

TWO MONTHS AND ANOTHER BREAKUP LATER...

I sat between Cortez and Manny at the George Ingleside High spring Pep Rally. We were seated on the front row of bleachers in our baby blue and white home jerseys and shorts. This particular time, Traci and I had broken up because she and my best friend Alicia had had some words...

After the pep rally, both the basketball team and the cheerleading squads remained in the gym. It was the end of the school day and practice was about to start soon. I was standing at half court with a basketball, trying to perfect this crossover move that this raw ass rookie NBA player named Allen Iverson had made famous; all while listening to Manny and Joey who were a few feet from me having a freestyle rap battle.

“Whassup Tone?” I heard someone say. I turned around to see Dionna standing there.

“What’s good little mama?” I gave her a hug.

“You know ya girl talkin’ to that Jerome boy, right?” She asked me.

“What?” I thought I’d heard her wrong. “You said she talking to who?”

“Jerome Sanders. The new boy.”

“Are you serious?” I looked around the gym, I found Jerome standing behind Traci, she was smiling and he was saying something in her ear.

“And then,” she looked both ways as if to see if anyone was within earshot and whispered to me: “I overheard her in Algebra class telling Krystal that she fucked him last night.”

If I were a girl, I would have emitted a high-pitched scream, started crying hysterically, ran over to them and started swinging wildly like Wanda; Jamie Foxx’s character, from *In Living Color*. Come to think of it, that’s almost exactly what happened.

“What?!” I said in what almost sounded like a high-pitched scream. Manny stopped rapping in mid-bar and gave me a funny look.

“You okay, bro?”

I responded by marching across the gym to where they were standing. Traci jumped when she saw me coming but relaxed after a second. I guess it hit her that we had broken up.

“So, you fuckin’ *this* nigga!” I exclaimed. “Bitch, I’ll fuckin’ kill you!”

RICO J.

“What?” She asked while releasing herself from his grip and giving me her trademarked look of death. She took a step toward me.

The gym fell silent and everyone was watching.

“Bitch, you heard what the fuck I just—”

Before I could finish she slapped the shit out of me.

“You wanna try that again?” She asked with her eyes squinted.

My face was burning, I ain’t even gonna lie: that shit hurt almost as much as seeing her hugged up with Jerome.

“How the fu—”

“Let me tell you something muthafucka!” She pushed my head back with her middle finger as she spoke. “Don’t you ever in yo muthafuckin’ life run yo cheatin’ ass up on me talkin’ shit—or better yet, questionin’ me! We ain’t even together nigga!”

I was stuck. She was talking to and treating me like I was a nigga on the street, like I was never shit to her.

“I ain’t cheat on you, that shit—”

“You fuckin’ Alicia, remember? Go question that bitch!”

“Face it, you fucked up boy!” Jerome smirked. “You let a good woman go now I got her. Man the fuck up!”

“Aw, you got her?” I smirked. “So how do my nut taste when you kiss her?” I charged at him but my team mates held me back. “Traci, really? You *my* bitch! Fuck this bum ass nigga!”

“Don’t talk to my man like that!” she snapped at me.

“Yo man?” I broke free from my guys and punched Jerome in his jaw. He landed hard on the gym floor. “Fuck you and this bitch made nigga!” Before he could stand up on his own I grabbed him by his jersey and snatched him back to his feet.

“*You* man up, muthafucka!”

We started fighting. That’s when Coach Simpson ran over to us, snatched us away from each other and pushed us in opposite directions. Who knew his old, out of shape ass was that damned strong?

“What the hell is going on here?” He demanded. Everyone in the gym had formed a half-circle around us. No one said anything. Jerome and I just stared at one another, breathing heavily.

“I leave you alone for *FIVE* minutes and *this* is what happens?!” He gave the entire team a once over and yelled: “Give me thirty laps!” He shot me a glance and added: “Everybody!”

“Coach, I can explain,” I said.

“I don’t wanna hear it Tone! I’m *extremely* disappointed in *you!*” He pointed to the other side of the court. “Thirty laps!”

“But coach, he—”

“NOW!” His deep voice echoed off the gymnasium walls.

THE SILENT TREATMENT

I had never, before or since then, seen Coach Simpson so furious. I turned and started running with the rest of the team.

“And you,” he said to Jerome: “I need to see you in my office.”

THREE DAYS BEFORE PROM...

It was 3:00pm on the last day of school for the senior class. We had ended the basketball season with a 75-20 record and placed number 2 in the state. Since there was no more practice, we spent our last days as high school students posted on the front steps talkin' shit every day after school. It was me, Manny, this guy named Devin and Lil' Joey that I recall but there were at least about 10 of us sitting there. I don't even remember what we were talking about because quite frankly that part is not even really what's important.

Mario's black truck pulled up in front of the school and parked, which was strange because I had my own car and Mario hadn't picked me up from school in over a year. So I immediately knew that somebody had died, that was the only logical reason for my brother to be at my school and not at work. I stood up to go find out what was wrong and I hadn't taken two steps before all four doors swung open. Riana jumps out of the driver's seat, Traci jumps out of the passenger seat and two of their cousins jumped out of the backseat.

My heart leapt into my throat because I already knew what was about to happen. My guys hadn't even noticed what was going on; they were too wrapped up in whatever conversation they were having. I looked around for Dionna hoping that she was still inside the building somewhere. I didn't see her.

"Yo, I'll be back," I said to my guys then I turned heel and headed back inside to find Dionna. True, Traci was Traci and my loyalty was to her, but Dionna wasn't that type of female so I couldn't let that shit go down without at least warning her that she was about to walk into an ass whooping. I jogged down the first floor hallway to the Student Council office and knocked on the door, no answer.

"Shit!" I trotted up the stairs to see if she was at her locker. She wasn't. After searching the whole building for her I said to myself "fuck it, I tried" and went back outside. I stepped outside and found Traci standing there talking to my guys.

"Hey baby," she looked up at me and smiled.

"Traci, what the fuck?" I walked up to her. "Don't do this man, take y'all asses home and leave that girl alone."

RICO J.

"What are you talking about?" she looked surprised. "I came to see you and the team off for y'all last day of school!"

"No you didn't," I shook my head.

"Yes I did!" she insisted.

"Traci," I looked her in the eyes. "No, you didn't!"

"Baby, I don't know what—"

"I hope the dick was worth this ass whoopin' bitch!" I heard Riana yell from a few feet away. Everybody looked up just in time to see her swing on Dionna.

"Excuse me a second," Traci smiled then winked at me.

"Traci!" I tried to grab her arm.

"Shoulda kept ya dick in ya pants," she pulled away from me.

In a matter of seconds Traci was by her sister's side and the four of them were attacking Dionna. But to my surprise, that little bitty bitch was giving they asses some go! I stood there in complete horror.

"Help me break this shit up bro," I said to Manny.

He and I ran over and snatched Traci's cousins away from Dionna.

"If y'all gonna fight, fuck it, fight!" I said to Traci as I held her cousin Traya back. "But let them go head up, don't jump that girl!"

"Nigga move!" Traya punched me in the mouth and rejoined the cloud of fists and weave.

Manny too had been attacked by their other cousin Jessica.

"Man, let them bitches fight!" He was rubbing his jaw. "If they whoop yo ass that's fine, but I'm not about to get my ass whooped too, and I ain't even the one that fucked *both* sides of the fight!"

I laughed.

Just when I thought the shit couldn't get any worse, a group of Dionna's friends ran up and started snatching them off of her. But they weren't breaking up the fight, they were jumping in! It was the Honor Roll vs. the Hoe Stroll. I was stunned.

"Oh shit!" Lil' Joey started clapping.

I can't believe it took security as long as it did to get outside and break the shit up but in the end it took four security guards and six teachers to stop the fight. Police sirens wailed in the distance.

"Let's go," I heard Traya say. They all jumped back in the truck, all but Traci. One security guard was holding her back and another was holding Dionna.

"I should've told you this a long time ago but," Traci pointed at me. "That nigga right there, is off limits! That goes for all you bitches out here!"

"I got her," I snatched her away from the female security guard and picked her up. "Get in the truck man."

THE SILENT TREATMENT

"How did my pussy taste on his lips, bitch?" she was yelling as I literally carried her to the truck.

"How did *my* pussy taste on his lips?" Dionna retorted. "You taught him well, Tray-B! Thank you!"

"You welcome bitch but how did my menstruation taste on his dick?" Traci tried to wriggle out of my arms to get at her. "You got to know he went raw *all* week!"

"Oh my God," I hung my head and silently thanked God that it was my last day of school and that I didn't ever have to see any of those people again.

"The police is comin'," Traya said to Traci. "Bitch, let's go!"

I finally made her get in the truck and I closed the door.

"It's cool boo boo," she yelled out the window. "I know where you live, bitch! This ain't over!"

I looked at Riana in disbelief.

"See you later, little brother!" she smiled at me. "I'm making baked chicken and lasagna tonight, what time you comin' over?"

I didn't respond I just shook my head. I couldn't believe her grown, 22 year-old ass actually participated in a high school fight *and* drove the getaway car. I briefly wondered if Mario knew where she was going when he gave her his keys. Oh, and did I mention that she was three months pregnant?

Riana sped off just as the police turned the corner. I looked over at Dionna. For a bitch who had just been attacked by four hoodrats, she didn't look the least bit disheveled and only had a busted lip. I had completely underestimated her.

"You okay?" I asked.

"Anthony," she said. She wouldn't look at me.

"What?"

"Fuck you," her voice was shaky. "I should have known better than to fuck with you, you a typical nigga!"

"Girl," I tried to hug her. "You see I tried to stop that shit!"

"Don't touch me!" she pushed me away. "I thought you were different but you're a typical, nasty ass nigga!"

"What the fuck do I have to do with—"

"Everything!" she yelled at me. "So you lied when you told me that you don't talk to her no more *and* you fucked that grimy ass bitch raw, while she was on her period? Traci is fuckin' everybody, Anthony! I don't care what story she runs on you, I've known that girl for years, years before we ever knew *you* existed. She'll fuck any nigga that buy her a drink and eat her pussy! She couldn't give a fuck less about you! If you can't prove it, it didn't happen; and those are *her* words!"

RICO J.

“Man, whatever!” I knew she was just talking shit because she was embarrassed so I brushed it off.

“Yeah, whatever,” she scoffed. “Fuck you Anthony! Don’t call me, don’t come to my house, nothing! It’s over!”

"Look man, I'm sorry," I threw my hands up and started to walk away.

“You ain’t sorry yet!” she said. “Keep fuckin’ that bitch raw!”