

The Assignment I Accepted

People ask when you know you're no longer just a Black girl. For me, it wasn't age. It wasn't heartbreak. It wasn't a struggle. It was the moment I found out I was pregnant with Harlem, my son.

For years, I had convinced myself that motherhood wasn't in my future. Too many years on birth control. Too many quiet assumptions I never questioned out loud. I believed my body had already decided no for me.

Then the world shut down. On November 10, 2020—during a pandemic, during uncertainty, during isolation—I learned I was carrying life. A life I had once believed was impossible. A divine interruption. A mission I didn't apply for but was clearly chosen for.

I was honored. And I was terrified. The world narrowed my options quickly, the way it often does for Black women: Abortion.

Or single motherhood. But my spirit wouldn't let me reduce my child to a decision made under false pretenses. I didn't have the heart—or the permission within myself—to end his life just to preserve a version of ease I was never promised.

What changed wasn't my circumstance. It was my purpose. I was no longer searching for meaning. I was the meaning.

I became somebody's mommy. And no matter how devastated I was by how I arrived there, the mission was still the mission. There was no

turning back. I had no choice but to walk by faith—barefoot, unsure, but committed.

When I was just a girl, I chased feelings. I searched for joy, for validation, for something that made me feel whole.

I didn't find that feeling until I became a mother. That's when the transformation happened.

From Black girl to Black woman. From surviving to stewarding life. From hoping to deciding.

Motherhood required an unregrettable decision—one I made with my whole chest. I don't regret my choice. I don't regret my son. I don't regret the woman I had to become to protect him.

Since then, I've made many decisions that demanded integrity over popularity. Decisions that made me look like "the bad guy." Decisions that required me to bite the bullet and stand alone.

But Black womanhood teaches you this:

You don't have to be liked to be right.

You don't have to be understood to be aligned.

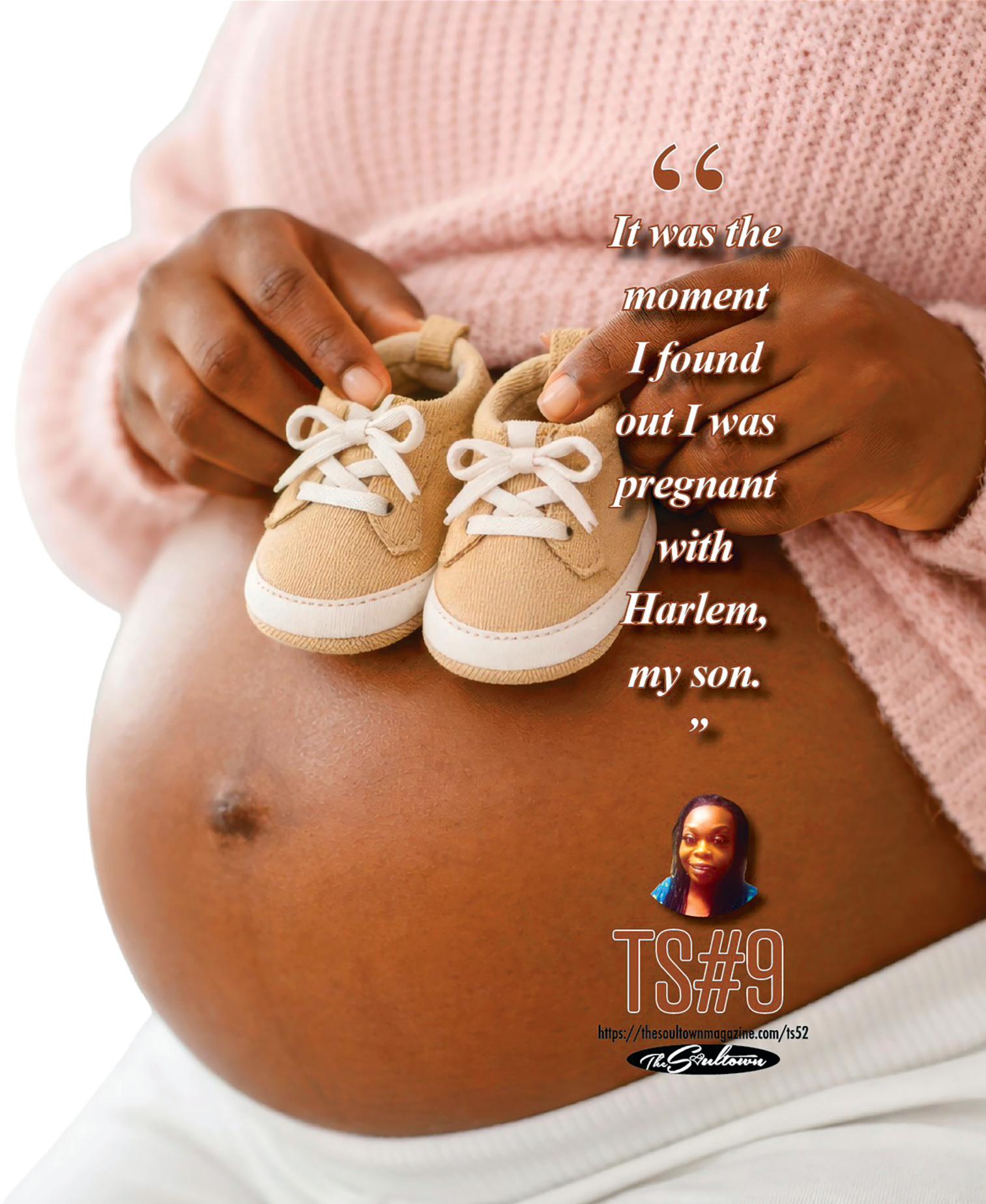
You don't have to explain what you're protecting.

Every decision I make is for my child.

And that's how I know—I am no longer just a Black girl.

I am a Black woman on assignment and I gladly accept it.

I am Shaneshia Vaughn, TS#9 of 52 of The Soutown Magazine. I want to thank you all for having SOUL! 🌿



“
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moment
I found
out I was
pregnant
with
Harlem,
my son.
”



TS#9

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That Made Me a Black Woman