

The Art of War:
Pimps and Robbers
by P. Higz

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Prologue:

My name is Lorenzo. I was in a typical jail cell. Posters of scantily clad swimsuit models littered the walls on the side of our beds on the white walls surrounding the hard grayish floors. The flat pillow on each of our bunk beds were barely enough to be comfortable when trying to sleep at night.

Getting along with your cell mate was the scariest part of entering the facility for the first time. An intimidating experience for most people, I just shrugged it off. I wasn't really scared to die and I definitely wasn't scared to kill. Not to say I wasn't nervous at all, but life was already pretty dark and depressive for an angel like me living in this cruel wicked society. Who knows, death may be the bridge to something better, and if I had to kill it wouldn't be the first time.

Fast forward two months later into my introduction to prison life, I was in a cell with George who was my bunk mate. It had been a long two months in lock up. Lunch tasted like shit, as always. I was lying in my bunk with a book laid across my chest. George was at the top of the bunk because he lost a coin toss bet when we first got introduced as cell mates. As the new fish I was supposed to take the top bunk. I challenged him to the bet instead. Fortunately, we were both the pretty cool and laid back type of convicts. That's not always how it works in there.

"Frederick Douglass lookin ass nigga," exclaimed my bunk mate leaning over the top bunk staring down at me with half a grin across his face.

"Shut up ol' Chris Rock on New Jack City lookin ass nigga," I said. "Serious comedian face ass nigga."

I was never the best when it came to roasting sessions. Maybe with my time in jail I'd have enough time to practice to where I could make grown men cry with my Memphis style lookin ass insults.

"Mane, all you do is sit in yo cell and read those weak ass books folks keep sending you," said George. "Why don't you hit the yard with me? Get some exercise for a change."

"I'm straight mane. You go out and fuck your time off like a dummy. I'mma educate myself so when I get out this shit hole prison, I'll be able to make something of myself. Feel me," I said feeling a little annoyed.

It always bothered me being around those with no ambition. I always had the intellect, knowledge, and wisdom to make something of myself, it just seemed like the Universe had other plans for me. Every time I'd get rid of one obstacle, there would always be another one to replace it, or even worse, a major setback. That's why it always bothered me when people have the opportunity to make something of themselves, but they throw it away to be lazy, or even worse for the streets. The cell doors began to open.

"Well Lorenzo," said George. "I'm about to go hoop while u keep jacking off to yo porno magazines. Have a good one bruh."

"Peace," I said.

Laid out on my chest was my favorite piece of literature of all time. I got hip to it behind bars. I wish I would've read it earlier. It was called the Art of War by Sun Tzu. Every time I read it I felt like I was more tactful and strategic then Niccolo Machiavelli himself. It also reminded me of many mistakes I used to make when I was out there in the streets. I even took notes on it based on my past called the "laws of gangsta." I did that so I wouldn't make the same mistakes I made in the past.

My favorite past time locked up or free was always reading a good book that I thought could improve my life in one way or another. The only thing I enjoyed more than being curled up to a good book was being curled up to a good blunt of some loud.

Yeah, I was a thug, but not the stereotypical fool you'd see on TV or in the movies. I was smart. Even though I had such a high level of intelligence people would tend to prejudge me and put me in a box, the thug box. Thing is though, I didn't choose the thug life. That shit chose me. I wasn't in it to impress these little chicken head hoes out here or to mimic what I heard in rap songs. Like I said, that shit chose me, and as much as I ran away from it, it didn't seem to want to let me go.

Picking up the book that was laid across my chest as I stared at the first chapter, I could never get enough of it. I read the first paragraph in Chapter 1. Laying out plans. It said, "The Art of War is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, and a road to either safety or ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected."

"Damn right that shit cain't be neglected," I thought.

As I began to fall into a daze, I began to daydream about the past. The book brought back so many memories. My life was rough and filled with drama, so the book was definitely a good fit for a hood warrior such as myself. I began to think about where I failed in life and what got me locked up in the first place. It all started when I was living right outside of Klondike in North Memphis, Tennessee. When my mother died I inherited her house as a part of her will, God rest her soul. I was working for a roofing company at the time. My racist boss just let me go. It all started like this.....

Chapter 1:

New Hustle New

Beginnings

As I was chilling on the couch at the pad, the TV was blazing Fox 13 News and Lil Rodney was sitting in a chair on the side of the TV and the couch. The chair was tilted enough to where he could watch the TV. A stench of marijuana and cigarettes infected the area around a glass table on the clean beige carpet floor with a big plastic bag full of smaller plastic baggies of kush broken down into different amounts of grams of weed on the table in the middle of the television, the couch, and the chair. White Jesus glared at onlookers on the wall to the side of the television on a giant screen print painting in a frame, which hinted at my religious upbringing to guests. I split open the cigarillo and let the tobacco fall into a paper plate on the table next to the lighter. The TV blazed, “A string of drug related murders are popping up around the Orange Mound area which have investigators puzzled.”

“These boys ain't playing out here,” said Rodney. “Ay, that's close by my niggas house.”

“Who? Johnny.” I asked.

“Yup.”

“Really, who gives a fuck,” I thought shaking my head.

Rodney sat up in his chair as I was rolling a mini cigarillo of bubble gum kush on the glass table in front of the couch.

“What got you selling dope again bruh! You ain't sold no weed since High School. Tell me you ain't lose yo job again bruh.”

“Yeah,” I said.

“Damn, boy jobs hate you don't it bruh,” exclaimed Rodney.

“You can tell,” I asked.

The blunt was finally rolled up. I put it up to my lips as I sparked the flame and lit the end of the nicely rolled cigar. I quickly passed the blunt to Rodney. We smoked a couple blunts then just relaxed as we watched the negative daily news broadcast.

Even though I kept it to myself, Lil Rodney was always a sucker to me. I never trusted him. He was soft to me, although he was a good actor and could pretend to be anything he wanted to when the situation called for him to impress somebody. He was also greedy and selfish. I fucked with him anyways just so I'd have someone to kick it with. After I made more friends later, I guess I just never let him go. It wouldn't hurt to keep him around anyways, or so I thought.

Two hours later, Rodney's phone started ringing.

“Wassup. Yeah. Fasho. I can come through.” Rodney hung up the phone and slowly put it in his pocket, then he let out a wide stretch in the chair then got up.

“You bout to roll,” I asked.

“Yeah, mane,” said Rodney. “Gotta get up with a lil something something. You gon be alright fool?”

"Yeah, I'll be straight. She got a friend," I asked.

"I'll see wassup," Rodney replied.

"Fasho," I said.

"Aight peace," said Rodney as he walked toward the front door next to the TV.

"Peace," I said as I picked up the TV controller to change the channel. I watched the TV until I fell asleep.

I was asleep for about three hours, and it was finally sundown. When I woke up a Mercedes Benz entered my driveway.

Nick beat on my front door loudly like the tune of a rap song during the crunk era as he waited patiently by the door.

I let out a enormous yawn, as I got up to go see who it was. I opened the door. "Wassup pimpin," I said. "Long time no see."

Nick was a dark-skinned pretty boy with a shiny diamond earring in his left ear wearing a Burberry bucket hat, a plain red shirt, and some khakis with some exquisite looking Gucci shoes on his feet. His chain lit up in the dim light from my living room like a chandelier. I always admired his fashion sense. I've never met a cat that could outdress Nick. It's almost like he reads fashion magazines all day to learn how to put himself together.

"Yeah, I heard you got some of that bubble gum Kush," said Nick nonchalantly as he walked in the living room.

"You know it," I said. "Mane that's a beautiful pendant on that chain bro. What's that an Egyptian Symbol," I said as I eyeballed the eye of Ra pendant that was iced out as well as the Cuban link it was connected to.

Nick didn't just wear expensive jewelry, but he always had on some of the most expensive luxury fashions that he got from the local boosters in his hood. Of course, he didn't tell anyone he got them from boosters but me. Ask him and he'll tell you he spent 2 racks in Atlanta on the shoes, and five bills for the shirt he had on that day. Nick was funny. For some reason he thought I was worthy of the truth though, which I must say was quite flattering to me as well as hilarious.

"Fasho mane, and it's all on a bitch in case you didn't know," said Nick. "Say mane, how you get your hands on some of that bubble gum Kush. You got lucky on that one."

"Lucky," I said. "Mane I'm trying to get like you," I said sitting down opening a bag full of smaller baggies of marijuana.

"Get like me then pimpin," said Nick. He paused for a moment. "All you gotta do is pay to get this izm. We been boys for a long time, and I'd love to have a new pimpin buddy to kick the shit with. It's gets lonely out here in this world of squares and suckers. Plus, I need to pass this shit on to a youngin so this game don't go to waste. Whaddya say P?"

"How much," I asked. I'd always been fascinated with the pimp game. Just never wanted to participate. I had a religious upbringing and I thought God would punish me if I ever got involved in some shit like that. Plus, my family was super religious, and they'd never forgive me. Yep. I was pretty much a good kid. Yeah, I dealt dope every blue moon. Who's ever died from weed anyways? Plus I was just slanging until I could find another job to keep me on my feet anyway.

"A hundred dollars an hour playa," said T.

"Damn, a hundred an hour," I asked.

Nick tilted his head to the side and explained, "Yeen gon miss that money once you start mashin for yo rashin playa. Trust me. Plus, I know you believe in the good book. Being an angel all the time will drive a sane man crazy. You need to get in touch with your dark side. Too much of anything can be unhealthy. You repressed on the inside P. It's no wonder you smoke so much weed. I bet yo brain would

explode if you ain't had any loud to smoke.”

He had a point. Life had me super stressed. If it wasn't for the weed, I wonder how I'd be in life. Behind bars, in an institution. Who knows? Life is a bitch.

“Well, I don't know if I can afford a hundred dollars an hour,” I said. I can spare a hundred right now. Is that enough to at least get started,” I asked.

“Fasho P,” said Nick. “In an hour I'll have you be able to come up on your first bitch. When I see your serious about this izm Ill cut you some slack on the money. The big price is just to make sure you serious about this shit. Sound good P?”

I pulled out a bank roll and took out 4 twenties and two tens and placed them in his hand. “I'm all ears” I said.

“Aight,” said Nick. “This will be your first lesson. Pay close attention and always remember what I'm about to tell you. He sat down as I dropped on the couch eager to hear what he had to say. “Lesson one. **Always remember, a man trades love for power, a woman trades power for love.** Never forget it.”

“Ok, ok,” I said. Little did I know that I was going to transform. Not just me but my whole lifestyle and outlook on life. Even my religious upbringing wouldn't survive when I learned more about Pimp God. I was going to become a new person. I was going to start pimping. At least my mother wouldn't be around to witness this odd transformation. It would've broken her spirit for sure.

Chapter 2:

Law 1 Pick and Choose Your Battles Wisely

It was a dark and dirty ass trap house in Orange Mound. The sunlight leaked into the dimly lit room through the torn up window blinds, with a couple chairs in the middle of the room, and a broken TV, which wasn't on at the moment, by the door. Dust and debris filled the room which likened it to a garbage dump or a room that somehow had a small tornado come in through the door. Johnny, or should I say pretty Johnny and his goons were smoking a blunt in a circle. Marcus and pretty Johnny were standing up while Joe was sitting down as they passed the blunt through the rotation.

“Check out the new Cartier frames fool! Huuuuuahhhhhhhh! Killing the game ain't it? Am I killing the game fool,” asked Johnny.

Johnny was the leader of a local gang called the Grind and Shine Mob. He always rocked pop out gold teeth with diamonds in them and always had the latest fashions and latest Jordans on. Not just a flamboyant and impeccable dresser, but he was a ladies man too. Light skinned, a little shorter than me, he also looked like an evil T.I.

“Them hoes fresh fool,” said Marcus. Marcus was one of his lower ranked goons that really did almost anything asked of him. After all, Johnny was ruthless, and he rarely would take no for an answer. Marcus was dark skinned, with a mustache and goatee, and an average dresser. That day he was wearing a basic LRG shirt with some Timberland boots. I mean this isn't a fashion magazine, but you get the point.

“Mane them hoes tighter than a virgin my guy,” said Joe. Joe was a big dark skinned mother fucker with corn rolls. His basic attire was a black tee with a giant pair of black or white air force 1s. Today he had on some navy blue dickies with his basic attire. As enforcers they acted almost like security for pretty Johnny. Him and Marcus that is. Marcus also knew martial arts.

The crew was interrupted by a barrage of knocks at the door.

“Ay Joe, go get the door,” exclaimed Johnny. “I smell dollar bills.”

Joe passed the blunt to Johnny and went to get the door. Johnny put the blunt out. He was happy because he was expecting some more money coming in from some cat he fronted some dope too about a week ago.

A dark-skinned man named T with a white tee, black jeans and some soldier reeboks walked in the door. He pulled out a wad of money mixed with twenty dollar bills, fives, ones, and more tied up in a rubber band. He handed the money to Johnny.

Johnny handed the money to Marcus. "You look nervous," said Johnny to T. "You alright my guy?" This turned Johnny's smile to a frown. Now, he was worried that one of his employees was going to come up short today. Joe told Johnny earlier that he heard from the grape vine that T was getting high on his own supply. Johnny was anticipating that if he came up short then he would come up with some lame excuse.

"Yeah, I'm straight. Just a little short that's all. The Laws were after me and I had to toss some of the dope. I tried to come back and find it later but it was gone," said T.

Marcus was finally done counting the cash. "It's short alright. 800 dollars short of the minimum amount due," he said.

Johnny's head dropped. He then slowly looked back up and stared T right in his eyes. The look in Johnny's eyes were lifeless like that of a reptile, lacking in any kind of compassion or feeling. It's hard even for a tough mother fucker like me to look him straight in his eyes, it's almost like there was no life in them. A sadistic mother fucker, if he didn't like you, he'd go for lowering your self-esteem. If that didn't work, maybe he'd punish you physically. You'd never know with pretty Johnny. He was unpredictable.

"You know T. I've been hearing a lot of things in these streets. Can you dig what I'm saying? You wanna know what kind of things I've been hearing in the streets?" Johnny paused for a moment then turned around and snapped his fingers. Marcus and Joe ran to both sides of T and grabbed him. As T wrestled to get loose they sat him down in a wooden chair and began to tie him up with duct tape.

"It ain't what you think it is," exclaimed T.

"Don't you wanna know what I heard," asked Johnny.

"Wh' what you hear," asked T.

"Some disappointing ass shit," said Johnny. "See, I heard around town that you been doing some hoe shit. Some hoe shit behind my back," said Johnny.

"Johnny! Nawl mane. Hear me out," interrupted T loudly shaking in the chair like a vibrator.

"Shut the fuck up," exclaimed Johnny. "In fact, duct tape this niggas mouth. This nigga doing hoe shit, and hoes need to shut the fuck up when a real pimp talking mane! Cuz I'm a real pimp T! And you wanna know what pimps do to hoes when they come to a P and their quota is short?????"

"MMMMPH! MMMMPH! MMMMPH," exclaimed T trying to talk with the thickly wrapped duct tape around his mouth all the way behind his neck.

Johnny quieted down and began to look calmer. He walked up to T tied up in the chair, bent over and put his hands on his knees as he bent over towards him and quietly said, "We get the coat hanger and discipline the shit out that bitch. That's what we do T."

Johnny slowly pulled a wired coat hanger out of his red sweatpants which complemented his new Jordans quite well. Joe and Marcus started to giggle. "Or is that just a gorilla pimp," asked Johnny looking at Joe and Marcus as he untangled the wiring of the hanger. "Pimps up hoes down," shouted Johnny swinging the long and unwrapped coat hanger like a whip across T's face. It was brutal. He was cutting his face up like a piece of meat. "Next time have my money right BITCH! HOE! BIH! HOE! BIH," as he swung back and forth across his face like it was a small pinata that just wouldn't bust open. The only difference was he wasn't blind folded. He repeated the process for about ten minutes before he dropped his metal whip on the floor and walked into the other room.

"MMMMMMMMPH," shouted T. "MMMMMMMMMPH! MMMMMMPH!"

"Damn this nigga getting like my alarm clock in the mornin'," said Marcus.

"I know," said Joe. "Shut uuup nigga," Joe exclaimed as he mushed him in the head with his left hand. "How you turn this nigga off again?"

Marcus put some bag that looked like a small potato sack over his head.

Joe raised his pistol with his right hand and pointed it at T's head.

Marcus started backing up.

"Lights out nigga," said Joe as the revolver exploded a slug into T's head staining the potato

sack with a giant blotch of red blood. The chair and T fell over with blood splattered all in the bag with a small hole in the right side. It was just another horrifying day in the hood. Another homicide in the city streets of Memphis, Tennessee.

A couple days later on a Saturday evening, Rodney and I were riding in my 96 Cadillac down Cleveland Ave towards Poplar Ave. We were going to the store to pick up some beer, cigarillos and then decide what we were going to get into for the weekend.

“Let's stop by Johnny's house fool,” said Rodney. “I heard he got some sour diesel and I need some'n to smoke on.”

“Johnny,” I exclaimed. “You can't be forreal. Hell nawl I ain't finna go to Johnny's crib mane. You got me fucked up.”

“Damn fool. Just for a minute. I don't see why both you niggas can't get along. Both of y'all my niggas mane. Y'all gon have to learn how to kick it together. I ain't taking no for an answer,” said Rodney.

Lil Rodney was being irrational to me. He should know as well as I do that Johnny be tripping and it isn't my fault that we never get along when we were around each other. I tried to argue my points to him, but he wouldn't let it go and kept pressing the issue. I felt the .357 magnum rossi in my pocket. The gun was legit and for protection, so I couldn't do dirt with it, but I don't do dirt anyways. I felt like I'd be alright as long as I had the strap in my pocket. Thinking back I don't think Rodney was even aware at the time I had a strap in my pocket.

“Alright,” I said to Rodney just to shut him up as I was starting to get irritated. “But just for a minute. We get the kush and get out. I ain't trying to spend too much time over there.”

“It wouldn't be the first time I had to kick it with that psychopathic weirdo anyways,” I thought. “I'll survive.”

“Cool, we in and out then,” said Rodney.

We pulled up into an apartment complex in Orange Mound and parked on the side of the building. As we walked up the steps to the second floor and turned to the right to walk towards Johnny's apartment, he was already outside sitting on a crate. His goons Marcus and Joe were leaning against the rail. Approaching the three gangsters, Rodney said, “Wassup fool. I ain't seen you in a minute boy. What's happening?”

“Mane, not shit fool,” exclaimed Johnny. He looked at me, straight in the eyes with that death stare. That stare that would intimidate even the hardest thugs or even an MMA fighter. “You didn't look too happy to see me last time I saw you cuz. In fact, you looked like you had some anna wit a nigga or something. You got a problem bruh. You got something you wanna get off your chest,” exclaimed Johnny sitting squarely on the crate without a drop of anxiety or fear in his eyes or facial expressions.

“Naw,” I said. “If I had anna I wouldn't be coming over to your crib like this feel me.”

By now we were all standing together. Joe and Marcus immediately walked off. They had that look on their face that said, I need to get out of here. Like, they were thinking, “I do not want to be around to witness what might happen. I'm going in.” They each walked off to separate apartments and now it was just me, Rodney, and Johnny.

“C'mon,” said Johnny as he opened the door to his apartment. “What y'all niggas been up to? Y'all in for a treat. Ya boy got some Hypnotiq in the fridge.”

I already had a 211 in my hand. I sat it down on the table as I sat in a chair. Rodney sat on the couch. The TV was just a blue screen with an old playstation hooked up to it. Johnny poured some Hypnotiq in my glass. “Just enough to get an insect a buzz,” I thought. I mixed the 211 with the Hypnotiq in the glass so I was straight though.

“Where'd you get them shoes at cuz, I ain't gon lie bruh, them hoes killing,” said Johnny. They

were some red Air Max 90 Flyknit 2.0's and I also had a shirt on that matched the shoes real well. I didn't usually dress that well, but it was the weekend and I wanted to look presentable that day for some reason. Boy I was tired though. I should have took a nap before visiting Johnny at his apartments because I was going to need all the energy I could get.

"Thanks bruh," I said. "I gotem at the mall."

"Lorenzo ain't no laaaaaame," exclaimed Johnny. "He got the FLY knits on like a FLY nigga posed to don't it," he said smiling putting the Hypnotiq back in the fridgerator. "Check these hoes out Lil Rodney." Johnny pulled a pair of stunning Cartier C-Decor frames out of his pocket and put them on.

"Daaaaamn boy," said Rodney. "Them hoes real right?"

"Hell yeah them hoes real. These hoes killing bruh, I'mma have to go to the Spot downtown with these hoes on. Im telling ya boy don't play wit it."

"Let me see them junts," said Rodney.

Johnny handed him the glasses. Rodney examined them looking like some kind of expert jeweler examining a Rolex or diamond ring to inspect how authentic the product is. He looked satisfied and started nodding his head. He gave the glasses back to Johnny. We kicked the shit for about an hour. I started to have to take a shit.

"I gotta use the restroom. Can I use your bath room real quick," I said to Johnny.

"Fasho cuz," said Johnny. "It's right over there."

I took a quick shit and then flushed the toilet, walked back to the living room and sat back down. "My bad bruh," I said, "I had to take a quick shit." I wasn't sure why I was telling them this like it was any of their business but I said it.

Johnny looked at me irritated. "You had to take a shit," he questioned me.

"Uh, yeah," I said nonchalantly.

"You used my toilet paper? I didn't tell you you could use my toilet paper nigga," exclaimed Johnny. "Nigga you tripping. Did I tell you that you could use my toilet paper nigga!"

"Calm down bruh," I said. "I ain't your hoe bruh. Calm down. If its that serious I'll buy you a roll of toilet paper."

"You gon buy me some toilet paper nigga," exclaimed Johnny.

"Bruh calm down," I said. "We gon have to fight if you gon keep talking to me like this. Or I'mma leave. Bruh it ain't that serious. Calm down bruh."

"What," exclaimed Johnny. "You wanna fight me nigga!"

"Huh," I said.

"Do you wanna fight me nigga," he exclaimed once more.

"Yeah," I replied.

"Bring yo bad ass outside then nigga," announced Johnny.

Rodney said, "C'mon fool, both y'all my niggas. Y'all gon have to learn how to get along."

Johnny stormed out of his apartment. As I got up and walked towards the door preparing to get a one on one with this psychotic acting hyperactive thug ass nigga, I was a little anxious, but not nervous. I was a little tired too. Going out like a punk wasn't an option though. I was too old for that shit. Plus, I felt like I had the advantage.

Rodney wrapped his arms around me from behind. "C'mon bruh," he said. "I can't let y'all fight. Both of y'all my niggas."

Not more than one second later Johnny popped back up in the apartment with the door open and pulled a nine-millimeter out and pointed it right at me. "Get yo ass out of my crib," he exclaimed.

I walked out until I reached the steps. As I began walking down the steps, I thought it was over. I did not hear anyone behind me, but as I reached the bottom of the steps, I started to turn around to make sure no one was behind me. Before turning my head where I could see behind me, a loud smack from Johnny's fist slammed into my jaw. Johnny decked me right in the side of my face close to the

chin. I backed up.

We immediately both started swinging, throwing bows, and trading licks with each other. The aching pain in my jaw from the sucker punch was too much to continue on fighting. We started to wrestle. I probably would have got the best of him as a wrestler if he didn't use that same area of my jaw that he sucker punched me in to his advantage. If I started to get the best of him, he just jabbed me in that same spot. I gave up and he kicked me over on the ground. Joe came out around the corner to see what was going on. He had his arms crossed over his chest.

"Get yo ass outta here nigga," shouted Johnny while he backed away. I walked towards my truck. Rodney followed behind me.

As I got close to my lac Johnny began to shout once more, "If you come back, I will kill you nigga! Get yo ass outta here nigga!"

I hopped in my lac. As we drove off I heard him shout one more time. "I will kill you nigga!"

Fuck, I thought. I hated this shit. That's what I get for having shit heads like Rodney in my life. "That nigga coulda killed me," I thought. I wasn't gonna let that shit slide though. "I can't go out like this," I thought. "The streets can't see me go out like this. I have to get revenge," I thought.

We rode back to my pad in North Memphis. Fuck pretty Johnny. The real person I should have been worried about was Rodney. I should have cut him off then and there, but I was young and dumb. Sometimes as a young nigga in the hood we learn some things the hard way. Rodney had the sour diesel. We pulled up in my driveway. I took the walk of shame up into my house and onto the couch with Rodney close behind me. It was party time now. We had liquor, weed, and some more shit. What a way to get started. We got drunk and high and then Rodney left shortly thereafter.

The next day I was sitting on my couch. I had the pistol laid on my glass table as I watched TV and I was smoking on a Newport short.

A group of knocks like the tune of a rap song sounded off on my front door. I knew who that was already. Nick.

I opened the door for him.

"You trying to get a record deal on my door ain't it OG," I asked.

Nick raised his eyebrows. "Ha! Good one," he said. "Hold up. Damn, homie. What happened to the side of yo face. Who you get to scrapping with?"

"Mane, some fuck nigga started shit with me in Orange Mound," I said. "He sucker punched me. Thing is no one saw him sucker punch me but me. Everybody gonna think he just beat me down like he really can go head up with me or something."

"Damn, that's fucked up," he said.

We sat down. I started loading bullets into my 357.

"What you gon do with that," asked Nick.

"Shit, the streets be talking. I'm going back up there to get a rematch soon as my shit heals. Beat that sucker down like he stole something," I said as I was loading the bullets turning the revolver to load all the bullets in it.

"Don't do that mane," said Nick. He then paused for a moment. "You gotta understand. Life is too precious. Even if your broke and struggling, ask yourself. Do you got a roof over your head? Food to eat? Hell, you got so much shit in this life to be thankful for, that ain't even just necessities. Life ain't worth throwing away over some bull shit ass street niggas, or some stupid ego or reputation or image you tryna uphold you feel me. That's why if I get jacked or robbed, I won't do shit. I might be like, ok.. It's your time to shine player. You can have all this shit. I'd get it right back anyways. I tell ya bro. I done caught a murder before bruh. Them cracker police told me I was a hero. For killing another black man that tried to rob me. You don't wanna go down that road jack. If you wanna get revenge. Get

money. That shit hurts the opps player. Success.....really is the best revenge if you ask me. You feel me?"

I thought about what he was saying. It made a lot of sense. "I feel you," I said. I slowly turned the gun upside down and let all the bullets fall out of the revolver.

"That's more like it player," said Nick. "That's what I'm talking about."

Chapter 3:

Pimpin is Big

Business

So, I got my first whore. Her name was Katrina. The name Katrina fit her motherfucking ass because that bitch was going to end up causing a hurricane in my life later, but I digress. The bitch was a money maker though. A beautiful red bone goddess that could cause the downfall of entire nations. I met her at the mall. With the face of Pocahontas and a body of perfection, she had perfect sized breasts and ass for her stature. She was 24 years old.

God took his precious time when he designed this one. The innocent puppy eyes she had could make the most hardened criminal melt in her palms. She was far from innocent though. Far from it. I had to be careful not to blow this bitch. One hoe is too close to none anyway. I was on the campaign for another one while she was at work. At work on the hoe track that is. Tonight, it was Lamar Ave.

I haven't felt this confident in ages. The bitch bought me a new maroon candy paint job, and some 22 inch rims that fit nicely on the pimp mobile 96 Caddy I was riding in. It was like Medusa went in for plastic surgery and came out looking like Beyonce, except it was a car. Of course, my windows weren't tinted. A bitch has to be able to see me riding in this bad boy right? I was riding towards the track on Lamar Ave. This was great. I could work at night, didn't have to deal with an ass hole boss or co-worker, and I could collect my trap in between going out campaigning for new hoes. Life was beautiful. I tell you that nine to five shit just wasn't for me.

I rode down Getwell Road and drove past the corner where ol' pretty boy Johnny's apartments were somewhat close too. I could've sworn I saw Johnny walking alone towards Getwell facing my car and his eyes popped open as he saw me too. Unworried, I kept riding anyways. It wasn't because I was scared to pull over and get a rematch with the clown, but because I was making money now. I had too much to lose to worry about this petty thug shit. Nick was right, some shit you just need to leave alone. Success is really the best revenge you can get against your enemies. What do I look like throwing all this away to impress some nothing ass niggas in the streets that wouldn't even throw me a float if I was drowning in the ocean. Fuck'em. I'm an entrepreneur like Nick and I'm about getting this paper.

I finally made it up to Lamar Ave. I picked up a nice size bankroll from Katrina on the track and let her back out on the track to get more of my money. The wad of money was so big a bulge the size of a boulder filled my pocket. It was time to ride to the stash spot. Lil Rodney was the only cat I knew that wasn't out committing any crimes in one way or another. He lived in a small house in a decent area far away from the ratchet hood shit going on where I lived. Of course, this was Memphis, there's a little bit of hood in most neighborhoods even the rich ones, but I felt like his spot would be safe. He wouldn't have to worry about police searching his house, and as long as he didn't tell anyone that he was using his pad as a stash spot, he wouldn't have to worry about robbers either.

I finally arrived at Rodney's place. We were sitting in the computer room in two chairs facing a table with a laptop on top of it. Rodney twisted around in his chair like Dr. Evil and I handed him the

money. "So how much you got now," he asked.

"It's 400 dollars. At the end of the night you get to keep 5 percent of everything. Just don't tell a soul about this shit mane. Not even your closest homie. Not even your dog. Not even your gold fish. I swear to God if you tell someone about this shit I'm gonna fuck yo ass up. No cap. Play with me if you want to. I will kill....."

"C'mon cuzzzz," exclaimed Rodney. "What you take me for bruh. Boy, you tripping. You know I ain't gonna tell nobody about this shit. Calm down homes. All that shit ain't even necessary. We supposed to be boys, remember."

"Ok mane," I said. "I have faith in you bruh. Don't let me down, but that's not all."

"Ok," said Rodney loudly. "What is it now fool. You acting a little harsh on ya boy. You know me better than that."

"Do not, I repeat, do not spend money like water," I said. "Be careful what you spend your money on. Don't ball out on a new iced out Rolex. Don't buy a car. Don't wear Gucci and Burberry and Versace. Don't buy nothing at all that will attract any unwanted attention to yourself. Is that understood my guy?"

"Gotcha pimp," said Rodney.

"Ok," I said. "Now that we got that out the way. I'mma holler at you later. I'mma go handle some business. Remember everything I told you alright."

"I gotcha fool," said Rodney. "You worry too much. This shit is in the right hands. You don't got nothing to worry about."

"Aite mane," I said. "I'm glad we could work together on this. I'mma holler at you in a minute with more of this money. Answer the door or the phone if I call. I know you sleepy but I know you want this money too."

Meanwhile in Orange Mound on Lamar Ave, a black BMW pulled up with a white man with a white dress shirt and tie on in the driver's seat. He was overweight but he looked like money. Katrina felt excited on the inside. "This could be my big break tonight. He looks like a big spender. Let's see what he talking about," she thought.

She walked up to the side of his car. "Hey big guy how you doing? Looking for something in particular? You look good today," she said.

"I just want someone to spend the rest of the night with," said the man in the BMW. "At least I'm hoping we can arrange something like that. I don't have much to spend, I have a flight to catch soon and I need all the cash I can for the trip."

"Sure baby," that'll be a thousand dollars." She opened the door and hopped in the car. They drove off into the driveway of the nearby hotel.

They entered the hotel room. She sat on the bed and looked at him as he took some cocaine out of his pocket and spread it out in a line across a folded dollar bill. Katrina saw an expensive looking Rolex on his wrist. It looked authentic and it didn't tick. "Bingo," she thought. "Daddy would be so happy to have that bad boy."

"I'mma go freshen up baby," she said. "I'll be right back."

"Ok, let me use the restroom first," said the trick. He picked up his suitcase and took it with him in the restroom. He left the dollar bill with the cocaine in it on the table.

Jackpot. Katrina got up quickly and sprinkled some powder substance on top of the cocaine. She knew there was something about that suitcase for him to take it to the restroom with him. It was going to be an interesting night. She sat back down on the bed.

"Well, I'm glad to have met your acquaintance," said the trick walking out of the restroom. "It gets lonely out here these days for a traveling man like myself. Good to have some company, I mean

some beautiful company like yourself around from time to time.” He sat down and picked up the dollar bill of cocaine. He put his finger on his nostril and snorted the line up in one sniff.

Katrina just sat quietly and watched.

Cough, cough, choked the trick for a second. He got up. “I need a glass of water,” he said. He started walking towards the bed. He stumbled a little bit feeling dizzy. He put one hand on the bed, then he fell over and passed out.

Katrina immediately and as quick as she could took the watch from his wrist. She took his wallet out of his pants, and then remembered the suitcase in the bathroom. She walked to the bathroom and opened the suitcase. JACKPOT! It was full of hundred-dollar bills in rubber bands. She eyed one of them to see if it was real and stuffed it in her bra.

“Daddy's gonna love this,” she thought. She scrambled with the suitcase and the watch and left the hotel room. She went back to the neighboring hotel and opened a door on the first floor. She picked up her cell phone and called me on the phone.

“Wassup bitch,” I said.

“Daddy, you need to come quick,” said Katrina. “I hit it big tonight daddy. I made a jackpot. You gonna be so proud of me daddy you just wait.”

“Alright bitch, just stand by. I'll be there in a few minutes,” I said.

“Ok, daddy,” exclaimed Katrina.

“Aite”

Our phones chirped as we hung up on each other.

“What kind of Jackpot did this bitch get for me,” I thought. “Maybe I can finally get the interior redone on my whip. I'm looking forward to this.”

I had dreams of cleaning up my money, retiring from the game, and living it up with my own businesses, real estate, hell even fucking with the stock market. I wasn't in it for longevity. My real goals were to get in and get out as soon as I could. This was my dream come true. Unfortunately for me, the streets weren't going to want to let me go. I never imagined the things that were about to happen could happen to me. Life is a bitch ain't it. Like I said before. I wanted out the streets. Apparently, the Universe had other plans for me.

Chapter 4:

Law 2: Knowledge of the Enemy's Disposition Can Only Be Attained from Other Men

I opened the hotel room door and walked in. Katrina was ass naked on the bed partially covered by the blanket and sheets. “Maybe soon, I’d be able to have some bucky naked fun with this bitch. Let’s see what she got for me,” I thought.

“Alright bitch,” I said. “What you got for me? You hit a major lick huh.”

“An authentic diamond bezel Presidential Rolex daddy,” she exclaimed. “But, that’s not all, I have a surprise for you. Come get some of this pussy first daddy. I’ve been fiending for some of that good dick daddy. These tricks just can’t please me like a real man can. Come fuck me daddy, please.”

“Bitch, fuck all these surprises and shit,” I said. “What you got for me. Show me. If it’s a pleasant enough surprise we’ll see. One thing about me is I don’t like surprises.”

Katrina pulled a suitcase from under the covers. She began to pop the locks open. I walked towards the suitcase. “Open it daddy,” said Katrina.

I pried the suitcase open. It was full of what looked like newly printed wrinkle free hundred-dollar bills tied up in rubber bands. “Whaaaaaat,” I exclaimed as I scrunched my eyebrows down.

“What’s wrong daddy,” said Katrina. “I thought you’d be happy I hit a lick like this. What’s the problem baby?”

I put the palm of my hand over my head. “God damn,” I said. “This money is most likely marked. Bitch! We’re going to have to find whoever this shit belongs to and give it back. These mother fuckers are gonna be looking for this shit, and trust we don’t wanna be the ones found in possession of this shit.”

“God damn daddy,” really. “Your tripping. This could take care of us for a loooooong time. Since when have you said no to some real money?”

“Bitch,” I interrupted. “I know your not talking to me like that. Might as well stick your head in a pond fulla piranhas. Hell, or jump off a cliff. Calm down bitch. Ain't no money worth our lives. I don't give a fuck if it put's us in the one percent of wealthy individuals in America that control eighty five percent of the wealth god damn it. We giving this shit back. Who you get this shit from?”

“I got it from some fat white man in a BMW,” exclaimed Katrina. “He said he was a traveling man. I was thinking he'd leave town anyway. Somebody I wouldn't have to worry about. I saw he had Kansas Tags on his car too.”

“He ain't a traveling man no more,” I said. “He's definitely going to be looking for this shit. Looking for you definitely. I tell you what. Here's the plan. You work the track tomorrow night in the same spot you were last time. When he pulls up, tell him that your man wanted to give him his money back, with the Rolex. Apologize to the man. Tell him to call me on my cell to reach me. For now, I'm taking this shit to the stash spot. We definitely don't want to have the shit on us when we meet. We're going to meet him in a public place to make the transaction of giving him his money back. That way we'll both be safe. You got me. I know you wish you had a brain like mine bitch, but that's why I'm a pimp, and your a hoe. If you thought like me and I thought like you I suppose I'd be on the track. Slinging dick and booty hole if I was a freak ass nigga like that or some shit.”

“Hahahaaha,” shrieked Katrina. “Your so silly daddy.”

“Just make sure you don't do this shit again,” I said. “Ok, bitch. Follow instructions. I don't wanna have to put my foot in your ass again like last time. This ain't a game. This shit coulda got us killed. Listen to daddy more often. I mean it.”

“Ok, I'm dropping this off at the stash spot,” I said. “Peace bitch.”

Forty five minutes later, I drove to Lil Rodney and dropped everything off at his crib. When he saw what I brought in he went crazy. I had to damn near pistol whip him to make sure he realized it was only there temporary and it wasn't even my money. I had to pay him extra, just to get him to keep it there.

“Is that a diamond pinky ring,” I asked Rodney. “And a Cartier bracelet. Are those Gucci slides in the corner over there?”

“Bruh, calm down mane. I ain't gonna wear this shit till I go to Atlanta. I ain't wearing this shit around the hood. You paranoid bruh. I ain't as dumb as you think I am. Stop being so worried. It's all good.”

Lil Rodney had me worried. He was a smart dumb nigga. He had a childish mentality, but deep under that childish mentality also lied some grown man wisdom. It's kind of hard to explain. “I sure hope I can count on this dumb ass nigga,” I thought. My life depended on it.

“Let me catch you wearing that shit in the hood, around yo mama, around a bitch from Memphis, test me if you want too. I ain't playing bruh. This my life on the line. Do not. I repeat do not, do anything stupid,” I said.

“I gotcha bro,” Rodney said nonchalantly.

“Aight then,” I said. “I'm rolling out. I may call you soon to pick the suit case and the Rolex back up. Have your phone on you at all times. I mean all times. Charged at all times. It's very important man,” I said. “I'm rolling back to the crib for now. You just remember everything I said. It's vitally important.”

“I gotcha bruh. Don't worry about a thing, said Rodney. “You couldn't have chose a better place for your stash spot my boy. It's all gravy train.”

“Aight then peace,” I said as I walked out the door.

I needed some sleep. It was a rough and stressful night. As I lay in the bed in the room close to my living room, I wondered if I could trust Lil Rodney. No, I knew I couldn't trust him, but I wondered if I could at least trust him with some shit like this. I thought about it. This pimp shit ain't easy. Maybe I'm gonna have to hang up my pimp coat and try something else. What it would be I didn't know. I'd talk to Nick about it later. I pulled the covers halfway over my face and turned to the side and went to sleep.

Rodney knocked on Johnny's door anxious to show off his new apparel. Johnny peaked through the eye hole and then opened the door.

"Wassup fool," said Johnny as he walked into the other room.

Rodney sat on the couch. The diamonds sparkled on his pinky ring and bracelet. His Gucci slippers were made for a king.

"Ay, can I charge my phone in here," asked Rodney.

Johnny walked back into the living room with a Newport short in his mouth.

"Damn, fool," said Johnny. You done robbed a money truck didn't it? Where you get the money for that bracelet, and that ring, and those Gucci slip on junts!"

"Killing ain't it fool," exclaimed Rodney.

"You damn skippy cuz," exclaimed Johnny. "Now, I know you ain't cop that shit with money from yo job fixing elevators and shit. What you do cuz? Tell me?"

"It's all on a bitch," exclaimed Lil Rodney. "Pimpin."

"Pimpin," asked Johnny?

Rodney smoothly glanced at Johnny looking like he was feeling himself too much, as he muttered, "Yeah, pimpin."

"Uh oh. Lil Rodney got pimp bones in his body. Well, waddya know! All on a bitch right," asked Johnny extending his arm out so they could do a hand shake.

"Right," said Rodney reaching his hand out to shake hands with Johnny.

Johnny slapped his hand down like he was trying to swat a wasp before somebody gets stung, "WRONG," he exclaimed. "You must think I'm dumb or something cuz. I ain't stupid cuh. Pimpin? Don't make me laugh Lil Bro. In fact you should be on comedy central right now nigga this shit, this shit is funny talkin about you pimpin hoes buddy. You hilarious."

Rodney looked slightly embarrassed. He quickly changed his story.

"Yeah, I was just fucking witcha mane. Somebody using my crib as a stash spot that's all. You need to get in on that too bro. Let me watch yo shit too. Ain't gotta worry about no police coming through, no robbers, or me dipping in the stash. Waddya say bro?"

"Ummmm, I'm cool for now. I already got a few stash spots," said Johnny calmly.

Johnny began to stroke his chin. "Lorenzo," he thought. "Lorenzo the one using Rodney's crib to stash his money. I saw him riding clean the other day too. This nigga done fucked around andmade me some money. That's what this is, plotted Johnny as he was fondling his chin in a daze.

Rodney snapped his fingers. "Snap out of it fool," exclaimed Rodney.

Johnny smiled. "You got some loud fool," asked Johnny.

Rodney pulled a blunt out of his pocket.

"I shall needed som'n to smoke on mane, I ain't smoked in two days," said Johnny.

"Here light this shit," said Rodney handing the blunt to Johnny.

Johnny pulled his bic out and put the blunt to the flame. A look of devious intent filled his facial expressions as he blew the smoke out of his mouth. Rodney fucked up that day.

Chapter 5:

Law 3: Do not Swallow Bait Offered by the Enemy

Mike was the head of the Memphis Crime Family in Memphis, TN. They were brutal, ruthless, and even disgusting at times when they wanted to instill fear in people or uphold their reputation. If they couldn't get to you, they'd get your family. They'd never leave witnesses. Police weren't even off limits when it came to who they would murder, and they had police on their payroll as well.

Mike wasn't a thug at all. He sounded more like Carlton on the Fresh Prince of Belair. Well, not exactly, but kind of. He prided himself in his suit collections and carried his self almost like an African American aristocrat. Victorian style paintings decorated his dark forest green walls. I suppose he liked green because it represented money. He was getting ready for a meeting with one of his favorite clients. It was the man that Katrina stole the money from. His name was Jack.

Mike picked up the Montblanc pen off his desk as he spun back and forth over the marble floors. He sat back in his chair looking at the gold and black luxury pen in his hand until he was awakened from the daydreaming by a knock at his door. He set the pen down.

"Come in," he shouted.

The doors that swung open looked like something out of a court room. In walked Jack, Katrina's victim from the track, with two tall black men of about six feet four or more in height on both sides of him. Jack sat down in the chair sweating profusely. He let out a fake grin on his face and stuck out his hand to shake hands with Mike.

"Hey, how are ya Mike," said Jack.

"I'm doing great Jack. Glad to see you again. Long time no see," said Mike.

"Well, about the money, I ran into a little problem," said Jack.

"A little problem," asked Mike inquisitively.

Jack raised both of his index fingers while saying, "Yes, a little problem."

Mike turned in his chair slightly to the right.

"What kind of problem is that Jack," asked Mike.

“Well,” said Jack. “Some black bitch from the ghetto took the money from me, but I can get it back I promise. It's not as big a deal as it looks Mike. I just need to go back to where she left me at, find her again, she's there all the time.....”

“Jaaaaaack,” said Mike. “Calm down. What did you say, black bitch from the ghetto.”

Mike let out a slight laugh.

The bodyguards started to laugh a little too.

“Let me tell you something about the brothers. The brothers like me Jack. Well, at least the honorable ones such as myself. We respect our black queens. Isn't that right Winston,” asked Mike to the bodyguard on the right.

“That's right boss,” said Winston. “We love our black women. Gotta show respect.”

“I am so sorry,” said Jack. “I didn't mean it that way. Really though, she stole it all. Even my Rolex. I can get it back I promise. Just let me go back up there.....”

“What did you mean by it then Jack,” asked Mike with a serious look on his face.

“I, I, I, I....said Jack trembling.

“Ah, I'm just pulling your leg Jack,” said Mike.

The security guards started laughing in unison.

“I like you. We've been doing business for years and I've never had any problems out of you,” said Mike. “How long did it take for God to make the world Winston?”

Mike smiled and looked at Jack. “Winston knows everything,” said Mike.

“Seven days boss,” said the NBA sized security guard.

“Seven days. If God can make the world in seven days, I'm sure you can get my money in that length of time right Jack,” asked Mike.

“Th, thank you,” said Jack with a look of relief. “You won't be disappointed.”

“Don't disappoint me Jack. I like you a lot,” said Mike.

“Let's go,” said Winston as they all walked out of the luxurious office leaving Mike behind as they closed the enormous wooden doors behind them.

Katrina was to Lamar in normal clothes this time, except this time instead of catching tricks, she was looking for the BMW with Jack in it. She had been looking up and down the street for a little over an hour and she didn't see anything. She started to turn around to sit at the bus bench. She was greeted with a 44-magnum pressed against the side of her face. CLICK!

Jack put the gun down quickly.

“Don't move,” he said. He patted her down. He took a knife out of her pocket, as well as a small 22 pistol.

“You move your dead bitch,” said Jack. A limousine pulled up right in front of them and the back door opened.

“Hop in,” said Jack. “Were about to go on a trip to see the boss. Let me tell you, making the boss upset is the last thing you wanna do, alright sweetie.”

They hopped in the back seat of the limousine and skirted off.

As Rodney sat in his computer room, he looked like he was digging for buried treasure as he was fingering the insides of his giant nostril. He wiped his his finger on his pants. Suddenly, his phone began to vibrate and ring.

“What up,” said Rodney.

“Wassup fool,” exclaimed Johnny. “What you got going tonight bruh.”

“Mane not shit,” said Rodney. “Why wassup bro. What you getting into?”

“Mane, you know Slime Boss. My partner that be rapping. He preforming at the club tonight out in east Memphis cuz. We finna get on stage with em. You wanna roll out with us fool,” asked Johnny.

“Hell yeah,” said Rodney. “What time?”

“10 pm,” said Johnny. “I’ll pick you up in the suburban thang. We riding with my brother.”

“Aight, say no mo, exclaimed Rodney. They hung up the phone.

Johnny looked at Joe and then he looked at Marcus rubbing the palms of his hands together.

“Looks like we bout to hit a lick. Y’all boys down for this shit right,” he asked.

“Fasho,” said Joe.

“Fasho,” said Marcus.

Chapter 6:

A.B.P. Always Be Playing

My phone started vibrating with a number I couldn't recognize on the caller id. I began to feel anxious and a little nervous. "He hel hello," I said.

"Well, well, well," said Mike. "If it isn't Mr. Rich man."

"Hey, uh," I said. "Let me explain bro. This was a big mistake. I want to give you your money back. It's in a safe place. We can meet up in a public place and I'll drop off the money. Just give me my gal back mane. She didn't know no better, I taught her better than this."

"No, hey how are you doing," asked Mike. "How rude. Let me tell you something. We meet where I say meet at. In fact, meet me there right now. I want to see you at the club Pure Passion in 30 minutes. If your late, well, you can kiss your whore goodbye. Is that understood?"

"Yeah, I gotcha," I said.

"Don't disappoint me," said Mike. "You get the cops involved, she's dead. You try anything funny, she won't be so, gorgeous and pretty anymore," he said mockingly stroking her weave like it was a kitten.

I hung up my phone. "What have I gotten myself into," I thought. "Rodney better have that motherfucking money in his house ready for me. If he doesn't, I might end up murking his motherfucking ass."

As Johnny and Rodney pulled out of Rodney's driveway, Joe and Marcus were in a black SUV down the street waiting for them to pull off. As soon as they pulled out of the driveway and sped off, they both got out of the SUV with two giant duffle bags each. They walked right into his backyard. They went up to the window on the side of his back door.

"Hold up," said Marcus. "Check the door first." The door was locked.

Joe went up to the window and was about to crack it making as little noise as possible.

"Hold up," said Marcus grabbing the crowbar out of his hand. "See if the window is open first dumb ass," he said tapping Joe on the head with the crowbar. It slid open easily as pie. Marcus was small so he climbed through the window and opened the back door. Joe walked in. Joe turned on a flashlight.

Joe opened the refrigerator.

"You hungry or something," asked Marcus.

"Mane, in the movies they always keep the cash in the freezer," said Joe. "You tripping bruh."

"Mane, look in that niggaz closet," exclaimed Marcus as they walked from the kitchen to Rodney's room.

They opened his closet door. Joe had a popsicle in his hand.

“Bingo,” exclaimed Joe.

“Jackpot,” said Marcus.

They started filling up the duffle bags as quickly as possible. Joe threw the half eaten popsicle behind him.

“This is waaaaaaaaaaaaaay more than we thought these folks had. God damn what they do rob a bank,” asked Marcus.

“Yeah, Johnny gon be real happy about this,” said Joe.

Joe and Marcus sped off in the black SUV. It was a clean getaway. Boy, Rodney and I were in for a surprise that night.

The club was packed. Crunk jams out of the dirty south were blasting through the speakers at the club that night as the DJ spun record after record for the crowd. People were throwing gang signs, dancing all around the stage. Slime boss was performing next after this last song played. They were about fifteen deep backstage and Rodney was feeling as tipsy and hyper as a five year old that ate too much candy before dinner.

“C'mon fool we next up,” said Johnny to Rodney as they all started walking on the stage.

Slime Boss tapped the microphone to make sure it was on and working properly. “Check one two,” he said. “Y'all ready for this shit cuh,” shouted Slime Boss. “Y'all ready for this get money shit! This trap shit!”

The crowd went crazy. Rodney accidentally left his cell phone to charge backstage.

I was calling him repeatedly as I was riding towards Pure Passion.

“Fuck,” I exclaimed. “Pick up the goddamn phone you goddamn East Memphis midget from the hood!”

Two minutes passed. They all walked off the stage. Rodney suddenly realized he left his cell phone on the charger. “Oh, shit he thought. Let me check my caller id real quick.”

He picked up his phone. It had my number on caller id for about 20 times. He finally picked up the phone and called me back.

“Yo cuz,” exclaimed Rodney. “My bad fool, I was in the middle of something and I didn't know that my ringer was off,” lied Rodney.

“Yeah, yeah fuck all that,” I shouted. “Meet me at the Pure Passion right now. It's highly important. I mean extremely important. Please. Can you do that for me now?”

“Damn fool,” what you get yourself into,” asked Rodney.

“Don't worry about that,” I said. “Just get that suit case full of money and wait in the parking lot in your car until I call you again. It's real important. I promise you won't regret it. You'll get a big bonus don't worry about it, but I need you on this one. I can't take no for an answer.”

“Aight, bruh,” said Rodney. “I'm headed to the house now.”

“Yo, Johnny,” exclaimed Rodney. “I'mma need to go back to the crib bruh. Please. It's a family emergency.”

“Family emergency,” asked Johnny. Johnny got a notification beep on his phone. It was a text from Joe. It read BINGO. Johnny let out a gigantic smile. “Aight cuz, let's roll.”

“Thanks,” said Rodney.

I was sitting at a table as far away from the strippers as I could. Mike slowly walked up to my table with his two goons behind him. He walked up sat down.

"Well," he said. "If it isn't Bill Gates."

"Sir," I said. "I just wanted to apologize first of all. I got all your money. Every last bit of it. My partner is on the way with it now."

"That's good Bill. Real good," said Mike. "How about a drink while we wait. What would you like? What's your choice of poison?"

"I'm cool," I said.

My phone started vibrating in my pocket. It was Rodney's number.

"You don't mind if I get this do you? I think it's the guy with the money," I said.

"Handle your business," said Mike.

"Hello," I said.

"Bruh, where you at," said Rodney.

"Mane, you know I'm at the pure passion," I said.

"We got a serious issue here cuz," said Rodney. "Promise me you'll stay calm."

I looked to my left and sighed.

"What is it," I asked.

"Bruh, somebody broke in my crib and stole all our shit," exclaimed Rodney. "It's gone bruh. I didn't tell nobody about the stash. I don't know what happened. That shit disappeared."

I tried to keep my cool. I hung up the phone in Rodney's face and turned the phone off. I had to think quickly. I remember what Nick told me when he was lacing me to the pimpin. A.B.P. An acronym which meant always be playing.

"Look Mike," I said. "I'm an honest guy. Truth is, my stash spot just got robbed. The person I put in charge of it has a big mouth. I'll tell you what. Let me make this up to you. I'll get all the money you lost, triple that. You just let me know who, when, and where to rob. I'll be like one of your employees. That's until you get triple your money back. I got balls of steel. I'll rob anybody. You just let me know the location, but let me kill this young nigga first, before he ends up ratting me out to the feds or some shit. He gotta weak heart. I can't let him live. He's got too much information."

"I tell you what," said Mike. "Maybe, just maybe, you are telling the truth. I believe you. In fact I kinda like you. You got balls. You bring that young niggas head to me on a platter and I'll believe you. If you don't then you and your whore dies. How does that sound.....player. Oh, and you figure out who to rob. I'm sure you can think of something. You're a smart man. I like the way you think by the way. Although your a dumb son of a bitch letting that little maggot watch your stash."

"Yeah I was," I thought. He was the safest option I had though. I'm not one of those type of cats that know everybody all over town. This Rodney motherfucker is gonna die. I know he lied about not telling anybody about the stash. I'm not dumb.

"Thank you," I said. "No problem. I'll kill him and bring him to you. You can depend on me. I promise. I need one thing though. To pull this shit off. I'mma need my gal back."

"Hmmmm," said Mike. "Ok, but remember. You try to leave town, I won't just kill you. Your families dead too. Anyone, in fact anything you love, say good bye. Understood."

"Yeah," I said

This was going to be my first murder, and not the last one either. I would have to figure out who Rodney told my business to first. Look at the shit I was in. That motherfucker Rodney was gonna pay. I never liked him though anyways. I might end up sending his fat ass momma pictures of his dead body. She was an arrogant bitch too. Fuck it. I never wanted to be a killer. We don't always get to pick and choose what we become in life. All I really wanted was to make it out the streets, and get rich at the same time. It's funny how life works sometimes.

I realized that I wouldn't be able to pull this shit off by myself though. A crew is what I really needed. Not for Rodney, but for everything. Patrick was a gangsta ass nigga I knew growing up. He owed me a few favors too. Big favors. I'mma call that nigga as soon as I can. He might be down to ride. I'd just need to break him off some cheese or drugs for helping me do the jobs.

Chapter 7:

Law 4: The Battle is Won In the Mind First

I was riding towards where Mike told me to meet him. It was an abandoned building in South Memphis. Wailing like a baby that just came out of his mother's womb in the hospital, Rodney was tied up in my trunk gasping for air while sobbing profusely. The bag over his face let in just enough air to keep him breathing enough so he wouldn't suffocate to death. His hands and feet were tied behind his back. As I pulled behind the building, Mike and his two goons were already there waiting for me.

"What's up Lorenzo," said Mike standing in front of his Rolls Royce with his two oversized security guards as I exited my Lac. "What you got for me?"

I opened the trunk. Rodney was quiet suddenly. I cut a piece of rope from his feet so we wouldn't have to carry him, and he could walk. The security guards picked him up and took him out of the trunk. We all walked together inside the building. The back door was already unlocked. The security guards sat Rodney down in a chair. Mike walked up to the front of Rodney. He took the bag off of his face.

Rodney was sniffing like he had the flu. You could tell tears had been running down his cheeks. He looked like a hot mess.

"Hello friend," said Mike. Mike was talking to him like he was a child. That's what he looked like to him anyways. He didn't see him as a grown man. "My name is Michael. Your friend here said you lost something that is..... very important to me. Am I right?"

Rodney nodded, looking downward at the same time.

"Look up at me Rodney," said Mike. Rodney obeyed and looked up.

"If you tell me who you told, about his.....stash spot, I might let you live," said Mike, "If not. Well....."

I cocked my pistol biting my bottom lip. I started to get angry.

"Well, your friend doesn't look to happy now does he Rodney," asked Mike.

"It was, it was, it was Johnny," said Rodney.

"Johnny," I exclaimed. "Let me kill this nigga right now. You hoe ass nigga!!!!!"

"Calm down," said Mike. "Johnny?" He started to laugh to himself. "Ok. Johnny."

Mike started to walk away. Winston the know-it-all security guard for Mike put the bag over Rodney's head again. The trio began to walk away leaving both Rodney and I behind.

"He's all yours Lorenzo," yelled Mike looking back before leaving the abandoned building.

“Naw, I want you to see this shit,” I said to Rodney taking the bag off his head.

I aimed the toaster as I pointed the barrel of the gun between Rodney's eyes. Shots rang as the chair fell over and blood splattered all over the floor.

“See you at the funeral motherfucker,” I said walking off. This one was going to be a closed casket.

Patrick was in his room snorting blow and smoking weed. The construction job he worked was just barely enough to get by and support his only son. He needed to find a way to get some security. No, not security to watch his back. Financial security. He also owed me a few favors. Big favors. I actually saved his life one day. We hadn't seen each other in years, but I thought it was about time I gave him a call. He needed me and I needed him.

Patrick picked up the phone. “Wassup cuz,” he said. “Damn u still alive cuz. I ain't seen you in ages. How you gon just pop up and call a nigga like that.”

“Well, I was just thinking about ya, and decided to hit you up and see what you was getting into that's all.” I said.

“Aight,” said Patrick.

“I ain't gon lie I do got an angle,” I said.

“I knew it,” said Patrick. “What you need mane. I got a kid now, I can't be on no bogus shit, as long as it ain't nothing crazy.”

“A lick,” I said. “A big lick. A giant lick. Something that'll take care of you for a long time. I mean it.”

“Is that right,” asked Patrick. “Lay it out for me.”

“Ok,” I said. “It's like this. First, we gotta find out where Johnny hides his shit. We gon have to be smooth and conniving like. We gon have to put our heads together on this one. Meet me at my crib. We gon talk about this.”

Chapter 8:

Law 5: Know Thyself As Well as Thy Enemy

Twelve-year-old Kevin was sitting on his porch on Faxon Street with a box of candy bars on his lap. Faxon Street was in North Memphis, but it was kind of Mid-Townish at the same time. My house was a few streets up north bound closer to Jackson Ave. in Klondike. He was raising money for his Church baseball team.

“Great, another potential customer,” he thought. He saw an older white Toyota slowly riding down the street. He hopped off the porch and walked towards the car.

Patrick and I were riding down Faxon in the car talking about the robberies we recently committed. We just robbed three liquor stores and a dope spot in one day. I was in the passenger's seat and Patrick was driving.

“I’ll rob anything right now,” I said. “The preacher, my best friends Grandmother, Malcom X, the President, I just don’t give a fuck right now.”

I heard a tap on the passenger’s side window. Patrick pressed the automatic window control to roll the window down.

“Hey fellaz,” said young Kevin with an innocent look in his eyes likened to a kitten. “I’m raising money for my church baseball team. I have any kind of candy bar you could possibly want. Snickers, Reeses, what would you like? I would appreciate y’all supporting my team.”

I looked over to the left at Patrick looking like I was saying without words, should I rob this young nigga. I placed my hand on the nine-millimeter in my lap. Just as I was about to raise the pistol and point it out the window.....

“Ay,GET, THE FUCK, OUTTA HERE YOUNG NIGGA,” exclaimed Patrick.

“Huh,” said Kevin.

Patrick started saying it more slowly this time, “Geeet the fuuuuuuuck, outta here young nigga. Scram!”

“Kevin turned around and walked back towards his porch.

I sat my gun, which barely left my lap, back onto my lap.

Patrick drove off. Who was going to be our next victim? We needed a big hit. We weren't anywhere near getting all we needed. Mike gave me three weeks to get all the money. Talking about God rose from the dead in three days, so we should be able to get it in three weeks and he was being generous. It was a big risk because it was triple what Katrina stole originally.

“You know what we need? A big lick,” said Patrick. “Let's go to a prayer meeting or something and ask Jesus to bless us.”

“A prayer meeting,” I said. “The fuck is wrong with you nigga? You must really wanna waste our time and get me killed”

“Yeah,” said Patrick. “Better us than that crooked ass preacher robbing old women for they purses right,” said Patrick. “Shiiiiit I know they probably got yo ass for a grip back in the day. Maybe it's time for payback. Don't you think.”

“Fuck you,” I said.

It was Sunday morning. Patrick and I were in the back of the small church trying to figure out how the money gets transferred from the old lady's purse to the collection plate, to the bucket, to where?

The humble saints that collected the tithes in the small buckets dumped all the money in a bigger bucket sitting next to the pulpit where the preacher was standing. One of the humble saints picked up the big bucket as he walked towards the hallway with a “Restrooms This Way” sign hanging above the door.

Patrick jabbed me with his elbow. “Look,” he said pointing at the man leaving the room with the big bucket of cash.

I immediately got up and walked as fast as possible towards the hallway that the man with the big bucket of cash walked through. As I opened the doors, I saw him enter a room, then close the door behind him.

I stormed to the door he entered and knocked loudly. He came to the door.

“Heeeey, buddy, praise Jesus right,” I said,

“Amen,” he replied with a smile on his face.

I peeked behind him, and I saw the bucket sitting next to a giant safe. “A.B.P.” I thought.

“Hey buddy,” I said. “I was thinking of joining the choir. Heck, maybe even being an assistant preacher. I just turned my life back to Christ and I definitely need some support and new friends to help me stay on the path. Could you tell me how I could get in touch with the preacher? In fact I'll sing a little tune for ya. I'm really good. HAAAAAAA LLLAAAAAY LU!”

“Ok, Ok, Ok, man,” said the man. “The preacher doesn't talk to the members of the congregation, but you can reach his supervisor.”

“What are the church hours,” I said.

“8am to 10 pm Monday through Friday,” said the man.

“When is choir practice,” I said.

“Saturday evening at 9pm,” the man said.

“Is pastor Charles gonna be at the practice,” I said.

The man let out a sigh. “Yes. But he'll be in a meeting.”

“THANKS,” I exclaimed. “Have a good one, praise Jesus.”

I walked back to my seat next to Patrick.

“Let's go,” I said.

We both got up and left the service. We hopped in the white Toyota and balled off.

“What we gon do,” said Patrick.

“I got a plan,” I said. “Let's pick up Katrina. She gon be the star of my plan.”

“Fasho,” said Patrick.

Chapter 9

Law 6: Attack Him Where He Is Unprepared, Appear Where You Are Not Expected

I woke up and heard something in the house. When I cut on the lamp that was sitting on the small chest of drawers next to my bed, I grabbed the yawk next to the lamp and looked over at Katrina. She was asleep like a baby. I nudged her to wake her up.

“Hide in the closet bitch,” I said. I grabbed a .357 under the pillow and handed it to her. She went in the closet and closed the door.

I quietly tip toed to the door of my bedroom like a ninja. The sawed-off shotgun was standing up against the wall next to the door. I inched the door open and peaked through the small opening. When the coast was clear, I walked in the living room towards the kitchen. As I ducked behind the couch, I heard a noise in the kitchen. The door in the kitchen closed. When I walked in the kitchen and opened the back door to the backyard with the yawk pointed erect in front of me, I heard a click. The barrel of a gun was pointed to the back of my head.

“Drop the gun,” said the man with a voice that almost sounded chopped and screwed. I dropped the yawk and watched it bounce down the steps into my backyard. I slowly turned around and immediately tried to snatch the pistol from his hands. It went off and a bullet hit the wall. The masked trespasser fell to the ground. Now the pistol was in my hands.

“Who sent you,” I asked. “Who sent you?” I shot the pistol putting a messy hole in his forehead and turned around in case someone else was behind me.

I walked through the darkness in my backyard. A bullet struck me in the chest. As I fell to the ground, I put my hand over my wound. My hand was covered in blood. A trespasser in all black walked

up with a ski mask on and pulled his mask off. It was Johnny.

“Wassup Lorenzo,” he said. “You know were really just the same. You can't even trust yo own mama can you nigga. I'm like you.” He paused for a moment. He pulled out a Newport and stuck it in his mouth. “Who can you trust? Who can I trust? Is there anybody out here? Ya momma, ya sister, ya cousin? Can we even trust God nigga? You can trust me nigga. I'm like you. Trust. Trust this nigga.....” He pointed the pistol towards my head.

My alarm immediately sounded off with blasting beeps to awaken me from my slumber. It was time to get ready for Lil Rodney's funeral. Katrina woke up and turned to the side and covered her ears with her pillow. The sweat poured down my face as I was wide awake from the traumatizing nightmare. I got up, walked to the closet and took the new suit out and laid in on the bed. I wasn't looking forward to Rodney's funeral, but I had to go. If I didn't show up then people might suspect I killed him. Who knows? Time for breakfast.

It was a closed casket. Rodney was loved by his whole family. They all pretty much got along pretty well. People were sobbing everywhere. I put my hand on his mother's shoulder. “I'm so, sorry Ms. Carol. I know were all going to miss him dearly,” I said.

“She took a deep breath from sobbing and wailing so hard. “It's ok Lorenzo. Y'all were best friends. Give me a hug baby.” I held her in my arms.

“Remember, if you need anything, I'm there,” I said to Ms. Carol.

“Thanks baby. I love you Lorenzo,” said Ms. Carol.

“I love you too Ms. Carol,” I said.

A Bentley pulled up by the funeral proceeding. The drivers door opened.

“Who the hell is that,” I thought.

Pretty Johnny got out of the drivers seat wearing a suit that looked more fit for a players ball than a funeral. He walked straight up to Ms. Carol.

“Ms. Carol,” he said looking like he was about to cry. He knew how to pretend like he wanted to cry. I knew if he started crying, they wouldn't be genuine tears.

“Fake ass nigga,” I thought.

“If you need anything, I mean anything, I promise, you can depend on me. Even if you just want somebody to talk too,” said Johnny.

“Thanks so much Johnny,” exclaimed Ms. Carol. “You all mean so much to me. You both were good friends of Rodney. Let's all take a picture together.”

Johnny glanced at me with a crooked smile and devious eyes as we both got on each side of Ms. Carol for the picture. I rolled my eyes.

“Y'all ready,” asked the camera man. “Ready,” said Ms. Carol. The camera flashed while

Johnny threw up a gang sign, Ms. Carol let out a smile, I just stood there looking normal.

I knew why Johnny had that Bentley. Me. Me and Mike. Our money. “I had to do something about this,” I thought. I gotta get our shit back. That and just a few more robberies and Mike would be paid off. “I'm going to get Johnny the same way I got Lil Rodney I thought.” I have to. This shit coulda ended my life. It already blocked me from making it out the hood. Fuck this nigga. This nigga gotta pay.

Chapter 10:

Law 7: Hold Out Baits to Entice the Enemy, Feign Disorder, and Crush Him

Choir rehearsal was over at 10pm. Katrina talked to Pastor Charles's supervisor. She needed prayer and guidance about her cheating abusive husband. She told the supervisor she was on the border of being suicidal. Pastor Charles didn't usually see anyone without appointment, but he made an exception for my beautiful red bone goddess. Patrick and I waited in the back parking lot for Katrina to open the back doors for us. Patrick knew how to pick locks so that was how we were going to get in the room and steal the safe. We had a dolly to carry the large safe with us in the back seat of Patrick's car.

The church choir burst the back doors open as they all went to their separate cars to go home. Katrina finally got a chance to talk to the preacher.

"Hello Pastor Charles," she said. "You look handsome in that suit. Oh, and I love that sexy tie too," she said as she began rubbing the tie on his fat chest.

"Is that silk," asked Katrina."

The pastor knew something about this. He was about to get lucky he thought.

"Let me go and tell the supervisor that she can go home sweetie, I'll be right back," said Pastor Charles to Katrina, feeling as aroused as a ten-year-old male watching internet porn for the first time.

Pastor Charles sent his supervisor home then walked back to Katrina. "Let's step into my office," said Pastor Charles. "What exactly did you wanna talk about? So, you have a cheating husband, right?

Next thing you know they were talking each other's clothes off in the Pastor's office. Katrina almost took her shirt off then she put it back on.

"I have to use the restroom real quick baby," said Katrina. "Don't you go anywhere, ok."

"I'll be right here, sweet woman," said Pastor Charles. "Just don't keep me waiting too long sexy."

Katrina ran up to the back door of the church and opened the doors. She looked around to make sure the coast was clear. She looked at us both sitting in our car and signaled for us to come.

Patrick and I grabbed our ski masks and gloves. We got the dolly out of the back seat and speed walked to the back entrance. We had to go through the hallway to the main worship room and go from the left side of the building to the right side of the building, and then back.

"Stall that nigga for a long time," I said to Katrina. "I'm not sure how long this will take."

"Ok", she said.

The three of us were walking through the hallway. Little did we know that a janitor was waiting for us in the worship room. Good thing we had our straps on us. Katrina walked back in the Pastor's office.

We were masked up and opened the doors to the worship room. A janitor was dusting shit off on the stage.

"Shit," I said.

Patrick pulled his gun out and ran up to the janitor.

"You make a noise I'll kill you," he said. "Watch this nigga while I go pick the lock," said Patrick looking straight at me. "When I get back we need to figure out what were gonna do with this nigga. We can't let this nigga call the cops on us until we gone and vamped from the scene."

Seven minutes later, Patrick came through the doors with a dolly and a gigantic safe attached to it.

The janitor was an OG. He wasn't part of the church crowd. He really just wanted a piece of the action.

"I tell you boys what," said the old Janitor. "I did big time in the feds robbing banks back in the day. I don't wanna get you boys in trouble. I do, however, would like a piece of the action. How's that sound brother mane," he asked looking at me. "How's that sound brother," he asked looking at Patrick. That preacher back there is a big crook any goddamn way. Better us than them niggas in the pews giving all they money away to that there charlatan."

"Where do y'all keep the duct tape," Patrick asked the old Janitor.

"Over in that first closet in the hallway over there," said the old janitor.

Next thing you know the old Janitor was tied up with duct tape and we put him in the closet and closed the door. We scurried out of the building and loaded all the items in our car. The safe was in the trunk. The dolly in the back seat. I then immediately called Katrina on the phone. I took my mask off and waited in the passenger's seat. Patrick followed suit.

Little did we know that an overweight old lady with a large church hat on was watching us the whole time from her car in an area of the lot we were blind to. "Uh, huh," she said to herself. "Scoundrel ass niggas." She picked up her phone and dialed 911. "Yes, I would like to report a robbery. Yes, it's at the Holy Temple of God close to Walker Ave. Yes, I'll write the tag numbers when they pull off. It's a white Toyota. Tell, the nice policemen that we thank them for their service, and one more thing..... show these niggas no mercy, she said in a low raspy voice. Yes. Thank you." She hung up the phone.

The pastor was fully naked on all fours on the carpet of his office. "Now, bark like a dog," commanded Katrina."

"WOOF! WOOF," howled Pastor Charles. "Can I, Can I eat the pussy now," said the Pastor.

Katrina's phone rang.

"Hold up," she said "It's my son." said Katrina. "Yes, yes. An emergency. Ok. I'll be right there." She hung up the phone.

"Can you wait here for an hour," said Katrina.

“Woof woof,” howled pastor Charles.

“No, you can talk normal now,” said Katrina.

“Uh, sure why is that,” said the Pastor.

“My son got in some trouble at home,” said Katrina. “I promise I’ll be back in an hour.”

“Sigh, ok,” said pastor Charles.

The back doors of the church swung open. Katrina scurried to the car and hopped in the back seat. We sped off. It was a clean get away, or so we thought.

Chapter 11:

Law 8: If He is Choleric in Temper, Irritate Him, Pretend to be Weak, That He May Grow Arrogant

We were at the local kick it spot. A spot me, Rodney, and even Johnny from time to time used to get drunk and high at and play pool. It was the spot a lot of gangsters, pimps, and hustlers would come to in order to buy drugs, or just play pool and hang out. Some people just came looking for trouble. It was called the Cue Ball. It was in an east Memphis in a plaza with a donut shop right next to it and a Kroger right across the street. Shoot outs happened occasionally and I was surprised that the hole in the wall bar was still open.

I bent over and broke the upside-down pyramid of pool balls with the cue ball and straightened back up.

“So, how we gon get your shit back from Johnny,” said Patrick holding his pool stick.

“We gonna really have to put our heads together on this one,” I said. “Well, for one thing, if we just go and kill the nigga, we ain't gonna be able to find our money. We need to find a way to isolate one of these mother fuckers. We can't just go in his hood in the daytime and kidnap one of these jokers. We might not make it back out. We need to make them come to us.”

“I know what we can do,” said Patrick. “We can trash that niggas new Bentley. He gon be mad as a motherfucker. You know that nigga ain't got no self-control. He'll try to trap yo ass somehow. We'll have to be prepared for what comes next. Luckily, he don't know where you live. He probably gon try to find yo ass over here. Take care of you in this here pool hall. He knows you used to be up here all the time with Rodney.”

“Brilliant,” I said. “Then if we get the information we need, we should have all of Mike's

money, plus enough to let us retire in the Bahamas for a few years if we wanted too.”

“This what I've been waiting on cuz,” exclaimed Patrick. “But you better be deep whenever you up in this pool junt mane. We can't be sitting ducks in this motherfucker.”

“We need more men definitely,” I said. “There's no telling who's gon be at his stash spot. Or even stash spots. You got a lot of niggaz on your team. How about we all roll up here every other day and kick it. That way Johnny will think twice about trying anything too bold or too gangsta while we in here deep like the Navy.”

“I gotcha cuz,” said Patrick.

“Well, we got the plan. Tommorow night, after dark. That bentley is toast,” I said.

Johnny was sitting in his apartment with Joe and Marcus. They were sipping sizzurp and smoking weed.

“We got all that niggas hoe money fool. All that niggas money, and he ain't do shit about it. That niggas a hoe bruh. I knew that nigga had hoe in his blood mane,” exclaimed Johnny taking a sip from a baby bottle.

“I still think that nigga coulda won the fight,” said Joe, “if you ain't hit that mane when he was walking down the steps.”

“The fuck you say Joe,” exclaimed Johnny.

“You heard me nigga,” said Joe.

There was a short silence in the room. You could hear a pin drop. Johnny got up and pulled his pistol and pressed it against Joe's nose.

“Say that shit one more time bruh,” exclaimed Johnny. “You must think this a game nigga! I dare yo mother fucking ass to say that shit one more time bruh! I ain't your play toy bitch! Play with me if you want too!”

Joe put his hands up. “Sorry mane. Put the gun down bro. I'm sorry,” said Joe.

Johnny put the gun down. “Forreal bruh,” he said. “We ain't in High School no mo mane. I ain't with playing these hoe games. Pass the blunt cuz,” said Johnny to Marcus.

Marcus started shaking his head, then he passed the blunt to Johnny. Joe and Marcus started getting tired of getting treated like punks all the time by Johnny. Something had to give. Johnny was out of control. Something had to happen.

Chapter 12:

Law 9: The General Unable To Control His Anger Will Launch His Men to the Assault Like Swarming Ants

It was around 3 am in Johnny's hood. His Bentley was parked in the parking lot behind Johnny's apartment. We rode up in Patrick's white Toyota and parked in the middle of the lot. Both of us masked up, I had a can of gasoline in my hand. Patrick had a big butcher knife in one hand. He walked up to the car and slashed the tires. I poured gasoline all over the car. Patrick busted the back window. I poured more gasoline and shook it all over the inside of the car. I threw a brick with a note tied to it a few yards in front of the car so it wouldn't catch on fire. The note read, "How are you enjoying your new Bentley. Let's call it even now. You got my money; I fucked your Bentley up. You know who it is already. Do something." It was all over in 5 seconds.

"Well," said Patrick.

I lit a pack of matches and damn near burnt my black gloves. I threw the matches on the car. Fire slowly spread around the in and outside of the car.

"Let's go," I said. We ran back to the white Toyota and sped off as fast as possible. A loud explosion caught us both by surprise. His car was over with.

"Hahahaahahahahahahahahahahaah," laughed Patrick loudly.

“Job well done,” I said. “Let's not celebrate yet. We still got a lotta shit to do.”

“Aight,” said Patrick.

He dropped me off at the crib. I was hoping everything would work out how we planned. Things don't always work that way.

A lot of the apartment residents were standing outside to see what was going on. Johnny peeped the brick on the ground with a note tied to it and picked it up. Joe and Marcus were walking right behind him. Johnny opened the note and looked it over. The fire was dying down on Johnny's car which looked barely recognizable.

“These niggas don't know who they playing with bruh,” said Johnny in a winy manner.

Joe started smiling trying to keep from laughing. Marcus caught wind of it and turned his head with a smile on his face.

“That's, it,” shouted Johnny as he turned around. “We gon handle this shit you hear me fool! Both of you niggaz get ready. Get your goons, get your toasters, y'all gon murk these hoe ass niggaz understood!!!!!”

“Yeah, yeah, for sure,” said Joe.

“What you got in mind,” said Marcus.

“He be at the Cue Ball in east Memphis,” said Johnny. “Y'all niggaz better not come back either and this nigga still alive. Ya understand me?”

“Fasho boss,” said Joe.

Marcus and Joe walked together as Johnny entered his apartment.

“What you think about this nigga Johnny,” said Joe to Marcus. “We underpaid, he treats us like hoes, and I be feeling like he a god damn slave master or something. Now he sending us on a suicide mission. This nigga be tripping mane.”

“Yeah,” said Marcus. “What you gon do about it.”

“I think it's about time Grind and Shine had a new leader,” said Joe.

“Who,” asked Marcus.

“Me,” said Joe.

Marcus nodded his head.

“Ill tell you what,” said Joe. “I ain't gonna ride on Lorenzo, that's a suicide mission anyways. They be deep at that pool hall, but I'll tell you what. I sholl will go talk to them niggaz. I ain't got no problems with these folks anyways. Mane, Johnny be tripping.”

“Well,” said Marcus. “We been best homies for a long time. Let's handle that then.”

“Fasho,” said Joe. They did their gang handshake, and both went into their separate apartments.

Chapter 13:

Law 10: It is Better to Recapture and Army Than To Destroy It

So, I knocked me a new bitch from the hood. A dark-skinned whore named Courtney. Courtney was sitting right next to me. Katrina was massaging me in my chair while I was smoking a Newport short at my table.

Patrick was standing with his arms crossed with a group of his goons around the pool table which were about ten deep today, as we were all just chilling sipping on beers we purchased from the bar.

Marcus and Joe walked through the entrance and looked around. Joe and I caught each other's eye. I stood up and grabbed the toaster in my pocket. Joe and Marcus walked slowly towards me and the large group of thugs that Patrick brought in with him that day.

Everyone put their pool sticks down. The game stopped. Patrick cocked his pistol and held it in his hand next to his hip.

"Hold up, what's this all about cuz," said one of Patrick's compadres.

"It's alright. We come in peace," said Joe. "We ain't even strapped."

One of Patrick's goons walked up to Joe and Marcus and patted them down.

"They telling the truth," he said.

"I wanted to talk to Lorenzo," said Joe. "We wanna help you take out Johnny. We over stressed with this nigga, underpaid, and he treats us like shit. I know you wanna know where his stash spots are. I'll tell you," he said.

"What's in it for you, and how do I know this ain't a setup," I said.

"Look, we all gon profit from this. I'm tired of getting treated like a slave," said Joe. "Johnny out here balling like a rich kid, and he pays us less than a motherfucker working at McDonalds. All I want is for you to divide the spoils with me and Marcus. That's it. Then we all get rich. I'll give you Johnny, and all of his stash spots."

"That sounds amazing," I said. "Where is his stash spots."

"He got two in South Memphis," said Joe. "I'll give you the locations. Johnny supposed to meet us at one of them Thursday night. I'll give you the location."

"Aight," I said. "We split it fifty fifty then to be fair. Sound good?"

"Fasho, I can get down with those numbers," said Joe. "Alright be at this location Thursday night at 1 am." He handed me a piece of paper.

This was just what Patrick and I needed, and I wouldn't have to worry about anymore beefing with anybody after this. Well, unless some of those crap games we robbed figure out it was me and Patrick. This is great. Looks like Johnny bit off more than he could chew. This was going to be like taking candy from a little baby.

Patrick and I had to borrow our partner that owned a moving company's van for the hit. We had a lot of shit we were going to have to take with us. Drugs, guns, money, whatever was in those stash spots. Patrick started to get a little nervous.

"You sure we can trust these niggas," he asked.

"The nigga gave us his stash spots. It doesn't make any sense for him to be lying to us," I said.

"You right," said Patrick.

"Here we are," I said.

We pulled in slow and parked where we wouldn't be noticed. We got out of the van and ran to the front door.

"This shit gon be easy as stealing candy from a baby," I said. "Joe and Marcus on our side remember. That nigga Johnny can't do nothing to us."

"Yeah, I know," said Patrick.

Meanwhile, Johnny was schooling his two ex-goons Marcus and Joe on how they were going to get me at the pool hall.

"First we gon drive up there together and wait in the lot," said Johnny. "Then we gonna send the set-up bitch inside. If Lorenzo holler first it'll be even sweeter."

The front door busted open. Marcus, Joe, and Johnny all pointed their pistols towards us just as planned. We had our pistols pointed at Johnny.

"Sounds like a good plan," I said to Johnny.

"Nigga, have you motherfuckers gone crazy," exclaimed Johnny. "Drop the guns. You outnumbered."

"Hehehe," I let out a short slight laugh. "You sure about that?"

Marcus and Joe, who were on both sides of Johnny, pointed their pistols away from us and towards Johnny.

"Now, drop the gun," I said.

Johnny's eyes scrunched down as his mouth opened with a look of confusion in his face. The gun left his hand and settled on the floor.

"You niggaz done switched sides on me," exclaimed Johnny. "I made you niggas! You niggas would still be riding the Mata bus eating ramen noodles for breakfast, lunch, and dinner if it wasn't for me! You can't be forreal! Joe musta put you up to this didn't he Marcus. Marcus I know you ain't gon let these niggas do me in. Marcus. You my main man Marcus. I know you better than that."

"Well, boss," said Joe. "I just thought, maybe it's time for a new leader. A new Grind and Shine Mob leader. Ya feel me."

"Ungrateful ass niggaz," shrieked Johnny. Johnny turned towards Joe biting his bottom lip and looked towards him like they were about to get into a street fight.

"Well, I guess I'll see you in hell boss," said Joe. The guns merely chirped. Since we were on mob business Mike provided us with silencers in case we needed them. Shots rang out from Joe's pistol

as he put three holes in Johnny's chest aiming for his heart.

I walked up to Johnny laying bloody on the floor, with blood staining his diamond gold teeth, and blood all over his hands on the bloodstained floor.

"Bye, Johnny," I muttered. "I'll catch you on the other side." I cockily winked my eye at him as I raised my pistol to his head. "Naw, I want this to be a slow death," I thought.

We parked in the driveway backwards with our van. We started loading bags in the back of the van from the room with all the drugs and money.

"This should be more than enough to pay Mike off," I said. "Once we hit that second stash spot, me and you gon have it made Pat."

"Fasho," said Patrick.

"Where you wanna go first," I asked Patrick. "The Bahamas? Amsterdam?"

"I don't know," said Patrick. "I just want my kid to be straight. I need to get into something."

"Holler at me later then," I said. "I'mma clean my money up, invest in real estate, the stock market. My life has officially made a turn for the better."

"Fasho," said Patrick.

There may have been more that Joe wasn't telling us about, but I didn't care. Being greedy can get you killed in the streets, just look at Johnny. Now, it was time to take the money to Mike. I was so glad this shit was over. I was sure I was going to retire from the streets. That nine to five shit just wasn't for me. Well, the streets ain't for anybody. That's all I was sure about.

Chapter 14:

Law 11: To Kill the Enemy, Your Men Must Be Aroused to Anger, and They Must Have Their Rewards for Doing So

"It's all their Mike," I said. "Every last bit of the money."

"I'm impressed," replied Mike, "You know Lorenzo, or do they call you something else?"

"Naw," I said.

"Ok," said Mike. "Well, Lorenzo, I see a lot of potential in you. Leadership qualities. You've proven yourself to be very useful to my organization. You know, I never really was going to kill you if you never came up with the full amount. You gotta understand Lorenzo, being a mob leader, it's very important to maintain a reputation of respect. Fear as well, but definitely respect. I truly believe you'd be an asset to the Memphis Crime Family. Whaddya say brother. How would you like to become.....a very wealthy man."

"Uh, I don't know," I said. "Can I think about it?"

"You think about it Lorenzo," said Mike. "You think about it."

Mike stuck his hand out to shake my hand. He had a firm grip as he shook my hand up and down. "It was nice doing business with you young brother. I'll keep my eye on you."

Great. The last thing I wanted was a big Mob leader watching me. I gotta get up out of here I thought.

"Thanks, sir," I said as I turned around to exit his office.

Now I just had to hit up that second stash spot with Patrick. That was going to set us straight for ages. Johnny didn't just go on a shopping spree when he robbed my stash spot. He flipped that shit. There was big money in store for me and Patrick. This was a dream come true alright. I was headed home to call Pat. I hope he's prepared to get this paper. It can be kind of intimidating thinking about how rich we were going to be, especially since we both had been poor our whole lives. Well, I wasn't gonna stay a loser forever. I had ambition. Not just ambition but know how.

Patrick and I were finally done loading up the van we borrowed. Bricks of cocaine, pills, and a ton of money were stacked together in the back of the van. I felt like I was on top of the world.

"Just be sure and go the speed limit," I said to Patrick. "The last thing we want is a squad car pulling us over. If that happens I'm running faster than a track star."

"Yeah, I know," said Patrick.

We rode down South Parkway, to Park Ave, and made a left till we got to Poplar. Then we went down poplar till we got to Cleveland. Patrick turned right on Cleveland. We came up on a stop sign and Patrick didn't make a complete stop. He paused the van for a moment and made a rolling stop past the stop sign. The police pulled up behind us.

"Nigga," I exclaimed. "You have to come to a complete stop at a stop sign. That shit can get us pulled over."

"Oh, shit," said Patrick. "Well, that nigga ain't even got his lights on. Hopefully, he'll drive off." Patrick turned right on Faxon. The police officer cut his lights on. Pull over he said on his microphone.

"Shit," exclaimed "Patrick. Patrick hit the gas. The police officer cut his siren chasing right behind him. Patrick turned left.

"Shit, drive and make a left on Jackson. Let me out close to Bellevue," I exclaimed. He sped down Jackson and made a turn on Bellevue.

Patrick stopped on Bellevue Street by the alley close to Courtney's house and we both hopped out of the car. I ran towards a house and hopped over the fence until I got into a back alley. Patrick turned around and started firing his pistol at the police officer's tires, then he turned around and struck off. He threw the pistol as far as he could as he was running. He didn't go in the alley. He ran down Faxon St. Another police car drove past the first police car and chased after Patrick. Patrick was going for the other alley on the other side of Faxon. I finally reached my bitch Courtney's backyard. I hopped the fence and stormed up to her backdoor. I banged as hard as I could.

"Bitch, open the door," I shouted.

She let me in. "What's going on," she asked. "You ok?"

As soon as she let me in a squad car drove through the alley and passed Courtney's house. They didn't know where I went. There was nothing they could do.

I tried to catch my breath. "The police after me," I said. "Bitch hide me in your basement. I can't risk the police finding me in here."

We heard helicopters soaring through the sky. I hoped the helicopters didn't see me go in Courtney's house. "I think they just came out now," I thought.

Patrick didn't get so lucky. He was in someone's backyard and a police officer met him running

through from the front of the house into the backyard while at the same time another police officer hopped the fence from the alley right behind Patrick. Both of the police officers pulled out their pistols and shouted, "Get on the ground, get on the ground now!"

Patrick got on his knees and put his hands on his head, then laid on his chest. Next thing he knew he was cuffed and placed in the back of a squad car.

"Looks like one of the church robbery suspects from that church out in the University of Memphis area," said one of the police.

"Church robbery," asked the other officer. "Wow, that's crazy."

Me, I wasn't about to leave Courtney's house for a long time until I felt it was safe. I spent a few nights over there until I felt the coast was clear for her to take me back home. This shit was crazy. I hoped the police didn't know what I looked like. That was a lot of contraband in that van. "They probably gave Pat a football field," I thought. I trusted Pat not to snitch on me, but we committed a lot of crimes for Mike. Who knows what part of my past was going to catch up to me if it did.

Chapter 15:

The End of the

Road for Me

It was Monday morning at 3:00 am. I was sound asleep until a loud boom woke me up from the police busting down my door. Police stormed in pointing their guns out like horns on wild unicorns. Next thing I knew my bed was surrounded.

“Freeze,” hands up shouted an officer pointing his gun straight at me. I yawned and stretched my arms out in the air.

“What's this all about,” I asked the crowd of police surrounding my bed in my room. They walked me out of my room with my pajamas on and a T-shirt and some slip on house shoes until I reached one of the squad cars.

“Don't make a move asshole,” said the officer sitting me in the back seat of the squad car.

“GOD,” I PRAYED. “PLEASE HELP ME FIND
AN EXIT OUT OF THE STREETS. I DON'T
DESERVE THIS SHIT. JUST TELL ME WHAT
U WANT ME TO DO. AMEN.”

Conclusion:

William was a short and scrawny black man with a goatee, mustache, and eyeglasses that made him look somewhat nerdy yet sophisticated at the same time. He lived his life the right way for the most part. He grew up in Collierville, the suburbs on the outskirts of Memphis, TN. A good upstanding citizen, he went to college and got his master's in business Logistics. He also went to church regularly, didn't smoke, rarely cursed, and even had a sense of morals and principles about himself, which disappeared somewhere down the line when a sudden event changed his life.

Somewhere along the lines he went through some changes. Hatred, envy, and jealousy took him over and completely changed his life. William became purely evil. He became everything he once despised. I guess a woman can do that to some undisciplined men that can't handle heart break, but I digress.

William gritted his teeth. "That motherfucking con artist," William said to himself as he was lighting the candles in front of him. There were a few black candles in a line with a beaten-up voodoo doll with a pocketknife stuck in its heart in front of them. William and the candles were surrounded by a large circle of salt on his hardwood floor. "That motherfucker fucked my woman.....turned her to a prostitute," he shouted angrily."

William picked up a sheet of paper with an upside-down pentagram drawn at the top and read aloud a hoodoo hex that he wrote on the paper with dragon's blood ink. "From the demons of the four corners of the earth and the guardian of the gateway of eternal torment. With a battle cry from Set, and torture of Bilal, I DOOM Lorenzo Higginbottom, to a life of pain and misery. I DOOM him to death."

William blew out the candles, then let out a sigh of relief. It felt good to get revenge on a man that stole the love of his life away from him. As depressed as he had been for the last couple weeks, he started to actually feel a little bit better. This magic stuff was new to him, but from the spells he cast before this one, it seemed to be very useful and very effective.

"That motherfucker doesn't know what he's gotten himself into", he thought. "This man is going to be a bum, a tormented bum, and he is going to suffer until his soul evaporates from the earth." He began to smile as he put a witchcraft spell book on his bookshelf. "Fucking trash nigga pimp," he thought. "I hope he rots in hell."

After the feeling of relief, his mood began to slowly change to a strong feeling of guilt and shame. He could barely look at himself in the mirror as he walked into his bathroom. He started crying. He never felt like he had any control in his life. He never felt like a real man. He never felt brave or courageous, just insecure, and weak. Magic gave him a feeling of control and power in his life he never felt before, but along with that came a deep self-hatred and guilt, because he knew deep down inside he was just slime to himself. Even if he could fool others with magic, he knew he was just a worm on the inside.

William walked into the living room and sat on the couch. He imagined his woman with Lorenzo, getting picked up off the track handing him a fat bank asking him for permission to take a break for the night. He put his head down. "Nooooo. Katrina. Nooooooo," he said. He started sobbing. He grabbed the pistol off the wooden table in front of the couch. Suddenly, he stopped crying. As he put the gun to the side of his head, he bit his bottom lip. He couldn't do it. He couldn't find it in him to take his own life. The gun dropped from his hands onto the couch cushion as he sobbed the night of way crying the tears of someone that lost a close relative to the angel of death.

A pimp's life is more dangerous than any drug dealers because his product is women. Even throughout history, women have caused the downfall of nations. In the bible, Eve's actions condemned humanity to sin which leads to death when she convinced Adam to eat from the tree of good and evil.

Imagine that.

The End

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