

Mr. Bill Collector

By
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Chapter 1: You Know You Done Fucked Up, Don't You?

July 8, 1997 12:03 am

His heart, which once pumped at a feverish and manic speed, had suddenly begun to calm to a normal pace. His forehead, once slick and drenched with the perspiration that leaked down into his eyes, began to dry. Come to think of it, he was a lot more relaxed now. Finally his mind could take a moment at ease. Perhaps it was the breeze from the ceiling fan he'd just switched on that brought forth this sudden comfort. The cool air was rather refreshing, serving its purpose well.

They called him Flash, and the name fit him perfectly. If anyone lived in the fast lane it was the man given the title Eli Jamison at birth. An arrogant son of gun with a cunning way of the street, he defined "hustler" in all aspects of the term. Since the age of eighteen he couldn't recall a moment that nearly resembled that of brokenness. He wouldn't allow it. Sure, Flash still kicked it in the hood, but he stayed fly long before the rappers made a song about it. To make sure he never bottomed out to "po-man" status, he was constantly out on the grind, participating in whatever carefree scandal the situation called for --- all for the lust of the money.

The Native of Detroit, Michigan was born on October 22, 1969 into a life of strife and poverty. Loathing damn near every minute of it, Flash vowed to never deal with the financial burdens he watched his family endure. The man carried no memory of his mother who died as a result of a heroin overdose. And his cowardly father ... well that was someone he could never speak on because it was someone he never met. Therefore, he could never love, respect, or even hate the man. Bless the hearts of his grandparents, whom showered him with all of their love, doing their best to raise a young boy destined for a life of dealing, danger, and death.

No way they should take the blame for what he'd become. And if anyone were to blame it would be this fucked up society we lived in --- the government at both the federal and local level --- corporate America --- The Man. At least that's how Flash viewed it. The bleak ghetto environment he was confined to as a child made it more acceptable for him to be influenced by the local thugs, pushers and addicts. And after more than ten years in the life, the crafty veteran had mastered the drug sector to the point where he could package the game up in a comprehensive format and resell it an 8-week learning course. But despite all his knowledge and craftiness, Flash couldn't shake the unavoidable cons that came with being a big time drug dealer.

"Fuck is going on?" Flash moved from the chair to the bed, and dropped his head in frustration, assuming a position similar to the one he'd been in for the last 30 minutes.

The room was as elegant as they come --- for a cheap motel that is. The nightly rate was an astounding fee of just twenty five dollars. Jack, the owner of the establishment, called it the V.I.P. Suite --- a living quarters fit for the king who demanded the finest in motel accommodations. A semi-clean leather sofa, black and white TV, and queen-sized bed occupied the small space. That was it.

Not necessarily Flash's style, but it would have to do. He was on the run from the streets. The last place the enemy would expect to find a baller of his character was a rundown motel in the worst area of Las Vegas. At least he hoped.

Accompanying Flash on the quilted covers of the bed was the nine millimeter Beretta, the troubled piece that like so many other components, played a significant part in the current shit he

found himself in. The number of lives the weapon claimed had become outrageous, to be frank. So many scalding bullets had traveled the barrel, so many rounds the piece could bear no more.

Maybe all the activity was the reason for the gun's malfunction. Following the initial shot, it seized, leaving Flash standing with an expression of bewilder and unadulterated fright. The gun's disposal was now mandatory. A glitch like that could get him killed out here. Not to mention the legal aspect and all those bodies metaphysically attached to it. Shit could get him a lot of years in there.

"Me and you Mary." Flash took a huge puff and revived the stogie that almost fucked around and died on him. The tightly rolled joint seemed to be burned for what seemed like an eternity, and he hoped the slow burn would continue. Had it not been for the marijuana buzz, he may have bitched up and placed the gat to his temple. But the smoke was dwindling and in a few short puffs, it would be gone --- adios. That didn't sit well with Flash at all.

Never the one to run out of bud (normally), but this hectic evening led him to dump the last of his stash into the Wizard rolling paper and twist up a spliff that would make the Rastas in Jamaica plenty proud. But there was a solution. Flash looked up and noticed the bottle of gin sitting on top of the television. He managed to form a short grin as the clear liquor poured slowly over the ice cubes in the square shaped glass.

"If that don't relax you, I know what will."

Her voice startled him. To be honest, he didn't even hear her come in the room, and with the shit he'd gotten himself into, that wasn't good at all. Flash had to be more alert, but how could he? His nerves were rattled to hell --- too much noise in his ears to think. He could barely focus on anything. The man was suffering from intense paranoia and it was now obvious that it had become detrimental to his well being.

A set of wet red lips planted themselves on his cheek --- soft and inviting. Then came a moist tongue over the back of his neck --- slow and tantalizing. She then placed her hands upon his naked, broad chest. Caressing slowly, her touch was quite sensual and a bit soothing despite the circumstances. But as Flash was coming to learn, the woman was cold as ice, and this concerned him greatly, especially considering the situation. He had been on edge ever since escaping that clusterfuck at the warehouse, and no one could be trusted now --- especially Candy.

"That better?"

"Much better," he admitted after depositing the crippled roach into the ashtray. Flash gulped the liquor and indulged as the cold liquid slid down his throat. He couldn't deny --- Candy's soft kisses and subsequent massage had him feeling rather nice. Damn near carefree. She had that whip appeal. The gift of gab, a knockout body, and set of angel eyes made for a combination powerful enough to wrap any man around her finger --- almost any man.

But Flash knew the game, ya see. After all, Candy was a key component in this scheme. The bitch who helped him realize and seize his financial freedom. The same bitch who devised the trap that would leave her man dusted and disgusted --- who was the same man alleged to be a notorious Cuban drug lord. That was the factor that put such a fucked up twist on everything.

Candy took a sip of the gin and asked, "What's the matter, bay? You should be gloatin' in glory right about now. You about to be the most powerful man in the Midwest. Play ya cards right and I bet you'll strike a million in no time." Her voice carried an eerie arrogance, one that irritated Flash to core.

Funky bitch. How could she be so confident? So ... carefree. After hearing Flash summarize the violent ordeal, she responded with enthuse, like the scene of bullets, blood, and brains made her pussy wet.

“Hopefully this don’t get in the way of my session. You owe me some tonight.” Candy got up and stood in front of Flash, giving him a full glance of her glorious five-foot frame. When famished, she could eat her weight in steak, shrimp, and fried chicken. But you could never tell by looking at her. Candy’s stomach was smooth and flat, making her the envy of several less fortunate women. Hell, she was so small, you might think a strong wind could carry her down the street. Still, you couldn’t let the slim waist fool you. She turned around and revealed a plump ass --- round, ripe, and ready to go, thong splitting a pair of pare shaped cheeks up the middle. That near-perfect bottom had landed many a man in hot water and now, it looked like Flash was the latest victim.

“Gimme that dick.” It had been weeks since the two had been intimate and engaged in what they coined the “damn thang”. She’d been deprived long enough. The time to have her needs fulfilled had arrived. She reached down to the crotch of Flash’s pants to release his manhood. At first she was offended as handling a soft penis was unexpected. But as her touch stimulated, Candy’s magic worked up a stiff response in her lover. She then gave it a light squeeze while gently rubbing the swollen head.

Now under ordinary circumstances, Flash would’ve dug in and seized the moment. He was a downright freak --- down for the bed, the floor, the bathroom --- usually just about anywhere. But this was anything but the usual scenario. Shit had got thicker than a hot plate of biscuits and gravy. At the moment, his mind flipped like the pages of an old, wrinkled book. Flash just hoped the gangster they called Antonio Valdez wasn’t the author of this novel.

Why fuck Tony? Shit, Flash couldn’t offer a viable answer --- only excuses. The Cuban man had been so humble. So generous. He befriended Flash immediately, placing an unbelievable amount of trust in the stranger all on the strength of one’s word. Just went to show that even the most thorough thoroughbreds could suffer from a lapse in judgement. They could have become the perfect duo, but now they were more susceptible to becoming bitter rivals. And with Tony’s clout in the street, who knew how long the feud would last?

Flash’s stomach commenced to churn as he recalled what was easily the biggest mistake of his life --- so big, that he could go on and call it “fatal.” Unable to function in the freak department, he pushed Candy away, took a deep exhalation of intoxicated oxygen, and began to replay the incident from earlier this evening.

Chapter 2: Now We See You ...

July 7, 1997 6:46 pm

“Man that bitch was screaming like a nigga was plantin’ stab wounds. Mufuckin’ Michael Myers or some shit. Shit, I thought the boys was gone come knockin’.” James explained the story while stretching out in the back of the van. “Man, that bitch had some good pussy.”

Not only was James Flash’s older cousin, he was his most trusted associated. His righthand man. Though he was often playful, impractical, and straight up inappropriate, he was very efficient when it concerned his finances, which is why he was such an integral part of the click. James had to be the most educated and organized individual Flash had ever known in his lifetime. The intellectual approach he brought to the game enabled their crew to make the others look silly. And with what Flash had cooked up, James’ savvy could help them go all the way to the top.

“I ain’t gon’ lie,” Flash spoke. “You be havin’ some bad hoes. I just don’t see how they be fuckin’ yo Bobby McFarlane lookin’ ass.”

“I told you cousin,” James replied. “It’s that mufuckin’ John Holmes. That and this cold ass game make fo a nigga these hoes just can’t resist.”

“Yeah okay,” Flash laughed. “Ole don’t worry be happy ass nigga.” Flash cracked on James at every opportune moment. It was something he’d done since a youth. Maybe it was because his cousin was an easy target. He wasn’t the most attractive man and was likely to be a prospect of the infamous “hair club” in the near future. But Flash held the utmost love and respect for him. There was no one walking the earth he admired more than James.

They’d only been on the road for a little over 20 hours total, but it seemed like they’d been driving for an eternity. Flash felt an agonizing numbness in his foot as he steadily pedaled the accelerator. Bouncing from the D to Vegas by van was a lengthy expedition not to be taken lightly. The group had been back on the road for six hours after a short rest stop and chronic break. They were understandably eager to end the trip, but their journey was almost complete.

Wake up!” Flash tapped his cousin, Chaz, across the shoulder as he slept in the passenger seat.

Chaz’s reaction was delayed, but after arising from his slumber, he opened his crusty eyes and smacked his dry lips. “Fuck my money at?” Apparently the youngster hadn’t fully left dreamland because he awoke with fierce anger. It took him a moment to realize that Flash wasn’t the junkie who owed him \$40 in cash.

“We there yet?”

“Fuck naw,” Flash cut into the youngin. “Fuck you think we just driving around site seeing?”

Similar to his elder cousins, Chaz peddled crack to support himself. The nineteen year old believed it to be his only source of income, even though there were plenty of legitimate job opportunities in the Metro Detroit area at the time. But to hell with slaving for another nigga. Chaz learned that lesson after a scuffle with his manager at the local burger joint. His employment stint there lasted all but three days. How the hell I’m spose to flip these burgers and dump the fries? Niggas got me fucked up.

Chaz’s head was hard as stone, and no matter how hard he tried, he just couldn’t seem to evade trouble. But regardless of his legal setbacks, Chaz would ride with his cousins until the

Lord punched his ticket. Clownin' bitches, robbin' fools, dumpin' on niggas --- to them he pledged his allegiance.

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July 7, 1997 9:17 pm

The atmosphere on the Vegas strip was astounding. In addition to the bright casino signage, the streets in general were vivid with color and activity. The three Michigan men looked around in awe as they surveyed the scenery from the parking lot.

"Man, we gotta vacate here," said Flash. "This shit off the hook."

"Damn skippy," agreed James. He nudged Flash and directed his attention across the street to El Botin Espárrago, the hottest club on the Vegas strip. Both cousins watched with famished eyes as a group of girls entertained the patrons awaiting outside in the long line. Their skirts were super short, and did a horrible job of concealing their boobs and ass cheeks, which just seemed to keep popping out with every other movement.

Tits and ass served as a nice diversion, but that did little to lessen the tension in the air. The appointed time was approaching rapidly --- 9:30 pm. With only fifteen minutes to spare, Flash started to scan the area for Valdez.

"Alright now," Flash began. "He spose to meet me down by the Riveria. I'm bout to head over there now. Ya'll be on the lookout for a black Benz. And whatever ya do ... don't let me outta ya'll sight. I want ya'll there when we make the trade."

Chaz nodded his head in agreement. He then nudged James, who was occupied gazing at the pair of plump asses that walked by. Did he know they were transsexuals packing more beef he? Would his horny ass even care?

"Yeah, cuz," James reassured Flash, though his attention was seemingly elsewhere. "We got you. Man, it's some bad hoes out here."

So Flash eased away from his party, hella cautious of this festive, new environment. Terribly paranoid, his body temperature increased with each step he took. He was so anxious, feeling as if he would blow a fuse if he didn't somehow get it together. Then, a sudden feeling of terror overwhelmed him. What if the scheme were to fail? Or even worse, backfire and leave them all rotting in Vegas? But there was no turning back. The deal was set and home was thousands of miles away. It was literally do or die.

"Hey mane!" Flash was caught off guard, but would recognize that voice anywhere. He turned to his left and noticed a black Mercedes Benz coasting along the curb. Seated in the back was Valdez and Candy; two strange Cuban males sat up front.

"You look lost hombre," said Valdez with his trademark smirk. "Never been to Vegas before, huh?"

Flash concealed his panic with a bright smile. "Shit can be a little overwhelming." The luxury vehicle pulled closer to the curb and made a complete stop, prompting Flash to walk over and shake Tony's hand. He looked around, but saw no signs of his cousins. Now he couldn't shake the notion that he was completely and utterly fucked.

Approximately twenty yards and five cars behind the Benz in the van were Chaz and James. "Think that's him," asked Chaz.

"Yeah," replied James. "That's him. Less ya boy out here hookin' on the low. Whoever it is flossin' the shit out that 500 SEL. Might have to get him fa that bitch too." After Flash climbed

into the back of the Benz, James mashed the peddle in attempt to close the distance between he and the target.

“Looks like you done already started the night off right,” said Tony after leaning over and observing the red gloss in Flash’s eyes.

“Shit, I start the day off right baby,” Flash returned.

“Why?” Candy asked, a huge smile on her face while she waited in anticipation for an answer.

“Cause I promised I’d smoke chronic till the day that I die.”

Both Candy and Tony laughed at the comment, but in Flash’s mind, her level of enthusiasm was a bit much for his liking. He just hoped that Valdez hadn’t caught on to her interest.

Realizing that she should have probably kept quiet, Candy sat there hushed and paid the two little attention for the remainder of the ride. She seemed occupied chewing a piece of thick red licorice with one leg resting on top of the other. But all that was just a front. The mere sight of Flash sent her heart racing into overdrive. Add in the danger factor that was this risky scheme they’d concocted, and she was barely able to contain herself. Pretending that he wasn’t there was a monumental challenge to say the least. Yet if she could maintain just a bit longer, she would have everything she lusted for and then some.

“What’s on the agenda for the night,” Tony inquired.

“I don’t know.” Flash continued, “But the night still young. It’s a lot of spots I plan on hittin’ up tonight.” Though he appeared cool, calm, and collect, Flash was actually a wreck within. He couldn’t wait to get this shit on, poppin, and over with.

Valdez had appeared a few minutes prior to the scheduled time. How long had he been on the scene? Did he catch a glimpse of Chaz and James? Flash silently prayed that he hadn’t.

His level of paranoia soared as the Benz took advantage of an opening, mashed through traffic, and through a red light. Hopefully Chaz and James would react promptly and trail them. Without them, this scheme would be near impossible to complete. Fuck that --- it wouldn’t be possible at all.

Flash became more concerned as the Mercedes halted inside of a spacious warehouse. The driver pulled alongside of a red, classic Lamborghini and stopped. Flash could see a figure in the driver’s seat of the sports car, but the dark tinted windows hid his or her identity.

“This is the end ... beautiful friend.” Valdez sang in best Jim Morrison voice while popping a piece of mint gum into his mouth. “I would like to stay but the Black Jack tables are calling.” He took his lady by the hand and the duo entered the spare vehicle. “Don’t worry,” spoke Tony from the back of the vehicle. “My buddies will set ya straight and take ya where ya need to go.”

Flash’s heart rate increased significantly as the vehicle smashed away. His treacherous ploy now seemed hopeless. Why would Valdez leave him alone with two strangers? Unless he had planned to have him murked. Their names were Juan and Ricardo. Seeing that both were silent during the entire ride, Flash couldn’t help but feel uncomfortable in their presence.

“Want some,” asked Juan, offering a piece of a half eat submarine. The 278 pound assassin loved to stuff his mouth with just about anything that wouldn’t kill him instantly. A huge pile of Italian bread, beef and cheese sat stored on the left side of his jaw while he continued to chomp away on the right.

“I’m tight,” Flash declined. “I just wanna get this over with.”

“Alright man. Suit yourself. More for me.” Juan devoured the remainder of the sandwich in two large gobbles. He then mumbled something to his partner.

I can't believe this shit. How could this happen? Valdez had pulled an amazing defense move --- whether he was blind to the fact or not. They were supposed to drive to a hotel parking lot just off the strip to make the exchange. Now they were in a strange warehouse that had to be at least 30 minutes away from Las Vegas Blvd.

Had Chaz and James trailed the Benz? If not, Flash stood alone in this scandalous plot. But it was quite doubtful that the task could be completed without their involvement. Hell, Flash walking out of this shit alive was doubtful.

The moment was as extreme as it gets. Ricardo watched over Flash with the eyes of a hawk. He trusted no one, regardless of Tony's recommendations. Ricardo knew better than to lump something as fragile as trust into a cold and unpredictable game like the drug trade.

"You packin' Flash," he asked while chewing on a thick wad of mint gum and blazing up a cigarette.

"You know it," answered Flash. "It's like a jungle out here."

Juan laughed and said, "A jungle. Haha! You're right, though. Ain't no more good faith in the business. So many deals goin' sour, you know. Can't put nothin' past nobody these days."

Flash found no humor in the conversation. It actually left him perturbed, feeling like Juan, Ricardo or both, would brandish their weapons and let it rain any second. The Beretta he packed was equipped with a fully loaded clip and one secured up top in the chamber. But if the situation called for it, would he be swift enough on the draw?

"You guys know a good spot a brotha can lay his head at?" Flash made an attempt to break the ice. "I'm bout tired as fuck."

"Yeah I do," Juan answered. "It's called the Lay 'Em Down Inn." He and his partner cracked up hysterically, right before cornering Flash on both sides. "Don't worry," Juan continued. "Tony said you's an alright guy. Told us to look out for ya. It's a nice hotel just up the street. Best breakfast in town. And that's sayin' somethin' in Vegas."

"You got the money I hope," asked Ricardo. He stared Flash over long and hard. Juan was definitely the friendlier of the two.

Flash figured the topic would come up sooner or later. Why wouldn't it? He didn't have a briefcase, suitcase, duffel bag, or anything that indicated he had twenty five large in his possession. Wasn't impossible to have it stashed somewhere on his person, but this strategy damn sure made him look suspicious.

"You know it." Flash then retrieved a bulky envelope from his inside jacket pocket. He hadn't come unprepared. And it was all there --- the whole 25 gees. Of course he'd be leaving with that and the dope. That's if all went as planned, and right now, things were looking beyond bleak. At this point, all Flash could hope for was Chaz and James making the save.

Ricardo smiled and tossed his cigarette to the pavement. "Now we do business." He ejected a thick round of saliva from his mouth and headed for the trunk of the Benz. Juan then wobbled over to accompany him.

"There you go," said Juan. "Ten beautiful birdies. Straight from the mother land." The suitcase contained ten kilograms of snow white cocaine. The product was pure --- harvested, processed, and smuggled straight from Cuba.

Flash stared down at the dope in awe. Never had he witnessed such a sight. He couldn't help but wonder if the product was authentic and right on cue, Juan slashed one of the bags with a razor blade. Flash dipped a finger into the pile and placed a bit on his tongue. Oh yeah --- A1. It was definitely real. Flash's tongue went numb instantly. .

Then came a loud BOOM! “What was that?!” Juan quickly drew a .38 and took a battle stance. “Don’t move.” He aimed the pistol at Flash’s head while scanning the area for possible intruders.

“Chill out man.” Flash raised his hands in surrender. “I’m right here man.”

“Watch him,” commanded Ricardo. He then slowly made his towards the other end of the warehouse. Ricardo clutched the glock .40 firmly in his right hand after firing up another cigarette. Something wasn’t right. He sensed treachery from the moment he laid eyes upon Flash. It was just something about his character that didn’t sit well with Ricardo --- something shady.

Juan whipped out a fruit cake, freed it from the plastic wrapping, and went to town. “You better not be trying nothing funny.” Some people smoked to calm their nerves. Juan snacked on fruit cakes, beef jerky, beef sticks, or whatever he could conceal on his large frame.

Ricardo glanced back at the two of them with fury in his eyes. “Watch him!” Juan pulled back the hammer on the revolver and stuffed the rest of the cake in his mouth. He was a nervous wreck. And though he was slow and legally obese, the poriky Cuban was skilled on the trigger. Didn’t look it, but Juan was a seasoned marksman with several head shots under his belt.

Fuck is these niggas? Flash began to perspire uncontrollably. He felt it pouring underneath his arms and soon, Juan would probably see it rolling down his face. The fat bastard was bound to blast him just from standing their looking so damn guilty. Never had he been so knee-deep in the shit. Where the fuck were James and Chaz?

Chapter 3: So Anxious

July 8, 1997 12:39 a.m.

Candy lay stretched out flat on her stomach in nothing but a T-shirt and thong. Tonight hadn't been what she expected, yet she was able to sleep with relative ease. Beside her was Flash. Bare feet on the thin carpet, he sat with his head down and hands in the position of prayer. But the crack peddling villain wasn't praying to any God. He couldn't recall the last time he called out to the Lord. With all of fucked up shit going down in 1997, he wasn't even sure if this so-called heavenly spirit even existed. Right now, he was an Antonio Valdez-fearing man.

"I gotta get the fuck outta here," he mumbled. The haunting vision of Valdez plagued his mind. He just couldn't dodge the image. Shit was so bad, that it affected his sexual performance --- if you could even call it that. Even though he wasn't remotely in the mood, the sight of Candy's luscious, bubbly booty compelled him to give it a go --- for her sake, you know? Things started out hot and steamy but before you knew it, Flash was as limp as a noodle --- just as he'd went in.

His male problem was the reason Candy fell asleep unsatisfied, pissed that she didn't even get the opportunity to climax. But Flash couldn't concern himself with her selfish desires. He had his own dilemma, and quiet as kept, this bitch was at the very core of his troubles. While Candy was a beauty to behold from a visual, physical, and sensual perspective, she was also poisonous, deadly to any man she dug her venomous claws into.

This hoe probably tipped his ass off. Flash turned his head and snook an extended peep at the woman's naked ass. It was a battle to overcome the lust Candy stirred within him, which is pretty much how we ended up here --- he couldn't resist and took the bait. The two of them often joked about how Candy had the bomb, but he hoped it wasn't the literal that killa batch, pussy powerful enough to leave him dusted and disgusted.

His mind traveled down a twisted road of torment. What was he to do with this bitch? What did she want from him? Really? Even if this shit did work out, there was no way he could rise to Tony's status --- not from what he knew about the infamous Cuban mobster. Maybe he had her sprung. Or maybe she had succeeded at a feat accomplished by no other --- pussywhipping into doing dumb shit he normally wouldn't even consider otherwise. Yep. That had to be it.

Chapter 4: Nice to Meet Ya

May 17, 1997 3:03 pm

It was a pleasant, sunny day in Watts, California. At 82 degrees, it felt just right. Flash had touched down in the town at around 11 pm last night. This was a trip that he'd been planning for some time. It had been a while since he'd last seen the relatives on his mother's side of the family. His last trip to the west coast was back in 94, and he hadn't seen his little cousin since 93. It was definitely time to catch up.

The candy coated red paint of the 1970 Monte Carlo glistened glamorously in the sun. Its spoke rims were dipped in gold, also shimmering wonderfully from the warm rays of the sun. The rear of the car sat low to the ground, giving indication of its rich, hydraulic abilities. The vehicle was indeed a classic to behold, one that Earl, Flash's cousin, would cherish for an Earth's eternity.

"Man, it's fuckin' beautiful out here," Flash gloated while basking in the sun and soaking up the environment that was Earl's neighborhood. Sure, it was no Bel-Air, but it was no Herman Gardens either, the vile projects community Flash grew up for a good portion of his young life --- far too long if you asked him.

"You need to get up out the D and gon' and move ya ass out here," said Earl. He and Flash sat chilling on the hood of the Monte Carlo. They passed the time sharing a 40 ounce bottle of malt liquor and a thick blunt of sweet smelling reefer. "Need a nigga like you on the team."

"Look at you," Flash sniggered. "Tryna recruit ya big cuz. I appreciate the offer E, but J and Chaz couldn't survive without me."

"Shit, they can brang they ass too. We all in the same game. Shouldn't be nothin' to adapt." Earl was a handsome young lad, one you'd never suspect of being a ruthless, cold-hearted thug --- until he suited up and left the house. More often than not, you'd catch him wearing some combination of red and black. Today, he wore a comfortable red T-shirt, black jean shorts, and a pair of crisp, red Chuck T's. Topping it off was a red bandana, tied around his head with the knot and bow in the front --- Pac style.

Just 18 years of age, Earl was a proud member of the Denver Lanes, one of the oldest sets of Bloods in Cali. He'd been full-on bangin' since the tender age of 12. Loyalty and love filled his heart when it came to his set, the gang he claimed to love more than his own mother on numerous occasions.

Flash couldn't even wrap his head around the gang banging concept. Scrappin' and blastin' niggas over colored rags. But who was he to judge? In reality, both he and Earl were flirting with death, each dragging a foot in the grave, just doing so in their own special way.

Something drove Flash to stare down at the crippled roach in Earl's possession. "Man ... you ever gon' pass that mufucka?"

"My bad," Earl apologized, then passed Flash what was left of the blunt. "I be smokin' dog. Nigga got problems. Ay, let's bounce somewhere. Find some hoes or some shit."

"Let's do somethin'," agreed Flash. With his fingers burning, he took one last hit and thumped the tiny piece of smoke to the ground. "Definitely tired of sittin' round yo lame ass."

"Yeah, yeah ... the feelin's mutual."

Earl slid off the hood of vehicle and grabbed his keys from his back pocket. Just as he reached for the handle of the car door, unexpected company approached. A clean, white Lincoln

Mark VIII pulled up parallel to the Monte Carlo. The tinted window on the passenger's side slid down to reveal an awesome sight. She had sandy brown hair and a smooth, caramel colored face. Her beautiful skin offset her twinkling hazel eyes. Her big, luscious lips were inviting, coated with a red gloss that made them look nice, soft and juicy.

"Fellas," spoke a thick Cuban accent. The man then leaned over the girl to view the scene. His eyes were dark but friendly. His face scarred and rugged. At a glance, one could tell that he led an interesting, if not dangerous lifestyle. His long black hair had that Bret "The Hitman" Hart look, like it was either stamped with grease or soaked with water before being brushed back into a ponytail. Antonio Valdez extended a hand from the window and greeted, "What's up?"

"What's up Tony." Earl slapped his hand. "We just chillin' round this borin' muthafucka." He then signaled Flash over for an introduction. "This my cousin, Flash. This my man Tony I told you about."

"What's up man, you alright?" Tony shook Flash's hand and stared the strange man over.

"Chillin' chillin', man." Flash replied, cool, calm, and collected as usual.

Earl became acquainted with the Cuban crime lord five months ago. Tony took an instant liking to the youngster, admiring his tenacity and thirst for success. He quickly learned that like himself, the man had a tremendous hunger for wealth and power. Sure, that didn't make him any different that most young black males in the drug trade, but Tony saw something special in Earl.

Tony had direct business dealings with few people. He was damn near untouchable and as a result, unapproachable. But through a shared family connection, the two formed a profitable relationship and an increasingly strong bond in the process. With Tony supplying him, Earl had access to the sweetest deals in all the land, which gave him the ability to slowly but surely rise above the competition on the local scene.

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Sitting fully baked in the backseat, Flash was impressed by the clear, crisp sound produced by Tony's high-end stereo system. His high was at its peak and the music complemented it so well. The CD player sang at a mellow level, beat thumping ever so subtly while reciting an old Isley Brother's tune. To top it all off, the Lincoln's super-charged air conditioning system replicated a feeling the was more than welcomed after sitting in the sun for the last two hours. They had just polished off a fat ass joint, so for a pothead like Flash, this shit was almost the perfect moment.

"So what you guys getting' into today," asked Tony while massaging the woman's thigh. Earl scratched the thin hairs of his chin and aimlessly pondered. "Shit I don't know. Ain't much to do on a Tuesday. Other than get fucked up and get in some hoes. Excuse me Candy."

"You are so excused," she replied with a hint of friendliness in her tone.

Candy. At the very mentioning of her name, the girl's image appeared before for Flash's stoned vision. From there, all sorts of kinky thoughts began to run through his mind.

Tony suggested, "You guys should roll out with me. I know your cousin didn't come all the way from Michigan to sit around your lame ass."

"This guy." Earl just shook his head, too high to even formulate a clever comeback.

"You know you my guy E, but you be so cool and quiet, man."

"Nigga be blowed, man," was Earl's only reply.

"So what do you say ..." Tony looked in the rearview mirror and locked eyes with Flash. "Flash?"

“Let’s do it,” Flash answered, gamed as ever. After hearing the engine roar to life, he slumped back in his seat and prepared to enjoy the ride.

Chapter 5: Eye Candy

Underneath a colorful umbrella sat Flash, Earl and Tony in a lavish exterior dining area. The glass table was spacious and designed with a complexly arranged floral centerpiece. La Grande Familia was without doubt one of the most elegant restaurants in all of Los Angeles, an exquisite sight to behold. The menu was on the upscale side but after learning that Tony would handle the bill, both Flash and Earl gladly took advantage.

"I know I met her before, but where you meet this one," asked Earl, munching on a crunchy tortilla chip.

"Oh Candy ... we met at the mall. Surprise, right? Not quite sure, but she just might be my new favorite."

Flash agreed with a simple nod of his head, and continued to gobble away at the appetizing croissant sandwich. Mouth saturated with tasty bread, ham and cheese, he then added, "Yeah, she tight dog. You get a dime like that you gotta hold on to it. Lock it down."

"Yeah, she's real cool." Tony took a sip of his king-sized margarita. "She's supposed to be bringing a few of her girls to meet you guys."

"Oh yeah," Earl smiled. "This nigga Tone gotta different broad for every day of the week."

"What can I say? I like to keep my options open."

The three men carried on their conversation with the main topic being females. Flash was happy that the pitcher of beer he and Earl requested had finally made its way to the table. While pouring himself a tall glass, he noticed four sexy women approaching, bitches that could only be described as "superbad".

As the foursome neared the table, Flash squinted his eyes to identify the female who led the pack --- Candy. Apparently she had changed into something a bit more comfortable and provocative. Finally Flash had an opportunity to view all of her stout and astounding figure. She wore a white body suit that clung to her curvaceous body, while showing off a healthy hint of nakedness from underneath. Aside from being downright knock 'em dead gorgeous, Flash noticed that Candy strolled along the concrete with a strut of sheer confidence, as if she were God's gift to the world. Normally that type of arrogance was laughable coming from a female, but in this case he was digging it.

"There they are," said Tony, grinning at both Flash and Earl.

"What's up baby." Candy placed a kiss on Tony's cheek and sat across his lap. She handed him his car keys and placed her arms around his neck. "So you gon' introduce yo friends?"

"You first." Tony sat back with a big smile.

"Okay." Candy stood and turned to make the introduction, displaying a juicy, plump backside that looked so right with the fabric of the body suit and thong all up in it. "This my cousin Meka, this my girl Shay and this my girl Vena."

After clapping his hands in approval, Tony introduced his guest. Of course Flash found each of the girls extremely attractive, but none of them were on Candy's level. The revealing outfit she wore allowed him to view all of her stiff, pointed nipples. Before she sat on Tony's lap, he got a wondrous shot of the cute camel toe puffing up between her legs. His current vantage point gave him a shot of her thick, sexy thighs, which caused his mouth to water damn near to the point of frothing. Flash tried his best to make these observations discreet. The last thing he wanted was to offend Valdez. After all, he had been so hospitable.

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Later on, the party of seven made their way to Valdez's mansion in Beverly Hills. Flash had been in delight ever since he and his cousin entered the Mark VIII some four hours ago. And the more they conversed, the more his admiration for the Cuban gangster grew.

With the sun getting ready to cower away for the day, Tony figured they should soak up the last few rays and relax poolside. Calling his estate immaculate wouldn't do justice to just how spectacular it really was. The \$1.5 million home was equipped with a total of twelve bedrooms and three spacious levels. Flash couldn't deny. The man's wealth impressed him to the point of envy.

"There's a lot of money out here," explained Tony. "I say it's time for us to start getting' it ... while the getting's good. Us underdogs you know? He then propped his feet up on the lounge chair to get extra comfy. "I try to kick it with your cousin, man. I really do like him. Reminds me a bit of myself. But he's thick skulled. Thinks he can slang and gang bang his whole life."

"Yep," agreed Flash. "That sound like E."

"Nothin' wrong with pushin' yey. That's never the message I'm selling. Somebody gotta do it. But in these days you gotta be incognito with your shit. Out here touching little to none of the dope yourself. These fuckin' feds wanna bury our ass under the jail."

"I feel you," Flash chimed in. "Hoes just gave my lil partner from Inkster twenty five years ... for two rocks."

"See that's fuckin' ridiculous. That's why its pays to have a lawyer. A good one at that. Shit'sexpensive as hell, but it comes in handy. Gotta watch those shady bastards, too, though. I find myself having a hard time trusting anyone who's got anything to do with the law."

"Man, I heard that shit," Flash agreed before taking a sip of his bud beer.

Meanwhile, Earl toyed with Candy's company in the swimming pool. Out of nowhere, his block head elevated from under the water, holding a bikini top in each hand.

Candy's large breasted cousin swung wildly, attempting to retrieve the garments.

"Boy gimme that!"

"Told you that shit was comin' off," Earl giggled.

Meka covered her breasts and smiled. Now on the prowl, Earl attacked her friend, Shay, by cupping her bottom from underneath and slamming her into the water. On the counter attack, Meka crept from behind and slid his boxers down. She then retrieved the bikini tops and bashed him over the head with them.

Candy gradually trotted across the wet deck wearing a pair of clear sandals. The nails of her sexy toes were air brushed in a purple and black design. But the main attraction was the two-piece bikini set that displayed the wonderful curves of her luscious body. Her voluptuous hips swivelled magnificently as she carried a silver serving tray in the direction of Tony and Flash.

"Here you go boo." Candy sat the tray down on the glass table beside Tony. She then handed him a glass of vintage brandy with a slice of lime neatly placed on the brim.

"Thank you," said Flash after receiving an identical beverage.

"No problem." Candy was enchanted by the deep tone of Flash's voice, intrigued by his mysterious charm. The mere thought of him sent chills down her spine. The brief eye contact they shared symbolized both of their interest. Flash got the sense that she was a big tease, but with those type of ASS-ets, perhaps she was worth the risk.

“Man,” Flash spoke up after taking a sip of the strong alcoholic beverage. “I can tell I’ma be toast before this night over.”

“Well at least you don’t gotta drive,” Candy replied.

“Ay, I thought it was four of ya’ll. Where ya other girl at?” “She in the house,” Candy quickly and slickly licked her bottom lip. “She makin’ drinks for them in the pool. She told me to ask you why you actin’ all shy.”

Tony saw this as the perfect moment to intervene. “Tell Vena to settle her hormones. Me and my new friend are discussing business. Can we have some more privacy, please?”

“Of course.” Candy obeyed, planting a wet kiss on Tony’s cheek and heading back the way she came. Valdez often prohibited her from meddling in his business topics. But what did she care? She knew what type of guy he was and how he made his money. She was content as long as she was rewarded for her time and efforts. Be that as it may, Candy also detected a bit of jealousy. For someone who claimed no emotional attachments, Tony was quite protective of her, trusting no man in his woman’s presence.

“Vena’s hotter than a Vegas whore,” Tony explained. “She won’t give you no hassle with the pussy. I even ran up in it a few times. But let’s get back to business.”

Flash watched as Tony removed the lid from a small jar labeled “sugar”.

“Damn girl got me side tracked.” With a plastic scooper, Tony poured roughly a teaspoon of white powder on the tray. There was an identical jar on the tray labeled “herbs”. He reached inside and pulled out a clump of sticky green buds.

Staring down at the dope in amazement, Flash couldn’t help but inquire, “May I?” “Go ahead. Knock yourself out.”

Flash dipped a finger into the small pile and tasted the substance --- instantly, his tongue grew numb. The product appeared to be potent as fuck, but there was only one way to be certain. Flash took a straw from the tray and placed it up a nostril. He then braced himself and vacuumed the cocaine from the tray.”

“God damn!” His head snapped back as his eyes commenced to water. The effect shot like a speeding bullet to his brain, tampering with his thoughts. The cocaine blast stunned him, causing his heart to beat hard as fuck for about twenty seconds or so. Finally, he regained his composure, and after that, he literally felt like the man of steel.

“Been a while since I did that shit.” Flash wiped his nose, ensuring that the evidence was gone. “I’m really more of a smoker.”

“Good huh,” suggested Valdez, observing the man’s large dilated pupils. “I hear you though. I tell myself to slow down on the white bitch, but I just can’t seem to get enough of her slutty ass. That rush ... there’s nothing like it. Especially this shit here.”

Tony gulped down the last of the brandy, hoping Candy would be swift on the refill tip despite being shoed away. “As do you, I have a deep connection with this shit here as well.” Tony cleared his throat and began to break the bright green, pungent smelling buds apart. “I been smokin’ for thirty years now and can’t imagine going a single day without it.”

“Word,” Flash agreed. “It’s never enough weed.”

In between the two jars lay a long, slender metal tube. Tony picked it up and slid a thick black cigar from the cylinder. They called it “Midnights”, a brand his business produced that had become rather popular in the Cuban cigar market. Its taste was rich and smooth, the aroma pleasant and smelling of a wonderful blend of naturally sweet tobacco. But it was the actual leaf that attracted the marijuana tokers. The leaf was as durable as it looked, and once sealed inside of a Midnight, the life expectancy of a blunt increased by nearly double.

“I’m gonna give you a few of these to take back with you,” informed Tony, wetting the cigar in his mouth. “I’m telling you ... you’ll never want another green leaf.”

Antonio Valdez was a native product of the malicious Havana streets. But the born and bred criminal wouldn’t struggle in the slums like many of his young friends for long. As a teen, his father became deeply embedded in the drug game, eventually going on to be one of the most powerful men in the city. Tony essentially grew up in the life, learning to apply many of the malevolent tactics adopted from his father, while adding a few of his own. At the age of 22, his father passed from lung cancer and as planned, he inherited the family business.

Several of the other crime lords on the local scene were threatened by Valdez, fearing that his vicious antics would not only challenge their power, but lead to their demise. But aside from those who had pledged their loyalty to his father, Tony didn’t give a shit about those who opposed. We quickly developed a reputation that had him more respected and feared than his father had ever been. Those who tried to test his authority were promptly handled with extreme violence.

Roughly two years after his father’s death, Tony’s power expanded beyond Havana and into neighboring San Cristobal and Matanzas. By this time, all of his adversaries had been disposed of --- wiped out clean. On top of that, anybody who was anybody in the local drug scene was not operating without his consent. Before long, the notorious mobster had seized control over sixty percent of Cuba’s drug territories. It was then that he officially dubbed himself as ruler of Cuba’s underground world.

By the time the early 1990s rolled around, Valdez was at his peak. Now worth well over one hundred million dollars, his reach spread to the political level and took his influence to an all-time high. He had become so powerful, that the Cuban government decided to step in and intervene. Valdez had to be stopped.

Surely, a thug of his kind had no place in the political world. It was his kind that furthered the perception the outside world had about Cuba, wrongly viewing it as another Caribbean nation riddled by gun violence and drug dealing, still draped in the shadow of the infamous Fidel Castro. But despite all the legal shenanigans, the government’s attempts to dethrone him failed miserably. War appeared to be the only option. The island country just wasn’t big enough for both parties.

However, Valdez eventually grew fatigued, and after years of battling the system, even he knew he was locked in a no-win situation. When two corrupt politicians were found brutally slain in the trunks of their cars and all fingers pointed to him, he knew he had to escape before his world came crumbling down around him. Valdez decided to relocate to the U.S., California to be exact. Though he was still calling many of the shots from afar, it was his younger, more ruthless brother left behind to officially operate the family dynasty.

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The convo with Tony was intriguing and all that, but Flash couldn’t avoid being curious to Candy’s whereabouts. He hadn’t seen her since she’d delivered the drinks about an hour ago. He and Tony weren’t talking much now. Both were mentally stimulated from the combination of weed, liquor and coke --- officially in LaLa Land. Still, Flash couldn’t help but dream up visions and thoughts of Candy in his mind. He vividly pictured the way she stared him down, the way she licked her delicious lips while doing so. Her incredible image just wouldn’t leave him.

Though Candy plagued his mind, it was Vena peeping from the glass door of the house in a purple silk robe. It was a distance away, but even in his near comatose state, blurred vision and all, Flash observed the woman with a breast fully exposed, massaging the nipple on the round melon like no tomorrow. Vena was probably the finest of the four women next to Candy. Why not take advantage? This was supposed to be a vacation.

Going for what he knew, Flash cleared his throat and excused himself. "Excuse me." He pried his body from the comfy lounge chair and gave a quick stretch before setting out on this new mission.

"Handle your business," replied Tony, glancing back at Vena, knowing damn well what time it was. "Be careful boy. She's a wild one."

"Is that right?" Sounded like a challenge, and that was something Flash would never shy away from.

Flash approached, and just when he was about a foot away from the door, Vena disappeared. Apparently she wanted him to engage in a game of cat and mouse. "Where this bitch at," he asked himself while cautiously entering the house. His first step took him into the kitchen. Another step forward and he noticed the elusive woman in the room to his left. Flash followed and caught up with her in a large, exquisite looking dining area.

"Come and get it." Vena ducked off into another room, this time, leaving a pair of purple thong panties and the robe behind on the carpet. Flash followed, eager to view the mysterious woman in all her glorious nakedness. Hot on her trails, he could at least attest that the backside view was a beauty to behold. Now pacing a bit faster, he stalked down a long hallway before following her into another room, where he found a most shocking bombshell.

"I had to find some way to get you alone." There, in what looked to be workout room of sorts, stood Candy with her back against a wall --- Vena was nowhere to be found. A lustful passion filled her eyes while a few fingers went to work in her pussy. Oh yeah ... for descriptive purposes, it would probably help to explain that she was stark naked. While the fingers of one hand went to work, the other caressed the stiff nipple that served as the centerpiece of a larger than normal sized areola --- think Jada Fire.

Like a 15 year old virgin, Flash tensed up and tried his hardest to look away. Yeah ... he failed miserably. How could he not gawk over this masterful piece of work created by none other than God himself? The fact that she was fully engaged in self-stimulation made it impossible as her fingers just kept plucking and popping away, while she bit down hard on her juicy bottom lip.

Candy was hotter than a Sin City summer night and clearly ready to go to war with the sexy stranger. The damn thing instantly "flashed" through Flash's foggy brain --- about 69 different positions in 15 seconds. But forming the backdrop of that smoking hot, pornographic montage was something horrific --- Valdez's smiling face.

"Come on now, you know this ain't right." Fighting temptation, Flash stared down at the white carpet, hoping she would put her fingers away and withdraw the offer.

"You tellin' me you don't like what you see?" Candy was stubborn and persistent with her desires. She knew there wasn't a man alive that could resist her. Flash was sure to fall into the same category. If not today, soon. "What's the matter?" She stepped up and put two of the sticky, semi-sweet smelling fingers up to his lips. "I know you want me. You wanna fuck the shit outta me. I can feel it."

Now standing face to face, Flash could feel the wonderful warmth of Candy's body as her soft breasts pressed against his sturdy, yet wobbly frame. The tension in the room rose as did he

when she slowly slid a finger down his chest and stopped at the waistline of his pants. “Don’t worry. I understand ... for now. But I won’t be denied for too long. I will have you eating out of my hand ... and other places.”

And with that, Candy strutted off, round and finely sculpted booty swaying marvelously on the way out. After all that, Flash could do nothing but sigh and think of how close he may have come to suffering death by pussy.

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From earth’s view, the scorching sun was covered by a swarm of collapsing clouds. A Channel 14 meteorologist had predicted showers in the forecast but not a drop had fallen yet. And though the day had come to an end, this night was far from over.

Flash was spent and now exhausted while lying on his back on the soft king-sized bed in one of Tony’s three guest rooms. Content couldn’t describe how he felt. At that moment, he didn’t have a single, solitary care in the world.

About an hour had passed since he, Earl and Vena shared two hefty joints out by the pool. That was about 20 minutes after Candy pulled that sizzling stunt in the workout room. She could shoulder the blame for the punishing he put on Vena’s ass. All he could think about was Candy while waxing her friend’s rump from the rear. From the moment he inserted the man of steel, to the moment he exploded all in Vena’s crack and up her back, visions of Candy dominated his mind. Flash didn’t smoke but could sure go for a cigarette following that taxing experience.

Vena had been gone for around five minutes, and Flash couldn’t help being a bit noided about her disappearance. Yeah, he was having a blast lapping up the life of luxury with Tony and all, but despite Earl’s claims, he didn’t know this nigga from the next cat on the streets. And to be honest, the little he did know actually scared him.

“Ready for round two?” Vena entered the room with a refreshing glass of iced tea in hand. Flash just smiled like a small child, mentally preparing himself for the inevitable --- branding his name up in that pussy.

Chapter 6: Flash Anxiety

July 8, 1997 2:43 am

No matter how hard he tried, Flash just couldn't fall asleep. Still cooped up in the motel, he replayed the day at Valdez's place vividly, as if it all happened yesterday. The few hours he spent in the Hills were quite eventful, filled with intoxicating treats and pleasant surprises. But all that happy shit was done and in the past. In the present day, shit was much more hectic, deadlier than ever. Maybe he wouldn't feel like such a mental wreck once his feet hit Michigan soil. Better yet, once free of Candy's poisonous presence and Valdez's soon to be never-ending pursuit.

July 8, 1997 12:14 pm

Swiftly pacing through the compact and crowded halls of LAX airport, the devious couple were relieved when they finally reached the departing flights. Flash took that brief moment to scan the area for predators. He knew they were up to their neck in it and wouldn't put it past Tony to attempt to pull off the seemingly impossible airport assassination. At this point, just being seen together was a deathly gamble they were betting with their lives.

"I hate airports," Candy growled. "All this fuckin' standin' around for the birds." The disguise of dark shades, a blue hair scarf, and light wool jacket was certainly a contrast from the diva's ordinarily dashing attire, but even she knew the severity of the situation at hand.

The gum had lost its flavor long ago, yet Flash still chewed it ruggedly, mistakenly chomping his poor tongue on a few occasions. He was a nervous man. Scratch that --- petrified, fumbling over his words, peeping over his shoulders. He dreaded feeling this way. It chopped away at his manhood. Flash was known as a certified "G" in some of the toughest Detroit hoods, but here he was, damn near trembling at the thought of what Tony could do to him. So this is what it was like to fear another man? Flash had never known that specific emotion. But Valdez was far from the ordinary street thug. He reminded Flash a bit of Al Pacino in Scarface, with a hint of the celebrated actor's character of Michael Corleone in the Godfather.

"You alright bay?" Candy attempted to peer into Flash's disturbed eyes.

"I'm straight. I just need to get the fuck outta here. Can't think around this muthafucka." Flash stuffed his hands in his pockets and commenced to pace in place.

Candy smacked her lips and spoke, "I still think you blowin' this out of proportion. Just chill out and have a little patience."

Flash simply gave her the "why I outta" face while forcibly sealing his lips and clenching his teeth. He had a strong urge to cock back and drop the cocky bitch where she stood. She'd been so irritating over the last 12 hours, doing nothing more than blowing smoke up his ass as far as he was concerned. He knew she was trying to be optimistic in light of a fucked up situation, but her company was anything but welcomed at this point. Flash needed to get away from Candy and quickly.

"Look here," Flash sternly whispered, trying to maintain a calm head even though it felt like his top would blow clean off. "We slippin' right now. We gotta be careful than a muthafucka. We gotta get back home safe before we get all nonchalant with the shit."

Candy put her hands in the loose denim pockets and smiled. "I just don't want you to get back to Detroit and forget about me." *Selfish bastard*. He acted like she didn't put her life on the line to set him up for the win. *Niggas*.

"Come on now," said Flash, his tone softer and sincere. "This shit wasn't all about the money and the yey. It was also about you --- the best reward of all. And if wasn't for you, we wouldn't have been able to pull this shit off. We gon' get together. Just gotta be careful."

Candy gave a weak smile, and tried her best to remain strong while watching Flash walk off and leave her standing there alone.

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A sense of comfort fell over him when he stepped foot on the plane. After locating his seat, Flash fastened himself in and tried to unwind. Never had he experienced such an urge to return back home. Of all places, no one planned their family vacation to Detroit. Shit wasn't necessarily tourist-friendly, especially in the pre-casino era. But Flash would cherish this trip like none other, and be thankful just to breathe the polluted ghetto air.

As planned, he and Candy were leaving Vegas and headed for their respective destinations. Who knew of the dangers that awaited them? Although there were a few hiccups --- major ones, they'd essentially pulled off part-A of the plan with success. Now on to part-B --- surviving. That one would prove to be much harder than it sounded. Flash was almost sure of it.

He ripped open the small bag of salted peanuts and laid back his head back on the hard cushion of the seat. After closing his eyes, Flash began to review the deadly web of deception in which he found himself tangled. He and the boys had just hit a massive lick, not to mention, committed murder in the process. Now that he was on his way home, he hoped that his cousins were making it their safely as well. Traveling from coast to coast with such a large bundle of dope was as risky as it gets, but then again, this entire job screamed "fucking crazy" from the start.

Paranoia began to settle as the plane zoomed down the runway and coasted into the sky. Out of nowhere, a hostage scene featuring Cuban terrorists as the culprits invaded Flash's thoughts. He laughed, knowing himself that the shit was ridiculous, but that's how mentally challenging this ordeal had become. As farfetched as it sounded him, he wouldn't be shocked if the flying mechanical bird went kaboom right then and there.

Tell anyone in the hood the story, and they'd say the boys just pulled off the crime of the century. In a sense, they really did. They made out with the dope, the money, and more importantly, their lives. But there was one vital component of the ploy that didn't go according to plans --- Tony's death, or lack thereof. The man was still alive, and though Candy said she would handle everything from here, simply knowing that the man he'd just fucked without the slightest smooch was probably sitting somewhere plotting revenge had him shook from within.

Chapter 7: Mr. Flossy

July 1, 1997 12:47 pm

The nervous female reporter cleared her throat and explained, “Acting on a tip, Detroit police stormed their way into the residence behind me, a suspected crackhouse, and seized large quantities of cocaine, marijuana and cash, in addition to guns and several rounds of ammunition. This is the fourth drug bust in this particular area in the past month alone. More at five.”

“Crooked bastards.” Flash shook his head while viewing the tube in the living room from the kitchen. His heart went out to his fellow dealers on the east side, particularly Pat, a longtime friend who operated the latest spot to have its plug pulled by Detroit’s finest. With a devastating drought already in effect, those boys were sure to endure a heavy loss.

Needing something to calm the growl of his empty stomach, Flash poured half of the new box of corn flakes into a huge plastic bowl. Two packages of restaurant sugar and a handful of diced bananas were then added to give it that extra boost of flavor. After pouring the ice cold milk over the cereal, Flash pulled a chair up to the table and commenced to devouring what would easily be his healthiest meal of the day.

“Leave a message,” said Flash as the telephone rang and he didn’t even attempt to answer. Hopefully it wasn’t his annoying ass boss, Ronald Meiser. Yes indeed. Even though he was making thousands of dollars per week out in the streets, Flash kept a decent paying gig at all times. It was a nice little coverup that worked exceptionally well at keeping the spotlight off his rapidly expanding drug operation.

Meiser hated for employees to leave messages on his voicemail, especially if they were calling off. But that would have to suffice today. After the night Flash had just put in, the bastard was lucky to get that. Hell, he even contemplated never returning to that hellhole ever again. Stocking the supermarket shelves on the graveyard shift wasn’t the worst gig by any means, but anything outside of bundling up packages and collecting large sums of money was beneath the Detroit hustler.

Last night was the fourth annual celebration of Eddies, at Eddies, one of the most popular exotic night clubs in all of the D. Flash couldn’t recall the time he came stumbling into the house, but it had to be around four or five a.m. He had consumed so much liquor and weed that he failed to make it to his room. Therefore, the living room floor became his bed.

In mid crunch, Flash attempted to remember the name of the sexy little tamale he snook off in the bathroom with for a quickie. Was it Tina or Tamera? Whoever it was, they would probably be calling him tonight for a longer encore. A balling cat of his stature was a fine catch for the cheese chasing rats around the way.

The telephone rang just as Flash raised his spoon for another gobble. To hell with dodging all these calls. He didn’t feel like going at it with his boss, yet he was more than prepared to tell Meisier where to stick it if need be. After a deep breath, he walked over to answer the cordless phone receiver mounted on the kitchen wall.

A phone conversation:

Flash: Hello.

“How you doin,” greeted a strange, but familiar female voice.

Flash: Who is this?

“Who you been thinkin’ bout since you left Cali?”

Flash: Candy? How you get my number?

Candy: Tony just happened to leave it layin’ around.

Flash: Tony. How he doin’?

Candy: He doin’ fine if he doin’ me.

Flash: (snickers) You ain’t got him on the three-way do you?

Candy: Come on now, I called to talk to you. I wanna know if I can see you again.

Flash: Yeah. I think I’d like that. Maybe we can hook that up.

Flash and Candy talked for perhaps twenty more minutes. It didn’t take long for the conversation to pick up a provocative adult theme that was to both of their liking. The convo was so intriguing, that they agreed to get together in person to get to know each other a little better. Just one time was all he needed to explore the raunchy woman’s wild side. Luckily for Flash, Candy was flying into Metro Airport --- tonight.

Flash wouldn't touch Candy with a 10-foot pole in California, but now that he was back in Detroit, betraying Antonio Valdez was the last thing on his mind. Funny how the degree of fearlessness and giving a fuck less increases when you're in the comfort of your own backyard.

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With the day approaching late afternoon, the sun shined gloriously over the hood and its warmth made for a temperature that seemed just right. Flash decided to free his white track suit from a two month long imprisonment in the closet and go old school. After lacing and tying the strings of his white and black Adidas snug, he snatched up his car keys and set out for what would be a most epic day in Detroit.

“Fu – ck – in’ piece of shit.” Since the lock jammed on occasions and the sensor was shot to hell thanks to Chaz, Flash had a rather difficult time lifting the garage door via the manual route. He finally succeed after two minutes or so, fortunate enough not to get a smudge of dirt on his pearly white attire.

“Damn you beautiful.” Inside of the garage sat his most prized possession --- a 1982 Cutlass Supreme. There was nothing he adored more. Not even his three-foot marble water bong could compare to its prestige. Flash circled the vehicle from front to back, taking a moment to admire the treasure. It took two years of sweat dripping, knuckle busting dedication to restore the vehicle’s appearance, performance, and actual life itself. But it was no sweat to Flash. He

dedicated himself to the restoration process and refused to drive the car until it was completely revitalized.

With a refurbished 350 engine situated under the hood, the now classic model vehicle possessed the power of a freight, yet purred softly while idle. From the blown camshafts and leaking oil pan to the shredded serpentine belt, Flash replaced each of the engine's vital organs and accessories. And once the motor was completely restored, a set of chrome five-star rims and a glimmering coat of fresh money green paint was slapped on the exterior just for visual shits and giggles. When pulling that bad boy out the garage, you couldn't tell this nigga shit.

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"Time to check my crackhouse, my crackhouse, my crackhouse." For an adrenaline junkie like Flash, racing down a residential street at forty miles an hour was pure fun. Hopefully local pedestrians would hear the swift engine approaching and seek cover because he sure as hell wasn't taking caution.

"I ain't takin' no shorts!" Flash bobbed his head while reciting the lyrics with fiery passion. The bass thumping from the trunk was so overwhelming he could barely hear himself or the lyrics. But as long as the beat continued to bang, Flash was more than content.

Summer vacation had been in progress for two weeks and the neighborhood blocks reflected the activity as kids were busy riding their bikes, playing hoops, and just being kids. A group of ambitious young hoopers respectively cleared a path as Flash cruised their way and honked his horn to say "what up".

Flash pulled up in front of the house with his right tire intentionally up on the curb. "What up nigga," he said after stepping from the Cutlass. "Jackie in there?"

"Nope," replied Ron. "Her and Dave just went to the liquor sto." Ron was the oldest member of Flash's crew. At 35, he was a true O.G. who just couldn't get out of the game. Part of it was because he was just in too damn deep. The other part had to do with loving the money, highs, and bitches that came with being in the life. After being released from prison five years ago, Ron swore to never distribute drugs again. But when Flash, his lil homie called with a 'favor', there was no way he could pass up on the opportunity. If nothing, loyalty ran deep within this crew.

"What's up with yo cool ass," teased Flash after giving his friend a good look-over. "They doin' pimp of the year tonight?"

"Fuck you mane," replied Ron, defending the silk blue shirt and dressy black slacks he wore. "I gotta date tonight."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah." Ron cleared his throat. "This lil cute white bitch from Eaton county. She takin' a nigga out to eat in shit."

"What?" Flash seemed surprised as ever. "You interbreeding? Betta be careful nigga. Know what they say. Once you go white ... yo ass just ain't right."

"Man, fuck what you heard. I'm bout to have this bitch handin' over the keys to the trust fund."

Flash laughed and slapped his friends hand. "Well pimp wit yo cool ass. Ay, that nigga Chaz up in there?"

"Yeah that nigga in there. Him and Big M's."

Just then Chaz came walking up from the side of the house. “What up fool.” He carried an empty beer bottle and a dazed, half-crazy glare in his eyes. If Flash didn’t know any better, he’d be scared. The white tank top he wore was torn at the shoulder, yet still looked relatively new. Shit was just weird when it came to Chaz.

“Who put that shit in yo head,” asked Flash, thumping a braid of Chaz’s long, dangling hair. “Look like you from Compton in shit.”

“Fuck you.” Chaz gave his cousin a playful shove. “Bitch I’m from the D! Fuck Cali!”

“Don’t let that nigga Earl hear you say that shit,” Flash continued. “That nigga get all emotional about his whereabouts.” Flash walked up to Chaz and out of nowhere, gave him a quick, short jab to the ribs. “And I told you bout calling me a bitch, nigga.” He stepped back with a grin, watching his little cousin grasp the affected area while gasping for air.

“Damn cuz, my bad. You know I be all high and shit. What you doin’ out here anyway, man? That nigga Jenkins finally cleared his tab?”

Flash gave his cousin a stare that just screamed: What the fuck you talkin’ bout?! “The fuck you talkin’ bout?”

“You ain’t know? That nigga Bob in there with M’s. Nigga tryin’ to get two free boulders. I’m like, nigga you must be high.”

Chaz’s revelation sent intense anger rushing through Flash. His cheerful smile became a scowl of pure evil as he balled his hand into a tight fist. “I’m a kill that bitch!” Flash stormed up the porch with the eyes of a starved tiger hungry for blood.

“Feel sorry for that nigga Bob,” said Ron, shaking his head while trying to straighten out the wrinkles in his slacks.

For more than twelve years, Robert Jenkins held the respectable reputation as the friendly guy who worked the photo station at the local drug store. A true pillar of the community, Bob was admired and adored by most of the neighborhood residents. Flash could even recall taking young Chaz to visit Mr. Jenkins, just to say hi. Bob would give Chaz candy while smoking cigarettes and shooting the shit about what was going on in the neighborhood with Flash.

Yes indeed, there couldn’t have been a person more humble and kindhearted than good ole Bob Jenkins. He was truly good peoples and real, which is what Flash liked about him. But as time dwindled, so did Bob’s character and aspirations. It was five years ago when Flash discovered a most lucrative and painful secret, one that at the time, no one could ever imagine.

The friendly film developer had started packing a pocket pipe. This apparatus didn’t ignite the sticky green buds. It was exclusively reserved for that rocked up white girl. One day, Flash caught Bob in the act on the side of a dumpster behind the store. At first he was appalled, wondering what sort of trauma the man was enduring. But his hustling heart would only allow so much sympathy, especially knowing he had some of the best dope in the city. So Flash approached Jenkins for what he was --- a crackhead. It was difficult for him to stare the man in the eye, but their relationship was based solely on business now. Flash carried no more respect or admiration for the man.

In the beginning, Bob played the role of loyal, punctual customer. He actually became a top-dollar customer, purchasing so much dope that Flash felt he owed the man. He couldn’t explain it but a part of him still liked Jenkins, so after two years of supplying him, he felt comfortable enough to set up a credit account. Flash hoped he wouldn’t regret the decision, but somehow knew he would.

Bob continued to lead a normal life while for the most part, puffing rocks in secrecy. He soon got up to three hundred dollars worth of crack per week. And while it was nice, guaranteed

cash for Flash, slowly, but surely, the unforgiving drug took its toll on poor Bob. Before long, his health and hygiene went to shits. Nothing mattered any more. He would report to work in a filthy uniform, looking like literal hell and smelling as if he hadn't bathed in days. Once slimming down to a boney 130lbs., those close to Bob began to worry. His temper grew hot and his drinking became compulsive --- all this on top of a crack cocaine habit that had spiraled out of control. Mary Jenkins wanted out. She swore never to be involved in an abusive relationship, and held her word by making moving arrangements after the first punch. The divorce proceedings followed.

From the D to Philly, the hood gobbles the gossip, and to no surprise, the Jenkins became the talk of the neighborhood. Everyone was aware of the separation, and Bob poured his heart to Flash whenever possible. But in the midst of marital problems and personal strife, he maintained his habit. The rock was his salvation, his only method of escaping the fucked up life he created for himself on earth. Pretty soon, that world crumbled. His boss wouldn't tolerate the tardiness and insubordination, which ultimately led to his termination. Worst of all, Flash deleted his drug tab. Bob had fallen back on four payments, accumulating four hundred dollars in debt to a man who didn't take lightly to his finances. In fear of Flash's fury, Jenkins vanished --- no one had seen him in three months until today.

Bob stood in the center of the living room with his left leg trembling, looking pathetic as fuck. Although he'd been using for a while, never had he looked so hopeless. His hair was dry and matted down to his head, spotted with areas of dusty gray. The chunky frosted flakes of dandruff made it difficult to tell what was really going on with his hair, but it was a mess to say the least. His black denim jacket, faded and torn at the elbows, happened to top off the same dingy outfit he wore the last time Flash saw him over three months ago.

"Come on Malik. I been knowing you since a kid man." Bob swayed from left to right with palms extended, literally pleading for that handout. "Flash ain't gotta know I was ever here."

Some would use the phrase "speaking of the devil" because right after he spoke those words, Flash came stomping into the room, seething and prepared to strike like a poisonous rattler. Terrified at the sight of the man he'd purposely been avoiding, Bob dropped the crumbled green paper he held tightly in his hand to the floor.

"What the fuck is this?" Flash bent over to retrieve the money. He straightened out the currency the best he could and grew even more irate after calculating the sum. "Forty dollars! You a brave muthafucka Bobby boy! You gon' go behind my back with this bullshit?! Up in my muthafuckin' spot?!"

"Come on Flash," Bob cried. "Just let me slide til later. My ole lady bout to give me three hundred dollars round five o'clock. I'll be right back over here to set you right."

Disapproving of the man's excuse, Flash stepped up with rage and nailed Bob dead in the mouth with a hard right hook. Bob stumbled back, only to be clutched by his collar and blasted with a knee shot to the balls. Flash then delivered a swift uppercut, sending the man crashing to the wood floor.

"I'm sorry," Bob pleaded as Flash punished him with a succession of brutal kicks to his kidneys.

"I told you! I told you not to fuck wit my money! What you thought -- I was -- playin' -- muthafucka?!" Staring down at the pitiful man with disgust, Flash attempted to calm himself before things got out of hand. Bob appeared to be in great agony. There was no need in catching a murder case over this shit. Flash was beyond four hundred bucks, but this shit was about principals.

Feeling like he'd done enough damage, Flash simply dropped the money over the battered man and stormed out of the house.

After helping Bob up and out the back door, Big M's followed Flash onto the porch. He then dug into his huge pocket, retrieved a large sum of cash, handed it to Flash and said, "Settle down man, it's all there."

"You get the nigga up outta there?"

"Yes sir. Please. Don't unleash the rage on me."

"Chill out man." Flash crammed the money into his back pocket. "You know that nigga had it comin' when he showed up here."

"Still dog," Big M's laughed. "It's obvious to be me that yo ass need a hug. Anger management ... somethin'."

Malik McGee was given the nickname "Big Ms" at the age of twelve, which is really when the bulking or "hulking" process started to take effect. Back then he stood five foot nine and weighed 200 lbs. Once entering high school, the massive kid became an unstoppable force on the varsity football team. As the starting center, he protected the quarterback and crushed anyone who opposed his position. But with a best friend like Chaz, who had been a troubled youth since the age of eleven, it was hard for Big M's to focus on his priorities in the athletic arena. Chaz was affiliated with high rolling thugs who pushed crack and drove fast, fancy cars. The fast life appealed to Big M's, and much to the chagrin of his parents and family, he declined all the scholarships he had on the table and elected to assist his friends in the dope game.

Ron returned from the store and Chaz instantly filled him in on what took place inside the house. Both found the situation comical and displayed it with jokes to ridicule their mans.

"Damn cuz," Chaz laughed. "If I would've known you was gon' wild out like that on Bob I wouldn't had told you he was in there."

"Fuck ya'll niggas, alright," Flash barked as he walked down the cement stairs of the porch en route to his ride. "You know how I am bout my papa. I ain't takin' no shorts. If that nigga ain't here round this time tomorrow wit my money ya'll niggas betta page me."

Chapter 8: Just Like Candy

July 1, 1997 8:16 pm

Luxury accommodations aside, Flash dreaded the nauseating aroma of potpourri and Lysol that lingered throughout the hotel lobby. It was the same foul ass smell he encountered every time he visited the Shabodique Inn, the hotel space he leased whenever entertaining a high-end piece of tail. It was a bizarre coincidence that at the time, started to aggravate a stomach that was already unsettled with butterflies.

The time was now 8:20 pm According to their arrangement, Candy was twenty minutes late. "Where this hoe at?" Flash grew frustrated and impatient as the lobby began to fill up with guests. Her tardiness forced him to conjure up other females he could call if plan-A happened to fail. Unfortunately, he didn't deem any of them worthy of a fancy joint such as this.

"This bitch need to hurry up." Flash was restless and the more he waited, the more he craved a toke of sweet marijuana. He hadn't smoked since early this morning, and after realizing he didn't bring any with him, he started to panic something fierce. Whether she showed up or not, Flash couldn't imagine himself making it through this night without his crutch.

"Hey, Flash. What's going on?"

Flash looked up and hovering over him was Kayland. The 19-year old white boy stood there with a goofy grin and push broom in hand. "What you doin' here?"

Flash stared down at his gold Rolex and replied, "Waitin' on this lil chick. I'm bout to go back to the crib if she ain't here soon, though."

Making sure the coast was clear, Kayland looked left to right and asked, "Got anything on you?" Kayland was responsible for cleaning the laundry room, cafeteria, and common areas of the hotel. Knowing the boy to be a habitual drug user and fuck-up, Flash was surprised to see that he held onto the job for so long.

"Nope. It's actually an off-night for me, dog." Flash glanced down at his watch again, growing even more agitated now that Kayland had showed. "I could sho go for a blunt my damn self right about now, though."

"You and me both dude," said Kayland, clearly disappointed. The youngster carried a demented glare in his eyes, indicating that he'd either took one too many sweeps of the broom or thirsted for a chemically induced high --- perhaps it was a little of both.

Since the young age of sixteen, Kayland had been an abuser of multiple drugs. And though he got started much later than many of his peers, once he started experimenting, he dove in hard and never looked back. In that three year period, the boy had tested his fate with a variety of substances, dabbling in chemicals ranging from GHB to LSD. But while many close to him viewed the boy's drug dependance as a detriment, Flash saw it as an attribute, mainly because he could count on some fat money every time Kayland called, which was quite often.

Nearly 30 more minutes had elapsed after getting rid of Kayland and still there was no sight of Candy. At this point, Flash was beyond annoyed. The hotel lobby had filled and emptied all while he sat there waiting impatiently. Among that traffic was a flamboyant, openly gay dude who Flash could have sworn winked an eye or two. The eye contact he kept dishing out was no doubt uncomfortable.

"Man, this hoe full of shit." Flash could take no more. He lowered his head in frustration, thinking of a plan-B and how he could possibly make up for this colossal waste of time. But just

as he positioned his palms on the sofa cushion to lift himself up, his vision was graced with a flat brown stomach decorated with a diamond-based navel ring.

“Where you think you goin’?” Candy shoved Flash back onto the couch and climbed on top of him. “I know you ain’t tryna leave me.”

On instinct, Flash cupped Candy’s round ass in the palms of his hands and gazed up into her big, beautiful, hypnotizing eyes. This is why he waited around and put his life at risk. Candy was simply stunning, a perfect 10 if there ever was such a thing. He so wanted to undress her, feast on her delicious parts, and take her right there on the couch. But the desk clerk was starting to get uneasy and besides, that’s why he copped a luxurious suite for the evening.

“So where we goin’,” asked Candy after gaining her composure and repositioning herself next to him on the sofa.

To the room --- that was the first thought that flashed through Flash’s mind. But sex with this goddess was a given. Bitch didn’t fly all the way to Detroit not to serve up the pussy on a platter. For now, he’d play the role of host and show her the town, in addition to the fact that he was more than just a sharp dressing thug with dick for days. She’d learn what Flash was all about soon enough. So on second thought .

“It’s up to you. You’re a guest in my town so I just want to treat you to a fabulous experience. One that’ll having you recommend friends and family to vacating in the D.”

Yeah okay,” Candy said between a giddy grin. “How about we start with some good food. Bitch hungry than a mug.”

Flash laughed. “I’m wit that.”

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The atmosphere in the Italian restaurant screamed high-class dining --- the exuberant prices on the menu confirmed it. Joints like this were a rarity for Flash, but for Candy, it had become a routine way of living.

“This is a really nice place,” she complimented while having a look around. “Come here often?”

“Every now and then,” Flash replied. “Whenever I’m feeling lavish and Italian.” He tacked on his best Italian accent for good measure.

“Boy you silly. So tell me something.”

“Somethin’ like what?”

“Something I don’t know about you. Of course I barely know anything ... besides what my girl told me.”

Flash briefly thought back to his sexual encounter with Vena, and boy what an encounter it was. He then decided to play along. “Well ... I’m a Scorpion, I like animals, and enjoy quite walks along the beach.”

As expected, that one had Candy rolling, flaunting those pearly whites and giggling like the Happy Hooker in a room full of well-to-do tricks.

Things were going well, but internally, Flash had to admit that maintaining focus on anything other than sex was difficult. Candy’s lips were so inviting. He loved how they slurped up the noodles from the creamy pasta, just knowing they could be much more useful in a more sensual setting. Bitch even had a beautiful set of teeth, something he rarely ever paid attention to. Flash couldn’t wait to get back to the room. Back in Cali he was able to resist. In Michigan, now that she had come to him, it was clear to see that he just had to have her.

“Mmm,” Candy moaned after clearing the corners of her mouth with the huge handkerchief. “That was so good.”

“Will we be having dessert?” The waiter crept up just as the couple had finished their meal. He’d served them well and by simply observing the couple’s demeanor, he had a good feeling about getting a generous tip.

The look Flash shot Candy indicated that it was her call. What she did next was a pleasant surprise. “You know what, I think we’re gonna call it a night. Can we have our check, please?”

“Sure, no problem.” The waiter trotted along, leaving the two strangers alone to contemplate the next move.

“So I take it you ready to go?” After looking down in his plate for the last minute or so, Flash decided to give Candy some deep penetrating eye contact.

“Yes.”

“Where to? How else can I show you a good time?” Lips twisted and pressed together, Candy gave Flash a naughty look and replied, “I can think of many ways, but how bout we head back to the hotel for starters.”

“Yeah?” Flash tried to play cool, but the cheesy grin did little to contain his excitement.

“Yeah. I’m feelin’ the need to slip into a little something more comfortable.”

“Well alright.”

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The night mask hovered over Metro Detroit as Flash and Candy relaxed in the lavish leased quarters at the Shabodique Inn. Flash was rarely left impressed with any female beyond body and head game, but Candy had already left a hell of an impression. Not only did her head appear to be snug on her shoulders, she was his type of gal in the way of partying. Before even leaving the parking lot of the restaurant, she inquired about what they would be smoking and sipping on for the evening. This led to a trip to the deep east side, where Candy actually offered to purchase the dank and drank, but of course, Flash wouldn’t hear of it. In short, the time had come to do the damn thang.

“Remember it, write it down, take a picture ... I don’t give a fuck! I was like hell naw. That shit had me rollin’ mane.”

“Yeah that nigga Smokey was a fool,” Flash chimed in. “I remember the first time I saw that movie was at the drive-in ... on a Friday at that. We was so high and laughing so hard, we ended up staying until they played it a second time and watched it again. Think it was like five in the morning by the time we left that God damn drive-in.”

Candy’s idea of something more comfortable was a pink Ralph Lauren Terry Cloth top and bottom short set. Not the slutty Victoria’s Secret getup he was silently hoping for, but don’t get it twisted --- Candy wore it, and wore it well. Flash looked forward to the moments where she would get up and prance to the bathroom, teasing him with her peeking cheeks along the way. She had enough sex appeal to lend some out and still enjoy premium coverage.

Flash and Candy lay stretched on the king-sized bed passing a thick blunt back and forth while indulging a classic jailhouse card game by name of tonk. She was a stunning dame no doubt, but Flash couldn’t get over how cool and down to earth she was. Candy reminded him of some of the more homelier looking hoodrats from the block. The type who were always in some shit and talking about splittin’ another bitch’s shit to the white meat. It was the last thing he expected from someone he’d already pegged as “stuck up” on first glance.

“Tell me somethin’.” Flash decided it was his time to play gameshow host.

“Somethin’ like what?”

“Like why you being a bad girl? Taking a gamble on a no-good nigga like me?”

Candy maintained her smile, but he could tell he’d struck a nerve just by her shift in movement on the bed. “I love to travel. I live dangerously. And I like I told you earlier ... I want, and get what I want.”

“I hear you, I hear you. But what Tony think about all that? He don’t strike me as a cat too keen on sharing.”

The deeper he probed, the more agitated she became. Candy dropped one head on the bed, took a huge tug on the reefer with the other, and glared Flash directly in the eyes, smile now gone. This was shit he wanted to know, but never got around to asking due to all the flirting and sexual references that filled their phone conversation.

Candy was a bit rattled but handled it well. She scooted up to dangle her legs off the edge of the bed and said, “I know it may be hard to believe, but Tony doesn’t own me. We have a business relationship ... nothing more, nothing less.”

“My bad baby,” Flash apologized as he moved in closer from behind. “I ain’t mean to rub you the wrong way. And um ... you gon’ pass that?”

Candy laughed and took another monster-sized puff before finally letting Flash have his turn at the reefer. “My bad ... about the weed. But naw, it’s no sweat boo-boo. And for your information ... I would prefer that Tony not know about this visit. I’d like to think this is something we could keep between me and you.”

“Oh, most definitely.” Flash disposed of the tail, reached over to the night stand and returned with a cup, which he presented to Candy.

“You put somethin’ in this?”

“Hell yeah.”

Candy smirked and guzzled the strong combination of gin and orange juice she prepared earlier. Two more chugs like that and it was gone. “Anyway ... how you know I didn’t come here to discuss business with you?”

“Is that what it is?”

Candy flung the cup to the floor, tossed Flash back on the bed, and climbed on top of him. “Soon. For now ... it’s all pleasure.”

Her crotch meshed up against his, Flash commenced to rise from beneath, against the resistance of his underwear and track pants. Candy usually found herself more aggressive when under the influence, and boy was she ever loaded. This was their second blunt and she and Flash had already plowed through more than half the fifth of Tango.

Candy leaned down to position herself face to face with Flash, foreheads touching, lips brushing against his. “You gotta excuse me. I get extremely horny when I’m all high and drunk.”

“I feel you. I rarely have sober pussy ... or pussy sober. You know what I mean.” The two shared a laugh before engaging in a deep, wet liplock that saw Candy leading the way with an aggressive tongue. Meanwhile, Flash took delight in cupping the naked flesh of her round rear from underneath the shorts, where he found a thin G-string parting the cheeks.

Much to both their chagrin, Candy stopped to come up for air. But when she removed her top, Flash realized it was all for the best. In the process, she revealed a pair of perky breasts that while smaller than he normally liked, somehow fit perfectly on her damn near perfect frame.

“You ever been pussy whapped?”

Bitch what? Flash couldn't believe she mustered up the nerve to ask such a question. But then again, he learned that nothing should come as a surprise when it concerned this bold and daring diva. "Can't say that I have. And I damn sure ain't been forewarned that I was bout to be whupped." He couldn't deny, though --- he was diggin' this bitch somethin' fierce.

"Well, you know what they say ... it's a first time for everything." With that, Candy let her head and hands travel the southern route, finding their way to Flash's pants, which were quickly unbuckled, unfastened, and yanked off with his assistance. She was pleasantly surprised to see that his manhood had already slithered its way out of the dickhole of his boxers, already at full attention and ready for a waxing. As if starved for cock, Candy clamped down on the stiff stick of flesh like a famished dog to a bone and commenced to bobbing and weaving, allowing her talented mouth to lead the way.

No stranger to the sex game, Flash had his knob polished on many occasions --- by crackhead whores in the alley and dime pieces in 3-star hotels alike. But just a couple seconds into this one and he could already tell it would be high on the list. Candy succeeded where many bitches before her failed, managing to fit nearly all 9 plus inches in her mouth without gagging, a feat she accomplished by coating his rod with plenty of saliva.

Now a few minutes in and Flash couldn't help but wonder ... did I underestimate this bitch? It was a valid question considering that he wasn't sure how much longer he could hold out. He was on the verge of exploding, right there in her mouth. But ...

Candy stopped and looked up at Flash with her hand still wrapped tightly around the base of his dick, eyes low and fiery red, spittle on her lips. "Where you stand on eatin' pussy?"

"What?" Never had Flash been thrown for so many loops in one sitting. Sure, he'd chewed the fat in the heat of the moment, but it wasn't necessarily his favorite pastime. Still, all he could muster was, "I don't object." Not his smoothest line, but that didn't matter. He was already in like the homeboy Flynn. Only thing could fuck this up was a premature eruption.

"I normally don't take no for an answer," Candy told him, "but you seem like someone who demand respect, so I figured I'd be nice this time."

"How considerate of you."

"I like to have my pussy sucked when I suck dick. It's kinda my thing." You might have thought Candy was being timed seeing how quickly she slid out of those shorts and tossed them to the far side of the bed. Slick with her shit, she left the panties on then squatted her puss over Flash's face and positioned her mouth back on his throbbing cock. "It's playing hide and seek. You gotta find it." She gave the invitation and proceeded back to town.

Just when you think you know it all, you learn something new. The number of pussies Flash had slain in his day tallied in the deep dozens, but never had he stared eye to eye with one from this vantage point. Yeah, he was new to the whole 69 thing, but there was little time to spare, so he pulled that thin patch of g-string panty to the side and went to work.

It didn't take Flash long to take a liking to the mutual perks of this position. From the way he held both of her firm, yet fleshy butt cheeks in his hands to the intoxicating aroma permeating from her snatch, Flash felt like he was right where he wanted and needed to be. Was this the equivalent to heaven? Maybe not exactly, but to sex fiends such as him, it was damn sure close. And soon, he would know that the best had yet to come.

What did Candy like to do after having her twat feasted on? Ride a thick one, of course. So after disengaging from the 69 and before she left Flash with a drenched face --- another courtesy call on her part, she gave him time to slip into a condom, mounted her man of the evening like a

veteran cowgirl, and allowed his gloved tool to rest between her buns as she massaged his ball sack.

“I can’t take it,” Candy moaned. “I need you inside of me.” She made the proper adjustment and just like that, she got her wish. A few minutes to get adapted to the length and girth and it was off to the races. Candy bumped and grinded on Flash’s thang like tomorrow wasn’t promised. Up. Down. Left. Right. She pumped the young stallion for all he was worth, all the while pinning his hands to the bed so she could maintain full control.

“Dis some good pussy.”

“Yeeh huuh.”

Animal instincts had kicked in and Flash responded accordingly, using the motion of his pelvis to deliver strokes with uppercut-like precision from underneath. Hands now free, he had regained much of that control he gave up, fingers aiding his rapid firing dick in parting her ass like the glorious red sea. But it was too much. Had he kept up at this pace, he would surely explode and ruin it for both of them. Would she clown him? This was shit he normally didn’t think twice about, but this wasn’t the ordinary situation and Candy wasn’t the average female. Before taking what might have been that final lunge, Flash flipped the hot woman over on her knees, and plunged into her from the rear.

This was his time to shine. He had newfound confidence, a second breath of endurance. The added leverage that was doggystyle gave him access to all of Candy’s capacity, and while she whaled out in what sounded like agony at times, she never failed to thrust herself back into the motion, creating a synergy with enough electricity to power an entire city.

It was like being in a freaky ass porn movie, a scene that got Flash hotter by the second. The mere sight of the wondrous waves rolling in Candy’s banging booty had him amped past high. Flash had to force himself to look away. Had he focused on the bouncing booty cheeks and the winking hole smothered between them for too long, he would surely burst. But he wouldn’t dare finish before engraving his memory within her.

If only he had a mirror. Flash would love to see how he boasted with a hand on one hip while sinking in and out of Candy’s soaked, squishy passage. The air conditioning in the room was on full blast, but that didn’t prevent either of their bodies from being drenched in sweat. Candy’s ass looked delicious, shimmering as if it had been doused with oil. With a little more to give, Flash put a leg up and spread her cheeks for even better leverage, suddenly enjoying this new area of target practice.

“Oh yeah! Fuck me!” Candy glanced back at her partner with a passionate hunger in her eyes. She then slapped her ass, encouraging Flash to thrust a bit harder. As if that wasn’t enough, she dove her face into the mattress, simultaneously opening up her ass and pussy, letting him know that she could sustain even more.

“Ahhh ... shit!” Flash complied, pounding with the speed and force of a locomotive. Judging her moans and groans, he could tell that Candy was on the verge of a climax. Bout fuckin’ time. It all made perfect sense because within another four to five strokes, he’d be done. After one last powerful jab, Flash erupted, exploding into the condom with immense power.

At the same time, Candy began to twitch, her pussy, butt cheeks, and entire body tensing and clenching up as a river gushed from her creek. Flash collapsed on Candy’s back, trying his best not to crush her beneath him. Still buried deep inside her, he could feel the natural oils from her still-tight pussy as they oozed all over his shaft. The sensation was fucking wonderful.

Chapter 9: Rock It Up

July 10, 1997 10:05 pm

Looking back on all that crazy shit, Flash could honestly say that Candy gave him what was arguably the best sex of his life. That in and of itself was fucking mind boggling and blowing all in one wrap. Tori, the chick he'd been calling his "main bitch" over the past three months, was more than exceptional, Vena was off the chain, but Candy --- shit was an out of this world experience. She left him craving for more, and after regaining their strength, they went at it a second time, this time, longer and even harder.

Unfortunately, their next sexual encounter fell short of all expectations. After noticing Flash's frantic stage, Candy didn't even bother slurping him. Why waste the energy and effort? He was obviously troubled by the bump in the road they encountered; the fact that Valdez was still alive. Yet and still, she tried to convince him that everything would be okay and they were still in control.

By now, the possibility that Candy had set this all up and essentially orchestrated his death had run through Flash's mind on multiple occasions. After explaining how everything went down or better yet, fell apart in the warehouse, Candy seemed enthused, like the thought of him almost getting his head blew off turned her on. Why wasn't she shaking in fear of Tony's retribution? What the fuck was she hiding?

While Ron and other members of the crew ventured off to Eddies for adult entertainment, Flash elected to stay behind and put in work at the crib. The flight from Vegas left him exhausted and he had failed miserably at sleeping since returning home. Insomnia meant no sleep, and he realized that laying eyes on the freaky dancers at Eddies would only remind him of Candy. So instead, he chose to occupy himself with a classic flick and an old hobby.

"Come on now, don't fuck up on me." Flash sat at the kitchen table while adjusting the VCR's tracking with the universal remote. The film was New Jack City, perhaps his most beloved movie of all times. Due to the many nights in Chaz's possession, the cassette had endured several bumps and bruises. Flash was surprised the shit even worked. He hoped the issue of fuzziness wouldn't persist because aside from the hobby, the movie was the highlight of his evening --- or so he thought.

"Money talks, and bullshit runs a muthafuckin' marathon," Flash had quoted and paraphrased along with the movie pretty much since the start. After all, he had watched the shit about 20 twenty times and almost knew the dialogue word for word.

The film coincided perfectly with the task hand --- bagging up rocks for distribution. It had been two long years since Flash last prepared his own dope. He had people employed for that job and that job only. But his cousins had the powder waiting on him, and considering the importance of this whole scheme, he wanted to make sure he put in the work himself. Flash planned to cook up the entire volume from the heist --- all ten keys of it, into crack cocaine. It was days worth of work but these would be the fattest boulders the local heads ever laid eyes on.

Within just a few days, the mission would begin. Flash would quit his job and start a new life as an entrepreneur. With ten kilos of free cocaine under his belt, there was no further need for employment. Of course he'd need a front to camouflage his drug empire, but he already had that covered. Survival was the only thing standing in the way of a long life of wealth and prosperity.

“Bout time,” said Flash after hearing the bell of the microwave. “Yeah buddy.” It was break time. After retrieving the still steaming snack from the quick cooker, Flash poured himself a tall glass of koolaid and took a seat on the couch to get a closer look at the film.

The pizza looked delicious and smelled even better. Flash couldn’t wait to dig in and go to town on the two slices before him. The heavenly combination of pepperoni, sausage and bacon would satisfy his meat fetish. The hot onions would provide the extra flavor his stomach craved. His cheese infatuation would be settled by the double layer of stretchy, oozing mozzarella. But then came the mushrooms. Normally he wasn’t a fan, but then again, these weren’t your average mushrooms. According to Kayland, they tasted like “rotten ass”.

With precision, he sliced up the two grams of dried psilocybin mushrooms into thin pieces and evenly distributed them across both of slices of pizza. “Fuck it.” Flash severed a portion of the pizza with the fork and filled his mouth. “Still good,” he declared after a few seconds of chewing. The pizza ingredients did a great job in concealing the mushroom flavor, which he could barely taste at all.

The first part would be simple. All he had to do was devour two slices of this yummy pizza. But what was to follow? Flash cringed after hearing about some of Kayland’s experiences on magic mushrooms. It was those sort of stories that kept him away from such foreign substances, which he and the crew liked to call “white peoples drugs”. But life was all about experiences, and with his life literally about to start anew, he pledged to be bolder than ever. Plus, Kayland offered the sample for free, so he figured why not?

Flash smashed the pizza in about three minutes and found himself craving a third slice. “Not bad Kay. Not bad. Now it’s time for the verdict.” There weren’t any more mushrooms left to devour, so he thought better of a third slice and soothed his craving with a tightly and nicely rolled joint. Flash knew that he’d soon forget all about the crazy fungus after his THC buzz kicked in, and that was exactly how he wanted. Otherwise, he would have sat there and drove himself mad during the anxiety of the come-up.

That familiar feeling came on fast, allowing him to easily slip into deep thought about what went down and what was about to come. Before his trip to Cali and the crazy shit in Vegas, he, James and Chaz had finally made the decision to set up shop on the east side. It was right on time as the game was evolving and the gang was ready to adapt with it. On the strength of Kayland’s ecstasy connection, the trio of cousins was prepared to set a trend that would have the collective Detroit ghetto “rollin’” on a new rush.

After bagging up the final stone of the evening, Flash took a moment to examine a portion of the game in which he risked his life on a daily basis. He picked up the small ziplock bag and stared at the dope attentively, as if the rock would respond and engage him in conversation. How could something so small and harmless looking be so toxic? Derived from a plant that God created, yet the corrupter of souls and a terminator of lives. Rock cocaine was a venomous manmade creation, one that zombified hoods one by across America. Whether you pushed the shit or smoked it, crack saw to it that you were one step closer to an earlier grave or prison cell.

Flash continued to puff as the drizzle of rain softly tapped the roof. He couldn’t help but notice that he felt super good right about now. Had the mushrooms kicked in already? Flash looked around and saw that everything was more or less in order. No pink elephants. No unidentified lights dancing on the wall. Must’ve been the bomb ass weed that had him feeling like he was embedded in the couch cushion.

Flash had a deep admiration for his cousin James for various reasons, but particularly because of the great smoke he supplied. It had got to the point where Flash didn’t have to buy

weed any more. The small bud operation James had on the side was going so well that he'd toss his cousin an ounce for personal use every few weeks. More often than not, it was an exotic strain that killed most of what was floating around the hood.

Setting his focus back to the tube, Flash thought about how black criminal organizations of Nino's CMB status were far and in between. Sure, you had your Larry Hoovers and even your YBI's right here in the D, but to his knowledge, most crews came up short, making nothing but petty chump change while the mob and drug cartels from overseas operated the true empires that were virtually untouchable. Flash vowed to make a success story out of his crew, yet realized that staying alive would be his biggest challenge.

Chapter 10: Ghetto Hero

His marijuana high now at its peak, Flash sat attentively with his eyes glued to the TV screen. The film had finally reached the exciting climax where the final gun battle would be fought. “He’s a fuckin’ pig Nino!” Flash was on the edge of his seat as if he’d never seen the movie before and Wesley Snipes could really hear him. But as the villains scattered throughout the warehouse, the picture on the television suddenly went fuzzy.

“What the hell,” Flash growled. Nothing but yelling and gunfire could be heard as he tried to adjust the tracking. Flash was pissed as he knew he was missing some of the best scenes. The problem continued for perhaps another thirty seconds before the picture was then restored in black and white.

“The fuck!” Flash tossed the remote control to the floor. He knew there could be repercussions for leaving the tape with Chaz, but imagined nothing of this magnitude. Flash realized there was no winning after seeing that the final minutes of the movie were replaced with a classic episode of Leave it to Beaver.

“Gee fuckin’ Wally.” Flash picked the remote from off the floor and sat there in utter disappointment.

Nino Brown may have been a fictional character with Hollywood scripted origins, but men of such supremacy and wealth did exist in the real world. And while Flash was affiliated with few individuals he could call certified powerhouses, he was actually quite close to one: Brandon E. Turner, commonly known in the streets as B-Money.

A Chicago native, B-Money called Detroit his home for more than 10 years. Back in the Chi, he was a member of the infamous Black Stone organization, a life where fighting and shooting it out with rivals was the norm. Upon arriving in Detroit, B left the gang mentality behind and set 100% of his focus on financial prosperity.

Being a veteran, Flash knew of several drug dealers, but few made an impact the likes of B-Money. The man had connections stretching from east to west coast, and an entourage that spanned more than 100 members strong. It gave Flash great pride to say that he was not only an affiliate, but a genuine friend.

But it was more than knowing the right people that fueled his rise to the top. His intellect, personality, and presence had a lot to do with it as well. B-Money watched and learned from his predecessors. From their successes and failures, he picked up what to do, what not to do, and optimized it all with a few nuggets of wisdom he developed all on his own. One of the most important lessons he learned was that even in a filthy profession such as this, not all money is good money, something his young friend would find out soon enough.

Officially blowed, Flash stumbled his way to the fridge for a cold beer, then retreated back to the cozy couch where he continued to reflect on his old pal. In his network, B-Money was often referred to as the “Mayor of Detroit”. He was sponsoring charity fundraisers, funding local business projects, and supplying nearly 60 percent of the city’s cocaine. Yeah. The title was fitting. B-Money made a small fortune consisting of millions and a stature that forever deemed him a ghetto hero. But in order to obtain the latter title, one must pay the price, and unfortunately, the charismatic hustler paid heavily.

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April 29, 1997

It was a bright, beautiful day without a cloud in the sky. The delicious aroma of barbecued meat drifted throughout the neighborhood, setting a festive tone that was seemingly reflected from block to block. The fourth annual Stockton Block Party brought residents out of their homes and even attracted guests from other hoods. This east side community was known to set it off so naturally, everybody and their mamas wanted to join in the festivities.

With the most of the younger children down the street playing in Roy's huge backyard, the adults and teens were either at or around B Money's house. In addition to the block party, the huge crowd was on hand to commemorate Tone's return home. Tone, B-Money's 17-year old brother, was enjoying his second day of freedom after being released from a juvenile detention center in Cleveland, where he served three years for an attempted murder charge.

B-Money went out of his way to ensure that his brother had a blast. More importantly, he wanted the little booger to know that he was loved and had a support system there to help him succeed in life. He spent hundreds on food on alone, while Flash and James chipped in on the liquor and weed respectively. Manning the grill was Big M's, while Rose, B's morbidly obese, though sweeter than sugar of a neighbor, managed the stove-based cooking duties inside. They had shit flowing like clockwork and as expected, good times were had by all.

"It'll be done in a minute," Big M's promised as he flipped the huge sirloin steak with a long fork. He assured the spectators that the meal would be the most spectacular they'd ever tasted. Strategically seasoned with various herbs and spices, the meat was tender and ready to fall from the bones.

"What will it be sir," Big M's asked Flash, who was next in line to have his plate filled.

"I'll definitely take one of dem steaks," Flash answered. "Ooh ... and a couple of dem mufuckin' snausages too."

"This nigga." Big M's shook his head. "I betta see some vegetables on that plate when I come through."

"I know you ain't talkin'. Like you and Chaz ass ain't use to eat dem damn double cheeseburgers for breakfast."

"Man ... that was years ago. Get outta here."

After having his plate filled, Flash walked off with a devious grin, gnawing down on a greasy sausage along the way. He was lucky to find an empty seat on the porch and decided to sit down so he could consume his meal like a semi-civilized human being. Driven by a major case of the munchies, Flash began mowing down on the sausage he took the time to actually put in a bun, though it was gone in three bites. Now all he needed was something to wash it down with.

"Like a cold one with that?"

Flash looked up to find B-Money hovering over him with a frosty unopened bottle of beer in hand. "Hell yeah. You right on time my nig." He popped open the cold fizzy beverage and chugged away.

Donna, B-Money's fiancé, walked by with Brandon Jr. in her arms. "Here, take him for a minute." She passed the infant off to his father and escaped into the house.

"Say what's up Uncle Flash." You could call it one of those corny Hallmark moments, but B-Money looked very comfortable with his son in his arms, like he was cut out to be a father and family man.

B had it good all around, especially when it came to Donna. She defined what a ride or die bitch was supposed to be. Her loyalty was unwavering and couldn't be questioned. She'd been

with Brandon for six long years, a period that saw plenty of ups, but its fair share of downs as well. Through the incarceration, life-threatening beefs, the funerals --- she stood by her man and would do so to the very end. Other bitches tried to compete, but the qualities Donna displayed time and again proved that she was irreplaceable.

“Alright, mommy’s back.” Donna returned and took the baby. “Hey Flash, I didn’t even see you sittin’ there.”

“Hey D. What’s good wit you?”

“Nothin’ much. Tryna stay active while yo boy try to make me a housewife.”

“Shoot, you might as well sit back and let that nigga spoil you.”

“Whateva.” Donna took off down the steps, giving Flash a glorious glance of how she managed to keep a hog like B tied down --- that ass.

“This gone be our year right here Flash,” said B-Money, now sipping on a beer of his own.

“What you talkin’ bout man,” replied Flash. “You on top every year.”

“You silly. Seriously man. I see big things happening for the crew, but especially you. I been watching you Flash. And from what I see, you lightyears ahead of everybody else in the circle. Can’t quite put more finger on it, but it’s somethin’ special about you.”

“Damn B, comin’ from you, that means a lot.” And it did. Despite being just six years younger, Flash looked up to B-Money like a father figure. He had the utmost respect for the man, and unlike most other cats, held his opinion in the highest regard.

B-Money continued, “What I really envision is more of us branching out into legitimacy. Businessmen on another level you know. Niggas can’t slang and bang forever, ya feel me?”

“Most definitely.”

Whenever spoken, the words of B-Money were to be heeded. He commanded respect and was known as a man who always spoke the truth. And while he lived better than most, B remained humble, realizing that he was blessed just to be breathing. The man had survived numerous assassination plots and seen far too many of his comrades lose their lives to bloody murder. It was the often fatal repercussions that came with being a drug kingpin that made him want to turn over a new leaf. Now with hundreds of thousands of dollars bundled into stocks and mutual funds, and a family just waiting for him to come home for good, B Money was so close to making an exit that he could taste it.

“You heard about the restaurant we opened over there on Fenkel and Greenfield, right?”

“Yeah,” Flash answered, finishing off the last morsel of meat on his plate.

“Well we tryna open up a laundry mat right in the same area. The plan is to franchise it and eventually have a couple of ‘em operating throughout the city.”

Flash gulped at his beer, listening attentively.

“I know you got ya own thing going, but I was hoping I could get you to help out on the management side of things. I know you bout that dolla dolla bill but don’t worry ... you know I’mma make it sweet for ya.”

“You serious, bro?” Flash couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

“Yeah man. I mean it ain’t the most glamorous gig, but I think it can work. Niggas gotta wash they clothes, and not everybody gotta washer and dryer to call their own.”

“You right about that.” Opportunities like this didn’t come around too often, and though there was much more to discuss, just knowing that B-Money was heading the project was enough for him to throw his chips into the pot. “Hell yeah B. Count me in.”

“Good.” A huge smile indicated how happy it made B-Money to know that his young friend was onboard.

Though admired and highly respected by his peers, it was the less fortunate who posed a threat to B's existence. It was always the haters, and the more you have to lose, the more you tend to have to deal with. At least that's how it was in the case of B-Money.

Even with all his clout and success, the fact remained that just like any mortal man, B-Money was not invincible. He rolled deep with a click of heavy hitters at all times, murderous thugs who would gladly dispose of anyone who opposed all to prove their worth. Still, whether it was fired from a foe of equal stature or the smallest street corner pusher, all it took was a single bullet to dethrone the powerful man deemed a king in the eyes of many.

The Astro van stuck out like a sore thumb as it cruised slowly down the block. Barricades cut off traffic from Van Dyke, while the activity on Packard indicated what time it was --- no through traffic nigga! But the vehicle continued to cruise, leaving most to assume they must have somehow been associated with B Money or his entourage to even attempt such a stunt. But had they been more alert and suspicious, they may have been able to save a life.

"Still some more of that yak in there," asked Flash while polishing off the beer.

"I don't know," B-Money answered honestly. "I saw Linda in it so if I was you, I'd go check the situation and quickly."

"Eli! Where you goin'?"

With the screen door opened, Flash looked behind him to find Donna trailing him. He hated for most people to call him by his government name, but would gladly give a pass in Donna's case. She was an exception --- not only because of her position as B-Money's main squeeze, but her long-time relationship with Flash. While the two were never intimate to the point of penetration, there were some mutual feelings that may have manifested into something far more significant had B-Money not come along some ten years ago.

"Hold that doe," Donna requested.

Flash opened the door wide and shook his head as Donna approached. "Lazy I tell ya."

"Boy, whatever. I'm tired as hell. I need somebody to carry me in there." Donna shot B Money a look, as if she was trying to send a him a hint.

"I would," B started, "but see I got this bad back ... result of carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders."

"Uh huh. I thought you was bout to say somethin' else. You lucky." Donna went inside, giving B- Money a playful tongue diss before doing so.

B-Money had no idea that these were his final moments, the last time he'd ever embrace his dear fiancé. He was all smiles while watching Donna walk into the house and disappear out of view, confident in his decision to finally claim her as his wife. No other woman he'd met could compare with her love and devotion. The paper work was just a finality of sorts. B-Money had already promised to treat her like a precious queen until the day they departed.

Chaz was the only one to suspect that something was awry as the van sped up and moved in closer. The fuck. "Ay, Junior, Reggie ... ya'll round up the kids and go play in the backyard. Hurry up!"

The 11 and 12 year old boys did as they were told. Meanwhile, Chaz sharpened his focus to get a better look at the passengers as the van passed by. Oh shit. "Get down! Everybody get the fuck down!"

But it was too late. The slim barrel of a mac-90 pointed from the passenger window and commenced to bursting a flurry of scolding hot rounds. Harold was struck so violently, that he'd need the bulk of his left leg amputated. Juanita was grazed in the shoulder and mentally scarred for life. The front windows of the house were shattered, while the porch looked like it had been

nibbled on by an army of mutant termites. But all that paled in comparison to the loss of life that was suffered.

Lying slumped and motionless on the concrete was B-Money. The rain storm that was the rifle eruption ceased his life in an instant. Two bullets ripped through his esophagus while another literally tore his left collar bone from the shoulder. The sickening scene on the block resembled something out of a gory horror movie.

“B! Stick wit me dog! You gon’ be alright! Flash dashed out of the house and down the steps as quickly as he could. Knees digging into the concrete, face flooded with tears, he held his dear friend in his arms, encouraging him to hang on, even though the severity of the wounds pretty much indicated that everything was a wrap. When someone official could call it, B-Money was pronounced dead on the scene.

It was hard to accept. Even with the chaos of neighbors running and cursing up the block, and Donna crying frantically on the front porch, Flash couldn’t believe B was gone. Chaz swore that he could identify the passenger, who was also the shooter. But the authorities wouldn’t obtain any of this information. Vengeance would be his, and the sentence he had in store would be more horrible than anything the law could enforce --- if he could get to the perpetrators before Flash, that is.

“Damn B.” Flash cleared his watery eyes. It was often an emotional experience whenever he replayed that dark day. B-Money was sorely missed by friends and family, labeled a ghetto hero by those who knew, admired and respected him.

Though the tragedy was difficult to handle, it seemed as if death had become tradition. Flash had now lost eleven homies as a result of gunfire while ten friends rotted away in the pen. It was like he couldn’t elude the reaper’s smothering presence. It covered him like a shadow, constantly cornering him to the edge of the cliff.

Chapter 11: Mushroom Mountain

Sitting there on the couch, Flash's high seemingly elevated with each passing second. His head was as light as a feather and his eyes were a dark, disturbing red. But at this point, he had gone beyond intoxication by way of THC. The magical combination of psilocybin and psilocin coursed through his veins, making their presence known with racing energy, followed by the most insane euphoria he ever felt in his life. He thought about rolling another joint, but after a second thought, realized there was no need for one --- he was already high as the proverbial kite. At that moment it all became apparent --- he was tripping on magic mushrooms.

Attempting to compose himself, Flash removed his T-shirt and took a deep breath. Throughout his lifetime he had experienced several different levels of intoxication. On numerous occasions he had drank himself silly, and even more, smoked himself stupid. The adrenaline rush the cocaine provided was simply amazing. He just wished the ride wasn't so damn short. He'd been around the block and back, but nothing compared to the current state of inebriation tickling his soul.

Flash couldn't help but think of Kayland, who appeared in a vision entrapped by a hazy, orangish aura. "I'm tellin' you Flash, that shit ain't like no weed. Brace ya self homie."

Goofy grin plastered across his face, Flash broke out with a case of the giggles. He realized it wasn't just his Kayland's image --- everything around him had a wavy aura to it. A look to the right revealed a wall that appeared to be breathing --- in and out, dry wall crinkling. He then stared up, freaked at what appeared to be the rapidly rotating blades of the ceiling fan descending from their mounted position. Flash shielded his face just in case, but quickly realized that he was only tripping.

"Damn." In attempt to calm himself, Flash grabbed the remote and commenced to flipping through stations. TV never looked this fucking interesting --- ever. There it was again. That orangish aura. This time it circled the characters on the sitcom; sometimes running through them. Flash stared attentively, trying his best to process the picture as the scene morphed into a burst of glorious colors. Then things really got disturbing. Froze, he sat there and watched in horror as blood started to ooze down the TV screen.

"Shit!" Desperate to end the haunting visual, he grabbed the remote and turned the TV off. The blood continued to drip slowly, then disappeared in fading fashion, reminding the first-time psychonaut that it was all an illusion. "This shit crazy. I gotta get some air."

Cordless phone in hand, Flash sprang to his feet and headed for the door. There was just too much weird shit going on inside. A change of scenery was mandatory.

"Feel good as hell out here." And he meant every word of it. Flash took a deep breath, allowing a mass of fresh air to invade his lungs as he stood on the front porch. At nearly two in the morning, the hood was silent, with the only noise being produced by the tires of cars smashing down 7 Mile and of course, the crickets.

Flash sat down on the porch and just took it all in. The outdoors had never looked so magnificent. The trees as they swayed in the wind of the night air. The brilliant twinkle of the stars. The majestic moonlight that hovered over the city --- it was all breathtakingly amazing. Never had Flash felt so connected with the universe. God bless Kayland's soul.

But as they say, all good things must come to an end, and slowly but surely, Flash's world began to crumble, all while he was high on this strange and powerful foreign substance. That

high and oncoming low were on a collision course that would soon mentally rock his very foundation --- and that would only be the start of it.

Flash sat down at the top of the porch and literally began to unwind, winding his neck with a looseness that made it seem as if his bones were made of a stretchy rubber. He felt like he could travel with his mind, and when he shut his eyes, he felt like he was in another world --- even if only for a brief moment. These closed eye visuals were at first, entertaining, bringing up rapid flashes of various images --- the faces and jiggly parts of beautiful women. Bricks of weed. Lines of coke --- popping up in locations ranging from inside his home to a deep jungle setting.

“Shit wild,” Flash commented in between chuckles. He discovered that if he kept his eyes shut, the visuals were more cohesive and consistent. There he was, walking down a path in a dark jungle, guided by the narrow glow of a flashlight. He came upon a slump of flesh, a dead body to be exact, and in that moment, Flash knew it was someone he killed. There was no turning back. Physically he could go nowhere but forward, while his feet began to slip and slosh in the muddy turf. He felt himself getting closer and sinking deeper when he looked down and saw a huge, mutated jungle insect on his leg, letting off an annoying, ear-piercing buzz.

Flash quickly opened his eyes, and there he was, back on the porch. It took him a moment to realize that his pager was going off in his pocket. “Man. This shit ain’t even fair.” With the pager in hand, he attempted to make out the number, but couldn’t see a damn thing beyond the toxic-green glow on the small screen. “Fuck it.” People who really needed to contact him knew that if he didn’t respond within five minutes, the house line was the best place to try to reach him. Within five minutes, the phone rang, startlin and totally catching him off guard.

A Phone Conversation:

Flash: Hello

Candy: Oh my God, I’m so glad I caught you.

Flash: Candy?

Candy: I need to see you! It’s about Tony!

Flash: What? When?

Candy: Tonight. I’m in Detroit!

Flash: What?!

He didn’t even give her a chance to respond. Flash hung up, leaving Candy with the rude and annoying sound of the dial tone in her ear. It was at this moment that his trip took a turn for the worse. Now his closed eye visuals haunted him with images of Juan and Ricardo. The faces of Tony’s henchmen continually morphed from normal to ghastly skeletons with a thin layer of skin stuck to the bloody bones. This prompted Flash to keep his eyes wide, but even then, the horrific visions wouldn’t leave. Opened eye visuals delivered realistic images of Tony, approaching up the walkway, draped in an expensive Armani suit, that trademark, infectious

smile plastered on his face. But what stuck out to Flash was the chrome pistol swinging freely in his right hand as he inched closer and closer.

“Fuck. Stop!” Thankfully, Flash was able to shut off the terrifying visions. Unfortunately, he couldn’t push the guilt out of his head. That guilt took him all the way back to 1990, when he committed his first of what had become far too many murders. He saw it clear as day, with himself in the passenger seat and Ron behind the wheel, rolling up on the click of bustas suspected of smoking the homeboy Stacy, the other half of the infamous hood duo known as Flash and Slash.

During the ride from west to east, Flash had plenty of time to think this thing through and pull out. Ron even had the decency to ask if he wanted to call the hit off and regroup. But he wouldn’t hear of it. These suckas took something that was very special to him, and there was no going back on the vengeance he vowed to claim the moment word about the perpetrators made its way to the hood.

There was no turning back by the time Ron stopped the Cadillac in the middle of the street. Flash noticed one of the targets reaching underneath his flannel, and automatically assumed that he wasn’t looking to check his pager. Realizing that his life was on the line, he reacted, bringing the barrel of the Tec-9 to the window then squeezing relentlessly.

He never knew how many people he hit or killed after letting off all 50 furious rounds in the magazine. But he would never forget the face of young Mike Shannon, a guy he actually ran the streets with back in the day, but was the first to receive the violent shower of bullets to the chest and abdominal area.

Just like that, this bizarre evening was no longer about hellish visions and hallucinations. It was about the mental and emotional toll that would accompany Flash until his dying day. All the lives he’d taken, the bones he’d broken, and the hearts he shattered in pieces came back in the form of a ball of negative energy that made him feel like absolute shit. The intense dripping of sweat and fierce pounding of his heart had him believing that he could possibly die during the trip, but even being a rookie to psychedelics, he knew it was just anxiety brought on from the demons attached to his Helter Skelter of a lifestyle.

In a “fuck the world attitude” and definitely wanting to avoid Candy’s calls for the rest of the night, Flash took the batteries out of the cordless phone and literally crawled his body, which felt liked it was weighed down with bricks, into the house. He then climbed up on the couch, curled into a ball and prayed that this natural, but wicked substance would leave his body as soon as possible. He couldn’t help thinking he might die at times, but after all he’d done, knew that such a death would be far too easy and undeserving for an animal like himself.

Chapter 12: Wrongful Death

July 7, 1997 11:23 pm

Ricardo paced heedfully with his weapon clutched high and firmly in both hands as he neared the other end of the warehouse. He was quite weary of the Flash, but the clatter he heard was more important. Ricardo was no fool. He knew he heard something and was damn certain that his ears hadn't deceived him.

"This mutha ... come on man! Ain't nothin' back there! Maybe you the one need to cut back on the herbals, ay!" Juan was growing impatient with this whole ordeal. He never wanted to deal with Flash. If it was up to him, he would have been in the midst of having his knob polished by one of the sexy trio of Mexican chicks they met earlier on the strip. But Valdez was the boss, and when he gave an order, it was to be followed to the letter.

"Come on Ric! Can't forget about those whores, man! Let's get this shit over with!"

Ricardo ignored his partner. He focused his attention on the moment at hand, which was a possible adversary potentially here to back up this black bastard he only knew as Flash, who by the way, had shady written all over him as far as Ricardo was concerned. He wrapped a finger around the trigger, prepared to chop down anything that moved. Though no stranger to danger, he also knew that situations like this were often unpredictable, and that factor had him teetering on the edge.

"Man ... what the hell." After another few steps Ricardo became disgusted. "Let me get the hell outta here." He'd walked all the way to the other end of the warehouse and checked all the major nooks and crannies in the process. Convinced that he was overacting, he lowered his weapon and blazed a cigarette.

"Let's get the hell out of here." Ricardo stuffed the gun in his front waistline and placed the lighter in his pants pocket. He then took a step forward but was immediately stunned frozen.

From behind a huge crate darted Chaz and James, semi-automatic weapons drawn, determination etched on their faces. Ricardo barely had to time even drop his jaw as the duo simultaneously unloaded with a flurry of rounds --- Chaz dumping from a 9mm Ruger, James spitting fire from a long-nose Desert Eagle.

Weapons still aimed, Chaz and James walked over to what was now the corpse of Ricardo. "Man," Chaz started, "I swear, I don't even think I hit this nigga."

"Probably not," James chimed in. "Know yo ass can't aim worth of fuck. Come on."

Chaz shook his head in dismay as he stepped over the body and followed his cousin toward the other end of the warehouse. Little did he know, he'd struck Ricardo multiple times. The Cuban's disfigured, sunken in face was his handy work. James was responsible for his splattered and shattered chest cavity.

"This guy." With Chaz on his trails, James turned the corner to find Flash standing there alone, a fat Cuban guy dead at his feet.

Juan never stood a chance. The sound of twin gunfire from his cousins was just the diversion Flash needed. It caused Juan to turn his head and focus in another direction, enabling Flash to retrieve the Beretta and quickly send one atop to his dome. Although all it took was a single slug to the head, Flash became extremely frustrated when he went to deliver one more for good measure, only to find that the gun had jammed in the process.

"Bet you thought you was fucked," said Chaz, gasping for air from the short sprint.

“We gotta big fuckin’ problem,” Flash explained, gun lowered to his right side. “This ain’t our guy.”

“What you mean,” James asked, looking as dumbfounded as the question sounded.

“This ain’t the fuckin’ guy! This ain’t Tony!”

Chaz used both of his hands to motion towards the area from which they came, back where Ricardo lay dead as a doorknob.

Flash shook his head, obviously traumatized by the whole ordeal. “Not him either. We fucked up. My mans cruised outta here with the bitch bout ten minutes ago.”

What the fuck did we just do? How could he make such an error? One with such deadly consequence. He struck first and initiated a serious conflict. With Tony’s hit men stretched out on the canvas, war wasn’t highly probable --- it was fuckin’ inevitable. Sad thing was, even with all the stripes they had earned in the streets, Flash knew he and the fellas didn’t stand a chance against such a superior force. Even if they were lucky enough to stamp out Tony, others would be coming in his name.

“We may not have the man but we got the dope.” Chaz stood over the trunk, staring down at the prize of this plot gone wrong in total amazement. “Fa this much cane, you can tell my mans to kiss my ass. Come holla at me in the hood.”

Sharing in the excitement, James trotted over to the trunk and joined his cousin. “Oh shit! Jack fuckin’ pot! I’m wit Chaz. We gotta make the best of this situation. Like ... now.”

Flash wasn’t sure if his cousins fully grasped the severity of the chaos they created, but from that statement, he knew that James at least, understood the importance of moving with haste. “Come on ya’ll! We gotta get the fuck outta Vegas!”

The Lost Chapter: That Killa Pussy

July 2, 1997 1:31 am

Unfuckingbelievable. Eyes rolled to the back of his head, fingernails digging into the bed sheets, Flash was in unadulterated ecstasy without being on the drug Kayland claimed took sex to an all new level of pleasure. But why bother when you could hook up with an explosive freak the likes of Candy and set the session off like dynamite?

Flash experienced a sudden and uncontrollable twitch. He was about to let go. Should he give her a courtesy warning and pull out? Flash felt like Candy left him with no choice when she tightened her grip, upped the pace, and sucked even more furiously. Within seconds, he erupted, but that didn't stop her. Candy carried on, pumping in a milking motion while swallowing as much as the creamy stuff as she could.

"God damn!" Flash shivered in what seemed like suspended animation as the leftover jizz oozed down his shaft and over his nut sack. He thought it would be a while before anything topped the oral treatment Candy gave him earlier, yet a few hours later, it had been done --- the best head he'd ever received in his life.

Candy returned with a damp towel, which she tossed on Flash's slowly shrinking dick. She then huddled up beside him on the bed, staring at the side of his face while propping her head up on a hand.

"Where'd you learn that shit," Flash asked before swallowing the lump in his parched throat.

"I've picked up a few skills along the way. That just happens to be one of 'em."

"Well I definitely approve." After another few moments, Flash finally composed himself enough to grab the towel and pat the sticky sperm off his crotch area. "So what a nigga do to deserve that treatment? I almost feel like I'm not worthy."

"Oh, you definitely worthy. Or at least you can be."

Flash looked over at Candy, overcome by curiosity. "Please, do explain."

"I'm hip to the game. I know what you do. And while it's obvious that you do it quite well, there's always room for improvement."

The look of bewilderment on Flash's face indicated that he still hadn't caught on, so she continued to feed him the line. "Tony, as you know, is a very powerful man. And I can tell that his wealth and power impresses you. I can feel your hunger."

"Yeah."

"Well, what if I told you I know a way you can have what he got? I'm talkin' the money, the lifestyle, and the bad bitch to boot. Tony has a lot of enemies. We do it right, and no one would suspect a thing. Not like the cops gon' give a fuck."

Flash gave Candy a look that let her know she'd piqued his interest. But deep down, he was at a total lost. He couldn't believe what she was proposing. Had Tony sent her here to set him up? It was possible, yet highly unlikely. Although he knew very little about either of them, something told him that Candy had her own agenda.

The two continued to converse into the wee hours of the morning, lying in bed while sharing more dank and ideas of how to pull off the ultimate scheme. By the time six am rolled around, the plan had been laid. Flash would arrange a deal with Tony, only to murder him in cold blood, while Candy hit his safe for the hundred grand he kept on hand at all times. The two would meet back up and begin their reign as the king and queen of the underworld. There were a few kinks to

work out, but with James and Chaz onboard, Flash knew it could be done. Stariving for that there come-up, he agreed, and made an irreversible deal with the devil herself.

Chapter 13: The Come-up

October 30, 1997 10:20 pm

“So tell me dog ... what you think?” Flash sat at the booth with an arm around Eddie’s shoulder.

Eddie, Ron's older brother, guzzled from the glass of champagne and returned, “All the women got on clothes, but I must say I’m impressed.”

“Damn Ed,” Flash laughed. “You a hardcore tittie bar fan to the end.”

With his party of Eddie, James, and Ron in tow, Flash looked out into the crowd feeling a great sense of accomplishment. The music pumped through the club at a roaring level, producing smiles and grooves everywhere he looked. Flash was very fortunate to have one of the most electrifying DJ’s in all of the Midwest spinning in his establishment. DJ Shango didn’t come cheap, but his name alone drew a massive crowd, a crowd that translated to dollars at the end of the day.

James matched Flash fifty thousand dollars to buy out the previous club owner and take sole control of the building situated in Downtown Detroit. Danny Lanskroner had operated the venue for ten years, but was increasingly growing fatigued of the nightclub business. With an array of new clubs opening up in the Metro Detroit area seemingly every year, Danny simply lost his desire to compete. Luckily, Flash and James came through with an offer he couldn’t refuse. The cousin duo even gave him a bonus to operate under the same name as a way to retain the existing client base.

Flash labeled Lanskroner a fool. Club Expo was a gold mine with dollar signs written all over it. The venue just needed a new owner --- a new touch. Flash and James responded accordingly by closing it down for a weekend for rebranding purposes. During that time, they contracted the services of a renowned nightclub development team to handle the redesign elements, which were minor, yet significant. They also employed a street team to hit the city and its surrounding areas with some hardcore marketing. It all paid off because during the first week of the grand reopening, Club Expo attracted over five thousand clubbers and raked in more than fifty thousand dollars in ticket sales.

The club business boomed, but it was really nothing but supplemental income. Flash’s major focus remained on drug distribution, which he had come to accept as his true calling. Even he could have never imagined how fast the crew would prosper after the incident in Vegas. By mid-August, Flash had collected his first million. Though it was to divide amongst his team of partners, workers, and assistants, being able to count out a million dollars in cash was damn impressive and at one time, something he thought he’d never live to do. On top of that, Flash knew that his own personal seven-figure payday wasn’t far behind.

By September, he was heading up what could officially be called an empire. The revenue was pouring in to the point where Flash had already set his date for retirement. Three more months was all he needed to establish his financial freedom and leave the game for good. Sure, he loved the risky and dangerous lifestyle on the edge, but also knew how fortunate he was just to be alive. Very few had the opportunity to leave this occupation on top. Flash vowed to be one of the few.

To say that Flash and his entourage led the good life would be putting it mildly. These men had the pockets of Wall Street gurus and the influence of political giants. There was nothing they

couldn't afford, no woman they couldn't tempt with the right dollar amount. The group of ruthless youngsters had actually become more outrageous and reckless than in their less fortunate days in the game. Flash and his gang literally wasted thousands of dollars per day on booze, weed, and bitches. They were simply living life as they pleased.

The current times were certainly in Flash's favor. Thanks to the Vegas lick, he was now without a doubt one of the most powerful men in all of Detroit. But Flash couldn't and wouldn't take all the credit. The crew held him down, and without them, he'd be dead, broke, or both. That's why he rewarded them with fair pay and incentives whenever the opportunities were presented. He kept their pockets swollen and treated them all with dignity and respect. As long as the crew remained happy and hungry, Flash knew his chances of riding off into the sunset were as good as anybody's.

Chapter 14: Retaliation

October 27, 1997 11:23 pm

“Okay. Call me.”

“Fa sho.”

Then the door slammed shut.

Yeah right, bitch.” Flash took a sigh of relief after Melanie saw herself out of the hotel room. Time was very precious, and at times, Flash couldn’t believe he wasted so much of it frolicking around with these helpless bitches. But as a hustler first, he was a lady’s man second, and in addition to promising to smoke chronic to his dying day, he vowed to slay as much as pussy as humanly possible.

It was hard to digest the fact that just a couple of months ago, Tone was caged away in an Ohio correctional facility for troubled youths --- even harder to accept that B-Money was dead and gone. Clear as day, he recalled the moments he and B spent making the arrangements for the block party that would forever be remembered as one of the darkest times in his life. Both were excited to learn that the young man often referred to as Tone Tone was finally coming home.

B-Money promised to steer his younger brother away from the streets, away from the madness that brought him both fame and pain. But oh how plans change. Tone was the newest member of Flash’s organization, tasked with helping Chaz collect money from his crack spots sprinkled throughout the city. Flash would have offered financial assistance to the kid had he asked to be down or not. He owed that to B-Money out of respect; on the strength of everything. Still, he couldn’t help but wonder how his deceased friend would react to knowing his little brother was an active member of the deadly trade in which they risked their lives and destroyed others.

With B-Money fresh on the brain, Flash thought back to when they’d done the homie proud, the night they rode on the enemy and claimed bloody vengeance. Didn’t bring him back of course, but on that evening, it made the crew feel a hell of a lot better.

May 28, 1997 1:23 am

Nearly causing a fatal collision, Flash floored the accelerator and mashed through the red light with reckless abandonment.

“Man, this nigga gon’ get us killed,” Chaz complained while grasping onto the seatbelt for dear life.

“Come on now,” said Flash. “I’m a pro. Muthafuckin’ Flash N’dretti.” Flash was loaded off one too many Bud Lights, which made the speed and power of the Explorer a questionable combination. These factors had Big M’s regretting the decision to allow Flash to get behind the wheel of his brand new whip.

The parking lot of the liquor store was virtually empty. There were only two cars on the premises and one belonged to the owner. Surprisingly for this area and time of night, there was only one stumbling crack addict roaming the grounds.

“Hey Flash, what’s up baby!” Bo Bo staggered up to the trio with his grimy palm extended.

“Bo Bo,” Chaz laughed. “Damn this nigga still alive.”

“Come on Bo Bo get the fuck outta here, I ain’t got shit fo you.” Flash ignored the fiend and reached for the door.

Bo Bo grabbed Flash by the shoulder and pleaded, “Come on Flash, just hook me up with one. A dollar or somethin’ man. I ain’t ate shit all day.”

“Man what the fuck!” Flash snatched away. “You fuckin’ crazy man! Don’t be puttin’ yo hands on me!” He then dug into his pocket and forcibly slapped a crumbled ten dollar bill into the man’s chest. “Now get the fuck outta here!”

Flash could do nothing but shake his head as he and his party entered the store. It was hard to imagine that Bo Bo was once a decent human being who held a high paying position with one of the three major automobile manufacturers in Detroit. But after twenty three years of hard work and dedication, he was layed off with no viable explanation. Things must’ve gotten tough because in two years, Bo Bo was strung out on the pipe. It was how many began their careers as rock stars, a sad story Flash had seen time and again.

With a filter tipped cigar in his mouth, Chaz strutted towards the cooler of beer and other cold alcoholic beverages like a man on a mission. Though quite faded, he was ready to take his high to another level and end this night on a proper note. “Let me think, let met think, what a nigga want to drink.” Overwhelmed by all the selections, Chaz snatched up a forty ounce bottle of his favorite malt liquor and just prayed that Big M’s wouldn’t want to share.

“How much is that pint right there?” It may have been a silly question seeing that the price was right underneath the bottle of Jack, but Flash was known to give the Rabs at the liquor store a hard time. Somebody had to make sure the foreigners were doing their job.

“All you getting’ is a pint?” Disappointment could be detected in Big M’s’ voice as he approached the counter with a 22-ounce bottle of beer in hand . “You ain’t talkin’ bout doin’ too much tonight.”

“Fuck what you heard,” Flash retorted. “This pint gon’ do me just fine. You and that lil ass deuce deuce ... I’m not so sure.”

Chaz came up from the rear and said, “I don’t even wanna hear it M’s. You betta get on wit that nigga Flash tonight. I’m drinkin’ every sud of this mufuckin’ forty, you betta believe it.” Big M’s was famous for not buying enough liquor for himself, and then subsequently killing someone else's shit. In his defense, he could put away a tremendous amount of alcohol, due in large part to his large size.

Something drove him to look up into the huge mirror mounted in the far-right corner of the store. What the fuck? Chaz couldn’t believe his eyes. Could it be? The end to a month's long pursuit?

“Ay dog,” Chaz tugged on his cousin’s shoulder. “Look in the mirror.”

Flash gazed at the reflection for no longer than a few seconds. Anything exceeding that may have caused an episode, one that led him to violently erupt on any and everything in sight. So after composing himself, he snatched up the bottle and calmly summoned his people outside.

“Man, you see them niggas?” Chaz bounced in place, excited with energy. “Lets do this shit, dog!”

“See who? What the fuck’s goin’ on?” Big M’s was totally in the dark.

“Them niggas who blasted B up in there.” Flash handed Big M’s the keys and the brown bagged liquor. “Just wait in the car M’s. We gon’ handle this.”

“Come on man.” Big M’s was a ball of nerves. Even though he wanted B-Money’s killers to suffer like the rest of the crew, he wanted no part of this. Now just wasn’t the time --- but then again, when was there an appropriate time to kill? “What ya’ll finna do?”

“Chill out,” Flash barked. “When you hear the muthafuckin’ flare pop, pull the ride around.”

Big M’s shook his head in disagreement, all the while complying to the request. He was well aware of Flash’s homicidal tendencies and knew firsthand that his best friend Chaz was a loose cannon waiting to explode at a moment’s notice. When adding these two hotheads to the equation that was already the situation, there was no way this predicament would end in a mere fist fight.

“You strapped,” asked Flash.

“Hell yeah.” Chaz lifted his shirt, revealing the shimmering chrome of the 380 pistol.

“Give it to me.”

It was too good to be true. For a month now, Flash and his army searched high and low for B-Money’s killers. For a moment they had accepted the fact that they may never claim vengeance, that these punk ass niggas would skate forever. But Karma proved what a bitch she was and brought what goes around right back around to them.

Chaz stood impatiently with his back against the brick wall of the store. Flash stood across from him resting an elbow on the disabled parking meter. Both were overcome with rage, prepared to destroy the monsters who gunned down their friend. Flash promised to storm inside and drag them out if they took any longer.

“Man I hate them muthafuckas. Take yo ass back to Pakistan wit that shit.” Mut walked out of the store talking cash shit with a huge grin on his face. After noticing Flash, he froze dead in his tracks. He stiffened up even more after glancing to his right and noticing Chaz standing there.

“What do we have here,” said Flash as he took a couple of steps forward and approached the pair of adversaries.

“Two bitch ass niggas,” Chaz answered.

Rob may have been a bit more terrified than his partner, Mut. It was really more of the same with him because he had been against all the chaos from the start. He never wanted to brawl with Flash, Ron, and B-Money at the party. This was all on Mut, who instantly became salty after being rejected by one of many skanks in attendance that night, the same skank who ended up accompanying B-Money and his company at their table later on that evening. This of course, infuriated Mut even more.

Mut concocted what sounded like a failsafe plan, but little did he know B and the crew rolled ten-deep that night --- all authentic G’s, no pussies on the roster. Rob saw them creeping up, but couldn’t warn his crew in enough time. Chaz, James and Big M’s came up from the rear with empty beer bottles in hand and struck first in what would become a bloody, battle royal-like brawl.

“Come on man,” Mut pleaded. “Ya’ll still trippin bout that night at the club?”

Flash gave the man a bewildered look and barked, “The club? A man with a sense of humor. Nigga you take me for a muthafuckin’ fool?!” Without further delay, he took a huge step forward and connected with a swift right that sent Mut and the bag of beer cradled in his arms crashing to the pavement.

This set off a chain reaction, which caused Chaz to rush Rob, grab him by the sleeves of his shirt, and sling him spine first into the glass door of the store. “Punk ass muthafucka!”

“Hoe – ass – nigga!” Mut covered his head for protection, but Flash was still able to inflict considerable damage by savagely stomping every unprotected limb. He sprang into the air for added effect, making sure he felt the pain.

Chaz had Rob in a rather uncomfortable position; on his ass, arm twisted behind his back, head against the glass door. Once he got him pinned up good, he then viciously slammed his knee into the man's face, repeatedly banging his head against the door.

The Explorer pulled up and halted at the parking lot entrance as the slaughter continued. "Come on niggas! Hurry up fa niggas call po's!" Though he'd seen and been a part of it, Big M's was amazed at the beating his boys put on this tandem of fuck niggas. He almost felt sorry for them.

Chaz ceased the attack, but Flash continued to batter his foe without a hint of mercy. He appeared to be in a diabolical a trance as he dismantled Mut with each agonizing blow. Then he stopped.

"Naw fuck that. That shit was too easy." Flash whipped out the pistol and aimed at the man's head.

"Shit." Realizing shit had truly gotten thick, Chaz dashed away and hopped in the back of the truck, hoping his cousin would soon follow.

"Come on man," Mut cried, suffering in anguish while lying stretched on the concrete. There was no way he could escape now that he was in the crosshair of an armed lunatic. There was no way to repent for his crimes. As the judge, jury, and executioner, Flash wouldn't hear of it.

Flash was filled with so much rage that his gun hand began to tremble just as his trigger finger started to iche. This poor excuse of a human deserved every round in the clip and more. He would never know the pain and suffering he caused by taking a life that was loved and depended on by so many. Death by murder was his calling, and to make sure it went down just like that, Flash planted two slugs in Mut's gut. He took pleasure in watching the man squirm and squall like a dying rat.

Battered, bloody, and on his knees, Rob thought there may have been a chance to escape, but soon realized that he was next to feel the wrath of the chrome. He'd never seen such a horrific sight at such close range. Needless to say, he was more petrified than he'd ever been in his life. Rob simply shut his eyes closed and prepared to meet the reaper as Flash pointed the gun his way.

But after a second thought, Flash lowered the pistol. He couldn't explain it, but Mut's death would suffice. Rob would suffer enough just by watching his friend squeal and bleed to the death. Maybe he would crawl over to him and hold him in his arms. It would mentally destroy anyone who was forced to watch a friend gasp for their final breath. Perhaps he would experience a degree of agony similar to what B-Money's relatives and friends endured.

Chapter 15: Deadly Quickies

October 30, 1997 10:49 pm

Teeth and butt cheeks clinched tightly, sweat dripping into his eyes, Flash hammered his way in and out of Candy like it would be his last swipe at the pussy. With her legs positioned high on his shoulders while he palmed her ass, he had all the leverage needed to tap what he believed to be the very bottom of her lust pit. At the current pace, he was sure to climax quickly, though would try to hold out just to prolong the pleasurable sensations that came with Candy sex.

While Candy was all in, she wouldn't be getting hers this time. But there was no need to sweat it. Once wrapping her succulent lips around him, it was a wrap --- Flash was bound to erupt prematurely. Hell, she thought he'd come before they even made it to the penetration stage.

Some people liked to incorporate food. These two freaks preferred to add a bit of nose candy to the mix. Lately, it was something they did each and every time. On this occasion, Candy started the hot fourplay off by lining his hard, fully stretched dick with a grade of coke so white, it looked like the purest of snow from the heavens. Careful not to waste a crumb, she snorted the line away before polishing off the residue by using her mouth as a sensuous suction cup. Candy promised this would be an unforgettable evening, and so far, she did not disappoint.

"Damn! I'm comin'!" Showing the reflexes of a veteran lion tamer, Flash quickly removed himself from the hot, soaking wet box, and sprayed Candy's stomach with a geyser of cream. "Goodness." Feeling completely drained for the moment, he rolled over and lied on his back to recuperate.

"I'll be back." Candy got up off the bed and jiggled her fine ass into the bathroom. Flash looked up just to catch a glance. He was still amazed at the sight of her plump, round booty regardless of how many times he'd been behind it with the cheeks spread for him to relish.

It seemed as if the Shabodique Inn brought out the best in them. That hotel, like tonight, often in the same room as the first encounter, was the spot where it went down. It was a place where they not only shared intimate moments, but dark secrets neither of them had ever shared with anyone. And of course, they passed around the finest of marijuana strains, and with all that, the two had grown pretty close over these last couple of months.

Candy returned wearing a short T-shirt that exposed a peek of neatly trimmed couchie in the front, and bubbly butt cheeks in the back. "Miss me?" She sat down beside Flash and planted a big wet kiss on his cheek.

"Hell yeah," he replied as he turned on the television. "When I'ma get that treatment again?"

Candy giggled and replied, "In due time. But I think one good favor deserves another."

Flash stared the woman in the eye and said, "What you talkin' bout Willis? Sike, I'm just playin' girl. You know I'ma hook you up." He then playfully lashed his tongue out at her to give her something to think about.

The night was still young, and with nothing of significance on the agenda, Candy looked forward to taking her man back to the land of sexual euphoria. Other bitches talked it, but she really lived it. Candy truly had the skills to keep them bills paid. It was how she talked Tony into buying her anything her black heart desired. How she persuaded Flash to man-up and seize that

come-up by robbing Valdez. She had him wrapped around her sticky little fingers, and with Tony out of the way, the game was hers for the taking. Yeah, it would've been great.

The eleventh hour of the evening had finally arrived. Flash was anxious as hell. He had never been the one to sit around and watch the news, but according to earlier reports, tonight's edition was one to see. One anchor called it one of the most gruesome scenes the area had seen in years, and considering where it was said to have taken place, that was really saying something.

"I gotta see this." Flash adjusted the volume to ensure that he caught every detail as the female reporter broke it down for the viewing audience. The way he got comfy and gave the tube his full attention, you may have thought he was gearing up to watch a big movie premiere or something.

Grueling murders took place in California all the time. Shit wasn't anything out of the ordinary. But tonight's discovery was beyond brutal, so disturbing, that it looked more like something out of a gore-filled horror movie. Flash didn't feel a thing for the poor sap who must've done somebody wrong to end up in a such a horrible predicament. Death was inevitable and in his mind, dished out in accordance to how we lived. But as the reporter continued, Flash found out that this incident hit closer to home than he could handle.

"Baby, what's wrong?" Candy observed his mood and instantly realized something was awry. The tears slowly streaming down his face were a dead giveaway.

Flash never expected the mangled corpse to belong to his dear cousin, Earl. It was a gut-wrenching scene. The body was found deposited in an Inglewood dumpster, surrounded by maggots and rats. Police said it was probably there rotting away for at least a couple of days. Earl's head was severed just below the chin and found cuddled in his arms, obviously a cruel joke staged by the perpetrator. One crime scene investigator was disgusted to the point of vomiting on sight after discovering the man's severed penis crammed into the mouth and stretching the jaws of the detached head.

Flash was overcome with terror and several other feelings. Right away, his heart went out to his aunt Clarisse who was probably more devastated than anyone. She dreaded the moment when she'd receive that inevitable phone call concerning her son. Fully aware of the venomous and dangerous lifestyle Earl led, she knew this fateful day would arrive sooner than later.

"What's the matter baby? You don't know him do you?" Candy grabbed Flash's shoulder in attempt to gain a response.

Flash turned to her with watery eyes and snapped, "Bitch don't play wit me! You know that nigga! That's my fuckin' cousin!"

Candy looked back at the TV, and after a second gaze at the victim's picture on the screen, she realized it was true. "Oh my God!" She covered her mouth. Not only because she felt bad for Flash. Because she felt the worst could eventually find its way back to her.

"I thought you said Tony went back to Cuba! You fuckin' lyin' to me, bitch?! You lyin' to me?!" Naked and furious, Flash sprang from the bed and into Candy's face.

"I told you the truth," said Candy, frightened for her life. "I know he there. I got a postcard from his place there the day my flight left."

"Bitch, you stupid?! That card coulda been sent by anybody!" Ordinarily, she wasn't one to back down from a man, but this situation was far from anything that resembled ordinary. Flash was a very dangerous force, and although she knew he cared for at least somewhat, she also knew that he'd thrash her in a heartbeat if she weren't careful. Candy played it safe and decided to give him some time alone by retreating into the bathroom.

Flash didn't mean to go off on Candy like that, but his emotions were in overdrive and he just couldn't help himself. Although Earl was a dedicated gang banger, there was no way his heinous death came as a result of rival retaliation. Sure, there were probably legions of crips, folks, and other enemies from the gang world who wanted him dead, but none of them would go to such lengths to prove a point. This gruesome murder had Antonio Valdez written all over it.

How could this happen? He knew damn well how. Earl was butchered in psychotic slasher fashion because of his cousin's crimes. He couldn't avoid the guilt that rained down on him in the form of a violent storm of internal anguish. If Valdez was truly on a mission, then Earl was just the first. The others were in grave danger as well and had to be warned. Before Flash could grab his cellular phone it rang, eerily taking him into the next phase of this chilling evening.

A phone conversation:

Flash: Hello.

Chaz: Ah shit, man! We just got hit dog! It's fucked up man! They ... they got everybody man! I mean ... they all gon', cuz!

Flash: What the fuck?! Who you talkin' bout, dog?! What the fuck's goin' on?!

Chaz: They busted in wearin' vests lookin' like the feds in shit! They laid everybody on the flo and shot 'em in the back! Damn near everybody was there! Pat, Ron, M's ... James. I barely got away, but I'm hit though! I'm bleedin' like a muthafucka!

Flash: What the fuck man! Who did this shit?

Chaz: It was that nigga, man! It was Valdez!

Rattled by the massacre he witnessed firsthand while peeking from the kitchen of the crack spot, Chaz didn't see or suspect a thing. Had he heard the vehicle pull up, but there wasn't much he could've done. He was virtually trapped in the phone booth, so there was little time for him to react in any sort of meaningful way.

Irritated by the graze of the bullet to his left shoulder, Chaz was completely distraught, more terrified than he'd been in life. "You gotta come swoop me dog! I'm at the phone booth down the street from the candy sto, but I gotta move! One time all over this mufucka! I'm bout to ...

The tented rear window of the Cadillac lowered and out pointed an AR-15. No need for a scope. The shooter easily focused his aim on the target inside of the phone booth and commenced to unload. Chaz dropped the receiver after the first slug penetrated the side of his head. The only thing that kept his lifeless body on its feet was the trail of bullets that came afterwards, shredding both glass and the youngster's flesh. The deadly, gas-powered rifle forced Chaz's body to dance about the compact area for what sounded like an eternity on the other end of the line.

"Chaz!" Flash yelled into the cellular device, pleading for a response. But there was none.

"Chaz!" With that many rounds fired there was no way his young cousin could have survived. Flash loosened the grip on the phone and with no control, allowed it to drop to the thin carpet, mind and body completely numb.

Candy sat trembling on the closed toilet, face wet with tears, nose buried deep in a wad of tissue. She was absolutely petrified, fearing that she would suffer the wrath of Tony if Flash didn't slay her first. His frantic tone during the phone conversation and sudden silence indicated that another tragedy had taken place. Things did not bode well for her.

Flash bursted into the bathroom and growled, "Stay here! Don't move! I swear to God if I come back and you not here I will fuckin' hunt you down and skin you alive!"

Candy simply gave a nod that indicated her understanding. She was shocked to find him fully dressed with a glare of desperate rage in his eyes. No matter what happened, this wouldn't turn out good. She just hoped she somehow came out alive. That's all that mattered. But even with all her slickness, that was starting to look doubtful. Candy couldn't help but wonder if she would be slaughtered by one of her two lovers.

The Lost Chapter 2: Reverse Swerve

For the first time since devising the ploy with Flash in the hotel room, Candy was experiencing regret, wishing she would have never talked the savage into crossing one of the underworld's most dangerous players. Watching Tony as he walked intense circles about the living room had her on edge, but nothing like when she first arrived.

Candy was literally greeted by terror when she pulled up and found Hector, Tony's driver and main enforcer, waiting inside of a limo in front of her home. As she half suspected, he was there to let her know there was a change of plans. Instead of kicking back and laying low for the day, she would be taken back to wait for Tony, who was scheduled to arrive at his Beverly Hills residence within the hour. The other half of her suspicion involved Hector blowing her brains out on sight.

During the short plane ride home, Candy internally debated about whether not she should carry on with her own personally motivated part of the plan --- lifting the hundred large from Tony's safe. If she did, it may have taken some of the attention away from Flash by making it appear like the deaths of Juan and Ricardo were orchestrated by a foe back in California. Or it might make her look suspicious, which was already likely seeing how she'd abandoned Tony and headed home without him. But that was if she could get to it in time. Nevermind. Scratch all of that.

Maintaining her composure and pretending that she wasn't deathly afraid of Tony's mere presence was a challenge even Candy wasn't quite sure she'd managed successfully. Perspiration steadily dripped from underneath both of her arms, and no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't fake the smile that would indirectly vouch for her innocence. So she took the scenic route.

As Valdez walked into the kitchen where she waited, Candy hopped up from the chair at the table and approached, sass in her step, scowl on her mug. "I don't appreciate you havin' me kidnaped," she growled while all in the personal space of man who could break every bone in her face with one blow.

Tony grabbed Candy's face --- not too roughly, but with enough force to inject a terrible fear in her veins. He used his thumb and forefinger to squeeze both sides of her jaw as he turned her head from left to right. Once he let go, he gave her two light pats on her left cheek.

"Have a seat *mamacita*."

"What's goin' on Tony?" Candy returned to the table and kept up the sassy demeanor. This is what Tony was accustomed to, so anything else would only fertilize his growing suspicions. Her expression told him that she didn't appreciate his antics. His expression indicated that everything she heard from Flash was true

"Juan and Ricardo went missing. They were supposed to get in touch if anything went wrong and meet me at our usual location in Fresno."

"What do you think happened?"

"I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised if our friend Mr. Flash was involved."

"You think he would try to pull something like that? By himself?"

"Anyone in this game is capable of anything ... especially when they're desperate enough. But I'm not sure. The cops could've been involved. I've got some people checking into it right now."

The phone rang up front, creating a moment of silence and brief, but intense stare between the two. "Please ... excuse me."

That was almost two hours ago. Candy didn't want to appear too on edge, but she didn't hesitate to past the time by choking down a chubby joint of Northern Lights and sneaking a few shots of whiskey. According to Tony, there was still no word on the status of Juan and Ricardo. She had yet to decide whether this was a good or bad thing. How would he respond when he found out they were on ice at the Las Vegas County morgue? Did she really want to find out? Of course she didn't, but what happened next erased all that from her mind.

With no warning, the front door came flying opening, creating an entrance for the team of armed DEA agents that stormed in. One agent hovered with an assault rifle nearly touching the tip of her nose, while the others tended to Tony. She watched in horror as her man was ruggedly thrown to the floor, handcuffed, and harassed. Candy wondered what would become of her, but she didn't have to wait long for an answer.

"Who are you to this guy?"

"Huh?"

"Don't tell these cock suckers nothing," Tony commanded before being slapped upside the head and having a hard knee shoved into his back.

"I'm gonna fucking ask you again ... how do you know this piece of shit?"

"We're ...we're just friends."

"Friends ay. Well listen missy, your friend is on his way to the slammer. And with all the blow we're sure to find in this place, I'm betting that he'll be gone for a long time. Now you can either be an accessory in all this, or walk now and put this all behind you.

Choked up on her tears, Candy asked in disbelief, "You mean I can go?"

"That's what I'm saying."

Without a second thought, she snatched up the purse behind her, headed for the door and never looked back. Candy was drenched, parched, and bummed the fuck out by the time she reached the gas station, which housed the nearest pay phone, but was unfortunately nearly two miles away. The lengthy stroll, sore feet, and mangled appearance was the least of worries. Something was about to go down and the unsettling intuition in her gut told her that it wouldn't turn out good.

It was more than a week later before Valdez made contact. That contact came in the form of a surprise visit to her home. Tony revealed that Juan and Ricardo had been killed and that he suspected a similar fate for Flash as well, who according to him, had not even been in touch with Earl since he was last seen in Vegas. He blamed the murders on a rival criminal organization, one connected with the crooked authorities who ordered the DEA to raid and put the squeeze on him. While they currently didn't have the evidence to put him away, apparently they applied enough pressure to scare him away because Tony announced that he was fleeing the country and heading back to Cuba.

The moment was all so unreal, but when those weeks flew by without hearing from Tony, she gathered that it must have true. That meant that they were in the clear. And with Tony out of the picture, she could claim her rightful spot beside her new king, Flash, whom she personally helped crown. Fuck that hundred grand. She was poised to make millions.

Candy finally felt composed enough to leave the bathroom and twist up a joint. The situation with Flash's family and friends was indeed unfortunate, but there was no way Tony could be the culprit. She wouldn't buy it. With all the money they had made over the past two months, they

were sure to have made some spiteful enemies along the way as well. That's what she kept telling herself.

Her outlook on everything changed when she received that cryptic page, one accompanied by a code that could only be associated with one individual. There was no longer any need to keep up the charade.

Chapter 16: The Final Hours

October 30, 1997 11:45 pm

Flash darted through traffic with conviction, mashing the gas pedal without a shred of regard for the speed limit, neighboring motorists, or anything that could possibly stand in the way of he and his destination. He had to get home and quickly. Ever since blasting and subsequently killing Mut in front of the liquor store, he refused to ride dirty with a weapon. After all, he had far too much to lose to risk a silly possession charge. But his new outlook on carrying left him terribly vulnerable, wide open to an attack that could easily come from the blindside. What would he do if Valdez and his goons pulled alongside the Lexus and opened fire?

“Fuck!” Flash took a deep drag on the fast burning joint while stopped at the red light, but not even the potent strain of chronic could settle his troubled nerves. “Come on bitch, change.” The last time he was this paranoid and distraught were those hellish moments of torture in that Las Vegas motel room, back when all is this madness first started.

That damn light seemed to take forever to change and apparently, decided to aid in the playing of tricks on Flash's mind in the process. The two vehicles on either side of the Lexus had him wondering if Valdez was a passenger. When the light changed and both vehicles skirted off, he realized that he was safe --- for now.

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Flash arrived home in record time, thankful that his residence wasn't surrounded by gun-toting Cubans or even burned to the ground. After performing a quick check of the house to make sure he was alone, Flash checked his answering machine. He pressed the button and let the messages play back in painful fashion.

The first message came from Donna, who was crying and so distraught that he could barely make out her words. “Eli ... this Donna. Something horrible just happened at the house on Montrose. I can't ... I can't even leave this on no answering machine. Please call me back as soon as you get this. It's a emergency.”

The machine indicated that there were five more messages awaiting him, but he couldn't bear to listen to any more. Just hearing Donna sob over the phone brought him to tears and his knees. But there was little time to carry on mourning like this. He knew he was next on the list, and that meant it was time to strap up and prepare for war.

While he could have easily made arrangements to flee the state or the country for that matter, Flash refused to run. If Valdez was coming, then let him come. Flash would await Tony and whatever army accompanied him in what he believed to be the safest quarters in his home --- the basement. And if they didn't come soon enough, then he'd come after them.

Should Tony and his troops come running down the basement steps, they ran the risk of being chopped up one by one at the hands of whatever unforgiving firearm Flash chose to brandish. He had so many little friends in his personal arsenal, and enough ammunition down there to war with the forces of Iraq. Would any of that impressive artillery even come into play? He only had two hands and something told him that just wouldn't be enough.

For someone who was worth so much money in the streets, Flash lived a rather simple life behind closed doors. Sure, he tossed money around at the clubs, kept his rims shining, and stayed

fresh to death in the flyest of attire. Aside from all that, though, he kept it low key. His basement was like almost any other you'd find in the hood --- unfinished, compact, and jam packed with too much shit.

Flash looked up at the detached light bulb that hung low from the ceiling. The uncapped wires were exposed and if you knocked up against it, you may see an occasional spark. Flash knew it was a fire hazard, but right now, an accidental house fire was the least of his worries. Figuring out a way to survive was his main concern.

“My niggas.” Flash poured the last swallow of his cognac down the floor drain. By now he was toasted, way beyond the legal limit. And in this condition, the fact that the majority of his entourage had been wiped out was a hard pill to swallow. It didn't seem real. Shit was more like a bad nightmare.

Flash fought many internal battles over the past couple of months. He barely had time to mourn B-Money's death when the opportunity of a lifetime presented itself in the form of Valdez's offer to be his regular supplier. Then Candy coaxed him into fucking it all up, but even that ended up working out in his favor. Just when he thought he'd miraculously escaped the wrath of vengeance, karma hit the fan with extreme force, smacking him dead in the face with hot shit.

Chaz, James, Big M's, Ron and Pat all had been deleted within an instant. Natural instinct was to deny it. He'd just spoken with all of them earlier. But not one of them responded to the calls to their pagers or cell phones. That was more than some weird coincidence. It confirmed that they all had indeed suffered the same unfortunate fate. They weren't necessarily upstanding citizens, but they didn't deserve to die like that --- executed face down; probably blasted with high powered assault rifles only law enforcement or villains like Tony could get their hands on. All because of Flash's greed and personal quest for power.

The most luxurious piece of furniture in Flash's cellar space was the bar, which of course, he kept fully stocked, even though he barely spent any time down here. He sat wobbly in a stool overlooking the vast selection of liquor, optioning which poison he'd use to numb the pain next. Flash was extremely blowed, but craved to get even higher. If Tony did catch him off guard and manage to fill him with slugs, he probably wouldn't feel a thing. Hell, he may even be able to get off a few extra shots he wouldn't have been afforded had he not had so much alcohol and adrenaline running through his veins. But this was only the beginning of his drug-orientated orgy.

Flash thought of James as he crumbled off buds from a long, thick marijuana branch. His cousin rewarded him with a pound of the potent herb as an incentive for the success of Club Expo, herb he cultivated himself. Who knew James would turn out to be a jolly old green thumb? The two of them shared huge aspirations beyond the dope game, which both of them planned to depart as soon as possible. But like so many before him, James became a victim of the game. Would his cousin soon be joining him?

He rolled the Vega to perfection, tightly concealing two grams of the sticky green between the tobacco leaf. Flash placed the huge reefer stick to his lips and fired it up. He tried to inhale all the smoke his lungs could handle on the first toke. Foolish boy, treating the oohwee like the everyday regos. Flash could only hold the wicked smoke inside for roughly eight seconds before letting go and shooting saliva across the bar counter. A burning sensation filled his lungs as he coughed hard and loud. Shit hurt like hell, but gagging signified a healthy hit, evidenced by the rapid change in head space he experienced. Ahhh ... welcome to LaLa Land.

Starting to feel like he may have been moving too fast, Flash took a deep breath and tried to settle down. He now puffed the weed like a civilized chronic smoker. Whatever the fuck that meant. With his throat on fire, he suddenly remembered his reason for quitting blunts --- shit was too harsh. It was something he and James tried to warn Chaz about, but the young hardhead wouldn't listen. He obsessed of blunt smoking and claimed to despise weed in the form of a joint, though he'd hit one if you passed it his way.

“Just me and you in the end,” said Flash to the hefty bag containing just a few grams short of a pound of bud. He stared at the large zip lock, wandering how much of the skunky herb he could kill in one night ... or until the enemy arrived and he was forced to hold fort. Either way, he knew his lungs would be working overtime tonight.

“Me, you and couple of friends.” Flash smiled as he acknowledged his drink and toasted the thin air. He then walked to the other end of the bar to retrieve the newest entrant to the party. Flash pulled a small box from one of the lower shelves and admired the smooth wood design before unlatching the lock and opening it up. Inside lay exactly an ounce of cocaine accompanied by a small razor blade.

Flash sat the burning blunt in an ashtray and set his focus on the powder. Anxious, he tore into the bag and scooped a clump of the powder onto the razor. After snorting the crystals up his nose, he set his light head back and embraced the sweet sensation of euphoria. Weed ... drank ... coke ... it was the ultimate combination, an experience he was grateful to have in what could easily be the final hours.

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By 1:30, Flash was totally gone, brain entrapped by a cloud of chronic fog, yet wired at the same time. He dabbed into the bag of coke on several occasions and was now filling his second Vega. Before sealing the blunt, he choked down his third glass of brandy. Though he felt disorientated at times, Flash's mind and body were aligned, both racing with loads of volatile endorphins.

“Execution double nine style.” Flash sat on the stool with two chrome Desert Eagles draped across his chest, opposite one another. It was a picture perfect pose that unfortunately, wouldn't score him any extra life points in the real world. Looking like a fierce killer was never enough. There were plenty of dead fools who would attest to that --- if they could of course.

It was at this point that Flash contemplated taking the fight to them. He was at his peak, ready to take 10 slugs to the chest and take 10 niggas down with him if need be. But even in his amped, intoxicated state, Flash knew that was a risk not worth taking. Fucked up as he was, he was more likely to smash the Lexo into the nearest light pole rather than execute the tactical seek and destroy mission the situation called for. He had a few diehard, down to put in any type of work just to be recognized low-level soldiers he could call to roll out, but what was the point? He'd already ruined too many lives, caused enough families to mourn. Flash made this death bed and if anyone, it was his to lie in next.

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The party had been relocated to upstairs on the third floor of Flash's home. It was nearly four in the morning and still no sign of an attack. Switching locations was a dramatic process, but then again, this was a dramatic ordeal. One semi-automatic clutched high in his right hand, the

other tucked in the front of his pants, Flash cautiously and thoroughly checked every nook and cranny of the main level after creeping his way up the basement stairs. He felt like an absolute ass, but better than blindly stepping foot in the kitchen and unsuspectingly having his brains splattered over the counter by an intruder.

There he sat in the aluminum chair with the 20 gauge across his lap. He couldn't decide on a battle weapon for shit. The shotgun would strike with force and was very capable of damaging more than one adversary in a single blast at close enough range. Lying on the bed in front of him was the Colt 45, another powerful option that could literally knock blocks off if called upon. Though he'd have to pick off the enemy one by one, an accurate head or body shot and it was goodnight Irene. But in dire moments like this, it was hard not to be swayed by the sexiness of the AK 47 that stood proud while propped up on the closet door.

One of the deadliest and most influential assault rifles ever crafted, the gun held two hundred rounds of scolding fury in a 200-round drum. The ruthless rifle cared little for the presence of a bullet proof vest, and that factor, coupled with the obvious, gave Flash a distinct advantage. He'd take any edge he could possibly luck up on at this point.

Flash's eyes were a deep blood red and barely open as he polished off the last of that fourth, monstrous blunt. He hated to even admit to himself but he was fading. The combination of exhaustion and sedating substances were taking their toll. Another bump of coke should theoretically wake him up, but he'd railed so much, that the shit was starting to lose its effectiveness. To compound matters, the 007 stunt he pulled to make sure the coast was clear downstairs had him running high and hot. His heartbeat was just starting to slow to a reasonable pace. He knew death was imminent, but started to think twice about allowing a cocaine overdose to be the culprit that finally took him out.

"Crept and we came," Flash finished off the lyric and bobbed his head in sync with the mellow tune of murder music.

E. 1999 Eternal was in the tape deck, declared by he and James as the dopest album to drop in 1995. Though he was a huge fan of Cleveland's Bone Thugs n Harmony, he'd never been able to recite the group's lyrics with any coherent consistency. The members of harmonious quintet were just too damn swift with their tongue-twisting, rapid fire flow. But tonight was different. Perhaps it was the array of drugs and alcohol and his brain's internal reaction to their combination. Whatever it was, Flash comprehended nearly every word they sang loud and clear. This level of comprehension caused him to feel closer to the group. He endured many of the same struggles they spoke of in their lyrics, leading him to conclude that they weren't much different than he and his crew.

"Thugs n harmony, eh? Dem niggas did that there."

Flash took a final toke on the Vega and crushed the tail end out in the ashtray at his feet. No more smoking. He carried on like Cheech and Chong by his damn self, but even the most hardcore potheads had their limits, and it appeared as if Flash was nearing his. His throat had groan sore from taking consecutive puffs and just sucking up so much damn smoke. All that insane guzzling of liquor was starting to become unpleasant as well, leading him to conclude that it would be wise to wrap up this entire session in another few swigs. Flash could feel the alcohol bouncing violently in his belly, taste the foul combination of liquor and tobacco paper each time he burped, which had become more frequent than he liked. Now, all he could do was hope that he didn't pull an Exorcist and expel a demonic purge across the room.

Accompanied by the shotgun, Flash walked over to the window and peaked through the blinds --- nothing but the barren concrete. Right then is when he realized that the ultimate

showdown might never take place. At least not tonight, this morning, over whatever the fuck scheduling buffs would refer to it as. That potentially meant that in a few hours, the madness could start again. He could step outside paranoid that he'd be ambushed by a hired thug awaiting him on the side of the porch. He could step into his car, wondering if it would explode the moment he turned the key forward in the ignition. He could easily find himself worrying if the vehicles in traffic were trying to steal a headshot or run him off the road. Flash had no clue what would happen if he left the house, but knew he had to tackle the situation head on if the time ever came.

Flash flopped back down in the chair and tried to settle himself the best he could. Might as well go with the flow and just wait this shit out. The song pumping out of the miniature boom box was called "Mr. Bill Collector", a slower track that similar to many of Bone's joints, almost sounded too smooth to be laced with such violent lyrics. After hearing a few verses, Flash was able to conclude that these thugsters were after men of his character. Men who were in grave debt because they had taken something that didn't belong to them. The Bill Collectors sought retribution and were coming to bring the pain for the wrongs they endured.

Flash shuddered at the thought. How many times had the shoe been on the other foot? Some sorry sack of shit somehow fell in debt and he had to make an example out of them. Old Bob Jenkins was just one of the many who suffered for trying to feed him the short end of the stick. But now he was the short taker while the malicious Antonio Valdez played the role of bill collector. Yeah, they fucked him pretty good, little to no grease and all, but Flash would put every penny he'd made in the game on the notion that this shit was far beyond money. There was no way he could get that back. Valdez wanted his payment in blood, and Flash's carried the most value.

Now lying in bed fully clothed, Flash let off a distressed sigh and gazed up at the blank, rotating, and slightly morphing ceiling. It was now past five in the morning and still not even a peep from anything that resembled hostile company, nor any word from Candy, who failed to answer her phone the two times he called.

"Whole fuckin' night wasted," he whispered through a dry mouth and cracked lips. Flash started to get down on himself. Couldn't he have made better use of his time? Was this really what he had been reduced to? But shit, how do you respond when your entire crew is destroyed like cheap army men? There was no way to prepare for anything like this, but Flash couldn't overcome the conflicting shards of guilt the cut through his soul, knowing it was all because of him.

Fuckin' idiot. He reflected on those dreadful moments back at the room in Vegas, when he couldn't figure out what it was that drove him to fuck up a potentially perfect relationship with Valdez. Now he knew. It was because he was a fuckin' idiot. A screw up from birth. Born to die. Destined to a life of crime, suffering, and misery. Up until now it seemed like he had been committing the bulk of the crimes, while causing all the suffering and misery.

Okay sure, Candy painted a beautiful picture of what could be if he 'played his cards right', but in the end, the decision was his to make, and being loyal, hungry, and as crazed as he, James and Chaz would ride and die on that decision. He had plenty of time to think about what was laid on the table, back out, and just walk away to another scheme. But the thrill and danger that tagged along with this particular lick was something he just couldn't resist.

With the deck stacked against him, Flash now knew that he'd severely underestimated the mysterious dude Earl vouched for as "good peoples". He had no idea what a presence Tony had from Cali to Cuba and beyond, but none of that mattered to him. Flash had come out on top in

every situation he'd ever been in. He'd outlasted the best of the best. Cheated death on more times than he liked to recall. But more than anything it was that fucked up selfishness. The need for competition. Drama. Utter chaos. Flash believed that no one, even a rugged Rico Suave muthafucka like Tony could outwit him in this game of gangstas. He had the resources and knowhow to withstand any enemy force. Bad thing was, he fucked up at step one.

“Damn. Please let me be wrong and trippin' the fuck out.” Valdez was definitely crafty. Flash now knew that his biggest mistake after the fact was getting too damn comfortable. He hadn't seen Tony since the night he was dropped off in the warehouse with Juan and Ricardo. Failure to respond to his men being murdered in cold blood signified one of three things according to Flash: (1) He was scarred. (2) He was wrapped up in something even deeper than being fucked over. (3) He was plotting and waiting for the right minute to strike.

Flash lived in fear of number three for quite a while, but once he built up an empire and started reaping the benefits of the fuckery, his arrogance ballooned and a feeling of invincibility settled. And although he never really bought into the story of Tony relocating to Cuba, he never thought they'd catch it like this. With all the eyes and ears they had posted throughout the city, they were supposed to see this a mile away. There were even times when he actually believed that he could stack his fortune and flee the scene before Valdez or whatever karma he had coming could spin its way back around.

Tony obviously had more power than Flash could have ever imagined --- not to mention, impeccable timing. Sadly, Earl was easy prey being a local someone who admired, respected, and trusted Valdez. But how the hell did he manage to catch James, Chaz, Big M's, and Ron --- Flash's most important counterparts, in the same house at the same time? Was he that good? Did it really matter? Things weren't adding up, but regardless of anything pertaining to the subject, nothing would change the fact that the boys were gone and never coming back.

The Bone tape had run its course. Flash decided not to refresh the music and listen the sounds of the morning as the birds outside started to chirp. While lying there in silence, he contemplated sending up a prayer. He'd likely fall to sleep in a matter of minutes and figured it wouldn't hurt to chant a little something that might increase his chances of waking up on earth --- or up there. Sadly, he couldn't figure out what to say to his Lord and Savior. Flash couldn't help fumbling over his words, even though he was reciting them to himself subconsciously. He just couldn't stay focused in his intoxicated state. So with that, he simply said fuck it and closed his eyes.

“Sorry man,” he apologized to the spirit above. “Now's just not the time. Might be seein' you soon anyway.” Flash humored himself with that one. It was hard to believe in the existence of a God when his life was congested with so much negativity. Even when things were going good for him, it was going bad for someone else, mainly the victims he made through slangin', murder, and general fuckery. Where the fuck was God when Earl was decapitated and left stankin' in the alley? Why wasn't his presence enough to save at least one member of the crew when Tony's assassins ran up in the spot? Didn't at least one of them deserve a second chance?

It all seemed hopeless. People could pledge all the allegiances they wanted to, but no one he knew ever conversed with this so-called God, and probably never would. And if he did exist, why in the hell would God listen to the likes of him? Flash was a heartless killer. He'd murdered several with the simple squeeze of the trigger and even more by his role in the drug distribution trade. If the myth were to be true, Flash figured his soul was destined to burn in hell for eternity.

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The last thing Flash remembered was lying in bed and questioning God's existence. Now he was sitting in a room wondering where the fuck he was and why the fuck he was there. After a few seconds of pondering, he realized that he was sitting on the couch in the living room of his first spot, the house he distributed from when he really started making an impact in the dope game. The setting became more familiar with each glance around the environment, but it was really that horrible stench of piss and mildew that caused him to pinpoint his location. He appreciated where he came from, but boy, those were times he did not miss.

What the fuck am I doin' here? Flash despised this place. He was hesitant to set up shop on the east side, but James kept carrying on about how it was such a great opportunity, there chance to get from under Spook and finally spread their wings. While the money came as expected, the police and local thugs gave them hell during their first couple months of operation. He despised that spot so much that he was actually a bit relieved when the narcotics unit ran up in the place and ransacked it for dope money. Fortunately no one got caught up in the raid, but luckily for Flash, that was the last of his brief stint on the east side.

This had to be a dream. It all became obvious when Flash was suddenly accompanied by a dearly departed friend. "What up, homie."

"What the fuck?" His presence had Flash totally freaked out. This had to be a dream.

"Why you lookin' all crazy in shit? You alright, nigga? Look like you seen a ghost." B-Money stared awkwardly at Flash, wondering what could be troubling his good friend. He leaned forward and examined his face, attempting to find a clue in those slanted red eyes.

"What you doin' here man?" Though he realized it was all a dream, Flash remained confused as fuck. "You can't be here. You dead B."

"Well shit, this yo dream, man" There he was --- the hood legend known as B-Money. He appeared to be in good health, free of the bullet wounds that brought his life to an abrupt halt. Flash didn't recall the outfit --- a red Tigers hat, matching white jersey, and jeans, but it looked like something B would rock. It was a great moment, no matter how real or unreal it was.

Flash embraced the moment and went with the flow. "B, man ... what the fuck is up, man? It's been too long."

"You know me," B-Money started. "All is well. You though. You seem like you stressin', bro."

He wasn't there, but a recap of the slaughter at the spot 'flashed' through Flash's mind. It was brief, brutal, and bold. He saw it all like he was right there in the living room where the crew members laid face down while the three gunman hovered with their weapons pointed. Flash couldn't look. He turned his head as they fired and pop the heads of his loved ones.

Frustrated, he lowered his head and massaged his temples, trying to find a way to put it all into words. "Shit done took a turn for the worst B."

"Come on dog." B-Money placed a friendly hand on Flash's shoulder in attempt to console him. "It can't be that bad, can it? I ain't never known a situation that could hold you down. Not the Flash."

This moment was utter torture for Flash. Though it was quite a treat to be in the company of a good friend, he had to seize a grip on reality quickly. He heard the engine outside. They're here! The time had come.

Flash leaped up and ran over to the window. He tried to peek out front, but for some reason, couldn't peel through the overly thick, dumb ass shades that shielded the crackhouse from the outside world. He always hated those tacky shades and wished them to hell during this crucial

moment of life and death. Flash may have not been able to pull off a simple task like looking out the window, but he could damn sure grab the toys and prepare for the fight of his life. But first ...

“Yo B we gotta ...” Flash turned to warn B-Money, but just like that, he was gone. “Fuck!” Never mind. He had to carry on with the mission. Flash rushed back over to the sofa and flipped over both cushions.

“They comin, cuz!” The warning came in clear and loud directly in his ears --- the voice of Chaz in one, James in the other. Their cryptic chanting was followed by the sound of footsteps, each one louder than the last.

“Okay muthafuckas! Let's go!” He grabbed the AK and the clip beside it with wicked intent. It wasn't the robust 200-round clip already inserted in his room, but it would make due. But there was a problem. The complications Flash experienced were anything but the norm. How hard could it be to insert a freakin' clip? Not hard at all, especially when you've been handling firearms since a teen. Just like that, the rifle and its clip were covered in rust, so much that it rendered them useless because no matter how much finesse he exercised, he just couldn't insert the ammo.

“God dammit!” Flash hurled the weapon across the room, plagued with the uncomfortable feeling of helplessness. He became erratically distraught as the sound of footsteps got louder, indicating that the enemy was deathly close. Flash looked down and discovered a pleasant surprise --- two chrome plated handguns suddenly appeared in both of his palms, both glistening from rays of the sun that now beamed brightly through a hole in the shade. Ready to get the show on the road, Flash left the living room and headed towards the footsteps. He marched to the back of the house, ready to meet this thing head on.

With the pair of heavy hitters in hand, Flash moved cautiously through the hall, literally sliding against the wall in his version of stealth mode. The echo of footsteps told him that the gunmen were trying to launch a sneak attack from the rear. Well he had a surprise for them. He'd cut them off and cut them down before they even barged through the back door.

“All right bitches.” Flash was so close that he could actually see them through small window glass of the door. He counted four of them, all dressed in black, all toting assault rifles --- all faceless. Flash stared down at the pistols and gave them a squeeze for good luck. He then lifted both, preparing to fire and ignite the hellacious war with Valdez's troops. But before he could blast, he was interrupted by the feeling of a soft hand on his shoulder.

“What?” The sound of footsteps ceased. There was total silence. Dumbfounded, Flash turned around to see who would possibly risk bothering him at a moment like this. It was Candy. There she stood with a huge grin and a sexiness that only she could flaunt.

What the fuck? This was the last thing he needed, dream or not. Candy's presence had him shook. He wanted this dream to end and quickly figured out a way to finish it. But before he could lift one of the heaters and wipe Candy clean out of his unconscious imagination, she blew him a kiss.

“Boo.” Candy's puckered lips were his very last image. With all of his might, Flash pulled himself out of the dream, heart pounding rapidly and sweating profusely. His head snapped up from the pillow, but ended up flush with the cylinder shaped silencer of the 380. pistol. The bullet was fast and furious, exploding Flash's head and laying him back on the mattress.

The blazing pistol was held by a pair of nervous, slightly shivering hands. She didn't think she could go through with it, but as she stared at the blood dripping on the headboard, it was clear to see that it had been done. Candy pulled the trigger at the closet of range. The bullet

ripped through the center of Flash's forehead, scrambled his brains, and came smashing out of the back of his skull. No way he'd recover from that.

"You did the right thing," Tony reassured Candy as slid behind her. "It's better this way." He then kissed her on the cheek and smoothly pried the weapon out of her increasingly loose grip.

As coldhearted as she was, not even Candy could bottle up the emotion that poured out of her. She never wanted any harm to come to Flash, but knew it was unavoidable when Tony approached with the new plan he concocted. The deceitful wench of a woman got the shock of a lifetime when she opened the front door of her home and saw a smiling Antonio Valdez on the other side. Right then and there, she knew that the routine shopping spree was out of the question.

After sitting her on the couch, Tony came clean about his whereabouts and what knew. He told her that the story of retreating back to Cuba to avoid his enemies was a lie devised to give him the time needed to conduct his own investigation. Playing the role of the feds? Influential partners in crime who owed him a favor or two. He followed up with the revelation of how that investigation led back to Flash and an accomplice. The last thing she expected was for him to name Earl as the guilty party, but when he did, she took the ball and ran with it.

Candy condemned Flash and offered to help Tony get redemption, which of course, he took her up on. Per Tony's orders, she would befriend Flash, with the mutual understanding that luring him into that necessary false sense of security would no doubt call for a little titty petting and some pussy rubbing. He let her know that he appreciated her loyalty and how it would enable him to serve up the coldest dish of revenge, which they both agreed he deserved to enjoy.

But taking out Flash wasn't enough. There was no way he could have acted alone, so Candy vowed to help Tony identify his counterparts. To make sure they rounded up James, Chaz, and whoever else could be involved in the killing spree, she enlisted the services of some of the most venomous and money-starved females she could call up. With the aid of her younger cousin Trish and two associates from the club she danced at, they were able to make sure that everyone got what they had coming to them at the right time.

With the plan set, the four California girls took a trip to Detroit to set the trap. Dressed to impress in a tight halter top that allowed her monstrous melons to tease tempting cleavage and a pair of even tighter shorts that showcased a shot of bootilicious cheeks while riding high up in her ass, Trish easily nabbed Chaz's attention as she waited in line at the liquor store. He took the bait and the plan was set in motion.

Trish explained that she had a click of bad dancing hoes anxious to perform and please. Chaz responded by letting her know that he had a click of high-rolling homies who didn't mind tricking off some of their hard earned cash. It was the ideal mix. After working out a few scheduling conflicts and arranging a sampling of the pussy on a solo creep, they agreed that the girls would put on a show for the boys at the spot, which according to Trish, worked out perfect seeing that her crew were residing in the area.

Flash would have a fit if he ever found out, so Chaz had to keep the affair from his big cousin. And although James was skeptical, he eventually agreed once he saw what Trish and her crew were working with. Everyone else was game, making it far too easy for them to gather the victims for what residents in the community would soon refer to as the Montrose Massacre. High, horny, and helpless, the gang was totally unprepared when Tony's hired guns barged in like law enforcement agents while the girls were upstairs supposedly preparing for their next performance. Chaz initially escaped their wrath, but we all know that he ended up suffering the same fate.

Candy knew that when she received that page in the hotel room the time to initiate the final part of the plan had arrived. Within minutes it seemed, there was a limo out front waiting to pick her up. In the back she found Tony, who greeted her with a big, golden smile, yet had nothing to say. He ruggedly grabbed Candy by her hair, forced her head in his lap, and subsequently, his hard dick her mouth. Relentlessly, he throat-fucked her with the type of viciousness and disregard that illustrated what he really thought about her. This was followed up by a ruthless anal fucking facilitated by nothing but a glob of spit and accompanied by some of the most excruciating pain Candy had ever experienced in her life.

After riding around having her tightest pleasure hole uncomfortably stretched for what felt like hours, the limo stopped at what was later revealed to be Tony's Birmingham residence. Apparently he truly was a man of mystery because Candy had no idea that he had home in Michigan. Tony informed her that they would ride out in a few hours to search for Flash and finally put the slick shyster out of his misery. From that point, the two barely spoke a word to each other.

Candy spent the time watching garbage TV, stuffing her face with gourmet ice cream, and soothing her soul with some citrus-flavored marijuana --- in addition to ignoring Flash's phone calls. Tony? Well from what she observed through eavesdropping was her so-called man laughing and chatting it up on the phone with another woman. Now that she thought about it, he probably had a dumb bitch like her in Michigan and several other states across the nation.

Candy couldn't put her finger on why she held so much disdain deep within for Tony. Maybe it was because she couldn't get over on the Cuban gangster like she longed to. Sure, he bought her nice things and came up with those crucial payments to help ensure that she was able to keep a roof over her head, but putting money in her hand was something he rarely did. Bottom line --- she wanted a man with power, yet one she could control. Like having her cake and pigging out on it too. Flash was the perfect sucker, and once she helped him slide over into Tony's position, she would have everything her greedy heart (and cunt) could ever hope for.

Then there was his promiscuous behavior. Of course Candy was never 100% faithful to Tony, but based on her twisted, selfish way of thinking, that still didn't give him any reason to be unfaithful to her. What made it worse was how he flaunted his transgressions all in her face. Tony didn't bother to hide the fact that he had been up in Vena, and several of her friends on a numerous occasions. Yes. His often ruthless ways as a player was one of the many reasons she despised him.

It was just too much. Candy stared down into the dead man's eyes, hoping he wasn't staring back. If she had to choose between Tony and Flash, it was Flash all day. But when you're thrown into the pressure cooker as she had been with Tony constantly turning up the dial, you do what you must to maintain, and in this case, maintaining meant staying alive. Candy knew that if she didn't comply, then Trish and everyone around her were in grave danger.

She couldn't bear looking at the corpse anymore. The scene was just too disturbing. Being the vindictive bastard that he was, Tony probably got some sort of sick pleasure as she stood there and gazed in utter misery. Fuck that. She could no longer maintain her composure. Had she stood there for too much longer, she'd surely barf all over Flash's carcass, adding on top of what was already a pretty disgusting scene.

"I think we betta go," said Tony, scratching his head with a leather gloved right hand.

"Yeah," Candy spoke softly. "I was hopin' you'd say that." As she took her final glimpse of the beloved Flash, a tear leaked from her eye and a jolt of pain shot through her heart. A part of her loved the man. At one time, she thought they could be the perfect team, a power couple no

other force could stop. But her life mattered more than any other, so sadly for the Flash, he had to bite the bullet at Candy's hand.

Never had she experienced so much regret. While staring at Flash as blood oozed from the gaping hole in his head, she came to the realization that this was all her fought. Had she not implanted the seeds of treachery in his corrupted mind, maybe he would still be alive today. Before Candy could give Flash one final goodbye, her head was snapped back swiftly and ruggedly.

"Second thought, I think you better stay here with him," whispered Valdez into her ear while firmly gripping her ponytail as he lectured. "You two deserve each other."

"Stop it Tony," Candy pleaded. She feared something like this might happen --- the swerve that had crossed so many angles it couldn't even be called a double-cross, but told herself that she was just being negative. Tony wouldn't betray her. He needed her. Didn't he?

Valdez figured he'd let Candy sweat it out a bit with the barrel of the Glock-17 shoved into her spine. It was amusing for a moment, but soon lost its glamour. He was tired of playing. It was far time to end this game of charades and carry on with life. So with that, he gave the trigger a light squeeze and ejected a hot bullet from the clip, one that completely annihilated a lung before bursting through her chest. Tony let go of his grip on her hair, allowing Candy to fall and collapse right on top of Flash's corpse.

"Maybe you two can find a priest in hell." Tony stared down at the soon to be deceased couple feeling somewhat relieved. Though he could never retrieve the valuables he's lost, retribution was ultimately his, and that's all that really mattered in the end. Perhaps Juan and Ricardo would now rest a bit easier now that they'd been avenged.

Tony walked down the steps of Flash's porch slothfully, like he wasn't in a rush to get to his next destination. It was partially because of all the marijuana he consumed before the final strike, but mostly because he was just tired. The lifestyle he led took a toll on the soul, and when you had to put in this type of work under these type of circumstances, it ate at you even more. While Tony was anxious to get back to California, he figured not to rush things. He hardly spent any time at his Michigan residence, and realized that now was as good a time as any.

Valdez couldn't help but feel for both Candy and Flash. Going back to his days as an aspiring crime boss in Cuba, he had never harmed anyone that didn't have it coming. Needless to say, those two were merely reaping what they sowed. Candy was what she was --- a gold digging tramp he was bound to cut loose sooner or later. Flash, on the other hand, disappointed him greatly. He felt that the young Detroit native had tremendous potential, even more than Earl, who, if there ever was a victim in all this, he was it. But in this dog eat dog world, only the strong survive, and once again Tony proved he possessed the survival skills that his adversaries and haters obviously lacked.

Beautiful day," sighed Tony as he headed to the limo that awaited him along the curb. The morning sun was glorious and it looked as if the Motor City was in store for some mighty fine weather on this pleasant day.

"Rico," Tony called out to his driver after settling himself in the backseat. "Let's head up Telegraph and find a nice spot to eat at."

"You got it," Rico obliged. "I thought you'd be ready for a nap after the night you had."

"Well ... while I am tired, I need a new number one as soon as possible, so I figured I might as well get started. Who knows ... she might be at the local Denny's or IHOP."

Rico laughed. "So you're saying Candy was your favorite?"

"No. no. But she's gone, so I might as well replace her, right?"

“Right boss.”

Not knowing what he really had a taste for in the way of breakfast or women, Tony concluded that they might be cruising the Metro Detroit streets for a while. He decided he'd make the most of it by blazing a pipe full of sweet Indonesian smoke and listening to the smooth sounds of his favorite Motown artist Marvin Gaye.

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About the Author:

Contel Bradford is a freelance journalist and author of books such as the top-reviewed *Thug Nation* and *The iPod & iTunes Handbook*. His work has been featured in numerous publications --- online with internet brands like Yahoo!, and offline in print anthologies such as *Tasty Temptations* and *Bitch I'm From the D*

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