

CHAPTER 48

I stepped into the familiar scene of Eddie's Pool Hall, to the loud echoing of 'CLACK'- 'CLACK'-'CLACK'ing and smacking pool balls; thick lingering clouds of cigartte smoke- laughter- jukebox music- and pool players shouting out geometrical pool calls

Past Eddie's jukebox- still in a condition pristine, thumping the sounds of Al Green; I spotted a few familiar faces, as the box switched to Michael's- *'Billy Jean'*

All-in-all, it was somewhat refreshing to see that the old haunt had not changed within my period of absence- at all; except for the new shooters and pool hall sharks, who waited patiently for a challenge- while leaning against a backroom wall

Having a really serious jones for that nicotine- if you know what I mean; I bummed a few Newports off some cat, just as he pulled a pack from out the machine

It was by far a longshot- for a man with nil resources to obtain the manpower that he so desperately sought; while some men could be swayed by gorilla rhetoric, it was always the best street soldiers that were with much currency bought

I started my campaign with the solid negros, that I use to hang with and know; yet all I got was dumb excuses, and the one that owed me the most- said..... **“HELL’LLL- NO!”**

“You- sta- sta- stop me- if’fff- ya- ya- you remember- ah- ah- any of thisThe- fa- fa- fight- at the Pike.....”, said Stutter Box Stan; **“.....The- fa- fa- fight on Mu- Mu- MyrtleThe- fu- fu- fight- with my- mu- mu- mother- in- lawYou- ranYou ranYou ra- ra- ra- ran!”**

.....I remembered

“Now listen AlleycatYou love your daughter- I know.....”, schooled the old mac Charlie Moe; **“.....But I’m warning you- Young BloodIf you love yo life- just let that stolen box shit- GO!.....
.....Just let it GO!”**

In the matter of an hours’ time spanned, I had stepped back out with not one solitary man to meet my posse demand; though I did walk out the pool hall with a full pack of Newports, and twenty-five dollars in *‘GET LOST’* money within my hand

Stomach grumbling- I walked into a liquor store, passing the crazy old kook in the flooding suit- whom sat loudly mumbling; I couldn’t make out one got damn thing that he had tried to say, because all his words- he just kept incoherently jumbling

How it did break my heart- watching the results of black lives that had fallen apart; once all promising youth, ignorant of the barriers that we faced from the start

From the hunger pains- to those stones that did roam, to the drug and alcohol diseases buried deep within our chromosomes; from the lack of healthy role models within our community, to the violence and abuse- within our very own homes

The inequalities in our school system, with the bell curve- for the black dum-dum; to the prevalent advertisements- strategically placed by white corporate scum

It was sometimes hard for me to understand- why, most black folk willingly chose to live amongst such a pale stagnating lie; when most of us were doomed to white capitalistic servitude, destined for black genocide- like Cocheese from- *'Cooley High'*

Inside of the liquor store- I had nuked two frozen microwave bean burritos and grabbed two small bags of crunchy Cheetos; two ice cold cans of the new formula Coke, and a nice pair of socks and sandals- to cover all of my exposed feet toes

Outside of the liquor store now, I gave my extra meal to the old man to chow; that he accepted with an all gum smile, a pat on the back- and a low low bow

Half an hour later- I found myself sitting on a bench alone at King's Park, eating my burrito within the dark; and it was right there- in that meditative moment, that my brain did ignite with a delayed grand luminous mental spark

.....THE KARATE MAN!

I leapt like a frog, tossing the rest of my meal to a nearby whimpering dog; wondering if he'd work on the tot-system, for whiskey- or a bottle of grog

.....I couldn't see why not- after all- he was a BUM!