realized that nearly all of it’s five passengers was throwing down the 4. So we retaliated by all dropping the pitchforks. The Malibu then sped forward, before making a u-turn, headed back in our direction.

At this point, I began to get a little nervous. Not because I was afraid to fight, because I had had plenty of those, growing up in Terror Town, but because I didn’t know if the GDs, in the Malibu, had straps or not. This time, when the Malibu stopped alongside us, the driver-side window was rolled down.

“What the fuck y’all hook-ass niggas just said?” asked the driver, looking like he was in his mid-20s.

“Hook?” questioned Fatal. “I’ll show you a hook, when I knock your brick-ass out!” Fatal said, and proceeded to drop the pitchforks again.

As the driver jumped out of the car, that nervous tinge hit me again. I still wasn't sure if the GDs were strapped or not, but at this point, either way, it was too late. The beef was on!

The driver took two steps toward Fatal before he was hit with a vicious right jab, by me, that caused him to stagger to his left. Fatal's follow-up haymaker, sent him falling to the ground.

By this time, the other four GDs that were in the car were out swinging on the first person that they encountered. With the driver temporarily out of commission, we outnumbered them 6 to 4, and quickly took advantage of the difference.

Danny managed to get one of the GDs in a full nelson hold, so I ran over to them, and unloaded a flurry of left, right, lefts, on the GD's defenseless face. Wanting some fun for himself, Danny took my target away, by slamming him face-first, into the cold hard concrete. I turned around to see that now, we were outnumbered 12 to 6, because the dudes that we had seen walking through the park, had been reinforcements for the GDs in the Malibu. There was now five different fights going on, all over the street. This had become a true rumble.

From my blind side, Skillet ran up on me, but was off-balance and swung wild, missing me badly. Just as I was about to counter with a punch of my own, Blocka, Blocka, Blocka, Whirru, Whirru, Whirru, were the sounds that I heard.

It seems like all at once, everybody froze, trying to locate the direction that the gunshots had come from. I was awakened from my paralysis by Fatal, with Sally in tow, pulling me by my Jacket and yelling at the same time, "Come on, Solid! We gotta go! The Romes on the way!"

Ten minutes later, we were all congregated together, in front of Fatal's building, discussing the altercation. Surprisingly, besides B-Dub's busted lip, no one had any noticeable injuries. And as it turns out, the gunshots had come from one of the older 4s that was down the street, and had spotted what was going down.

We kicked it for about twenty more minutes before, one by one, J-Mo, Danny, Miles, and B-Dub, dipped off, to check in at their respective homes. With only Fatal, Sally, and me left, Fatal suggested that we go up to his crib to smoke a blunt.

Fatal was only 17 years old, but lived alone. He and his mother's boyfriend, couldn't seem to get along. The boyfriend was a policeman, and the love of Fatal's mother life. So she decided that rather than lose possibly her last shot at true love, that she would leave her apartment, and move into an apartment with her boyfriend, thus leaving Fatal to have to fend for self. This arrangement suited all involved, and especially Fatal, since he was already selling enough drugs to keep up with the bills and still have some money on the side.

Fatal's mother left him a nicely furnished 2 bedroom apartment. Entering the apartment, you walked directly into the livingroom, which boasted a 40-inch big screen TV, enclosed in an entertainment center. Facing that is a three cushioned black, Lazy Boy couch, and to the left and right of that, were the matching love-seat and chair. A black glass coffee table sat in the middle of it all.

Sally took the center cushion of the couch. I took the recliner to her right, and after Fatal loaded the CD player with Twista's "Adrenaline Rush" CD, he took the cushion to the right of Sally, and nearest to me.

"Damn, Sincere. You finished rolling the blunt yet, or do you need some more time, slobbering the muthafucka down?" joked Fatal.

I gave a slight smirk, before replying, “Fuck you, nigga. Give me some fire.”

Taking those first few tokes of the weed gave me just the relaxed feeling that I needed, after the long first day of school that I had just had. After a few rotations of the blunt, and some small talk, Fatal leaned over towards me whispering, our conversation concealed from Sally by the loud sounds of Twista’s “Get It Wet” bumping through the speakers.

“Aye, Solid. I believe this bitch a runner. So, I’m ’bout to take her in the room and get her butt-naked. So, when I finish, be ready, so that as soon as I come out, you can go in there and handle your business before she put her clothes back on. A’ight?”

“A’ight, bet” I replied.

Fatal then leaned over in the opposite direction, whispering in Sally’s ear. After about, two minutes of conversation, he lead her down the hall to his bedroom. After only 15 more minutes, the door reopened, and out came Fatal, butt-ass-naked! After closing the door, he turned around, smiling ear to ear.

“Damn, Sincere! I ain’t gone even lie, Four. That pussy good as a muthafucka, joe! I didn’t even wanna come out of it, but chu my nigga, and my balls my word. So let this bitch be a small representation of my bond to you that what’s mine is yours and let nothing come between us, especially pussy.”

I looked Fatal in his eyes and felt kinda weird having this conversation with him, being that he was naked with a dirty condom in his hand. But what’s real is real.

As I entered the bedroom, I saw that Sally was lying on the bed with her back facing me as if she were asleep. As quickly and quietly as possible, I began stripping all the way down to my boxers and socks. I

noticed, for the first time, that Sally's clothes did not do her body justice.

Sally was 5'4", 125 pounds. She was very dark, with baby smooth skin. She wore weave pieces, like most girls in the hood, but whoever was doing hers was doing them well. But the feature that had me fennin, was her track-toned legs and her Baby Phat ass! The fact that Sally was a GD Queen, and we had just whooped the GDs, only went to excite me more.

I climbed onto the bed, using my left elbow to support my weight, while rubbing her legs, up and down, with my right hand. Feeling my touch, Sally began to moan lightly. She then rolled over onto her back causing my roaming hand to slide in between her thighs.

"Fatal! I mean, Sincere! Boy, what chu doing in here?" yelled Sally, as she opened her eyes and realized that it was not Fatal, but me that was causing her pussy to moisten.

Her response startled me, but I quickly recovered. While still rubbing the inside of her leg and occasionally softly brushing over the lips of her vagina, I responded, "Shhh. Just chill, boo. Fatal stepped out for a second and asked me to come and keep you company. So just relax, ma. And let me take care of you."

Sally didn't respond immediately, and I took that as a sign that she was debating whether she was willing or not. Trying to get her to see things my way, I inserted my index and middle fingers, as far as I could into her pussy, and began a slow forward curl with my fingers while slowly easing my hand backwards. This technique allowed me to caress both her G-spot and her clitoris in one smooth motion. It was one of the many jewels that Sweet Sammy had laced me with, over the last two years. And judging by Sally's reaction, it was a jewel indeed.

As I continued the technique, Sally began to spread her legs apart, close her eyes, and breath pleasure.

“Ooh, Sincere. This feels so goood,” she moaned.

Never stopping the rotation, but seizing the moment, I repositioned myself between her legs and began sliding on my condom.

Entering her, I couldn't believe how tight her pussy still was. Thankfully, her warmth and wetness provided me with a smooth entrance. With the first stroke I traveled as deep into her as I could go, causing her eyes to bulge in pain. I wanted to remind her that despite the sensual fingering, I was not here to make love, I was here to fuck!

To Sally, the feeling was mutual. She let me know that by raising her legs, so that they were now positioned on my shoulders, allowing me unimpeded access.

I instantly began pounding her pussy. The harder I fucked and the longer my stroke, the louder that Sally begged for more.

“Ooh! Yeah! Sincere, make me feel good. Ooh! Yeah! Make me feel goood!” she yelled.

Her screams, my grunts, the bed creaking, and our bodies clapping together was the soundtrack of Fatal's bedroom, for the next fifteen minutes. Then, from out of nowhere, Sally reached up and pulled me down on top of her. She wrapped her arms around my neck, and repositioned her legs so that they were criss-crossed at the base of my spine, in a leg-lock, making me immobile. And she kept me in that hold, with my face in a pillow, for the next three minutes, while I wondered to myself, “Why was she still holding me?”

By the time that I realized it, it was too late. I jerked loose of her embrace, to see Sally with a Kool-Aid smile on her face.

While I was thinking that I was getting over on her, by running a train on her, she had reversed the game and got over on me, by

receiving a thorough fucking, getting her nut, and preventing me from getting mine by holding me in that hold, until I was no longer erect.

I could have been a poor sport, and forced her to allow me to get mine, but I'm a Four Corner Hustler, so I respected her grind.

"You got that one, shorty," I stated, while returning her smile.

CHAPTER 2

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1997

All was quiet throughout the entire first half of today. The Gangsters that I share classes with didn't show any signs that we were now beefing, but the whole school knew and could feel what was up.

As I took my seat in the cafeteria, it occurred to me that the usually rowdy lunch crowd was eerily silent today.

"Damn, Fatal. What's up? Nobody got murked last night, did it?" I asked.

Fatal looked at me with his eyes squinched, questioningly, before responding, "Naw, Four. Not that I know of. You know something different?" he asked.

"Naw. I'm just wondering why everybody quiet and shit, like a funeral is about to begin."

Fatal gave me that devilish smirk before responding, "Shiiit. After this evening, it probably will be some funerals about to begin, while you bullshitting."

That caused some nervous chuckles from amongst the brothers.

After a couple of more minutes of small-talk, and everybody being notified to meet up in the Foot Locker parking lot across the street from the school after school, we dipped off to our respective classes.

My next three classes were just as boring as my first five, so that, the sound of the dismissal bell ringing was music to my ears. As soon as I exited my 8th period history class, Fatal and B-Dub was right there waiting for me. They told me that a few of the older 4s had driven up to the school to offer us aid and assistance. They were in the parking lot waiting for us.

Entering the Foot Locker parking lot, Fatal introduced me to the 4s that had come up to the school. After introductions were made and handshakes were exchanged, we loaded up into the five cars that they come up there in, and rode off in search of some GDs.

Our first victim came not three blocks away from the school when I spotted a GD that I shared 2nd period with walking with a female.

I was in the last car of the caravan with Fatal, and two of the older 4s, Sconey and Tru.

“Aye, Solid! Stop! There go one of them bricks right there!” I shouted, excitedly.

Tru stopped the car in the middle of the street to the left, and just behind the GD and the female. Sconey and I jumped out of the Chevy, catching up with the Gangster.

The Gangster must have been in an intense conversation with the broad, because he didn’t peep us running up on him until we were less than three feet away. By that time, it was too late.

The Gangster turned around opening his mouth to speak, but his words died on his tongue as I hit him in his face with The Club, an anti-car theft lock. You could hear his bone crack when his eye socket collapsed, on his way to the ground. Sconey began to stomp him as I continued pummeling his head and body area with The Club.

“Yeah, bitch! Who got the ups, now? You brick muthafucka!” I grunted as anger surged through my pores.

I caught movement out of the corner of my eye, and looked up to see that the female that he was with was running down the block, screaming at the top of her lungs, and an elderly woman had come out of her house.

“Baby, please, y’all stop beating that boy. Y’all gone kill him!” the old woman cried out.

Seeing the amount of attention that we were attracting, we stopped the assault and returned to Tru's Chevy to find some more victims.

Block after block, we would find one or two GDs walking together, jump out, whoop their ass real good, and ride off in search of more vics. We found the first substantial number of GDs, about 7 or 8, walking together just off of Cottage Grove.

The word that we were riding around whooping niggas must've gotten out, because as soon as we turned the corner, they all took off running.

All of the 4s bailed from the cars, barely before they came to a complete stop. Since I was in the last car of the caravan and suffered from a slight limp given to me by some other GDs about four years previous, I was the last in pursuit.

Skillet was one of the GDs that had fled. He was only 17 years old, but was already well respected amongst his fellow GDs, as well as his adversaries, for the work that he had been putting in since he was 11.

Skillet was a third generation Gangster Disciple. His father was in prison, a co-defendant of the gangs founder, and his grandfather was one of the original Black Gangster Disciples. There was great pressure on Skillet, within his organization, to climb to the ranks of his forefathers.

The only reason that Skillet had taken off running was because one of his other Gs had taken off first, causing him to run out of instinct. Once he realized who and what it was that he was running from, he wanted to stop and fight. But because all of his Gs had scattered in different directions, to do so would be a guaranteed ass whooping that he wasn't willing to take right now.

With Soney, Tru, J-Mo, and Fatal in close pursuit, Skillet ran up the left side of a house on the corner, around the front, down the driveway,

and across the backyard, making a giant square. As he jumped the fence, returning to his original location, he thought about how he was going to give Torrenzo a “pumpkin head” for running when he got back to the block.

I was about a quarter of a block behind J-Mo and Soney, when I saw them round the corner chasing the GD. By the time that I made it to the tall brown wooden fence of the house that I had seen J-Mo and Soney round, I heard a thump that got my attention. I stopped to see what the noise was, looked up at the fence, and first saw a pair of fingers, then the left leg of the person swinging over the fence, followed immediately by the rest of his body. As the person was trying to hang from the top of the fence to cushion his fall, I grabbed both of the person’s legs trying to pull him down.

When the person looked back over his shoulder to see who was pulling his legs, and I realized that it was Skillet’s legs that I was holding, I began to pull even harder.

Just then, I heard the rest of the brothers on the other side of the fence, having just made it into the backyard and noticed Skillet’s fingers clutching the top of the fence.

Desperation kicking in, Skillet began to kick wildly trying to free his leg from my hold, but I held on tight, and began to pull down harder to break his grip on the fence. On my third pull, I broke his grip.

Skillet fell face first towards the concrete. By pulling his arms down in front of his face, he was able to save his skull from cracking, but he couldn’t save his front teeth from being knocked out as his face made contact with concrete.

I began stomping him and soon J-Mo, Fatal, Soney, and Tru joined me in the fest. While J-Mo, Soney, and Fatal continued to stomp Skillet, Tru pulled me to the side, away from the fracas.

“Check it out, Li'l Solid,” said Tru. “The game wasn't made for all to play. But judging by the hunger in your eyes, you got staying power. And to stay in power, you got to be either feared or respected. That nigga lying there,” he said, pointing at Skillet, “didn't fear your fury or respect your gangster. That nigga challenged your whole being!” Tru then pulled out an old, rusty looking .38 special from the back of his pants, and extended it towards me while saying, “Here's your opportunity to justify your thug. What chu gone do?”

Without any further thought or hesitation, I took the pistol from Tru's hands and reentered the crowd of 4s, still stomping Skillet out.

Skillet's eyes were now closed, and he was barely conscious. As the brothers peeped the “itchy” in my hand, they took steps away from Skillet, allowing me room to work.

As I stood over Skillet with one leg on each side of his body, staring at his badly beaten face, he slowly opened his eyes, thinking that his beating was over. As his vision cleared, shock, fear, and finally, sadness all quickly washed over his face when he realized that he had been awakened from a nightmarish beating, only to be awakened to the sight of the barrel of a .38 special, aimed directly at his face.

As I tightened my grip on the handle and began to apply slight pressure on the trigger, Skillet's eyes traced from the barrel of my gun, up my arm, over my chest, neck, and chin, and finally, he made eye contact with me. Neither sorrow, nor remorse, or pity did I feel as we stared at each other. As I witnessed a single tear escape from his right eye, at that exact moment, the only thought that came to my mind was, “How dare this bitch-ass nigga have the nerve to look me in my eye.” BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!

CHAPTER 3

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1997, 4:38 p.m.

In the last three weeks, I've only been to school a couple of times. Even then I left after only a few classes, because it seemed like everybody that I passed in the hallways looked at me as if they knew what I had did. It wasn't true, but my suspicions had me so noid that I just said, "Fuck school!"

Sconey, Fatal, Tru, and I have been kicking it real hard since the day that I silenced Skillet. It seems like every since that day, we've been shooting, getting shot at, or both, with the GDs.

Shits gotten so crazy that just the other night, Fatal and I was riding with Tru in one of his hype's cars. We rode down Ellis St. and spotted this dude that had the exact same size, build, height, and First Down coat on as this GD named Dante. So we rounded the corner, parked in an alley, and Fatal and I jumped out and stood behind some trees that resembled fir trees, knowing that the dude was going to have to walk past us to get to his block, Dobson Ave.

A group of females' loud talking alerted us that he was near. When I saw, through the bushy tree, that he was less than two steps away from us, I stepped out of our hiding spot, surprising him, put the barrel of my revolver to his head, said, "GDK, bitch," and pulled the trigger. For a second that felt like an hour, no one moved or made a sound. Not me, Fatal, not dude, or the broads. Everyone was shocked stupid.

A millisecond after I had made my move, I realized that dude wasn't Dante. He was some lame nobody. But by then it was too late, I had already pulled the trigger. Luckily for all involved, the one chamber of my revolver that didn't have a bullet in it was the one that had clicked.

I exhaled, told dude, “My bad, joe,” and fled the scene in Tru’s geekmobile, tripping over the fact that this bullshit ass war had almost caused me to kill an innocent man.

I’ve been so fucked up behind that, that for the last two days, I haven’t left the crib, and has had to put up with nonstop nagging from my mother over me not attending school. She has even gone to threatening Alexis and me with eviction, since Alexis just recently admitted to being four months pregnant. The only reason that she hasn’t kicked us out already is because I’m her youngest and only son, and Alexis had always been a straight A student and an obedient daughter, before this last incident. Nikki wasn’t so lucky, and was evicted a month ago when she came forward with her pregnancy.

Knock, knock, knock.

“What’s up?” I yelled, while simultaneously hitting the mute button on my bedroom TV.

Tony walked into my room with an Eddie Bauer book bag hanging off of his left shoulder.

Tony’s a good nigga, basically, all around the board. He’s been kicking it with Alexis since she was only 14, and he was 19. My mother didn’t know of their age difference until two years into the relationship, and by then, he had my mother green to what was really going on with his Nas-type, intelligent thug appearance. I mean, the nigga keeps new cars, but he never ride rims. His hair is draped in his trademark five braids, but he also wears reading glasses. I mean, even now he’s doing his thug-thing with the crispy 40 belows, Pelle Pelle jeans, and Avirex leather coat, but he’s also rocking the decoy book bag and an Izod shirt. Balance he tells me.

“What’s the drawing, Moe? Where them derbs at?” asked Tony.

And that's what I dislike about him. He always addresses me as a Blackstone, which is his gang, instead of a Four Corner Hustler. And he's always asking me about some hoes, when he's suppose to be fucking with my sister. I mean, real niggas do real things, but . . .

"Ain't nothing, Moe. What's up wit it?" I asked.

"Shit. Your sister got me going maternity shopping wit her, but I brought chu something to put up for me," Tony said, dropping the book bag from his shoulder before unzipping it. "This ain't as much as I usually bring, 'cause them Foster Park niggas been spending good today. It's still about two and a half kilos in here. I took me out enough to hold me down for the week, so I'll get at chu then, a'ight?"

"A'ight, bet Moe. All is well," I stated, throwing up five fingers, then closing my thumb, and bring my right hand from high in the sky, to over my chest.

"All is well," Tony replied, walking out of the room, while also throwing up five fingers with his right hand, before closing them into a fist, and stamping it on his heart.

I looked inside of the bag, making sure that everything that was suppose to be in there was in there, before making my move.

This is the part of the game, played by Tony and me, that my mother, sister, and the rest of the world are green to. Every since I was 11 years-old, I've been an employee of Tony's. I started out selling weed, only making \$20 off of every ten \$10 bags that I sold. I then went to doing some shoot-em-up bang-bang shit for him, and even dabbled in the crack game for a second, but never saw any real progress since I was still in school, and couldn't full-time grind.

Tony was sleep to what was really going on out here. When he found out that we were moving to the suburbs, he figured that our

house would be a good, low-key spot for him to keep his coke at. So, that's what I've been doing for the last three months, holding his work.

"Simon!" yelled Alexis, while opening my door at the same time.

I quickly slid the book bag under my bed.

"Boy, what . . .? Simon, what's in that book bag that you just tried to hide from me?"

"Goddamn, you nosy! Them my Playboy magazines. You wanna read 'em?" I asked, giving her a sarcastic smile.

"Ugh, boy you nasty. Here, take the phone."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know. Some little boy that say that his name is Fatal. Oh, yeah," she said, before lowering her voice in a conspiratorial tone, asking, "What Tony came in here to talk to you about?"

I put on my most serious face and kept my voice calm, saying, "Oh. He told me that his sister was wondering when I was going to bring the twins through."

"The twins? What twins?" Alexis asked, looking mystified.

"These twin nuts, muthafucka! Now get cho ass up out my room," I said, before cracking up laughing.

Once Alexis closed the door to my room on her way out, I brought the phone to my ear and asked, "What up, Four?"

"What up, giggles? It's Iraq in these muthafucking streets, and your friendly ass over there smiling," stated Fatal.

"Fuck you talking about, nigga? I smile to hide the pain. Now, what's the demo?"

"Four, I need ju to run down here and bring me that itchy. Them niggas wet Miles up today, after school."

"What! Aw, hell naw! Them marks still want it? I'll be down there in a second. We finna give them niggas some hot ones!" I replied angrily.

“Naw, Sin. It ain’t going down like that. Miles is J-Mo’s cousin, and he want some get-back, so me and him gonna handle this one. I just need your itchy so that we both will have one.”

It pissed me off to be excluded from the mission. I loved my 4s just as much as I loved my sisters and mother. But I felt J-Mo’s position, too.

“A’ight, Four. Give me about five minutes,” I said, resentfully.

After grabbing the book bag and taking it to my stash spot, I headed down the street to Fatal’s apartment, strapped with my brand new, black plastic, rubber-grip, Glock 40.

Halfway down the block, from out of nowhere it seems, a black and gold Dolton Police car screeched to a halt to the left of me in the middle of the street. Without a second’s hesitation, I took off running in the opposite direction through the gangway of two buildings. The officer in the passenger seat took off after me, while the other one sped around the block calling for back-up.

At the end of the gangway stood a ten foot high, barred gate. I knew that I wasn’t going to be able to out run the policeman on my tail because of my slight limp, so my only chance for escape was to make it over that gate, and hope that his heavy equipment would prevent him from getting over it with the same speed, thus giving me some much needed cushion.

With all my strength, I ran as fast as I could towards the gate preparing for my leap. Two feet from the gate, I jumped off of my left foot, reaching for the top of the gate. As soon as my right foot made the slightest contact with the gate, I thrust upward off of it and managed to clear the entire top of the gate! I held on to the other side of the gate for a second to slow my momentum and to cushion my drop, because a twisted ankle right now would be costly. As I dropped

and began to turn around to check behind me, just as I expected, the policeman tried to emulate my technique but his extra weight caused his momentum to slam him face first into the gate.

I ran to the right through two yards before dumping the itchy in a flower bed located on the side of a house leading to the next block. As I came to the front of the house, I could hear the police car's engine running full blast in my direction. I quickly ran across the street, and began a series of gate-jumps in a huge semi-circle until I arrived at my side door.

Entering the house, I first ran downstairs to the basement, and changed my clothes. I then came back upstairs to the main floor to get me something to drink, and to calm down my adrenaline. Midway through pouring my glass of Kool-Aid, I heard the distinctive knock of the police at the front door. Again, without hesitation, I left the Kool-Aid on the kitchen counter, and fled the kitchen and down the eight stairs leading to the side door.

I turned right coming out of the side door, heading for the backyard and beyond.

I took one step into the backyard before I was falling to the ground, hearing bells ringing, and, miraculously, seeing day turn into night in an instant. I was then snatched from the ground by the 6'4", black policeman that had knocked me to it.

"Hold on! Wait! What are y'all doing to my baby?" shouted my mother, running out of the side door.

The black officer, holding me by the chain links of the handcuffs, replied, "Miss, if you would just calm down," and after a moment's hesitation, he continued, "Your son, just moments ago, eluded capture by fleeing from two gang task force officers. He began a foot-chase that

lasted approximately ten minutes, and he also brandished a 9 mm pistol at one of the officers before throwing it into a neighbor's yard."

"Man, hell naw!" I shouted at the officer's make-believe story. "Ma, they lying. I ain't do none of that shit!"

"Simon, didn't I tell you that those gangs were going to get you in trouble? Look at you now. Your bad ass probably *did* do it."

At that moment, my soul died. I couldn't believe that my mother would co-sign the word of a policeman's over my own. After all of the shit that we had been through?

The officer must have taken my mother's comment as a cue that it was okay to proceed, because he began leading me to the backseat of his car, while reading me my rights. At this point I would usually put up a frivolous struggle with the police, but my mother's last statement had taken all of the fight out of me.

For the next four hours, I sat in an empty interview room in the police station. Every hour or so, an officer would come into the room, looking sympathetic, and begin questioning me about Skillet's murder and the other shootings that had occurred over the last few weeks. They would tell me that they were trying to help me save my own life and so and so.

I had played this game with officers for so long now, that it was becoming boring and mundane to me, so I just allowed them to talk, while giving them my most innocent face, saying nothing at all. After a while, they realized that their tricks and routines weren't going to work on me and took me down to 11th and Hamilton, where the Audi Home is located.

For many novice juvenile criminals, the Audi Home's tall white walls and tinted windows, are an intimidating presence. The Audi Home was

known for its violent reputation, but over the past four years, this place had become something of a second home for me.

As I entered and got booked, I was treated more like a relative that had just returned from an extended vacation than a new intake prisoner. Unlike most inmates, I was only kept in intake for a day before being placed in my usual population block, 4k.

“Damn, nigga! You just got out of here six months ago. What chu back down here for, now?” asked B, the officer of the block.

B was a big dude, standing 6'5", 267 lbs. But he was more friend than foe, since he was a member of the Black Peace Stones, and one of Tony's friends.

“Man, they got me on some bullshit. They talking about they caught me wit a itchy.”

“Did they?” asked B.

“Hell naw, nigga! They found that shit in a flower bed somewhere. It got a rubber-grip on it, anyway, so you know it ain't no prints.”

“Oh. Shiiit, you good then. You ain't no new-jack. You know your way around here. So, go pick out which room you want, put chyos stuff in there, and I'll move whoever is in there out in a second.”

This was one of the perks of being a “plugged thug.” I could basically do as I pleased around here.

I walked into the TV room where there were four cells which were suppose to be reserved for the best behaving inmates, but really weren't. I interrupted the television program by asking who was in which room.

Recognizing me, a few of the other regulars welcomed me back and notified me of who was in which room. Two were occupied by Vice Lords, another by a GD, and the other by a white boy that wasn't in a gang.

That right there let me know that the block wasn't being run by a thoroughbred, because Nuetrans, (The name given to people not in an organization), and especially a White Neutron, was never suppose to have a TV room cell.

Very calmly, I alerted the Neutron that his cell was now my cell, and that now would be a good time to pack up his things to move. I could tell that the Neutron wasn't a new-jack, because he immediately got up from his seat, walked to his room, and began packing his things, knowing that it had been good while it lasted. He and I both knew that there was NO WAY that he was suppose to have room like that!

"Aye, Joe. Who is you?" asked a lanky, 5'8" kid, approaching the door of my new cell.

I was standing in the doorway of the cell watching the Neutron gather up his things, when I replied, "I'm Sincere, Four Corner Hustler from 64th and Champlain. Who you is?" I asked.

"I'm Non-non, 3 star elite over the TVLs, in K-Town. I got this deck. So, why don't chu wait on me in the bathroom while I grab your nation pack, and we can talk in private."

This was the norm when entering a jail in Chicago. You would receive a nation pack consisting of essentials like, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, etc., and be quizzed on your knowledge of gang literature. This was to ensure that you were who you said you were.

After handing me my nation pack, which I immediately placed on the floor, and quizzing me on my knowledge of literature, which I knew more of than him, he began scolding me.

"Look, Sincere. I run this shit! So, you don't come on my deck and start giving out orders like you chief or something. I fucks wit that white boy. So, you go back to HIS room, get chyo stuff back up out of

there, and find you another room to move into, a'ight?" asked Non-non.

I stared at Non-non for a second, as if I was confused. According to the laws of our respective organizations, I was supposed to have followed Non-non's orders, being that he had rank and I did not. But like I said earlier, Four Corner Hustlers barred none.

Without as much as an answer, I cold-cocked Non-non right in his mouth. The punch caused him to bend over at the waist and to turn away from me with his hands covering his mouth, so as to stop the flow of blood that had immediately begun to gush out of his top lip. I then hit him with a right hook to his kidneys, and he fell to the bathroom floor on his stomach.

Calmly, I took a seat on his back, wrapped my left arm around his neck in a sleeper hold, and began pulling his entire upper body backwards towards me, stretching out his abdominal muscles and choking him at the same time.

With blood trickling down his mouth, and preventing him from breathing with my choke hold, I began to whisper into his ear, "Non-non, because you my brother, I'ma spare you. But chu better know and understand that I ain't no lame. And that little rank that chu got, you can put that shit in your pocket for as long as you on 4k, because from now on, this is my deck. Understand?"

With the little strength that Non-non had left, he made a valiant effort to shake his head yes.

With our conversation now over, I released Non-non from the sleeper hold, grabbed my nation pack, and proceeded to my new TV room cell, without the slightest worry of revenge from Non-non. Real niggas are easy to recognize, but hard to find. You could've done an autopsy on Non-non's body and you wouldn't have found a trace of

real nigga in him, unless he had swallowed some of the skin off of my knuckle.

“I see you didn’t waste no time introducing yourself to your brother back there, huh?” joked B, as I passed his desk.

I answered him with a you-already-know smile, and kept it moving to my room for some much needed rest.

CHAPTER 4

“Simon, I really believe that it would be in your best interest to go along with the prosecutor’s plea agreement. You would only have to do 6 more months in the Illinois Youth Department of Corrections before being released to a child placement center, where you will be in a controlled environment, by counselors and staff. This will allow you the opportunity to put to use the trades, that you would have acquired while being in the I.Y.D.O.C.”

This was my lawyer’s spiel to me. She had been nagging me for the last 4 months to take this deal, to no avail.

“Man, the shit I ain’t feeling is why they wanna slam me for another 6 months, then try to send me to placement for 6 months after that!”

“Simon, like I’ve already explained to you before, your mother hasn’t been present in court once since you’ve been detained. It wouldn’t be in your or the court’s best interest to release you to an absentee parent.”

She was right about that. My mother hadn’t been to court or visitation since the day that I was locked up.

“Look, Mrs. Klum, I don’t give a fuck about the prosecutor’s deal! And I don’t give a fuck about going to trial wit these bitches! So I’d advise you to get ready for war.”

Mrs. Klum looked at me with that same pathetic look that all self-righteous professionals that thought that they were superior to their clients gave. She then gathered up her files, and signaled to the bailiff that we were ready to appear in front of the judge. Little did her scary ass know, I had a trick up my sleeve for her.

The bailiff escorted us into the courtroom in front of Judge Stuttley's towering seat, and to the left of the prosecutor and arresting officer.

"Mrs. Klum, I understand that there hasn't been an agreement reached between your client and the prosecutor. Is that true?" asked Judge Stuttley in his intimidatingly deep, baritone voice.

"Um, uh, nnn, no your honor." Mrs. Klum stuttered, scared to death of Judge Stuttley.

"Mrs. Klum, I have continued this case over ten times already to allow you all enough time to compromise, but you all have not been able to do so, and as such, I will not issue another continuance. Trial is set for 2 hours from the current time of . . ."

"Um, your honor?" I called out, interrupting him.

"Mr. Jackson, you will speak to me through your lawyer. I . . ."

"Your honor," I interrupted again. "This is concerning a problem that I have with my lawyer."

He sighed before speaking, "And what problem is that Mr. Jackson?" he asked.

"I want to fire my lawyer," I stated, matter-of-factly.

The prosecutor and Mrs. Klum's jaws dropped in surprise. Judge Stuttley rolled his eyes to the back of his head, and exhaled a deep breath.

"And why would you like to fire your lawyer, Mr. Jackson?"

Bingo! My show!

"See, your honor, I'm about to go to trial today. The way I see it is this courtroom is a battlefield. On one side you got the prosecutor. He's got mortars, heat-seeking bullets, grenades, anti-ballistic missiles, and all that type of high-tech weaponry on his side. And on my side.."

I nodded my head towards Mrs. Klum, "all I got is a scared little

poodle. I mean, what am I suppose to do, unleash her collar and tell her to engage?”

Uncontrollable laughter, quickly filled the courtroom.

Judge Stuttley tried to maintain his bearing, but even he couldn't contain a brief chuckle.

BOOM , BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!

“Order in the court!” yelled Judge Stuttley, quickly regaining order. “Mr. Jackson, that kind of disrespect will not be condoned in my court! The next time that you do that, I will place you in contempt. Do you understand?”

“Yes, sir, I apologize” I lied, with my most innocent face.

“Mrs. Klum, you are relieved of all responsibilities of Mr. Jackson's case. Mrs. Crenshaw!” Judge Stuttley yelled, gaining the attention of a middle-aged black woman sitting in an area assigned to public defenders.

“Yes, your honor” she replied, while standing up.

“Mrs. Crenshaw, you now have the responsibility of Mr. Jackson's case. I will go against my previous statement, and reset trial for 2 months from . . .”

“No, no, your honor!” I again interrupted him. Before he could begin scolding me for my interruption, I shot my shot. “We don't need no more continuances. This case is easy. We'll be ready in the 2 hours you scheduled for trial earlier,” I stated, confidently.

“Mr. Jackson, you are really pushing me today. My mother once warned me to be careful of what I asked for. Too bad that your mother isn't here to give you that same advice. Per the defendant's request, trial is set for two hours from the current time of 12:41 p.m.”

I was then taken out of the courtroom to a holding tank where my lawyer promptly came to speak with me.

“How are you doing, Mr. Jackson? I am your new lawyer, Mrs. Crenshaw. But before we begin I must ask you one question, if I may?”

“Okay. What’s up?” I asked.

“Well, I was just wondering, have you lost your little young-ass mind?” asked Mrs. Crenshaw, while revealing a Crest-white smile.

I liked her already. Bold. Black. Unafraid to curse. Yeah, she was exactly the type of lawyer that I wanted.

“Look, Mrs. Crenshaw, this case is beat. All that I need ju to do is call one witness, ask him these questions that I wrote down for you, and convince my mother to come down here to court so that I can go home after this case gets thrown out.”

“Oh, you just got it all figured out, huh?” asked Mrs. Crenshaw, causing me to slightly grin while shaking my head, yes.

“Just out of curiosity, if everything’s going to be so simple, why have you remained in custody for six months? Why haven’t you already gone home?” she asked.

“To tell you the truth, Mrs. Crenshaw, I’ve been having a lot of fun in the Audi Home, and I didn’t want to get out too early and have to return to school this year. Plus, this girl name Kelley got at me out of the blue about four months ago. So, I kind of wanted to stay gone for a little while to see if she’s a true rider. But last week she promised to give me some . . . , um, you know, when I get out, so now I gotta go,” I said.

Mrs. Crenshaw, just looked at me, shaking her head in disbelief. “Mr. Jackson” she said, while still shaking her head side to side, smiling, “You truly are a one-of-a-kind character. And as crazy as it sounds, since you are so confident in your defense, I’m going to follow it to a tee. I’m going to do whatever it is that I have to do to get your mother

down to this courtroom today, if for no other reason than to personally see the woman that gave birth to you.”

Mrs. Crenshaw took my list of questions, and wrapped up our conference.

Two hours later, without an update from her, I was lead by the bailiff back into the courtroom wondering if Mrs. Crenshaw was able to convince my mother to show up.

As soon as I entered the courtroom, my inquiry was answered when I saw my mother, and an aunt from out of town, standing behind my smiling lawyer. As I made eye-contact with my mother, it was something different about her that I couldn't quite place.

In Illinois juvenile court, there was no 12-member juries. The judge had absolute authority, acting as both jury and executioner. Lucky me.

The prosecutor, Mr. Zepelowski, began presenting his case first. He called 3 witnesses, the arresting officer, and the 2 officers that had began the chase. The arresting officer's testimony was first, and basically irrelevant, since he hadn't been the one to recover the gun, and he wasn't present during the chase.

The driver of the police car that had approached me testified next. His testimony was vague, since he had missed out on most of the details of the chase, by being in a car.

He testified to seeing me flee when I was originally approached, and seeing me leave from the driveway that the gun was found in.

Last to testify, was the officer that had chased me, and had found the gun, officer Roosevelt Freeman. He was both the prosecutor's and my star witness. Mr. Zepelowski wrapped up his case, and turned the courtroom over to Mrs. Crenshaw.

“Your honor, the defense will only be calling one witness, officer Roosevelt Freeman.”

Witnessing Mrs. Crenshaw question him made me chuckle. I mean, I thought that she would review my questions, and phrase them in her own wording, but she read from the notepad that I had given her exactly as I had wrote it.

“Mr. Freeman, tell me exactly what happened when you tried to bounce over the gate behind Mr. Jackson.”

“Well, I was in hot pursuit of the suspect when we both encountered, approximately, a ten-foot high barred gate. The suspect was about 15 feet in front of me when he leapt, and swung his lightweight frame over the gate. I was right behind him, and tried to emulate his agile technique, but unfortunately , gravity didn’t allow me his same elevation, and I was momentarily stalled trying to climb the difficult configuration of the gate,” testified Freeman.

“A’ight, Mr. Freeman, we can assume that Mr. Jackson didn’t wait on you to get over the gate, right? He kept running?”

“Um, yeah, he kept on running,” Mr. Freeman answered.

“Okay now, the distance from the gate to the flower bed, where the weapon was supposedly found, is about 60 feet, able to be covered in about 2 to 3 seconds, isn’t that about right, Mr. Freeman?” asked Mrs. Crenshaw.

Mr. Freeman began to get nervous, sensing that Mrs. Crenshaw was going somewhere with her questioning. But where?

“Well, um, I, I reckon I can’t be exactly sure, but that’s about right,” Mr. Freeman responded.

“Now, Mr. Freeman, the location that the gun was discovered in was around a bend, impossible to be seen from the gate in question. Out of your own mouth we’ve heard that Mr. Jackson kept running as you struggled over the gate. So, even if we give you the benefit of the doubt and agree that you were able to get over the gate with your size in three

seconds, with the lead that Mr. Jackson already had on you, plus another three second handicap, how were you able to see Mr. Jackson throw a gun into a flower bed that he would've already passed by the time that you were able to make it over the gate?"

"Well, now, hold on now, you're trying to use those lawyer tricks on me and put things in my mouth. I never said that I saw him throw a gun. I said that I found the gun that he threw, when I followed his escape route."

Mrs. Crenshaw free-styled the next question.

"Mr. Freeman, how can you say that Mr. Jackson was the person that had thrown the gun, if there was no one that saw him throw it," she asked.

"It's a reasonable assumption, Mrs. Crenshaw. I mean, a gun was found in the same path that he had just fled in. I mean, who else put it there?" asked Mr. Freeman.

"It's funny that you asked," said Mrs. Crenshaw. "Its just too bad that you've decided to ask that question in the middle of a trial, instead of during the investigation, when fact finding is crucial. Your honor, I move to have this case dismissed on the grounds that the only witness witnessed nothing at all, and has even introduced ghost suspects into the trial, thereby providing us with reasonable doubt. Furthermore, if you will read the results of the fingerprints tested, they tested that none was found, thereby making it impossible for my client to have possessed that gun, because there hasn't been any testimony given that my client was wearing gloves at anytime before, during, or after the chase and his subsequent arrest."

The judge didn't even have to look at the fingerprint records. Officer Freeman's response to the forth question had sealed the verdict.

“As a result of a multitude of factors, this case is dismissed. The defendant is to be released to the custody of his mother, immediately!” ordered Judge Stuttley.

Mrs. Crenshaw and I smiled at each other. I blew her a kiss and gave her a wink before walking out of the courtroom rapping a verse from one of my favorite Notorious B.I.G. songs.

“Nigga got bagged with the toast, weeded. Took it to trial, beat it. Now he feels he’s undefeated, he means it. Nothing to lose tattooed around his gun wounds, everything to gain imbedded in his brain. I feel the same.”

Yeah. That’s what’s up. It’s going down!

CHAPTER 5

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 1998, 4:07 p.m.

As soon as I entered the crib from court, I went downstairs to the basement bathroom, not to take a nice hot bath, but to take a nice long shit! It seemed like I did my best thinking when I had to rid my body of physical waste. I needed that uninterrupted time to think right now, because my immediate future plans were going to be critical to my survival.

I pulled out a cigarette from the fresh box of Newports that my mother had just bought me, fired it up, took a long hard pull, and began thinking on the current situation at hand.

For the whole 6 months that I was locked up, Tony had been sending me messages, through B, asking about the coke that I had stashed for him on the day that I had gotten knocked. I was about to tell B the location of the stash when Biggie's 3rd Crack Commandment started playing in my head, "Never trust nobody. Your moms'11 set that ass up, properly gassed up, hoody to mask up, shit, for that fast buck, she'll be laying in the bushes to light that ass up," so I decided to lie until I could talk to Tony directly.

That time never came, and the situation that presents itself is this, I could keep it real wit Tony, give him his dope back, explain why I sent him the bogus story through B, and hope that he blesses me for my loyalty, or I could say, Fuck Tony, keep the dope, come up on my own, and stick to the story that I already sold him, seeing as though it is highly believable. What would you do?

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

The knocking of someone at the bathroom door interrupted my thoughts.

“What’s up, Joe? I’m up in here!” I yelled.

“Oh, I’m sorry baby, but I’s need ta talk ta ya” replied my aunt, waiting outside the bathroom door.

“A’ight Sherylanne, I’m finna come out in a minute.” I said, and finished handling my business.

I stepped out of the bathroom to see that she was still right there, waiting on me. What the fuck was this important, and why was she up here, and not down in Georgia?

“Simon, you thun got so grown and handsome since the last time I’s saw ya! It had ta be ova fi, six yeus” Sherylanne said, excitedly, in her deep-south accent.

“Yeah, it has been a minute,” I responded, then paused for a second, before continuing, “So what brings you up here, auntie Sherylanne?”

“Bowy, I’s had ta come upa here and straighten shit out! Ya sustahs cawled me and told me ’bout hi ya mammy had done put bofe of dem out and left you in jail, so I’s had ta come upa here and see what da hell was goin own. I can’t git hur ta let dem guls come back, but I’s got chu home, ain’t I?”

I shook my head, yes, despite the true answer.

“Nephew, I’s need a fava fa yo po aintee.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“I’s need ta borrow some scratch, til ya unca sen me sum’in upa this aways.”

“Oh, I’m popped!” I responded, patting both of my pockets.

“Naw, ya ain’t. Dat lawya lady say ya got some money still down at the jail ya left.”

“Oh, shiiit, it ain’t nothing but like 40 bucks, but if you can get my mother to take you all the way back out west to get it, shit, you could get that.”

Sherylanne, barely waited until the end of my statement, before running upstairs, to get my mother. “Thank ya, nephew” she yelled in flight. The look that she had in her eyes was the same one that my mother had had in the courtroom. It was a look that I had seen before.

With my mother and aunt gone to the Audi Home, and Sweet Sammy away at work, I was home alone. After checking the stash, and seeing that the dope was still there, I took a shower, got something to eat, and decided to see if Kelley was for real about what she had said in her last letter.

Ring. Ring.

“Hello?” answered a soft voiced female.

“Hello, um, is Kelley there?” I asked.

“This is she, and whom may I ask is calling?”

“This Sincere.”

“Who?”

“Sincere!” I yelled.

“Oh, my God! Girl, guess who I’m on the phone with!” Kelley yelled to someone in the background. Through the phone, I could hear at least 2 other females yelling, and saying things that I could not understand. “Ooh, Sincere, I’m so sorry about screaming in your ear. I’m just so happy to finally hear your voice!”

“It’s all good, boo. What’s up wit chu, though?”

“Nothing,” she said, dragging the ‘o’ sound. “I’m just sitting here, chilling with my friends. What chu doing?” Kelley asked.

“Shit. I’m just chillin’ at the crib too, trying to . . .”

“Hold up!” Kelley yelled, cutting me off. “Did you just say that you’re at home? Sincere, don’t be playing with me,” she pleaded.

“Yeah, boo, its official, the young don is home.”

Kelley dropped the phone, and began yelling with excitement. I kept the phone to my ear while wondering why was she so excited about me when she had only known me for 4 months, through letters.

Kelley picked the phone back up, but now she began to speak in a more mature, and sexy tone. “Sincere, I’m sorry, baby. You gotta forgive me. You just don’t know how much I’ve dreamed about this day finally coming true! Did you receive my last letter?” she asked. I chuckled to myself at the thought of the letter in question.

Kelley had wrote me a brief letter re-stating that she had wanted to get with me from the first time that she saw me in 8th period. She said that she didn’t approach me right off, because of fear of rejection, and rumors of my violent nature that had begun to spread after my first day of school. After I had stopped attending school, her fears soon turned into regret, until one day, while working in the dean’s office, she stumbled across some paperwork bearing my name and Audi Home address. She quickly copied it, and thanked the god of love, for the second chance. That was the first part of the letter.

The second part of the letter was really a song. Kelley had taken R. Kelly’s ‘12 Play,’ and rewrote it in her own words to fit her fantasy. She had promised that we would ‘perform’ the video when I got out.

“Yeah, I got that” I answered, smiling to myself. “You trying to lay down the visuals tonight?” I asked.

“UmmHmm,” she mumbled. “And you know that I don’t usually do this, but I think I’ma break you off with a little piece of the remix.”

I couldn’t help but to bust out laughing! “Boo, you off the chain, ma.”

After scribbling down the address to her crib, and promising to come through later, I called Fatal. 20 Minutes later, he, Sconey, Tru, and Cuso were at my door with bottles of Hennessey and Moet in hand.

This was the first time that we had kicked it at my house, and I didn't know how my ole girl would respond when she returned, but I just thought, fuck it, whatever's whatever. Two bottles of each gone, with two bottles of each left, I was already scummy. The Mo and Henn had me feeling so good, that I found myself firing up a stuffed, Black Jack cigar, knowing that my mother would be able to smell the thick smoke as soon as she entered the house.

The 4s told me that after three more 4s, and two more GDs had gotten killed, the po-pos had the blocks so hot, that you would have been committing 'freedom suicide' if you went out on a mission. After 2 months of the Romes applying that kind of pressure, both sides, unofficially, and uncooperatively, eased up on the shooting and killings. Sconey told me that they were still trying to get back right from the financial losses they suffered, when the police had put the clamps on. And the coke-drought, that had hit last month was only making it harder to bounce back.

The headlights of my mother's Ford Escort shined through the darkness of the basement windows as she pulled into the driveway.

None of the 4s had ever met my mother, and the uncertainty of her character was revealed in the sudden silence of everyone in that basement. Upon entering the house, my mother and aunt could be heard coming down to the basement. As my mother opened the basement door, thick clouds of weed smoke still could be seen hovering in the stale basement air.

“What’s up?” I asked, with Chinese eyes, trying to break the cord of tension that bound the room.

My mother looked into the faces of everyone in the basement, before asking, “What are you all down here doing?”

“Nothing. Niggas just down here chillin’,” I responded.

By this time, Sherylanne had come around the couch that Cuso and I were sitting on, and began inspecting the bottles that were sitting on the floor. “Da hell yaw down hea chillin’, gul, Delores, dem down hea celebrating, and this bitch came to crash the pawty! Let me go get my cup,” Sherylanne said, before running upstairs to retrieve a cup.

“Simon, let me talk to you for a second,” my mother said, motioning for me to follow her outside of the basement door.

I got up from the couch and walked towards the door with a million thoughts racing through my head. Was she about to snap? How should I respond? Fuck it! I closed the door behind me as my aunt nearly ran me over trying to get back into the basement.

“Simon, I want to talk to you about some things concerning your life, but I’m not going to do that now. I called you out here because I need some money,” my mother said.

I thought to myself, Damn! That’s it? “Ma, I’m broke. But hold up, let me see if I can get something from one of the 4s.” I re-entered the basement and alerted everybody that I needed a few dollars, for my O.G. Without the slightest hesitation, Fatal, Soney, Cuso, and Tru, all dug into their pockets, and gave what they could. The total added up to about \$280.

We drunk and smoked for another hour or so, until they decided that it was time for them to return to their grinds. After letting them out, I checked the VCR clock, 9:37 p.m., and decided to hit Kelley back.

“Hello,” Kelley answered, damn near whispering.

“Yeah. This Sincere. This Kelley?” I asked, making sure. “Yes. This is me, boo. What happened? I thought that you said you were coming over?”

“I am. I had to call first though, ’cause I don’t know if I should be creeping, or what?”

“Naw, its all good. Just ring the bell, and I’ll be here.”

I hung up the phone, threw on my hoodie, and an old ass First Down coat, and began my journey. Walking to Kelley’s crib, even with all of the clothes I had on, I felt naked not having a pistol. Every time a Cutlass, Regal, or Chevy passed me, my only thought was that I hoped the dudes in the car weren’t GDs.

I safely made it to Kelley’s apartment building on 144th and Cottage Grove, less than two blocks away from where I had killed Skillet. I rung the doorbell, and was buzzed into the hallway of her building, which reeked of piss.

One fiend in particular, grimaced an odd look at my St.Louis Cardinals hat cocked to the left side as I walked past him on the stairs. I arrived at Kelley’s third floor apartment, and just as I lifted my hand to knock, she opened the door smiling.

Kelley’s pictures were a crude tease, compared to the actual sight of her. She stood in the doorway with silky black hair that draped down to her shoulder blades. She had the most beautiful set of hazel eyes that I had ever seen! She had cantaloupe-sized breasts, just-right thighs, and an ass that was made for cuffing. Topping it all off was the fact that she was 5’3’, and a true red-bone. Don’t get me wrong, I’ve fucked many bust-downs from around the way, but none could compare to the young Lisa Raye standing in front of me.

“You like?” Kelley asked, seductively, while striking a pose in her matching navy blue satin, pajama set. I slowly shook my head, yeah, and allowed her to lead me by the hand into the dark apartment.

From a back-room, the sounds of R.Kelly’s, ‘12 Play’ could be heard playing softly. Without speaking, Kelley slid off my coat, hung it on a stand, and guided me through the dark apartment to the very room that the music was coming from. I knew that this had to be her bedroom just by the amount of pillows on the already feminine bed. Kelley released my hand to close and lock her door, and told me to take a seat, which I did, at the foot of her bed. After securing the door, Kelley walked over, stood between my legs, placed her hand on my shoulders, and squatted so that we were now eye to eye with each other.

“Sincere, before we do this, can I tell you something?” Kelley asked, softly.

I didn’t speak, but nodded my head, yes.

“The first time that I saw you was your first day in history class. Mr. Bell gave us a one-question pop quiz that everybody passed, except you. I remember he put you on the spot, and made you explain to everybody why you said that England had won the Civil War, instead of America. You didn’t even look embarrassed, even though everybody was laughing at you. You looked confident in your answer. Do you remember what you said?”

“Not really,” I responded.

“I do! You said that America had won the physical battle, but that you felt like England had won the war, because they were able to implant their influence in the hearts and minds of Americans through religion, language, politics, and culture, thus guaranteeing their continuance as long as America existed, even if they were no longer present. Sincere,” she said, looking deep into my eyes, “you allowed

your mind to do it's own reasoning, instead of just repeating what was taught to you by some teacher in the past, like the rest of us did. That showed me that you're not a follow-the-leader type nigga. You aren't afraid to create your own road, your own destiny. And that's why I'm not afraid or ashamed to give myself to you this early in the game, because I'm not really trying to play. I want you to know that whenever you decide to take off, and wherever you decide to go, I want to be there, riding wit chu."

I looked as deep as I could into Kelley's eyes, searching for signs of game, treachery, or deceit, but I could only find sincerity.

"Boo, what's wrong? Why you looking at me like that?" asked Kelley, visibly concerned.

There was nothing wrong with me. Kelley had me in a state of awe.

"On the Four, Kelley, ain't no broad ever came at me like you just did. That was the realist shit I ever heard from a female."

"I'm not surprised," Kelley said, with a slight smirk. "'Cause I'm not every woman." She finished her statement, giving me her most serious face.

I cupped her chin with my right index finger, bringing her face closer to mine, and began placing soft kisses on her pink full lips. On the third kiss, she slowly opened her mouth, allowing my tongue to roam it's interior. I returned the gesture, and we began a 5-minute kiss-a-thon.

Kelley then broke our warm embrace by standing up from her squatted position. She then unbuttoned her pajama top, revealing 2 perfectly round C-cup breasts.

I then reached around her, palming her butt cheeks, and pulling her closer to me. I began sucking, and softly biting, her swollen nipples.

“Ussshh!” she sighed, tracing her fingers along the parts of my braids, as I continued sucking her titties, and messaging her pussy through her pajama pants with my left hand.

“Sincere!” kelley gasped. “I can’t take this no more!” she yelled, before snatching my hoodie and t-shirt off in one quick motion.

Kelley stepped backwards, and pulled down her pajama pants, revealing her hidden treasure to me. I immediately kicked off my Timbs, but before I could begin to unfasten my pants, she attacked me with a barrage of hungry kisses, forcing me to fall back onto her bed. Kelley snatched my hand away from my pants, quickly unbuttoned and unzipped them, reached down deep, and freed my dick from the confinement of both my boxers and pants.

Kelley moaned continuously while kissing me and squeezing my dick, not wanting to stop either to allow me to fully undress.

When she couldn’t take the teasing of her twat any longer, she pulled my boxers, pants, and socks off, and straddled me on the bed, preparing to ride.

Kelley’s emotions must’ve overrode her intelligence, because she tried to squat on my entire size! Halfway down, she realized with a jolt of pure pain that her tight vagina wasn’t yet ready to swallow my full size and girth. Kelley began a slow grind until, inch by inch, I was consumed by her womb. With her mind willing, and body ready, Kelley began making long slow squats on my cock, while staring me in my eyes, wincing from pains of love, and balancing herself with her palms placed in the center of my chest.

“Ussshh Mmmmm, Usshh Mmmm,” she moaned to the rhythm of the ride.

As she became more comfortable and confident, she sped the rhythm, until before long, I couldn’t take the tease any longer.

I began thrusting upwards with my hips, meeting her pussy deeply with every downward descent she made.

“Oh! Ooh! Sincere! Babbbyyy!” Kelley screamed, as we reached max speed, bodies clapping with each love connection.

Kelley buried her face in my chest, and hugged me tightly with tears falling down her face from the feeling of pure ecstasy as her cum-dams broke, and I shot life in to her canals at the same time. We laid in that position for five full minutes, exhausted from the experience.

“Sincere,” Kelley called, slightly lifting her head so that we could make eye contact.

“Huh?” I asked

“I love you,” Kelley mouthed, and fell back onto my chest. For the rest of the night, and early into the next morning, we continually repeated our experience, but mostly we talked. I told Kelley of my life growing up, and she did the same. What shocked me about this girl that I thought was a suburbanite, was that she had been raised in the Ida B. Wells housing projects, was raped by her mother’s boyfriend, and that same boyfriend had killed her mother just last year! That was the reason that Kelley was living with her traveling stripper sister, who was out of town working. I wasn’t a sucker-for-love type nigga when it came to the females, but Kelley’s realness and hard-knock life attracted me, because it paralleled mine in so many ways. They say that pain is universal. I guess that’s why misery loves company.

CHAPTER 6

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1998, 6:05 a.m.

With only two hours of sleep under our belts, Kelley and I got ourselves ready to leave. I was going to walk Kelley halfway to school, before dipping off to my crib to get some rest.

As we exited her building, I immediately noticed a group of niggas staring directly at us from across the street. I tried not to stare directly at them and bring attention to myself, knowing that I was unarmed and out of bounds. In the glance that I did make, I was sure that one of the dudes in the group looked exactly like Charlie.

“Kelley, turn around, and walk back into your building as fast as you can, and I’ll get at chu later,” I sternly whispered to Kelley.

Without the slightest hesitation, she followed my instructions. In my peripheral, I saw that the group was now crossing to my side of the street.

“Aye, Joe, let me holla at chu right quick,” one of them yelled to me from behind. I knew what that meant. I immediately took off running to my right, through an abandoned lot adjacent to Kelley’s building.

POP, POP, POP, POP, POP! Bullets dislodged from the dudes’ pistols. One of the bullets had come so close to hitting me, that I could hear it as it cut through the air inches away from my ear. I jumped a gate, and stole a quick peep back only to see that they were gaining on me. POW! POW! POW! Exploded bullets from yet another gun. Four niggas, at least two pistols, and all of them faster than me, I knew that I had to make it to the usually semi-busy intersection of 143rd Street, and hope that the presence of so many motorists in broad daylight would deter them from killing me.

I jumped another fence, sped up it's driveway, and turned right towards 143rd, running for dear life.

"Quit running hook-ass bitch!" another yelled.

BOOM! BOOM! Knock, Knock, Knock, Knock! Damn! how many guns did these mutherfuckers have? I wondered, as I dashed from the sidewalk in between two closely parked cars, and into the middle of the street approaching 143rd.

BOOM! Knock, knock! POP! knock! BOOM! POW! They all began unloading, realizing the urgency and importance of not allowing me to reach 143rd Street. After the first cannon had went off, I again dashed left between two more cars, back onto the sidewalk, this time on the opposite side of the street.

I reached 143rd with them still in hot pursuit, but there wasn't any traffic like it usually would be, so I continued running across the intersection-- POW! POW!-- and into a gas station. Never stopping or slowing down, I ran through the gas station. When I saw the wooden door that lead to the back, the thought to stop never registered in my mind. I ran full speed ahead, jumped, and karate kicked the door open. Behind me, I could hear people screaming at the guns being brandished in the hands of my pursuers as they entered the gas station. There were two people in the back room that I entered, but I barely saw their faces, as I ran past them to the rear exit.

"Where that hook at?" I could hear them asking, as they searched for me.

The gas station's back door was the kind that could be twisted open from the inside, but needed a key to unlock from outside. I bailed through the door, climbed the brown wooden fence that was directly behind the gas station, and began hopping fences, and running through yards all the way home. As soon as I entered my house, I fell out right

there between the two staircases from exhaustion and an overdose of adrenaline.

“Simon, bowy, dat chu?” Sherylanne asked, from the kitchen. Now standing in the upstairs doorway, looking down the stairs at me, she asked, “Bowy, why ya layin’ on nat ground? What’s a matter?”

“I’m tired,” I gasped, barely able to speak the words. Sherylanne left me, and I laid there for two more minutes before heading to my room in the basement, grabbing the cordless on the way.

“Hello.”

“Yeah, what’s up, Kelley?”

“Ooh, baby I was worrying myself sick! You okay?”

“Yeah, I’m good. Check this out, I need you to do something for me.”

“What is it?” Kelley asked. “I’ll do anything for you, boo.”

“A’ight. Go to school” I stated, matter-of-factly.

“What?” Kelley asked, surprised.

“I said, go to school. I’ll holla at chu when you get home,” I said, ended the call, then immediately placed another. Ring. Ring. Ring. Ring. Ring. Ring.

“What?” answered Fatal, sounding groggy.

“What nothing nigga, y’all told me niggas had chilled on that gang-bang shit, and I damn near got murked this morning, coming from off Cottage!” I snapped.

“What? Huh? Hold up.” he said. I could hear him getting up, now fully awake, “Now, you say muthafuckas got at chu on Cottage? What the fuck you doing on Cottage, and this early in the morning?”

“Don’t trip, Four, I got them niggas. Gone go back to sleep, ’cause

I'm 'bout to do the same. I'll get at chu later," I said, then deaded the call, and went to sleep.

4 HOURS LATER, 11:44 a.m.

"Hello?" I answered the phone, still half asleep.

"All is well Moe. Where you been at? I been hitting you up at the crib since last night."

"Damn Moe! You questioning my whereabouts like that? Let me find out you split between the legs" I joked.

"Ha. Ha. Ha. Naw, it ain't like that." Tony replied, laughing. "Pardon self ones. But on some real shit," he said, seriously, "I got chyour message, and I feel you tossing that merch when the Romes got at chu, but at the same time, you still account-able for that. So, what I'ma let chu do is return to where we started, same pay, until I clear 10-large. And I need ju to demonstrate on these 2 koos for me. After you handle all of that, all is well."

I took the phone from my ear and looked at it, baffled.

What Tony had basically just proposed to me was that, I would have to sell about 8 pounds of weed, bag for bag, for him, making only \$320 per pound for myself, and have to kill two niggas, just to get out of debt for the 2 and a half kilos, that he thought that I had lost in my flight from the police.

"Aye Moe, check this out. First off, I ain't no Stone, I'm a Four Corner Hustler! Get that straight. And secondly, I called my-self looking out for you by selling B that script, and not telling him where the merch was stashed at, because I don't really trust dude like that. I was waiting to talk to you personally, so I could let chu know the demo,

but since you played pussy wit me, consider yourself fucked nigga! I ain't giving your ass shit!"

"What?" Tony exploded. "You got my shit? Nigga you know you betta not play with my shit!" Tony warned.

"Nigga, fuck you!" I responded back. "I been holding your mark-ass down since I was 11. I know you Tony! You ain't neva bust your gun, I did! When it come to beef nigga, you don't want to do nothing but cook!" Tony began to talk again, but I silenced him by hanging the phone up. Fuck him! I then pushed the on button on the cordless, and began dialing.

"What's happenin?" answered Fatal.

"Aye, Four, this Sin, come to my crib with a mag, I need to holla at chu." I stated, and immediately ended the call. I then went to the stash to retrieve the coke, grabbed a large ziplock bag from the kitchen, and brung it all back to my room. Not 10 minutes after I had called him, Fatal was at my door. I let him in, and lead him down to my room.

"What's up solid? You finna go get at them bricks?" Fatal asked, handing me a chrome .45.

I took it, and replied, "Naw, I need it for some shit wit another nigga."

"Who?" Fatal asked.

"Don't trip, I'ma holla at chu later 'bout dude. I want to holla chu 'bout some other shit right now though."

"Shiiit, what's up?"

"Four, I was wondering, I wanna know how much cream you be copping?"

That question was really a test of trust for Fatal. Most niggas would get offended if you asked them something like that, thinking that you were on some stick-up shit, or trying to size them up. Either way, not

trusting your motives for asking it. That's why I asked it. I knew that if Fatal answered the question, then he had a great deal of trust in me, no sub-conscious reservations.

"Damn, Four! That's an ill ass question, Joe." Fatal responded, smiling.

"But chu my guy, Sincere. I know you ain't on no bullshit. I just sold my last 3 dimes this morning, so all together, I don't got shit but about \$700, and my rent due already. Since it's a drought, niggas want the whole \$500, for a half an ounce, so I'ma get me one of them today, keep \$200 for safety, and flip it, so after I give my landlord his \$500 for the rent, I'll still have 'bout enough to get another half wit." explained Fatal.

When I had asked Fatal the question, I really didn't care how much he was copping, but after hearing how little he was copping, it made me want to do what I was about to do, even more.

"Check this out, Four, I got a proposition for you."

"Spit it nigga!" Fatal responded, impatiently.

"Alright. Since all the older 4s, like Sconey, Tru, Cuso, and them, be serving on Maryland, or at Cuso crib, and you and B-Dub the only ones be serving on Pennsylvania, lets open the block all the way up!" I suggested, excitedly.

Fatal sat looking at me like I was crazy, before responding, "Nigga, how the fuck we gone open The Penn up when I ain't copping shit but a half, B-Dub's been missing in action for about two weeks, and the rest of the li'l 4s don't even be serving? I mean, its our block, but we don't got shit to pump it wit."

"How about we pump it with this?" I asked, smiling, pulling the zip-lock bag, now containing half of the half of a key, from under my pillow.

“Dammnn! Nigga, where the fuck you get this?” Fatal asked excitedly.

I shared his excitement. “I hit a lick nigga, what’s up?”

“Shiiit, you tell me.” Fatal responded, still excited.

More serious now, I responded “Fatal, after the first time we went to war for each other, we made a bond that what’s mine is yours, and vice-versa. I stand on that shit nigga! So we gonna get somebody to cook this shit for us, split it down the middle, and juke this bitch!”

Fatal smiled at me, with disbelief. Seriously, he stated, “You a real ass nigga for this blessing Sin, and on the 4 I’ll never let chu regret it, but we don’t need no cook.”

“What chu mean?” I asked, confused.

“Just what I said,” stated Fatal. “I do magic with a hot-pot, a jar, and a spoon. Lets go to my tip, I’ll show you.”

5:22 p.m.

Over the last 5 hours, Fatal had began cooking the coke, while I took note of his technique. After the first piece dried, we weighed it on a digital scale, then I began cut and bagging it in the corners of sandwich bags, while Fatal continued cooking and weighing. When he finished cooking, he joined me at the glass table to help cut and bag. When we finished, all together, we had cut and bagged up 1,440 dime rocks, which would make us about \$7,220.00 a piece! To ease bulk, we separated 80 dimes, into 18 different sandwich bags. We each grabbed a sandwich bag full of rocks, and prepared to go to work.

Not 5 five minutes after we stepped out in front of Fatal’s building, we were approached by an extremely emaciated middle-aged , Black woman.

“Baby boy, please tell me y’all working? I done walked all the way from the Gardens trying to score, but its dry everywhere!” she sobbed.

“You for real?” I asked, surprised that Altgelt Gardens projects were dry. Even though it was only 5 blocks south of where we stood, the Gardens was in the city of Chicago’s city limits, and usually stayed flooded with more than enough dope to supply it’s enormous clientele of cluckers. “I’m straight, though. What’s up?” I asked.

“You got some dimes, ’cause I need two of ’em.”

I spat two of the 20 dimes that I held concealed in my mouth into her hand, and grabbed the big-face 20 dollar bill from her, closing the deal on Fatal and I’s partnership’s inaugural sale.

“Baby boy, make sure you don’t go nowhere, ’cause I’ma be back, and I’m bringing plenty mo people wit me, ’cause everybody geeking. Just look out for me.” she asked, walking away smiling.

Our first sale wasn’t a representation of the next 3 hours, which could only be considered sporadic at best. Fatal wasn’t tripping, though. He said that it was always slow between 10 and 2 in the afternoon, and 5 to 9 at night, but that after that, the rush would be on well into the morning.

As Danny, J-Mo, Fatal, and I were conversing in Fatal’s parking lot, B-Dub screeched to a halt in the middle of the street yelling out of the window of a black ’96 Chevy Impala.

“What’s da dizzeal my nizzigs?” yelled B-Dub, smiling from ear to ear. We all walked over to the car to find out where he had gotten the whip from.

“Nigga, who car you done stole?” asked Fatal, leaning into the driver’s side window.

“Naw, it ain’t like that 4. I gave a clizzuck 6 bizzags for this bitch,” stated B-Dub in his Chris Tucker like voice.

“Oh yeah? You got enough chickle to be tricking now, huh?” asked Fatal.

“Aye, solid, why don’t chu run me around the corner right quick?” I asked, cutting into B-Dub and Fatal’s conversation.

“Oh, my nigga, Sincere! What’s up, muthafucka?!” B-Dub yelled, excitedly, just now recognizing my presence. “Get in 4.” I walked around to the passenger-side door, and got in the car. “A’ight, Four, I’ma holla at chu when we get bizzack. I got a lick for us, Joe.” B-Dub yelled to Fatal as he smashed the gas, burning rubber as we pulled off.

“Dizzamn, Fizzo, when they let chu out the pokey?”

“I just got out yesterday, Four.” I responded.

“Ooh, I bet cho ass still hurt, don’t it? Where we going?”

I couldn’t respond right away, ’cause I was cracking up laughing, thinking this nigga is crazy! “144th and Cottage,” I was finally able to respond.

“What!” B-Dub screamed. “Four, you done lost your muthafucking mizzind! Them niggas gone kill us!”

I laughed. “Fuck them niggas, Four. We good, Joe,” I assured.

B-Dub looked at me like, yeah, right, then responded, “See, Four, that’s why I love you, nigga, ’cause you stiill crizzazy!”

We both got out of the car, and entered Kelley’s building, not having to be buzzed in this time, because the door was held ajar by a bottle. As we passed the 2nd floor, I saw the hype from last night that had mean-mugged me coming in. As we began climbing the stairs to the third floor, I saw him easing his way to the stairway going down to the first floor. Mid-step, I turned around, running back down the stairs. He also tried to run, but 10 stairs from the bottom, I pushed him causing him to tumble the rest of the way down. Immediately, I began kicking and stomping him in the face with my size 9 Timberlands. Not

even knowing why I was kicking dude, B-Dub joined in on the action until he saw me stop. I pulled out the chrome Solid-Fimp (.45) from my waist, and handed it to B-Dub.

“Four, I gotta run upstairs for a second, but if this nigga act like he wanna move, give this nigga head a sun-roof,” I ordered, and went up the stairs leaving B-Dub with an ear-to-ear smile on his face, daring the hype to move.

Knock, knock, knock. “Who is it?” came Kelley’s voice from inside the apartment. I didn’t answer, but she still opened the door. “Baby!” she screamed, pulling me into the apartment. “I’ve been waiting on your call all day. Were you busy?” Kelley asked.

“Yeah, I’m running now. But I wanted to see you at least once today, so you know that last night wasn’t just a fling to me.”

“Ahhhhh, you so sweet,” Kelley said, hugging me. “Baby, I knew that I didn’t make a mistake last night.”

“Never a mistake, boo,” I said, softly into her ear as her head rested on my chest. “Last night was the beginning of our future, Kelley. Just keep it real wit me, and I’mma make the world bow to you. I gotta run right now though, but I’mma get at chu tomorrow, a’ight?”

“Okay, baby. Be careful, boo!” Kelley advised, releasing me.

“Fo sho,” I responded, leaving out of the door.

I rejoined B-Dub and the hype to see that he was still in the exact same position as when I had left. B-Dub handed me back the .45.

“Come on, lets go,” I ordered, grabbing the hype’s right arm.

“Wait! Hold on my brother, please!?” he begged.

“Shut up, bitch!” I snapped. “You either gonna ride in the car with us, or in an ambulance to the morgue. Now, make your choice.” B-Dub got behind the wheel, and me and the hype got in the back seat. “Go to the forest preserve,” I said to B-Dub.

“Wait! No! Please, brother, pleeease! I’m sorry, please!” the hype cried. Bap! Bap! Bap! Bap! I continuously slapped the hype with the pistol, momentarily silencing his cries.

“Nigga, you thought that I wasn’t gonna figure it out, that it was you that told the GDs that I was in the building last night? Huh?” Bap! “Huh?” Bap! “Huh?” Bap! “Huh, bitch?!” I yelled.

The hype’s head was leaking badly, and he was still crying as we pulled into the dark, empty parking lot of the forest preserve. I walked around to the hype’s door, and pulled him out.

“Let’s walk and talk, nigga,” I said, pulling him out of the car, and leading him onto a wooded trail. 15 feet into the trail, he broke loose of my hold on his coat, and started running. BOOM! I shot once, hitting him in his back, causing him to fall to the ground. I walked up to him as he moaned, and kicked him over, onto his back. I then stuck the barrel of the .45 into his mouth, as he stared into my eyes, scared to death. “So you like running, huh?” I asked. “A’ight. Run tell this!” BOOM! I shot him again, this time, blowing his brains out of the back of his head.

As I re-entered the car, this time on the passenger side, I noticed B-Dub with his hands clasped, and his eyes closed, leaning over the steering wheel. “Nigga, what the fuck you doing?” I asked.

“Praying,” B-Dub responded, dead serious.

“B-Dub, get the fuck outta here,” I said, laughing it off. “What the fuck you praying for?” I asked.

“Forgiveness, nigga! ’Cause fizzaucking wit cho crazy izzass, I feel like I’ma be meeting that nigga, Gizzod, real sizzoon!”

HA. HA. HA. I busted out laughing! That nigga’s the crazy one.

After stopping by the weed spot and the liquor store for a fifth of Hennessy, we arrived back on the block. When we had left, only J-Mo,

Danny, and Fatal were on the block, but now it looked like a block party was jumping off by the amount of people walking the street, and cars parked alongside of the usually half-deserted, Pennsylvania Ave.

“Fatal, what the fuck going on?” I asked, exiting the car.

“Man, as soon as y’all left, that bitch from earlier came through wit 3 carloads of hypes, and that shit ain’t stopped since. That bitch wasn’t lying, on the Four, the whole Gardens been through here. Come on, Sin, help me serve some of these muthafuckas,” stated Fatal.

I began going from person to person, car to car, serving hypes. It seemed like every time one car would pull off, another would immediately pull up. This non-stop routine went on deep into 3 in the morning. By then, only me, Fatal, and B-Dub were still on the block. J-Mo and Danny were still going to school, so they had went in to prepare for their last day of school for the week.

After some aggressive pressuring, B-Dub admitted that he had been in a city called Mobile, Alabama, for a distant family member’s funeral, and ended up staying down there for the last two weeks after seeing how sweet it was. He said he had gotten the car from a trusting hype, when he told her that he needed it to return to his hometown of Cleveland, to re-up on the butter that she had been praising him for, for the last week. After telling us how they were making \$2,500 off of an ounce of coke on the regular, compared to the \$1,600 that we were making during a drought, he had our full attention. But in the end, the thought of traveling all the way to Alabama to get money, when the Penn had jumped the way it had tonight, was too far-fetched for Fatal and I. When B-Dub asked about the drastic clientele increase on the Penn, we stayed tight grilled, only telling him that we had run across some butter. B-Dub left at about 4 a.m. to get his cousin, and head

back to Alabama, but not before taking me on one more trip to the weed spot, and leaving Fatal a 205 area code phone number.

By 5 o'clock, the traffic had slowed greatly, but it still hadn't slowed enough to bore us into calling it a night. By the time J-Mo, Danny, and a few of the other brothers were walking through the Penn on their way to school, the flow had picked back up, and we were still out there to get every dollar!

By 9 o'clock, the traffic had again slowed to a trickle, so we decided that it was a good time to call it one. I was too tired to even walk the one block to my house, so I went upstairs with Fatal. We checked the stash, and was surprised to see that we had sold 6 of the 18 packs already! We had made about \$5,000 in twelve hours! Hey, what can I say? Yesterday was a good day.

CHAPTER 7

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1998, 7:17 p.m.

Two weeks of no sleep and straight grinding had paid off lovely. Everyday, since the first, our clientele of cluckers rapidly increased as the amount of coke on the streets, just as quickly, decreased. The drought had gotten so bad that the bags that we were once selling for \$10 were now being sold for \$15 just as fast. With the Gardens still dry, the Penn had become a desert oasis translating into many big-faces being acquired by Fatal and I.

The older 4s had also become casualties of the drought. When they heard of the Penn's prosperousness, they paid us a visit. Solid Love is loyalty, but dollars is sense, and it wouldn't have made any for us to sell our brothers some weight with an already limited amount of cocaine, and no end of the drought in sight. Lets just say, after their unsuccessful visit, our brotherly bonds had become tense.

The same could also be said about other hustlers from affiliated gangs like the Mickey cobras, Vice Lords, and the Blackstones that came through to cop weight, only to be refused. I guess what they say is true; its lonely at the top.

Beef aside, our only real problem came when we realized that our own supply would soon run dry. With \$140,000 stacked, but only a half of a key, we sat in Fatal's apartment plotting our next move.

"Damn, Four, you don't know nobody we can cop from?" I asked, dumping ashes from the Tese weed filled Optimo that we were smoking.

"Hell, naw" Fatal responded, resignedly. "I ain't never copped more than an union before this lick, and even if I did have a connect on kilos,

it wouldn't be no good, 'cause ain't nobody coming off no weight in the city. That's why all them niggas from the Wild 100s and shit been trying to trick us into serving 'em.

For the next 30 minutes, we both sat on his leather sofa smoking and racking our brains trying to come up with a game plan. I was in the middle of a daydream, mad at myself for wasting the 3 hours a day that we set aside to rest before returning to the block, when I was shocked from my semi-slumber by Fatal's loud excited voice.

"I got it, nigga!" Fatal shouted before leaping from the sofa and heading to the kitchen to retrieve the phone. From the kitchen, I could only faintly hear him speaking Chicago street code to the listener. After hanging up and picking the phone right back up, it sounded as if Fatal was making some type of reservations. Fatal then stormed back into the livingroom, and stood in front of me with a Kool-Aid smile on his face.

"Man, what the fuck you cheesing for?" I asked, irritated from a lack of sleep. "We haven't slept in 2 days, finna have to go back on the grind for 17 mo hours. My hair haven't been braided in 2 weeks, and we'll be out of coke in 3 days."

"Quit whining, nigga," stated Fatal, cutting me off, but still smiling.

"Just go to the crib, take a good bath, grab another change of clothes, get cho hair braided, and meet me back over here. We got a trip to take."

"A trip? Where the fuck we going?" I asked.

Fatal gave me that devilish grin, and began singing, "Sweet Hooome Aaalabama."

8:15 p.m.

After taking care of my hygiene, and packing a change of clothes into my old book bag, I was about to head out of the door when my mother called me from upstairs. As I walked into the upstairs livingroom, that look was more noticeable on my mother's face.

"What's up, ma?" I asked, already ready to leave.

"You what's up, stranger. Don't you remember I told you that I needed to talk to you?" she asked.

"Yeah, ma, but . . ."

"But nothing," my mother responded, cutting me off. "You've only been in this house for probably an hour in total over the last two weeks. And besides your clothes, you look like something somebody done through away, with your hair all messed up. Now, go get me a glass of water, some combs, and that grease off my dresser so that I can braid your hair while we talk." I did as I was told, and my mother began braiding my hair.

As she began talking, what had me tripping was that she began re-opening the painful doors of her past that I thought she would never want re-opened. She told me about the rapes she endured from her step-father, and how her mother played ignorant to what had happened. She told me how she was basically expelled from the family at age 14 to fend for self when she became an unwed mother to Alexis. She told me she really felt bad for kicking Alexis and Nikki out like her mother had done her, especially when Alexis ended up having a miscarriage in her 3rd trimester. Then her conversation turned to me.

"Simon, I know what you out there doing. I know what you *been* out there doing! I worry about you every night, and Lord knows that I pray that I don't be punished for allowing you to live that life. But baby, God gone have to understand that I'm tiiired! I've been a liar, prostitute, drug dealer, and a thief to make sure that my children had

something to eat at the end of the night.” She closed her eyes, shaking her head side to side in remembrance. “I can’t fight for you no more, Simon. Uhn, uhn. All that I can give you is my best advice, and that’s if you’re going to play these streets, then you better be ready to cheat. Don’t be no fool, baby. Only follow the rules that you yourself create. ’Cause, baby, they lying. The world ain’t fair. To win at this game of life, you’re going to have to shock the world, and fool the public.”

Shock the world and fool the public, huh. Okay then.

9:42 p.m.

I arrived back on the Penn to see that it was business as usual. But what had me puzzled was that I saw fiends getting served, but Fatal was nowhere in sight.

“Where Fatal at?” I asked J-Mo, as I walked up to him.

“Oh. He upstairs waiting on you,” J-Mo replied before walking over to an ’88 Toyota Celica that had just pulled up to the curb. I left the block and went up to Fatal’s apartment, still confused about what was going on. As I entered the apartment with the spare key that Fatal had recently given me, I saw that Fatal was laying on the sofa asleep.

“Fatal, what the fuck going on out there, Joe?” I yelled, waking him from his slumber.

“Do you always have to do that?” Fatal asked, angered at being awakened. “Damn, man!” he grunted while wiping his eyes and acquiring his bearings. “I put J-Mo, Danny, and them out there to hold the block down until we get back, because it don’t make no sense to let the block go dead if we don’t have to, unknowhatimsaying?”

“Yeah, I feel you,” I replied. “You told them where we going?”

“Hell, naw! They just know we not gonna be here. You ready?” Fatal asked.

“Yeah,” I responded, lifting my book bag.

“Come on then,” Fatal ordered before tucking the baby 9 mm into his pants, grabbing two large gym bags from the side of the sofa, and heading out of the door with me right behind him.

Fatal had arranged for his neighbor, Ms. Stacey, a pretty close to 40 faced, single parent female, to take us to the bus station. The conversation got a little freaky on our way to the 95th Street Greyhound station, and at 10:44 p.m., we boarded bus #19 on an 18-hour trip to Mobile, Alabama.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 1998, 7:00 a.m.

We stepped off of the bus in Mobile, and immediately knew that we were dead wrong. We were dressed in Timb boots, jeans, and hoodies under our new Starter coats. All of which were inappropriate for the already 78 degree temperature that welcomed us.

“What’s up, my nizzigs?” yelled B-Dub, spotting us amongst the crowd of passengers departing from the bus.

“Damn, nigga! Why you didn’t tell me it was this mutherfucking hot down here?” asked Fatal, pulling off his coat.

“My bizzad, fizzo. I thought chyall already knew the demo,” B-Dub replied, leading us to a red Ford Taurus.

As we rode down Government Blvd., B-Dub told us about the guy we were suppose to meet tomorrow evening. The connect’s name was Doug. He was a Belisian, and, supposedly, a take-no-losses type nigga. B-Dub had met Doug through his cousin when he first had arrived in Mobile. B-Dub was yet to do any business with Doug, because his

pockets were still young. He was waiting until his bank account grew up to approach Doug. For security reasons, we never told B-Dub how much we were trying to cop, only that we were trying to cop.

We pulled to a stop in front of a group of row houses that looked more like condos than the RV projects that they were so named. B-Dub was staying with a 19-year-old female named Da'nesha. The fact that she was 19 and still in high school with two kids would have deterred many, but not B-Dub.

When we walked into the project apartment, I began to understand why B-Dub was shacking up with her. Da'nesha stood about 5'7", 147 lbs, with smooth dark skin, and an ass made for music videos. Her hair looked as if it had been done in a hair show, but I believe that she may have had done it herself, because she was working on a petite, red-bone's hair, and had two other thick, but not as cute, females sitting on the couch waiting for her services as we entered.

"Solid, y'all can chizzill on the cizzouch. I'll be back. Da'nesha!" B-Dub yelled. "Let me holla at chu a second," he said, walking towards a back room with Da'nesha following close behind him. Fatal and I placed our bags in front of us as we both took a seat on the couch.

"Li'l daddy, y'all from up nawf where B-Dub from?" asked one of the females sitting on a love seat to the left and facing us. Me and Fatal busted out laughing, confusing the girls, waiting for our answers.

"Why y'all laughing fa?" asked the other female on the love seat.

"Shorty, y'all talk funny than a mutherfucker" I replied, still laughing.

"Ahhhh, gul, I know dis youn ass bowy ain't came down hea cappin' wit his cracker talking ass!" snapped the girl that had asked the first question.

“Naw, naw, ma, pardon self. Self wasn’t knocking your vocab, one just wasn’t in tune wit the accent, ya dig?” I explained, trying to straighten out the situation.

“Hell, naw, I-on dig,” she responded loudly. “I-on know what da fuck you jest said bowy.” Me and Fatal again began laughing.

“I said forgive me, because I wasn’t trying to joke on your accent. It just surprised me, seeing as though I’ve never been in the presence of a beautiful southern belle like yourself, ya dig?”

“Ahhh, gul, he got game,” said the red-bone.

“Yeah, he got that,” co-signed the first questioner, now blushing. “But chu still talk like a white bowy,” she joked, this time causing all of us to laugh.

As we began conversing, I found out that her name was Nasia, the girl sitting next to her was Suge, and the red-bone’s name was Kim. They were ages 20, 19, and 17, with Nasia being the oldest, and Kim the youngest. They all stayed in the RV projects. Suge was a single mother to a 3 year old little girl, Nasia had a 1 year old son, and Kim was childless, but stayed with Nasia because of her mother’s alcohol problem. Her story was a sad one, I know, so you can figure out which one that I was most attracted to.

They were understanding of Fatal and B-Dub’s 18 year old age, but when they found out that I was only 16, they damn near lost their minds with questions of my mother’s whereabouts, and why I was globe trotting at such a young age.

While we talked and smoked, Nasia blessed us with a delicious, home-cooked southern breakfast of fish and grits. The breakfast was especially appreciated by Fatal and I, since for the last few weeks, our breakfast had been consisting of two blunts, a pint of Hennessy, and a couple bags of potato chips.

We left the RV with our bags at around noon. With the help of B-Dub's cousin, we were able to acquire the Presidential Suite in the Adam's Mark Hotel. It was one of, if not the, finest hotel in Mobile.

Feeling good to finally have some free time, Fatal and I had B-Dub to take us shopping, sight-seeing, and to do a little spying. We rode through different neighborhoods in the city, looking for areas that were vulnerable to a hostile hustling take over. At around midnight, we returned to our room, where Fatal began changing clothes for a night of clubbing at one of Mobile's hippest clubs called the Silver Spoon. B-Dub told me that I could also get in, but I didn't want to risk embarrassment, so I stayed back.

At around 3 o'clock in the morning, I was awakened from my comfortable deep sleep by the warm and wet mouth of Nasia swallowing my entire manhood! At first, I thought that I was still dreaming, because I was sure that I had went to sleep alone in the empty Presidential Suite wearing my red silk boxers and a white wife-beater. But when I looked to the left, those same boxers were on the floor under a pile of women's clothing.

The slurping sounds made by Nasia as her head bobbed up and down on my fully erect penis further assured me that I may have been fulfilling a fantasy, but I sure in the fuck wasn't dreaming!

Nasia held my stare with seductive eyes as she continued to deep-throat me with no use of her hands. I thought to myself that she must be a very smart girl the way she so expertly used her head.

Feeling the sudden throbbing of my penis in her mouth, Nasia quickened her bobbing, making my toes curl from the enormous explosion of semen that burst through my loins and down Nasia's welcoming throat. Nasia swallowed all that I had to give, and cleaned my head off with long licks from her pierced tongue.

“Sincere,” Nasia called in her soft sexy bedroom voice. “Have you eva eaten a warm southern peach muffin?” she then asked, seductively. I busted out laughing. If she meant what I thought that she meant, then this girl was off the chain!

Nasia must have taken my laughter as acceptance, because she climbed up my body, until she was straddling my upper chest. She placed soft hands on each side of my face, looked deeply into my eyes, and softly said, “City bowy, don’t be sked of this southern belle. I promise you, I’m made of sugar and spice, and my pussy stay ripe.” Nasia then lifted herself up on her knees, so that her pussy was directly over my face, and her hands were clutching the top of the headboard.

At this point, I really didn’t know what to do, because I hadn’t ever eaten pussy before. My only knowledge of cunnilingus came from porno flicks, but I figured, what the fuck, and raised my head up slightly, placing soft kisses on her vaginal lips. As I began to gain confidence, with my right hand I separated her lips, and inserted my tongue deep into her opening. As my tongue found a rhythm, Nasia moaned and grinded according to it’s pace. Before long, the fact that I had complete control of her body at the tip of my tongue began to excite me, so I flipped her over on the bed onto her back, and buried my face into her warmth. When I moved to sucking, nibbling, and licking her clitoris in slow circular motions, Nasia screamed, squirmed, and tossed pillows.

“Damn you fa doin’ nis to me, nigga, ooohhh!” Nasia cried out, in ecstasy. “Okay, baby. Okay, baby,” she gasped. “I can’t take no more. Stick it in. Stick it in!” Nasia begged, and I obliged, opening her legs wide, and diving deep with my dick into her soaking wet insides. I pounded Nasia’s pussy deep into the morning, until the bed was soaked with evidence of her involvement.

By the time we woke up, it was close to 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Nasia and I joined Fatal and Suge in the Suite's dining room for a late room-serviced lunch.

B-Dub was to take us to meet up with Doug at 3 p.m., so after lunch, we sent the girls to shower before their cabs arrived.

"Did ju enjoy the gift that I sent chu this morning?" asked Fatal, with that grin of his.

"Did I?" I responded, smiling from ear to ear, remembering my impromptu wake-up present.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1998, 3:43 p.m.

The address given to B-Dub as the meeting spot turned out to be a small bed and breakfast on the outskirts of Mobile.

"Man, it ain't a car in this whole muthafucking parking lot. Either this mark gave us the wrong address, or this shit is a set-up," stated Fatal, angrily.

"Naw, fizzo, this nizzig don't play gizzames. Believe me, he here," B-Dub responded, somewhat quelling our concerns. As we reached the top of the beach-front bed and breakfast's stairs, the door snatched open, surprising us, and a tall, muscular black man, stepped out. He confirmed who was who with us, and sent B-Dub to wait in the car while he led Fatal and I inside.

It was a good thing that Fatal had won the argument and we had decided against bringing a gun, because as soon as the door closed, we were thoroughly frisked by the welcoming attendant, and another man that had been posted inside of the door. We were then led into a cozy livingroom, where we were told to wait for Doug.

Doug entered the room ten minutes later, standing 6'1", 190 lbs, and black as a motherfucker! He was dressed in a pair of brown and white Gucci loafers, yellow khaki shorts, and a knit cable cashmere vest by Ralph Lauren. Gold shined from his fingers, wrists, neck, ears, and right front tooth. Needless to say, he was not as impressed with us.

"Watt is test kids do here?" Doug asked, looking back at one of his attendants, angry and confused. His attendant hunched his shoulders, and I decided to speak up.

"No offense, but we wouldn't be here, if we couldn't be here," I stated, matter-of-factly.

"Oh, yeah, yunsta?" Doug asked. "Okay, I untatain you one sec," he said, taking a seat on a white wicker chair. "Watt lu want from me?" he asked.

"I want the tools that it takes for a nigga like me to have, to acquire the American Dream. And my mans tell me that I need to look no farther than you to get those," I stated, causing Doug to crack a gold-toothed smile.

"I like you ansa, yunsta. But watt can you offa me I not hav? I hav money and gurls. I hav jewelry. I hav cars. Tell me watt you can give tat I not aweady hav."

I looked down, and thought on that for a minute. Finally, I said, "I offer you the one thing about me that most turned you off about me. The one thing that every man longs for, but no amount of money can buy. I offer you my youth. I'm only 16 years old, so with that, you also get my loyalty and word that as long as you stay real wit me, then I'll return that same realness back to you. And I'll never betray you, for as long as my run shall last." The entire room sat in a momentary silence for a few seconds as everyone took in what I had just said. Doug broke the silence.

“Rude boy” he called to his attendant. “Geet me frunds someting to drink. We hav business to discuss.”

Fatal and I broke out into wide-mouth smiles, we were in there!

CHAPTER 8

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1998, 1:00 p.m.

We arrived back on the Penn to see that the block was still pumping. We called J-Mo upstairs to get an update on how things had been going. J-Mo told us that the block had been juking so hard since Thursday night, that he and Money, one of the other teenage 4s from across the railroad tracks in Riverdale, had stayed out all night, and had ditched school the following morning, to keep the flow going. He said that only 3 of the 18 ounces that we had left them was still remaining.

After running to his house and retrieving the \$26,000 that they had already made, we dismissed him back to the block so that we could cook up some more work.

When we had left our meeting with Doug, we left with 15 kilos in our possession. Ten we had bought for a price of \$15,000 a kilo, and the other 5 were given to us on a consignment of \$16,500 a kilo. We gave one kilo to B-Dub out of love, and to set up a base for possible future expansion.

On the long bus ride back to the city, we decided that we would cook up 4 of the 14 remaining kilos, and sell them in bags. The other 10, we would sell in weight not to exceed a 1/4 kilo at a time, until the end of the drought. This way, we could appease the other hustlers' hunger, while still maximizing our profit potential.

To further spread the wealth, we decided while cooking, since the young 4s had did such a good job while we were gone, we would give them back half of what they had made to split, then hire them full-time to work the block while Fatal and I concentrated on selling weight, and

coming up with ideas to gain even more money for the mob and ourselves.

After cooking and bagging up a 1/4 kilo of coke, we called J-Mo back upstairs to reveal our plan. He was in agreement with our plan, and we arranged a meeting for tomorrow with him and the 13 other young 4s living on or in a 3 block radius of the Penn.

MONDAY, APRIL 1, 1998, 7:00 p.m.

Of the 14 4s invited, 12 showed up to the meeting in Fatal's apartment. Of the 12, only 5 were still attending high school. I made my mental adjustments, and began the meeting.

"First of all, do y'all know why we here?" I asked, looking into the faces of each Four, scattered around Fatal's livingroom. A chorus of yeahs, fa'shos, and head nods answered my question.

"A'ight, this the binness, Solids. Me and Fatal trying to take the nation financially far above any of the other mobs on the south side. Above the GDs, BDs, New Breeds, MCs, and the Stones! Wit chyall help, we gone show muthafuckas what the hustle, in Maniac Four Corner Hustler, is all about, ya dig?" A loud chorus of hoots and cheers, amongst the brothers, broke out.

"A'ight, a'ight, a'ight," I said, calming everyone back down. "Now, this what we gone do. We gonna set up three shifts on the Penn. J-Mo, Danny, Money, Mike, and Chill Will, y'all gonna work the 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shift, since y'all still going to school. Danny and Chill Will gonna work security, J-Mo and Money gonna work the block, and Mike, you gonna run the packs to them and keep up with how much each of them sell. A'ight, I need a volunteer out of the brothers not in school." Da'Juan was the first to speak up. "A'ight, Da'Juan, you gonna be the

first in rotation to run packs and keep track for two shifts. The 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., and the 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. shifts.

Kenny and T, y'all got the block from 11 to 3, and Btreal, you got the S. Poppa, you got the S from 3 to 7, and Li'l Dave and Ron, y'all got the block. Security and runners get a fixed pay of \$200 a shift, half paid by us, half paid the hustlers on shift. Hustlers take 40% of whatever you sell. Jobs rotate daily. Everybody got it?" I asked, looking around.

"Yeah, we got chu, chief" joked Da'Juan.

"Naw, I ain't chief" I responded. "But give me a couple of years," I then stated, smiling, but was dead serious.

Fatal dismissed the school shift to their hustle, and the rest of the brothers to their leisure, after giving them a list of fines for things ranging from shorts to tardiness, while I got on the chat, and alerted the older 4s that the weight room was now open for business.

CHAPTER 9

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1998, 1:19 p.m.

The drought was now officially over, but business was still booming! Our block shifts were running steady, grossing about \$6,000 a day. Because Fatal and I started to sell weight near the end of the drought, when the drought ended, most of our new customers cut off their ties with their old connects, and continued copping from us.

Fatal's on his third trip to Alabama right now. He's copping 22 kilos this time, at our new price of \$13,500 a kilo. Since it would be too difficult and risky for Fatal and I to continue transporting the amount of kilos that we were now purchasing on a bus, we hired Suge and Nasia to transport them in U-Haul moving vans filled with decoy furniture. Fatal follows their van in another car, so that we know, first hand, what went on with them for the entire trip.

I began officially sharing an apartment with Fatal when we took over his mother's previous lease earlier this month. Kelley and I have become kind of close. I say kind of, because I still do my thing on the side. But since she hooked Fatal up with her best friend, Ayanna, Fatal's been on some sucker-for-love shit. So they have basically become regular residents in our apartment.

As I took a seat on the soft cream leather in my new, powder blue '96 Chevy Impala, I was shocked at the sight of what I saw staring at me in my rearview mirror.

"Don't say shit, li'l nigga. Just start the car up and drive real careful. You wouldn't want me to accidentally blow your head off, would ju?" sarcastically asked the man in my backseat holding a gun to my head.

I did as I was told, and, for the first time, regretted having mirror tint put on my windows.

What made the situation even worse was that I knew the man in my back seat, and Mase was antagonizing the shit out of me through my sound system rapping about having 24 hours to live. I probably didn't have that long. As I made a right turn on 119th leaving the Roseland shopping center, the man in my back seat again began to talk.

"Look, shorty, I didn't really wanna do dis to you, 'cause I like you, li'l nigga. And I know that your head worth more than the li'l debt that I owe Tony, but I'm fucked up, shorty. That nigga went to the P on me, so if I don't get chu, then the Moes gone do me!"

The P is the title given to one of the top authority figures in Tony's gang. Simply stated, what the P says goes.

"I feel you, Bull. The nigga tried to get me to do the same shit to you a couple weeks back," I lied, gambling that Bull had been owing Tony for an extended period of time.

"Get the fuck out of here, man!" Bull yelled. "I knew that hoe ass nigga was grimy like that."

"Hell, yeah," I added. "I deaded the nigga on that shit though, and I told 'em to chalk what I owed him." Bull sat back in his seat, contemplating his next move. I decided to try my luck, and see if I could help him make that decision.

"Look, Bull, I spared ju last month, so I'm asking you to spare me today, my nigga. If you'll do that, I'll bless you wit something nice to get on wit, and I'll handle that nigga, Tony, for you. I'll make it look obvious that chu ain't have nothing to do wit it. I mean, shiiit, no pun intended, but ju'll be killing two birds wit one stone." Bull chuckled at the inside joke.

Bull sat back, thinking on my proposal. Finally, he began to talk, with greed in his eyes. “Yeah, your name been ringing all the way down in Rag Town. Niggas saying you getting that chickle. But chu asking for a lot, Joe, I’m saying . . .”

Already peeping where Bull was going wit his spill, I jumped in and cut the games. “10 Gs and a key, Bull,” I offered.

Bull sat back as if he was considering my offer, but the sparkle that lit up in his eyes gave him away. He was already tricking with the money. “I’m sayin’, how I know you gone play fair?” asked Bull.

I waited until the yellow light turned red to reach into my glove compartment, and grab the registration to my car. It had one of my most loyal hype’s name and address on it. I had had her sign for the car. Handing Bull the registration with Glenell’s name on it, and making my voice sound extremely serious, I said, “Moe, this my momma name and address on here. So you know I ain’t playing!”

Bull looked over the document before pocketing it, satisfied with the deal. “A’ight. Sincere, give me your phone, and in 30 minutes, call it. I’ll let chu know where to meet me at. On Stone, Joe, if you bring any nigga wit chu, your OG a goner,” Bull warned before grabbing my phone, and exiting my car in the middle of the street.

As soon as I felt like I was out of sight of him, I began smashing the gas on my way back to the block.

As soon as I arrived on the block, I was barely able to put my car in park, before I jumped out of it and ran upstairs to my apartment. I quickly called Glenell, and told her to meet me at my apartment, asap. She arrived 10 minutes later, and just as I was finished counting out \$10,000.

“What’s going on, baby? You sounded like you was in trouble over the phone,” Glenell said, entering the apartment.

“Naw, it wasn’t nothing like that,” I said, pocketing the money. “I just need to rent cho car right quick, so I can go handle some business.”

“Oh. Okay. You gone straighten me, right?” asked Glenell.

“Yeah. Just tell T that I said to give you 4 bags. But I need Ju to do something else, too”

“What’s that?”

“I need ju to wait about an hour, and report the car stolen.” Glenell’s eyes bucked in fear, but quickly went back to normal. She was a product of the streets, and knew that she was safe, as long as quiet was kept. As soon as I escorted Glenell out, I went to Ms. Stacey’s apartment to call Bull.

Ring. Ring.

“What up?” answered Bull.

“Its me. Where at?” I asked.

“Chicago State University parking lot,” he said, and hung up.

“Sincere, I’m cooking some lasagna tonight. So, why don’t you stop by and get you a plate, ’cause I gotta do something to thank you and Fatal for helping me with my rent this month,” Ms. Stacey said, as I prepared to leave.

“A’ight, I’ll come through. But chu don’t owe us nothing for that li’l bit,” I responded.

“Sincere, I know, baby. But I been wanting to do something special for you all, anyway”

“A’ight,” I responded, and headed to the door, wondering if Ms. Stacey was trying to tell me something more in her last statement. Nawwww.

I snatched Da’Juan from his post, and drove off in Glenell’s car to Chicago State.

As I parked in the half-deserted Chicago State parking lot, Bull was sitting on a bench waiting for me. After staring at the car for a minute, he finally noticed me, and hopped into the passenger side.

“Why you change cars?” Bull asked, a little nervously.

“Nigga, you know I wasn’t finna bring no brick all the way over here in no car with Brabus rims on it. Shiiit, I’da never made it.” I replied. Bull thought about the logic of what I had said, and began to relax.

“Yeah. You doin’ it, nigga. All the hoes that’s done called your phone since I had it . . . I’ma fuck wit chu, Sincere, but I gotta get little for a minute after this. Where the shit at?” asked Bull.

I pulled the 10 Gs out of my pocket, and allowed him to count it before saying, “Come on. I got the dope in the trunk.”

When we both arrived at the trunk, I inserted the key into the lock, and quickly raised the trunk. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Da’Juan unloaded 5 shots into the face of Bull, not only killing him, but also leaving him unrecognizable. Da’Juan jumped out of the trunk, and into the passenger seat while I closed the trunk before pulling off, running over Bull in the process.

I drove 10 blocks to a neighborhood detail shop. After paying for a full-service detail, Da’Juan and I walked away from the shop to a bus stop, and caught a bus back to Dolton.

4:44 p.m.

Ring. Ring. Ring.

“Hello,” answered Tony.

“Yeah. What up, nigga? This Sin.”

“Sin? Nigga, what the fuck you want?” Tony asked, angrily. “Damn, bruh. What’s all the anger for? I was just calling to see if you still had your receipt.”

“My receipt? Fuck I need a receipt for?” Tony asked, confused. “Why else people keep receipts, nigga?” I asked, rhetorically. “To get cho refund back. ’Cause, mutherfucka, I ain’t dead!”

8:17 p.m.

Kelley was in our bedroom laying on her stomach watching TV as I entered the room. As I climbed onto the bed, she turned over onto her back, and I straddled her mid-section. With our hands entwined above her head, I leaned forward placing soft kisses on her sweet lips.

“Kells.” Kiss. “Do you love me, boo?” I asked.

“Don’t do this to me, Simon,” Kelley said, with a look of hurt on her face.

“Do what?” I asked, confused.

“Question my love for you. Simon, I love you more than . . . I mean . . . This language don’t even have the words to explain.”

“I know, boo,” I said, cutting her off, and kissing her deeply. “That’s why I trust you to handle this mission for me,” I stated, now looking at her seriously.

“I’ll do it, baby! Just tell me what I gotta do,” Kelley responded, willing and ready to please.

“Check it out,” I said, sitting up now. “At exactly 10:30, I want you to call this number I’ma give you, and say . . .”

10:57 p.m.

Da'Juan and I sat in a stolen Chevy Caprice on 87th and Saginaw watching an argument take place between a man and woman on a porch across the street from where we were parked. The woman threw clothes and shoes at the man before storming back into the modest home slamming the door on her way in. The man gathered up his things and hopped into a red GM Jimmy. It was the moment that we had been waiting on.

For hours after my phone call to Tony, I racked my brain trying to figure out ways to touch him. Tony was a difficult man to touch, because the only two places that he could be found was at home with Alexis, or on the block with his brothers. Both of those places presented their own set of problems. Finally, while I was in my best place for thinking, I came up with a plan.

To set things in motion, I sent Danny, Da'Juan, and Btreal to steal 2 cars for the mission. I then went and convinced Kelley to call Alexis claiming that she was pregnant by Tony, and needed some money for maternity clothes. I gave Kelley some key details about Tony and Alexis to give even more credence to her story, and headed off to their home. If there was one thing that I knew about my sister, it was that she wasn't going to put up with no cheater.

Tony pulled off from the curb as a grey Toyota Camry also pulled off about 30 feet ahead of him. After Tony had traveled about halfway down the block, I pulled off in the Chevy behind him. The Camry came to a stop at a stop sign at the end of the block. Just as I was approaching the rear bumper of Tony's Jimmy, my Primeco phone rang alerting me in code that the intersection was clear.

Immediately, I threw the Chevy in park, and Da'Juan and I bailed from the vehicle running towards Tony's truck on both sides. Tony's

face registered shock when he and I locked eyes in his left side view mirror.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The passenger-side window shattered as bullets exploded out of the barrel of Da’Juan’s .357.

Tony laid slumped against the driver’s side door, caught by surprise by Da’Juan’s attack. He was bleeding badly from his arms, neck, and the small piece of his right ear that had managed to stay attached to his head.

When I opened his door, his seatbelt was the only thing that saved him from falling to the ground. I then fired two more shots into his chest, finalizing his death.

After I joined Danny and Da’Juan in the Camry, Danny pulled off. He made a quick right, drove three blocks over, and pulled into an alley. We all jumped from out of the Camry, leaving the guns and gloves behind, and hopped into Btreal’s Grand Prix.

“Take 87th to Stoney Island, then hit the E-way to the Gardens. A nigga trying to get high,” I said.

CHAPTER 10

“Aye, boo. Why don’t chu and Ayanna run to the store and get us a box of Optimos before we watch ‘Bout It” I asked, as Kelley, Ayanna, Fatal, and I sat in the livingroom chilling. Kelley grabbed my keys from off of the table, and left with Ayanna.

20 minutes later, they returned, but Kelley’s demeanor had changed drastically from when they had left. Kelley came into the apartment behind Ayanna, walked over to me, dropped the box of blunts and keys into my lap, and exited the apartment, all without saying one word!

I looked at Fatal and Ayanna like, ‘What the fuck?’ and they gave the same faces back to me. I then got up from the couch to catch Kelley, wondering what the fuck had just happened. I finally caught up with her behind my building, walking through the Dolton Expo parking lot. I stopped her speed-walk by grabbing her hand.

“Kelley. What’s up, boo? Why you tripping?” I asked.

“Tripping? I ain’t tripping. You the one tripping, chasing me down like you don’t know what’s up or something,” Kelley responded with a serious attitude.

That comment, and her tone, had me confused as hell now. My face clearly showed it. “I know what’s . . . Kelley, what is you talking about?” I asked, totally lost, as she again began to walk away.

Kelley turned back towards me with an irritated look on her face.

“What don’t chu understand about ‘it was good while it lasted?’ I mean, I got my nut, you got chyour nut. What the fuck else do you want? We even,” Kelley stated, matter-of-factly, and spun off, walking away.

Kelley’s comment made me feel like one of the many bust-downs that I had had this same conversation with, only with the shoe on the

other foot. I couldn't believe that Kelley was doing me like this! I ran until I caught up with her.

"Kelley, quit playing, man! It ain't going down like this!" I said, hugging her with my pride hurt.

Kelley pushed hard out of my embrace, and spat, "What the fuck is wrong wit chu, nigga! You a playa. You know the game. You got chyours and I got mine, now move the fuck on!" Kelley snapped, and again began to walk away.

I stood there watching in total disbelief as Kelley walked away. For a few minutes, I stood there thinking, or more precisely, hoping, that Kelley would turn around, and tell me that she was only playing. Kelley never even looked back as she crossed the street exiting the parking lot. I turned around, walking in the opposite direction with my hands on my head, and, at the top of my lungs, screamed, "Damn!"

I was too fucked up to return to the apartment and have to see Fatal and Ayanna all lovey-dovey together when I had just been dumped. I ended up just walking around the out-skirts of the Penn smoking a blunt, wondering what the hell had just happened.

During my walk, I had to finally admit to myself that I had some real feelings for Kelley. I didn't know that before today. I didn't consider myself a player or nothing. It was just that no one female had ever captivated my mind to the point that I desired her company on a long term basis. With me, it was like, today? Okay. Tomorrow? Maybe. Be with you for three days in a row? Hell, no! But today, I knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that somehow, someday, Kelley had snuck into my heart, and completely annihilated that attitude. Too bad that now it was too late.

"Four, what up?" asked Chill Will noticing the sad look on my face as I walked past him.

“Ain’t nothing,” I replied, lying while keeping it moving towards the inside of the building.

As I approached the apartment door, I almost felt too ashamed to enter. I took a deep breath and entered the apartment with my head down planning to go directly to my room.

Two steps into the livingroom, I heard Fatal and Ayanna break out into a hysterical laughter. I looked back towards the TV to see what they were laughing at, but an Allstate commercial was on. When I lifted my head up and looked towards them, I knew exactly what they were laughing at, me! Beside Fatal and Ayanna on the couch sat Kelley with a mischievous smirk on her face.

“Damn!” joked Fatal, imitating what I had done in the Dolton Expo parking lot, causing Ayanna to fall to the floor in laughter.

“Can I talk to you for a second?” asked Kelley, sounding innocent, standing, and walking towards my bedroom. Fatal was about to make another joke, so I quickly followed Kelley.

“Baby, I’m sorry,” Kelley began, apologizing, as I closed the bedroom door. “I didn’t want to hurt or embarrass you, but, baby, I had to do something to find out if you really cared for me, or if I was just another derb to you,” explained Kelley, looking an entirely different way than she had in the parking lot.

I stood there for a second, just watching Kelley. I couldn’t believe that this girl that I had considered a suburbanite had run game on me so smoothly.

I smiled while shaking my head from side to side. “Kelley, I’m a kill you!” I said, and slammed her playfully onto the bed. Ha. Ha. Ha. We laughed and wrestled.

“I love you, Simon,” said Kelley, sitting on my stomach.

“I love you, too, Kelley,” I responded, truthfully, and received a passionate kiss. I was happy to sacrifice a moment of embarrassment, for a lifetime of love.

TWO WEEKS LATER

“Aye, Sin. Do me a favor, and pick up Ayanna from school for me. I gotta go serve Double R this eighty over in Foster Park, and I’ll meet chyall at the Evergreen Plaza,” stated Fatal, out of the window of his day-old, ’98 Navigator, looking down into my day-old, ’98 Lexus GS 400.

We had woke up early this morning to go and get our rims put on, and our new sound systems installed. I hated to return to Thornridge high school, and hadn’t since the day that I had dropped out, to the chagrin of Kelley, having to walk home from school. But since it was the last day of school before the summer break, and my 20" Lorinsers were looking like shiny, giant chrome cookies on my champagne colored Lexus, I gave in to Fatal’s request.

I sat idle, smoking a blunt, while waiting in the school’s parking lot. I had sat there for ten minutes, being eyed with envy by the school’s security guards and both sexes of students, when Kelley, Ayanna, and a friend of theirs, that I later learned name was Pooh, noticed me, and entered the car. As we pulled off towards the exit of the parking lot, two security guards jumped in front of my car, forcing me to brake quickly. With students flanking both sides of my car, I rolled down my window to curse out the stupid ass guards, just as the dean of students, Ms. Dee, approached my window.

“Excuse me, mister, but our policy states . . . Wait,” she said, finally recognizing me. “Aren’t you Simon Jackson, a former student of ours?”

“Yeah. That be me. What happening?” I asked, arrogantly, through thick clouds of weed smoke that I continued to blow out of my window, and into her face.

“Mr. Jackson! You are a 16 year old dropout, not able to afford a car like this. And smoking marijuana is illegal!” she snapped. “So if I ever see you on this school’s premises again, I’ll call the police and have you arrested. Do you understand?”

“Bitch, I don’t give a fuck!” I snapped back, and pulled a 4 inch thick wad of money out of my left pocket. With my right hand, I began quickly unfolding big face after big face while telling her, “Call the police, hoe! I got bail money, get out of jail money.” Scurrrrr. I pulled off, leaving the on-lookers with their jaws dropped, and their ears hearing the sounds of Jay-Z’s ‘I Done Came Up’ beating out of my four 12" JL Audio speakers.

Kelley convinced me to allow Pooh to ride out with us, so the three of us met up with Fatal in the plaza parking lot. We went from store to store, for three hours, buying everything that we halfway liked. From Pelle Pelle, Maurice Malone, and Iceberg for me to Gucci, Chanel, and Prada for Kelley. I even tricked \$1,000 on Pooh, too, so that she wouldn’t feel left out. She hinted at how she would re-pay me by slyly slipping me her number while Kelley was in a dressing room.

After wardrobes and shoes were taken care of, Fatal and I led the girls across the street to buy our hats.

In Chicago, you weren’t balling if you didn’t own at least one ‘One Fifty’ cap. They were baseball caps that had the face of a Fossil watch, or a rock of some sort, in the center of the cap where the team name is usually sewn. Flanking the watch or rock are a pair of wings designed in either snake or alligator skin. The top of the bill, and the adjustment band on the back of the cap, is also snake or alligator skin. The hats got

their name from their starting price of \$150. They are also known as Wing-Ding, Brawse, and Fossil caps.

I had five 150s already, but I still bought a few more to match each out-fit that I had just bought. By the time we left the mall, I had spent over \$15,000 on clothes, shoes, and hats. From the mall, I dropped Pooh off, and met Fatal and Ayanna back at the crib for the real surprise of the night.

Kelley and Ayanna didn't know it, but next week was going to be the last week that the 4 of us would all be together for a few months.

During Fatal's last trip to Alabama, he had found that the Mobile drug scene was sweeter than we had originally thought. When he returned from his trip, he told me about his findings, and we agreed that now would be a good time to enact our expansion plans, since the coke prices in Chicago were almost all the way back to normal. He and Ayanna would move to Mobile for a few months, until he had firmly set up a base of operations, while I held down the Penn.

3 DAYS LATER.

"Come on, boo, you ready?" I asked as Kelley packed our last article of clothing into a suitcase.

"Yeah, I'm ready, boo. But can you at least tell me where we're going?"

"Nooooo" I teased. "You'll find out soon enough," I said grabbing our suitcases and heading into the livingroom.

"Bout time!" Fatal stated, impatiently.

"Man, chill wit that. You give Money and J-Mo everything they gone need?" I asked.

“Yeah, nigga. Everything is good. Lets go!” Fatal replied grabbing his luggage and heading for the door.

ON THE FLIGHT TO JAMAICA.

The cabin of the 747 Air Jamaica plane was very dark and chilly as Kelley and I sat under a blanket in a three-seated row near the back of the first-class section. We were carrying on a conversation in hushed whispers. An elderly white man sat to the right of me in the aisle seat snoring as we reached the mile-high point of the plane’s ascent.

“Simon, I can’t believe you taking me to Jamaica. Its like you fulfilling one of my fantasies,” Kelley whispered, cradled in the crook of my left arm.

“I want to be the man that makes all your dreams come true, Kells,” I whispered back.

“I want to be the woman that makes all of your dreams a reality, too,” Kelley responded lifting her head up and kissing me.

“I bet chu too scared to join the mile-high club wit me?” I dared whispering into Kelley’s ear.

“Boo, you must’ve thought that I was playing when I told ju that there isn’t *anything* that I won’t do for you,” Kelley shot back.

I looked at Kelley believing that she was bluffing until I felt her soft hands unbuckling my Girbaud shorts. Kelley then let her seat back as far as it would go, and turned over onto her left side facing the window as if she were asleep.

I emulated her move letting my shorts and boxers slide slightly off of my waist. Directly behind her, I placed my left arm under her, and pulled her closer to me while easing up her Adidas skirt. I then slid her panties over enough to allow me to enter her from behind.

“Ooooh shhhh,” Kelley winced as I drove into her week-off-from-nature’s-visit tight pussy.

Kelley continued to softly moan as back and forth we grinded lost in the wonderment of our lust, and not caring about anything else in the world except the fulfillment of our fantasy.

CHAPTER 11

“Dese way, mon,” called the brown-teethed dread that the travel agent had arranged to take us to the hotel.

We arrived at Club Hotel Riu, and was escorted to adjoining rooms on the fourth floor. Each room was decked out with amenities like a Jacuzzi in the large bedroom, 2 big-screen TVs, a fully stocked bar, and a balcony overlooking the white sands and blue-green waters of Ocho Rios.

“Good looking out wit the bags,” I said to the Jamaican doorman, handing him a \$20 tip as we arrived at Kelley and I’s room door.

“Me job tee take car eva you need,” he replied, graciously accepting the \$20.

“Check this out,” I mumbled to him so as not to be heard by Kelley, who was walking around familiarizing herself with the room.

“Where that at?” I asked putting my fingers to my lips as if I was smoking a joint.

“Me da mon tee see,” he replied smiling. “I be back,” he then said before running off.

“Simon! Come look at this view!” yelled Kelley from the balcony. I walked up on her from behind admiring the beauty of Jamaica’s beach compared to the glass sands of Chicago’s lakefront.

“Can we go walk on the beach, baby, pleeease,” Kelley begged.

“Wait, boo. But chu gotta go unpack our stuff first, while I go to the door,” I replied.

Kelley kissed me frantically, and skipped to the bedroom happily.

“What’s up?” I asked opening the door for the doorman. He handed me a large brown bag containing about a half pound of weed.

“You like, no?” he asked. I opened the bag and sniffed deeply, but had to pull the bag from my face, because of the potency of the fumes

“How much?” I asked.

“For you,” he said pointing at me, “one hundred dolla.”

I gave him \$200 off the strength, and went over to Fatal’s room to smoke my life away.

Kelley was looking nothing short of flawless as the four of us walked under the stars of night along Jamaica’s finest beach. The violet colored Chanel g-string bikini with the matching see-through wraparound skirt and wet long black hair had Kelley looking like she could’ve been an islander herself.

But even with such a beautiful specimen wrapped around my arm, I couldn’t help but to still steal glances at the brown and deep chocolate, thicker than syrup, Jamaican women that passed, pranced, and partied along the beach. I could tell that Fatal was having the same problem, because Ayanna had to constantly nudge him to make him aware of his gawking.

I didn’t have that problem with Kelley. Almost daily, she and I would have deep talks where I would school her to different aspects of the street life, and she would tell me what she would and would not be willing to accept. Early in our relationship I explained to her that I’m a 16 year old hood-rich thug nigga, so if she really wanted to be with me and make our relationship last, she would have to understand the amount of temptations that I received from beautiful women on an everyday basis and understand that, tested enough times, eventually the flesh will fall weak. After giving her some added details on the subject matter, she told me that she understood, and made me give my word never to sleep with her sister, Ayanna, or to abuse the excuse, or to impregnate any other woman. I respected Kelley’s realness, and gave

my word to that, and try to never allow the shit that I do in the streets to get back to my home, or in between my sheets.

Loud music, laughter, and the deep rumbling of a bass drum attracted us to a party of about 75 people going on under a gazebo. All over the make-shift dance floor, women grinded to the latest reggae hits. When Buju Banton's 'Boom Bye E' ye Banti Boy' began blasting through the speakers, the party's energy rose to an all-time high. Not ones to miss out on the fun, we entered the dance floor to throw down, too.

Kelley demonstrated dancing and grinding skills that I would have never guessed that she had. But after three hours of non-stop dancing and drinking, I was tired. Ayanna and Kelley had left to the bathroom, and Fatal was practically getting raped by two white girls in the corner, so I began making my way through the crowd to find a table. Halfway through the crowd, someone grabbed my hand.

"Pardon me manna, rude boy. Me tink ya sexy," said a Jamaican princess smiling as I turned around to see her. She was standing 5'4", caramel complexion, with raspberry colored, thin, neatly twisted dreads, cut in a bob, slightly covering the corners of her eyes. Her black fish scale cat-suit showed off her bodacious curves and teased the eyes with fantasies of what lied beneath. I was about to respond to her comment, but I was briefly tongue-tied.

"You no hav say no-ting, mon. Just me dance wit to," she said pulling me back onto the dance floor.

By request, the DJ played the throwback song of the night when Super Cat's 'Flex' reawakened the intoxicated dance floor. Khia, my dance partner, turned her back to me and began winding, rotating, and swaying her soft ass against my crotch. She was doing a dance that was appropriately named 'Sex On The Dance Floor.' My dick was hard as

a rock through my shorts, and I knew she felt it, because she bent over and began slow winding against my shit, as close as she possibly could, like if we were fucking and she wanted every inch of me in her. Near the end of the song, Khia turned towards me and began a frontal grind against me while softly rubbing my back through my wife-beater. And I took the opportunity to palm her soft, but firm, ass cheeks.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Kelley and Ayanna staggering back into the gazebo, and made a mental note to make this my final dance. At the end of the song, I thanked Khia for the dance and regretfully declined her request to accompany her on a late-night stroll.

By the time I reached the table, Fatal was already there, but the girls were so drunk, we had to practically carry them back to the rooms.

Kelley was awake when we entered the room, and I was horny as hell, but by the time that I was able to lay her down and take off her clothes, she was knocked out asleep. I was pissed at not being able to fuck tonight, until I remembered what I had left at the beach. I hit Fatal's door and found out that Ayanna had fell out, too. So Fatal and I decided to tuck the wifeys in and head back to the beach.

"Hey, pretty woman," I said tapping on the back of Khia's shoulder. She turned around looking angry at my intrusion into her conversation with some European rock-star looking dude, until she noticed who I was. Upon recognition, her face melted into a full smile.

"You come back fa me, no?" Khia asked offering me her right hand.

I took it and asked, "If it's not too late?"

Khia looked back at the rock star, waved, and began walking off with me. We walked and talked for a quarter mile down the beach until we reached a dark secluded spot just off of the beach.

"You seat," Khia ordered, and I took a seat on a concrete slab bordering the end of the beach.

Khia then walked up to me until she was standing between my legs. There, she unzipped her cat suit down to her mid-section and pulled the shoulders off revealing her beautiful, perfectly round, brown nipples and breasts. I pulled Khia closer to me, and began softly nibbling and sucking her hardened nipples while pulling her cat suit the rest of the way down.

Khia stepped out of the cat suit, and dropped down to her knees pulling my boxers and shorts off. With one hand on each of my legs, Khia began licking from my balls to the head of my shaft. After properly lubricating me with her saliva, she took my manhood into her mouth, swallowing me deeply.

For 20 painfully pleasurable minutes, Khia killed me softly, sucking, and finally swallowing my unborn seed.

With my dick ultra-sensitive, Khia continued sucking it until it was back hard. Khia then stood up, turned around, and eased herself down onto my 9 inches of lust!

I guided Khia to the sand in a doggy-style position, but instead of allowing her to plant her hands in the sand for balance, I held her hands in mine, holding her up, and allowing me even deeper penetration. I started off making long slow strokes, until I felt her pussy releasing it's juices, fully lubricating her walls. Faster and deeper I began to stroke.

“Oooh, yes, me rude boy! Fuck me, you Nubian mon!” Khia cried out in joy, rocking backwards on her knees, meeting my every thrust.

Looking down at the ripples jiggle in her ass as our bodies clasped almost caused me to prematurely jack. For 30 minutes, we fucked with an animalistic hunger. When we reached our climax, her sex gushed and leaked as she released our grip, burying her head in her hand in the sand.

We laid in the sand occasionally summoning up enough energy for another ‘fuck fight’ until the sun began to rise on the horizon, alerting us that our night of no boundaries had come to an end.

I felt kind of guilty about just getting up and walking away from Khia knowing that I would never speak to her again after this day. But Khia did her best to calm our uneasiness when she said, “Sincia, me hav no regrets. Me hav wet punanny fa weeks remembering tis night. But me won someting ta remember ya fa life.”

I thought for a minute, then took off my black and gold 150 hat and handed it to Khia.

“Now, every time you look at this watch right here,” I said pointing at the gold Fossil watch’s face, “remember the night when, for a while, time ceased to exist.” Khia and I hugged, exchanged kisses, and departed from each other, never to cross paths again.

I arrived back at the hotel where Kelley and Ayanna were still asleep, and Fatal was napping on my livingroom couch with an 8 inch long, inch thick, perfectly rolled blunt hanging from between his fingers.

“Nigga, what the fuck you doing in my room?” I asked, waking him up.

“Nigga, I fell asleep waiting on your sucker-for-love ass,” Fatal joked, sitting up and handing me the cigar. “Fire the weed up, Four,” said Fatal. “I got a story to tell.”

The next five days of our trip passed too fast. We did everything that niggas in the hood never thought that they would do. We jet-skied, water-skied, hang-glided, scuba-dived, and raced scooters through the streets of Ocho Rios.

When we finally alerted the girls that Fatal and Ayanna’s things were now in Mobile, Alabama, they reacted first with anger at being left in

the blind about our plans, then with tears and mourning at the impending separation of best friends.

JUNE 15, 4:19 p.m.

Kelley was standing on the balcony sulking, still mad at me for concealing Fatal and Ayanna's moving plans from her until our last night in Jamaica. I crept up behind Kelley and wrapped my arms around her waist, resting my chin on her shoulder, and lightly kissing her neck.

"Boo, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to keep secrets from you, but we couldn't let the cat out of the bag until the last second, 'cause when niggas start hearing of your next move is when the tech gets drawn, and we couldn't chance that, Kells. I know you can feel that."

"Yeah. I can feel you, baby," Kelley responded looking out at the serene beach. "But you know that I would never tell nobody nothing about you and Fatal."

"Yeah, I know. I had to do that for Fatal though," I responded. "I'ma miss my girl, Ayanna," Kelley said, sounding as if she were about to cry.

"Me, too," I agreed.

"But you know what else I feel?" asked Kelley.

"What?" I asked back.

Kelley slightly scooted her ass against my crotch, hinting at the bulge growing in my boxers. We both smiled, and I reached down releasing my mans from its silk captivity, inched Kelley's nightgown up, and entered her from behind on our private balcony hoping that my future would be as tight as the grip that Kelley's pussy had on my penis at that moment.

We woke up the next morning to an early group brunch before heading off to the airport. Kelley and I's flight departed first, so Fatal and Ayanna came to send us off with hugs, shakes, cries, kisses, and tears.

CHAPTER 12

JUNE 16, 1998

As soon as we exited the cab in front of our building, Da'Juan and Btreal took our bags upstairs, while J-Mo stood in front of me with a dumb look on his face.

"What happened?" I asked, tiredly, already knowing that something was wrong.

"We need to talk," J-Mo stated, and I lead him upstairs to the apartment.

After getting Kelley settled in and rolling up a blunt out of the ounce that I was able to bring back from Jamaica concealed in the sole of my shoe, I sat in my Lazy Boy chair, fired up the blunt, and prepared myself to hear the bullshit that J-Mo was about to tell me.

"Sin, man, I'm sorry. Sh . . . shit fucked up," J-mo began.

"Four, kill that sensitive ass female shit, and just tell me what the fuck happened," I responded, already irritated with the direction that this conversation was going in.

"So much shit, Solid. The night chyall left, we went to a party at the Dolton Expo, and Soney and Tru nim got into it with the Breeds. So when we came out to the parking lot to get the heaters, the Breeds and the GDs was already outside posted, and started busting. Tru, Traycee, and Terell got shot, but they killed Money. His momma couldn't even have the casket open at the funeral, because they said that he got hit in his face and body like 16 times. Then, about 2 days after that shit happened, I had Chill Will holding the block down for me, while I went to the crib to get me some sleep. When I got back, Chill Will was

missing in action, and nobody on the block knew where he had went. When I checked the stash 5 kilos was missing.”

“What the fuck!” I snapped. “How stupid is you to . . .” I began scolding J-Mo, and didn’t stop for 5 minutes, until I needed to catch my breath. Kelley had came into the livingroom wondering what all the yelling was about, but I snapped on her too, causing her to run back into the bedroom. I couldn’t believe that me and Fatal’s idea to leave our cell phones, so as not to be disturbed during our trip, would cost us so dearly.

“Fa . . . fa . . . Four, um, uh, th . . . that ain’t it,” J-Mo stuttered. I put my head down, not believing that there could be even more bad news to come. J-Mo must’ve never heard of the story about how the bearer of bad news to the mob was usually the first to be killed, ’cause if he had of, he would have stopped with his news report a long time ago.

“What else?” I asked, defeatedly.

“Ya . . . ya . . . your s . . . stepfather b . . . been coming th . . . through the block li . . . like ever . . . everyday, asking for you,” J-Mo said, causing me to snap my head up, staring at him. “He . . . he . . . said it’s something a . . . about ya . . . your O . . . OG.”

I dropped my head again, shaking it from side to side. “J-Mo?” I called.

“Wh . . . what . . . what’s up, Four?” J-Mo asked, hesitantly.

“Get the fuck out of my face!” I responded, seriously. I was so heated that dismissing J-Mo from my presence was the safest thing that I could do for him at the moment.

As soon as J-Mo left, I immediately went to the bedroom, grabbed my Glock, another blunt, and my car keys, and left without saying one word to Kelley or the brothers serving in front of the building.

I immediately knew that something was seriously wrong when I parked in the driveway of my old house and saw that the three vans parked in front of me all had Georgia plates.

The side door was answered by a weeping woman, that I vaguely remembered, hugging me tightly. I walked into a packed upstairs livingroom that instantly became eerily silent as I approached.

Upon seeing me, Nikki jumped from the couch, ran to me, and hugged me tightly, as the woman at the door had, weeping uncontrollably. Over Nikki's shoulder I glanced around the crowded livingroom, noticing that everyone was either crying or consoling.

"Nikki, what happened?" I asked. My sister forced herself to stop crying long enough to kill me with two words.

"Momma dead," she said, burying her face back into my chest.

I pushed out of her embrace, turned around, and walked out of the full house of relatives, that I barely even knew, without as much as an acknowledgement that they even existed.

I hopped into my Lexus, pulled out of the driveway, and began driving. I was in a daze, or what medical experts would call a state of shock. I thought about all my mother, sisters, and I had been through. I thought about the two years that we spent sleeping on the streets or in shelters. The empty apartments we lived in as my mother continued to battle her drug addiction. I remembered the fear that I felt, at the age of 10, witnessing gun-wielding drug dealers come into our apartment and confiscate the few material possessions that we had as a collection on a debt. The resurrection of my mother into a clean and sober, self-respecting woman. I remembered the day when, at the age of 32, my mother was finally able to afford to buy herself her first car. The sparkle that shined in her eyes when we did the unthinkable, and

moved into a house. Good times, bad times, and worst times, were all endured in my mother's lifetime.

By the time that I was able to finally halfway return to my senses, I checked my Cartier, looked at the interstate sign, and realized that it was 2 a.m., and I was 20 minutes away from St. Louis, Missouri. I pulled off at the next exit and bribed a young white female to allow me to rent a room at her Best Western hotel. After a long thoughtful shower, I called Kelley.

Seeing my number on the caller ID, she answered, "I'm sorry for making you mad, Sincere, baby. But would you please come home so that I could know that you're alright, boo, please?" she begged, showing me that she was as sincere and loyal of a woman that any thug nigga like myself could ask for.

I told her where I was, how I got here, and about all of the latest developments that had triggered my shock-induced flight. Kelley cried, tried to console, and even offered to catch a flight to St. Louis to be with me, which I politely refused.

Even though I was crushed beyond description by mere words, I had not yet shed a tear. But hearing Kelley's cries, and knowing that they came by way of first-hand experience, having felt the pain of losing a mother herself, and the culmination of Money's death, Chill Will's theft, and the abundance of pain that I had already had kept hidden deep in my heart, finally caused a crack in my heavy armor. A single tear trickled down the left side of my face, representing my near overwhelm by the many struggles that I had already endured in my short life.

Early the next morning, I drove back to Chicago with my head clearer, knowing that I had a duty to my sisters to be strong and resilient in the face of all adversities.

The next two days went by in a semi-blur, with all the planning for the funeral going on. The only bright spot in those two days was the bond that Alexis, Nikki, and Kelley developed, through consoling each other, and the many hours that they spent together shopping and organizing.

Because I was forced to run so much in the last two days, helping my stepfather, sisters, and Kelley with funeral arrangements and costs, against my better judgement, I allowed J-Mo to continue running the Penn until after the funeral. Fatal called offering to come home immediately, but I told him to stay put, seeing as though he didn't really know my mother like that.

At the funeral, one by one, a relative of mine would walk to the podium, crying, saying all good things about my mother. How much they loved her, how generous she was, and how much they will miss her. I sat there staring at them with genuine hate in my heart. I hated the fact that they would disrespect my mother's death by showing up at her funeral telling lies, and shedding fake tears for the sympathy of their brethren.

My mother rarely talked to any of them, and had told my sisters and me many stories of their larcenous ways, hypocritical conversations, and rumor starting slanders.

At the end of the funeral, most of my imposter "ylimaf" members came to me offering condolences and false promises, but I refused to play their game of sharing grief, and brushed them off with a cold shoulder and a minimum amount of conversation.

Per my mother's instructions, she was to be cremated after the funeral, so there wouldn't be a burial service. When everyone began departing to meet up at another ylimaf members house for dinner, Alexis asked me if I would be joining them. I told her no, and even

without me having to explain why, she understood. I sent Kelley with Alexis and Nikki, and drove home to do some deep thinking.

A pint of Hennessy and two blunts to the head in my silent dark apartment provided me with the peace that I needed to formulate my next moves. I decided to expand my distribution on the Penn to also selling hydro-weed to enable the 20-something, new young 4s, that had been blessed as 4s over the last month and a half, a way to get money, since my current roster of hungry employees weren't willing to sacrifice a position on the highly lucrative rock-shifts to one of them for even a night. I also decided to enroll in a G.E.D. program, and attain my diploma as an honor to my mother. I was about to lay back on the couch and take a quick nap before Kelley returned home, when those plans were interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Who is it?" I yelled, angered by the interruption, until I saw through the peep hole that it was my neighbor, Ms. Stacey. "Oh, I'm sorry for yelling at chu. I . . ."

"Don't apologize, baby," Ms. Stacey said, interrupting me. "Under the circumstances, I can understand your irritation. But I just wanted to come over and personally tell you how sorry I am for your loss, and let you know that if there is *anything*," she stressed, "I can do to help you feel better, you just knock on my door and let me know. Okay, baby?"

"Right," I responded.

"Oh, yeah, you never came over to get your lasagne that night either," Ms. Stacey said, changing the subject, and also making me remember that I hadn't eaten all day.

"My bad for that. You got something over there to eat now?" I asked.

Ms. Stacey smiled, and responded, “Baby, I didn’t cook tonight, because my son is at his father’s house. But I’ll do something special for my baby right quick. C’mon.”

I locked my door and followed Ms. Stacey to hers, having to mentally scold myself for the freaky thoughts that quickly ran through my head as I stared at her plump behind. Just think, this woman was trying to show some care and concern for me, and me walking behind her lusting. Shame on me. I locked her door behind me, but when I turned back around, Ms. Stacey was on her knees directly in front of me.

“Sincere, I respect you because you’re a smart, strong, young man,” she said, looking up at me and unbuckling my Purple Label slacks at the same time. “And you hide your feelings so well. But you can’t fool me, baby. I know that you’re hurting,” she said, and planted a wet kiss on the head of my penis. Looking back up at me, she said, “Sincere, let me do to you what I’ve wanted to do for you for over four months now, and make you feel better. Okay, baby?” Ms. Stacey asked, but didn’t wait for me to answer, before wrapping her lips around and engulfing my manhood.

I was always taught to never refuse an offer of help, so I leaned my back against the door, and allowed my nurse to use her healing powers to the best of her ability.

CHAPTER 13

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 1998

“What’s up wit chu, Nino?”

“Ain’t nothing. What’s happening wit chu, Li’l One?” Nino asked in return as he took a seat on the passenger side of my Impala.

After a couple days of pressuring Sconey nonstop to give me somebody that had access to pounds of hydro, reluctantly, he finally agreed, and set up this meeting between Nino and me. This meeting was going to be big, because no one else on the south side had access to a substantial amount of ’dro besides Nino, and Nino’s block was the only one on the south side even selling official hydro-chronic marijuana.

Nino was a member of the Black Disciple Nation. They were an organization known for getting money on the south side. I only knew Nino from the phone conversation that we had had earlier, but if he was holding like Sconey said that he was, with the chickle that I was already getting from the Penn, selling weight, and the Alabama jump-off, add in some dro money, and I figured to be a millionaire by the end of the year, and probably sooner.

Nino looked around the Museum of Science and Industry’s parking lot for signs of a setup. When he was satisfied that everything was kosher, he relaxed, and sat back in the already reclined seat.

“Aye, Joe, you know when I hollered at Sconey on the phone, he told me his guy wanted to holla at me, but he neva said jyour name, and you didn’t mention it when I spoke to you either,” said Nino.

“Oh. Pardon self,” I replied. “My name Sincere.”

“Sincere?” Nino repeated, and began looking at me strange, as if he was analyzing me. “Man, hell naw, you look too young to be the Sincere I’m thinking about,” Nino said, more to himself than me.

“Damn, its another nigga round here using my name, too?” Nino looked over at me with a serious face now, and asked, “Do you got a champagne Lex wit flats on it?”

His question caught me off guard and made me a little ’noid, because I had done so much shit in the last few months. But I was curious to see where he was going with his question, so I replied, “Yeah. That’s me. What up?”

“Hell, naw!” Nino replied, shaking his head side to side, smiling. “Nigga, do you know how long I’ve been trying to find out who you was so that I could get up wit chu?” he asked, still smiling. “Man, let me holla at my li’l guy nim right quick, let ’em know I’m straight, and me and you can ride out, ’cause I need to talk some serious business wit chu, a’ight?”

“A’ight,” I replied, unsurely.

As Nino walked to his car talking to his security, I pressed a button under my steering wheel releasing the electronic lock on my hidden stash box. I wasn’t really comfortable with the situation, and I wasn’t willing to risk my life on the strength that all was well. After about three minutes of talking, the Durango full of BDs pulled off exiting the parking lot. Nino walked back towards my car as he had left it, alone. I pushed the button again re-locking the stash box as Nino re-entered my car.

“You ready?” he asked, and I pulled off heading up Lake Shore Drive.

During the drive, Nino told me he had been hearing my name ringing since the drought. He said that he had been looking for me to

do business with, because the BD that he was copping from was taxing him as a way to keep him from blowing all the way up. That same BD was the leader of their organization, and was even taxing Nino's street sales of 'dro so much, that Nino was looking for a way to get out of the 'dro business all together, if he could find a new connect for coke at the right price.

After riding around downtown for two hours, talking and smoking, we headed back to his block with an agreement that he would terminate his block sales of 'dro, while on the low from certain members of his mob, continue to purchase it wholesale from his Houston-based connect, and sell it exclusively to me. In exchange, I would lower my regular price of \$19,000 a kilo to \$17,000 for him. I reasoned that it would be pointless for him to accept cash from me for the weed, then turn right back around and give it back to me for the coke. So we decided on a system where we would exchange our respective goods, according to their worth, thus eliminating the use of cash between us all together.

I came up with that idea so that Nino couldn't play games and try to regulate the amount of 'dro I copped without also having to regulate his own cocaine intake. Either way, I couldn't lose, since 'dro wasn't the main source of my income, and I would be copping at his connect's price, while he would be copping at my 'lowered' price. In essence, I would still be profiting \$3,500 a kilo, and be the sole provider of 'dro to the south side. Muwah! I mentally kissed him off, no homo, as I dropped him off, knowing that I had to milk this deal for as much, and as often as possible, because, for certain reasons, I had a feeling that it wasn't going to last long.

I drove back to the Penn, and scooped J-Mo up to ride with me, up north, to my Mexican freak, Andrea's, crib. During the long,

hour-and-a-half drive to the north side of Chicago, J-Mo seemed despondent, and I understood the reason why.

I had only talked to J-Mo once since the day that I snapped on him, and that was to tell him that he was relieved of running the block. So he was probably still salty at me.

J-Mo was a good dude, as loyal as they came these days. And despite his slip-up with Chill Will, he was thorough when it came to handling business. Besides, that shit could've happened to anybody, including me. I knew that it would be difficult trying to run a 'dro spot, crack spot, and sell weight all by myself, so getting J-Mo back in good standing and rebuilding our bond, so that I could trust him to handle business like I knew he could, was important. Besides security precautions, that's the reason that I had brung him with me.

"Four, I ain't gonna lie and tell you that I wasn't salty about that shit wit Chill Will, but chu gotta pardon self for the way I tripped out on you. Shit be stressing like a muthafucka when you reach certain levels of this game, youknowwhatimsayin?" I asked, breaking the silence.

"Yeah, I feel you, Sin. I ain't tripping. I know I fucked up. But best believe, Solid, I'ma catch up wit that nigga, Will, though. He been laying real low so far, but I know he gone pop back up on his set in headquarters, and my cousin, Snake, live around there. So when he do, Snake gone get at me, and that nigga's a goner," J-Mo stated, and just like that, everything was everything again.

We pulled up to Andrea's house on Sunnyside and Hazel, beating Jay-Z's 'Hard Knock Life.' We received mixed reactions from the 50 or so Latin Kings and Queens that stood along the block. With our hats cocked to the left side, J-Mo and I exited the Impala and walked into Andrea's house.

Andrea was a fine, 5'5", light tan-skinned, long black-haired female that I had met on her 19th birthday through my cousin Noobie. That same night, we fucked like mad Russians, and hadn't stopped since. Andrea was the first Mexican girl that I had ever fucked around with. And her sex was so good that I nick-named her, Acapulco Gold!

"Sincere! Mi amante! Como esta, papi?" she asked, excitedly, while hugging me as we entered the house. "Bien, mami. You missed me?" I asked.

Andrea lowered her head, smiling shyly, and responded, "Mucho, papi." I then introduced her to J-Mo, and without any further conversation or procrastination, Acapulco Gold and I dipped off to her bedroom.

For the next sixty-five minutes, a nonstop chorus of, "Cójame, papi," and, "Ello leso asi bueno," could be heard all the way in the livingroom by J-Mo as we fucked in nearly every position in the ghetto Kama Sutra. Alcapulco's sex was so good because she would allow every hole of her body to be used as a means for intercourse. And her pussy got so wet during sex, that afterward, a large puddle of her lust would be left covering almost the entire center of the bed.

"J-Mo! Come here!" I yelled from the adjoining bathroom to Andrea's bedroom.

"What's up, Si . . ." The rest of my name was lost in J-Mo's mouth as he stood wide-eyed in shock at the sight laying before him. Alcapulco Gold was ass-naked, stretched out on top of the covers, still recuperating from our last session.

I re-entered the bedroom, followed J-Mo's eyes to the bed, and began playing in Andrea's vagina with my fingers, while asking J-Mo, "This pussy look good as a mutherfucker, don't it?"

"Heeelll, Yeah!" J-Mo replied, showing all of his 32 teeth, smiling.

“Check it out, and let me know how you liked it,” I said, walking past J-Mo on my way out of the bedroom.

“You for real?” J-Mo asked, not yet convinced that I was setting this dime-piece out to him as if she was just a used car that I wanted him to drive around the block.

I answered his question by closing the door behind me as I walked out of the room. The thought that Alcapulco Gold would refuse to fuck J-Mo never even crossed my mind. I knew, from past experiences, that girls like Alcapulco Gold would do things that they probably never even thought that they would do, just to be able to say that they know, or are affiliated with, niggas like me. Girls like Andrea are the street’s equivalent to industry groupies.

Thirty minutes and a couple nuts lighter, J-Mo and I prepared to leave Andrea’s house. As we stepped out on the porch we noticed two, 14 or maybe 15 year old, Latin Kings posted in front of her house.

“King love. Almighty, homes,” the shortest one of the two said, while throwing up his gang sign.

Still standing at the top of the steps looking down at them, I responded, “Almighty,” and threw up the 4 at them.

“Oh, you Vice Lord, homes?” the taller one asked with a snide smile. “Let us holler at chu, homie.”

I quickly looked across the street, and noticed that all attention was tuned to us. Without responding, I turned around and re-entered Andrea’s house, followed closely by J-Mo.

For the next thirty minutes I walked back and forth, pacing Andrea’s livingroom, periodically looking out of her window, trying to figure a way out of the situation. J-Mo was sitting calmly on the couch, also plotting. Andrea had locked herself in her bedroom, mad at me for cursing her out for telling me to come over to this trap. When my

aggravation peaked from the lack of ability to come up with a plausible plan, I said, “Fuck it,” and told J-Mo that we were going back outside. Like the loyal nigga that he is, he followed me.

Two more Latin Kings, and three Queens, had joined the two Kings that were previously posted in front of Andrea’s house.

“Man, why the fuck y’all niggas tripping? We all Almighty,” I spat angrily from the top stair. I was somewhat hoping that, by me reminding them of our two organization’s common bond, maybe they would get off of the bullshit.

“We’re not tripping, homes,” the taller one from earlier said. “We just want to holler at chu, brother,” he remarked sarcastically, receiving some chuckles from his peers.

I wasn’t with being clowned. So this comedian mutherfucka was pushing me to my boiling point. Knowing that we were ridiculously out-numbered and had no win, I decided to try once again to keep the peace.

“I’m sayin’, man, what chyall talking about?” I asked.

Click. Andrea’s door locked behind us. J-Mo and I exchanged quick glances, not having to speak what we both knew, that there was no turning back this time, because Andrea had left us to the wolves.

I slowly slid my right hand in my pocket, pressing two buttons, my automatic startup, and my keyless entry, while the taller King was speaking.

“Just come off the porch, homes. I promise, this’ll only take a second,” he said, again making his friends laugh.

I took three steps toward the edge of the porch with my head slightly bowed, before quickly pulling, from underneath my shirt, a Glock 19, while raising my head up, busting.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! I let off, catching them off guard. Smart mouth caught the first one in the stomach and fell to the ground moaning, while the other 6 took off running in different directions. J-Mo and I ran towards my car, still shooting. The Kings from across and down the street began running towards us, also shooting. J-Mo kept them somewhat at bay shooting back at them, while I snatched the driver's side door open, and dived over to the passenger seat. J-Mo jumped in behind me quickly throwing the car into drive.

Bullets shattered the windows, and J-Mo yelled, "Ow! Them muthafuckas shot me!" as he smashed down hard on the gas pedal, badly swiping the right rear bumper of the car parked in front of us.

I adjusted myself from the crouched position that I was in as the back window shattered, and bullets continued thumping against the body of my car. Out of the now gone passenger window, I began busting at the Kings that were posted on the quickly approaching corner. Most ran for cover, but a couple were able to fire a few shots at us as J-Mo flew through the stop sign.

After we flew through the stop sign on the next corner, and the shooting had ceased, I told J-Mo to stop the car. Quickly, I grabbed J-Mo's gun, jumped out of the car, and ran over to the curb, tossing both guns into a gutter, before returning to the car.

J-Mo was softly whining from the bullet that had ripped through his shoulder, and exited out of his back. Blood seeped moderately from his wound, but he wasn't in any danger of bleeding to death.

J-Mo turned a right on Sheridan, headed for the nearest 4CH set on Hamlin, when two blue and whites jumped behind us. With my car in the condition that it was in, and shots-fired calls clogging their radios, it was a no-brainer that they threw their lights on and pulled us over.

They ordered us to stick our hands out of the windows, and approached the car with their guns drawn. Pointing guns on us on each side of the car, they snatched our doors open and threw us to the ground.

With a knee in my back, my arms spread-eagle, and his left hand smashing the side of my face into the concrete, the red-neck officer asked, “Where the fuck are the guns, buddy?” When I didn’t respond, he said, “Oh. You don’t wanna talk, nigger?” Pow! He punched me in my eye. “Still don’t wanna talk?” he asked, waited a second, then, Pow! He hit me again. He then searched, cuffed, and threw me in the back seat of his patrol car. J-Mo received similar treatment, and was cuffed face-down on a gurney, before being whisked away to a local hospital.

I watched from the back seat of a patrol car as Chicago’s hienys, I mean, finest, tore the inside of my car up looking for guns. When they couldn’t find any, they towed my car away, and took me to the police station.

There, I was periodically beaten with phone books for not answering their hours-long questioning. From a sympathetic female officer that had brung me an inch-thick piece of meat that they claimed was bologna, two hard slices of bread, and barely two good swallows of warm water, I learned that J-Mo was still in the hospital with three other victims of the shoot-out. They were all expected to pull through. I also learned that three of the Kings from Sunnyside were also arrested under suspicion, and were being held in a different part of the station, but so far, none was talking.

After the second day of beatings and questions, that same female officer came and told me that a girl from the same street as the shoot-out had been found dead from execution-style bullet wounds by firefighters when they arrived to put out a fire that was purposely set to

her house. I didn't need the lady officer to tell me the girl's name to know that it was Andrea. Mob rules dictated that someone had to be held accountable for the chaos that had happened that day.

After the legally maximum amount of time that they could hold me without charging me, 72 hours, expired, and the police still hadn't recovered a gun, or convinced any of the witnesses to come forward with a statement, they were forced to release me. They did so after taking all but one dollar of the thirteen hundred that I had had on me when I was arrested, and leaving me with a swollen face and bruised-as-if-I-had-sparred-nine-rounds-with-Tyson mid-section. I limped to the nearest restaurant, got some change, and called Kelley.

CHAPTER 14

FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 1998

In the darkness of a cool June night, 36 young black men stood side by side in an at-ease stance with the tips of their toes touching the tip of the man's shoe to their right, forming a 360-degree circle. I stood one step inside of that circle with my feet together in a 45 degree angle, and my right hand covering my left pressed against my stomach. We were assembled behind my building, while in front of it, crack-heads sat idle in cars or aimlessly stalked up and down the Penn, anxiously awaiting the conclusion of our meeting to appease their cravings for crack.

“Solids, I called this gold to alert the brothers that yesterday I was blessed with the rank of a Universal Elite. For the benefit of the new 4s to the mob, what that means is . . .” and I began describing the responsibilities to the nation that I now had as a result of receiving this high-ranking position in the mob.

Few people in my organization would ever ascend to the position that I now held, and I had attained it already at only the age of 16! Certain ones in my organization had been hearing, and discreetly watching, the way Fatal and I had organized and financially uplifted the ‘younger brothers’ on the Penn. They had gotten together and decided that I would be a good choice to be one of the leaders of our nation into the next generation and beyond. Receiving this honor was ‘hood equivalent of being inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame, because it is a life-long blessing, and links your name with all of the ghetto prophets that came before you.

After my initial announcement, I issued out lower-level ranks to a select few. With that, we now had an official governing body for the Penn, which would be honored and respected by Chicago's entire 'League of Nations.'

10:14 p.m.

"Baaaby, can you do me a favor and take Pooh home for me, 'cause it's late, and I don't feel too good," Kelley whined as she entered our bedroom interrupting me watching Sports Center.

I breathed deeply and hesitated before answering her. I had been trying my best to not be put in a position where Pooh and I would be alone. Every since that day that I had taken her shopping with us, she had been continuously flirting with me. Kelley hadn't paid it any attention, being the trusting type that she is. And knowing that about her 'best friend,' Pooh had been pushing the envelope more and more lately. She wasn't used to her beauty and sex appeal being rejected by men, so my nonchalant behavior towards her only enhanced her larcenous desires even more. I had seen home-wreckers like Pooh before, and was intent on not becoming a victim of her seduction. Her modelesque figure, smooth caramel skin, Indian silk hair, Chinese-type eyes, and full pink lips were kryptonite to any man's fidelity.

"C'mon, Kells. I'm tired too, baby," I complained, trying to avoid the trap.

"Pleeease," Kelley begged, knowing that it was hard for me to refuse her when she did that. Not wanting to argue or cause Kelley to wonder why I was so intent on not wanting to take Pooh home, I reluctantly agreed, and went into the livingroom to get 'Delilah.'

“Oh, you’re gonna take me home, Sincere? You so sweet,” Pooh openly flirted, giving me an I-know-what-you-know-not type smile.

“Call me when you get home, girl,” said Kelley.

“Okay, Kelley. ‘Bye, sis,” yelled Pooh, following me out of the door.

Pooh had moved out of the suburbs and back to the city on 95th and Woodlawn. It was about a 20 minute drive from where we lived, so I hit the E-way, and hoped that I would make it to her house without incident. I drove as fast as I could without killing us, and trying my damndest not even to look Pooh’s way.

“Sincere, do you think that I’m getting fat?” asked Pooh. I ignored her question and kept my eyes on the road. “No, I’m serious, Sincere. Look at this.”

Foolishly, I looked over to see what Pooh was talking about, and had to force my eyes back onto the road and away from the body part that she was talking about had gotten fat. Pooh had sneakily pulled her tennis skirt up, so that when I looked over at her, the fist-sized mound between her legs were clearly visible through her sheer pink panties.

“Uummph, Sincere, you getting fat chyourself,” Pooh commented, smiling at the bulge that my Akademiks jogging pants was not able to conceal.

“Pooh, you need to stop playing,” I said, trying to sound as serious as possible.

“Naw. Sincere, you need to quit faking,” Pooh responded, then quickly leaned over into my lap.

There was light traffic around me, so I kept steering with my left hand, while trying to stop Pooh from pulling down the front of my pants with the right. My one hand against Pooh’s two highly determined hands was no match. Within a matter of minutes, Pooh was actually literally tasting the fruits of her victory.

After making a couple of late-night business drop-offs, and checking on the Penn, I returned to our apartment to find Kelley lying in the bed in a fetal position.

“What’s wrong, boo?” I asked, honestly concerned.

“I feel sick, baby,” Kelley moaned. “Fatal called and said that our mail is on the way.” ‘My mail’ is the thirteen kilos that I sent for yesterday.

I walked into the bathroom preparing to take a shower, feeling filthy for allowing Pooh to rape me with her mouth-- and break my bond to Kelley-- with her tonsil tricks. Kelley hadn’t ever tripped on me for the many girls that she knew that I had fucked during our brief relationship. All that she had asked of me was to not fuck a few select individuals, and I couldn’t even stay true to that. Damn you, dick!

I finished my shower, climbed into bed, held Kelley tightly, and went to sleep hoping that what I had done in the darkness of my Lexus front seat would never come to light.

JUNE 12th, 1998

For the past two weeks, I had put my full effort into planning the most special birthday for Kelley that I could think of. I had paid and arranged for Kelley to be awakened with a catered-- courtesy of Beverly’s catering service-- steak and eggs breakfast, which was her favorite, followed by a full hour of cunnilingus for desert, of course, provided by me. After that, we were to spend the early evening shopping on Michigan Ave. After shopping, we were supposed to return home, where I was going to surprise Kelley with a purple-- her favorite color-- satin Michael Kors evening gown and a platinum and diamond necklace, bracelet, and earrings set that I had bought from

Tiffany's for her to wear at an extremely exclusive, 5 star restaurant. Just to reserve a table for 45 minutes at this restaurant, I had to bribe the maitre d' with \$2500 to allow us to by-pass the minimum-6-month waiting list.

Post dinner, we were supposed to ride in a horse and carriage around downtown Chicago, and finally be dropped off and rest in the Jacuzzi and waterfall room of the Cyberis Suites.

In all, I had spent over \$20,000 to make this day special for Kelley, and she had killed it from the beginning when she woke up at 6 o'clock in the morning throwing up everywhere. Before the catering company was even able to arrive, she had called her sister, and they had left to visit a doctor. Now, over twelve hours later, Kelley's sister, Martina, was not answering her phone, and since Kelley didn't have a cell phone, I had no way to get in touch with either of them. To say that I was pissed was an understatement.

"What happenin', Sin? 4 of em," said J-Mo, extending his hand out for a shake as I walked out of the apartment building.

"4 of em," I responded, and accepted J-Mo's hand in our customary handshake.

"What chu doing out here, Four? I figured you and Kelley would've been somewhere in Tahiti for her birth rite 'bout right now, knowing you?"

"Hell, naw. Her dumb ass wit her sister somewhere," I snapped. "Oh," J-Mo replied, uneasily. "What chu finna get on then?" he asked, checking the time on his watch.

"Slow motion," I answered.

"You ain't fucking with that dice game, out wiggedy?" J-Mo asked.

I had forgotten all about the big dice game going on out west at Brother's Palace. Just to let you know how big the dice game was

supposed to be, it was by invite only, and there was a mandatory \$5,000 deposit enforced at the front door.

“You wanna go?” I asked.

“Why not?” J-Mo replied. “Ain’t shit else happening.”

“A’ight, go get Da’Juan and Btreal, and y’all meet me back here,” I said, and went back upstairs to my apartment.

I called Martina’s phone three more times and still didn’t get an answer. Fuck it. I counted \$55,000 into a book bag, grabbed an ounce of ’dro, and returned downstairs to meet up with J-Mo, Da’Juan, and Btreal.

10:32 p.m.

At the door of Brother’s Palace was a notorious gang enforcer by the name of Pistol Pete acting as security.

“What’s up, Li’l ones,” he said, looking from me to J-Mo, Btreal and Da’Juan. “Sorry, but ain’t no after school programs going on up here tonight,” he stated.

“After school program?” I questioned. “Nigga, you got me fucked up! I’m here to shoot,” I stated affirmatively.

Pistol let out a light chuckle. “A’ight, big man. Stand down,” he joked. “What’s your name?” he asked looking down at a small sheet of paper.

“Sincere.”

At the mention of my name, Pistol quickly looked up over the paper at me, and slid the piece of paper back in his pocket. “My bad, Charlie,” he apologized. “I only heard of you by name, and you look so young.”

“Yeah. I feel you. Don’t trip,” I stated, having heard that same apology a hundred times at clubs and parties over the last couple of months.

Pistol alerted us that only one gun per crew was allowed for security purposes. So, I sent Btreal back to the car to put up his, Da’Juan, and my strap. After receiving a ticket for my \$5,000 deposit, we entered the Palace.

We were led to a smoke-filled basement where all of the activity was going on. Along the walls were tables set up for the benefit of the gamblers’ security details. In the far left corner was a make-shift bar serving everything from weed and Hennessey to Gin and heroin. Working the room in their birthday suits were infamous Chi-Town strippers like Champagne, Candy, Lola Lane, Fidelity, and an ATLieN guest by popular demand appropriately named Buffy the Body. They served the gamblers drinks, smokes, and ‘tension relief’ on request.

In the center of the room sat a crap table surrounded by the best and brightest of Chicago’s underworld. You had Head, Ice Mike, Marlo, Mike Dub from the Heights, Reno, Dino, Kita, Good Twin, Bad Twin, Marvell, T-Fly, Shakey, Ray-Ray, Jimmy D, Shorty G, Geno, Mickey C, Marcellus, and Utha. Together, these dudes made up what I considered to be Chicago’s Finest!

To assemble this caliber of dudes in this setting, or any setting for that matter, being that we were from different mobs from different sides of town, was a feat in itself. None other than Nuke, with his pimp-like charm and deceptive manipulation skills, could have organized this affair. He was sitting in a 5 feet high chair, supervising and officiating the game as I approached.

What they hit for?” I asked, announcing my presence amongst the gathering of Dons.

“Ahhh, shit! There is the future, fellas,” Head said, pointing at me. “This is my lil’ guy, Sincere,” said Head, officially introducing me.

“Future my ass. Youngster, I hope that your bank account is older than your age, ’cause its going to cost you a G to catch this fade,” Jimmy D said, dropping a stack of twenty, fifty-dollar bills on the table.

All eyes were on me as I reversed the position of my book bag, so that it was now draped in front of me. I took out two of the fifty, thousand dollar stacks, and set them on the table.

“True, my age is young. But my money is as old as Methusa. You don’t hit for another G, nigga,” I dared, as everybody began to laugh at my adolescent cockiness. JD dropped another \$1,000 on the table.

I quickly learned my first lesson when it came to playing with fire, when JD burned me for \$14,000 on eight straight 7s, before crapping out. I got me some get-back on my roll, holding the dice for 15 straight minutes, and gaining the attention and affection of all the ladies. I netted close to \$25,000 on that streak. But by 3 a.m., I had lost every dollar that I had came with, plus the \$4,000 that I had got back from the door deposit.

I left the Palace pissed and embarrassed at not succeeding, and being out-hustled under the watchful eyes of my mentors. I returned home and instantly knew that something was wrong as soon as I entered the apartment. I took note of the differences in the livingroom, and headed to the bedroom. There, the vast difference of my apartment was even more evident. I checked the closet and dresser drawers to make sure that I wasn’t tripping. The note, left on top of the stripped-down bed, put everything in perspective.

Sincere,

Yeah, right! You're a lying, no-good, dirty-dick, muthafucka! I Hate You! My sister told me not to fuck with your trifling ass. And my dumb ass loved your mark ass. I supported you through the good, bad, and ugly. I accepted your life-style, and tried my best to understand your views. All I asked of you was ONE THING! Pooh told me what you forced her to do. You rapist BITCH! I HATE YOU!

P.S. The doctor told me that I am 8 weeks pregnant today. But don't worry about me having your baby, I'm having an abortion. Your trifling, nasty, sick-dick, disease-infested ass gave me

Sincere

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