

## *Chapter 1 - Do The Right Thing*

### *Jamal*

**T**he summer of 1986 was shaping up to be pretty damn good for me. I was entering my senior year in high school, I didn't have a criminal record, and I hadn't fathered any kids. I didn't have a job, but the little money I earned from being the neighborhood barber was enough to keep me happy. As long as I could buy myself a few Ralph Lauren polo shirts and Bally tennis shoes, life was great.

When I wasn't goofing off with my friends or hanging out at the local shopping mall, I could usually be found hanging out at my girlfriend Tracy's house. Tracy was a tall, slim, and very attractive sophomore

who attended a local all girl school. We met a year earlier, and started dating shortly thereafter.

To say that our relationship progressed quickly would be an understatement. Innocent hand holding scenes and trips to local theaters to see matinees were quickly replaced with unbridled public displays of affection and all night intimate phone conversations; conversations that usually ended with one of us falling asleep while holding the telephone.

At the tender ages of 16 and 14, Tracy and I thought we were grown, and it wasn't long before we were engaging in "grown folk" activity. We hadn't reached the four-month mark in the relationship when that unrelenting narcotic called *lust* mixed with our raging hormones. Before we knew it, innocent late night marathon phone conversations were replaced with perfectly orchestrated summer time "booty calls."

During our season of lewdness, I rarely used a condom and Tracy rarely insisted. Lust skewed our already poor judgment. Even a blind man could see that promiscuity would become our downfall.

In many ways, we weren't that different from many of the teenagers in neighborhoods across this sex craved nation. Our modus operandi was really very similar to the one used by many teenagers – yeah, maybe even your teenager - so pay close attention because the scenario is more prevalent than most parents realize.

During the summer months, parents would get up and go to work Monday thru Friday, and leave their horny ass teenage kids at home. In between accomplishing the various tasks written on the "Things To Do" list posted prominently on the refrigerator - teenage boys and girls across the city were sneaking their lovers in the house through windows, back doors, and down chimneys if need be. Tracy and I were no different.

After a day of sex, cereal, and soap operas, the clean-up process would usually begin at roughly two o'clock in the afternoon. For those of you who lived a more sheltered life and are unaware of the clean-up process - here is the cliff notes version of what it consisted of:

- (1) Taking a quick shower and then using a towel to wipe down the tub so that it appeared dry.
- (2) Washing and drying the sex stained bed sheets and putting them back on the bed.
- (3) Using a can of air freshener to eliminate the "boodussy" (that's booty-dick-pussy for the ebonically challenged) smell that seemed to insist on lingering in the air.
- (4) Placing the used condoms in a paper bag and putting them in the garbage can - outside.
- (5) Doing a thorough scan of the bedroom floor to make sure that no pieces of the condom wrapper had been overlooked and waiting to be found. Veterans to the game knew that the key was to never rip the top of the condom wrapper all the way off - just tear it enough to slide the condom out.
- (6) Calling a friend across the street and telling him/her to go outside and check for any signs of parental activity - if the coast was clear, the sex exhausted lover was sent on his/her way never to be seen or heard from again...that is until plans could be made to hook up again later on that week.

My family lived at the end of a newly developed subdivision. The walk from the bus stop to my house was approximately seven minutes. It was important to know the precise time because the buses were rarely late. If you missed the bus you'd be waiting thirty minutes for the next one to appear. Another reason why it was important to know the schedule was because it reduced the probability of you and your young lover having to stand at the bus stop – in the middle of the day - looking awkward and guilty.

At least two or three times a week Tracy and I would make our way to my house from the bus stop. As we walked past my friend's houses, I tried to pretend I didn't notice my buddies peeking out of their living room windows. Everyone in the neighborhood knew about "the walk." It even became a neighborhood competition amongst the boys to see who could have the most "walks" during the summer. Even the girls in the neighborhood would look out of their windows and shake their heads in pity as they watched another unsuspecting victim being led to some boy's home.

I'd won the neighborhood contest the previous summer with 14 "walks", and was trying to repeat as the champ – not an easy task now that Ricky Trufant lived up the street. Ricky was the new "cat" on the block. He had a light brown complexion with wavy hair. Ricky told everyone he had "Indian" in his family. All the girls called him "Pretty Ricky" – I called him a broke ass El DeBarge. Nonetheless, the girls loved him and he was definitely going to be my stiffest competition.

The threat of competing with Ricky Trufant didn't matter to me because Tracy's weekly visits all but guaranteed I would be the first on my block to repeat as the "walks" champion.