*Money
Murder
&
Drug Flow*

by

L.O.R.D.

**CHAPTER 1**

**The Beginning . . .**

It was just getting dark outside when the brand new 1989 money-green 7-Sseries BMW pulled into the housing project with its rims shining like mirrors. The driver hopped out wearing a large gold cable, with his coat open and a baseball cap to the back. His status was validated as he collected respect from a crowd of thugs standing in front of a high-rise building rolling dice.

“Whaddup?” several voices repeated, as they greeted him.

“Whaddup? Whaddup?” he responded, as he approached. Then, with his face frowned, he accosted one of the men in an aggressive manner. “What the fuck is the deal, nigga? You telling people you gonna pop me when you see me? You punk ass nigga!”

“Yeah, I said it!” the man snapped back, forcefully.

“Pop me then, mahfuckah!”

The crowd began to scatter in fear as they both reached for weapons while taking a few steps back.

*SNAP! SNAP! SNAP!*The BMW driver beat him to the draw, squeezing three shots from a .45 automatic.

The other man, large in stature, saw three quick flashes light the night up and heard bullets zipping past his head as he sheltered into a hallway while pulling a .9 millimeter from his waist.

*SNAP! SNAP!* He fired back, catching his aggressor with two slugs to the stomach. The BMW driver folded forward from the impact, firing three wild shots as he fell against his car.

Bright sparks lit the dark hallway as bullets ricocheted off the walls. But the big fella stayed crouched down on the side of the hallway door, tightly gripping his gun with both hands until the shots stopped. He was feeling a massive rush from the drama as his heart pounded heavily against his chest. Peeking out into the night, he saw his target faintly, running off, holding the .45 in one hand while clenching his stomach with the other. At that moment, he burst out of the hallway, chasing after the BMW driver while consistently firing shots in his direction.

*Snap . . . Snap . . . Snap . . .* More and more features swirled into the air as each bullet smacked into the back of the BMW driver’s North Face coat. After the last bullet hit him, he tumbled forward, and then made it back to his feet without stopping motion. As he headed for Wade Street, he felt the heat from the bullets burning his flesh. Soon after, his whole body went numb and he fell into a state of shock, feeling as though he was dreaming. Everything became cloudy to him, yet he could still hear the loud sound of gunshots that seemed to be following him with vengeance. As he headed for the hallway of a high-rise building, desperately trying to escape the sound, he noticed a young dark-skinned kid holding the door open for him . . .

\* \* \*

Although Sher’on and Young God no longer participated in the league, they were walking home from the basketball game at the YMCA with the others. While on their journey back to the projects, the last of daylight became overwhelmed by a dark sky, and the topic of discussion was who had the most money in the projects.

All six of the boys were fascinated by the fast cash they saw being made around them every day, but only two of them engaged in that lifestyle. Sher’on, the tall, light-skinned sixteen-year-old who lived on Wade Street, on the projects’ outskirts, started his career just last year in ’88 as a lookout for Red Bag.

Young God, on the other hand, grew up around scales, guns, narcotics packaging, and drug paraphernalia. This was thanks to his older brother, God, who would occasionally give him errands to run. At times, he would be given stacks of cash freshly made off of the block to take home to their apartment on Maple Drive. Maple Drive was referred to as “The Drive,” a long street that ran through the entire complex. Young God’s real name was Michael Skyers. He was given the name Young God because of the striking resemblance he shared with his brother. Now at fourteen years of age, Young God was into more than just bringing home stacks of cash for his brother. The medium-built, light-brown complexioned youngster was taking larger steps toward feeding his ambitions.

Kazarr was the youngest of them all, only thirteen and considered to be a problem in the making. Sometimes, constant jokes and taunting by others about him being poor and dirty would cause him to flip out into unbelievably violent rages. The dark-skinned, frail, knotty-headed thirteen-year-old grew up far less fortunate than most. His mother was one of the popular baseheads in the projects, and their apartment was the most famous crack house of all. The inside of their residence was brutally filthy. It had a horrible stench to it, along with a serious roach infestation, including the water-filled sink that stayed full of dirty dishes. In the refrigerator, there was nothing more than a box of old baking soda, half a jar of mayonnaise, two sticks of butter, and a molded slab of welfare cheese. Growing up under these conditions and having a single parent who would be out tricking all night to feed her habit rather than her children, Kazarr and his sister would often endure droughts of hunger. These dry spells for food would last until they ate at school, a friend’s house, or whenever Kazarr got money from one of the hustlers in the projects for carrying drugs in his pants from one side of the complex to another.

Zig was one of the more fortunate kids growing up in the projects. His friends called him Zig because of the dislike he had for his government name, which was Zack. Zig was fourteen, and like Sher’on, he also lived on Wade Street. He and his sisters lived under the same roof with both parents. Their mother and father held decent jobs and were committed to their children. But that didn’t make Zig a good kid. He was one of the sneakiest little kids in the whole Bishop Terrace complex. Though he wasn’t selling drugs yet, one could still tell that he was full of anticipation and eager to get a taste of street life.

Last but not least, there were the twins: Terry and Tramain. They were two days older than Kazarr and lived diagonally across from Young God on the Drive. Even with them living in the building, which hosted the most activity in Bishop Terrace, the twins never did any drug-related favors for the dealers who congested their hallway and lingered in front of the unit. They were two dark-skinned little boys who loved to fight and curse. The recent drug overdose of their mother only made matters worse as they both concealed rage in them, liable to erupt at the slightest provocation. They never knew their father, and now that their mother was dead, their aunt had taken over the apartment in her place. Yet, they didn’t respect her, and things were always out of control.

While bragging about Devil being the richest hustler in the projects, Sher’on added a story to support his theory.

“I remember when Devil first made my brother lieutenant for Red Bag. He came to my house at like eight in the morning and brought us to the Volvo dealership out in Milford. We ain’t even know what we was there for! When we got out of the car, Devil just gave Tylon palm and said, ‘You’re the head lieutenant for Red Bag now.’ Then he waved his finger at all of the new Volvos on the lot and said, ‘Pick one!’ That’s when Tylon got the burgundy, 740 GL Turbo, with the tan leather interior.”

Sounding not so impressed, thirteen-year-old frail-bodied Kazarr explained, “Nigga, that ain’t nothing! Every time Dark Heart and them go to the city, they come back to my house with big blocks of caine taped up in plastic. It be so much stuff, when my mother be checking it for them, they be paying me and my sister to stay outside all day and night.”

“That’s true!” Zig confirmed, remembering several nights of sneaking Kazarr and his sister in his house because of them having no place to go.

Dark Heart was one of the most feared nineteen-year-olds in the town. He was 6′2″, 300 pounds, black as tar, with bloodshot red eyes, and extremely ruthless. Just being in his presence gave one the impression of being smothered by a dark cloud of evil.

Those long sessions that Kazarr spoke of weren’t taking place as often as they used to. Dark Heart and Young God’s brother, God, recently took a major loss that also caused their partnership to end with bad blood. Their transporter, who was hired by God as a last-minute substitute for their regular guy, was taken into custody by state troopers after getting busted on Interstate 95 with the cocaine hidden inside the door panels of the car. Nobody knew how many kilos they lost, but everyone knew there was a heated argument between the two in which God pulled out a gun. After that incident, they severed ties and started individual operations of their own. But the tension was still high.

Long before the breakup of God and Dark Heart, Young God had already begun working for the Bookers. The Bookers were three brothers who ran the most organized drug block in the projects. They turned the building where the twins lived, into a money-making machine. Keyon, who was the youngest of the three at seventeen years old, had a knack for smooth talk and enough confidence to try and corrupt Jesus himself. Just months ago, Keyon saved his brother from being convicted of a wild-style, sloppy, double murder. He secretly persuaded the jury’s foreman, a forty-year-old Caucasian female kindergarten teacher, into accepting $25,000 in cash to taint the jury. Even Ishmell himself was surprised to be found not guilty. After the verdict was read, Ishmell looked into the crowd of spectators and saw his brother wearing a distinctive smile. At that very moment, he knew exactly why he was found not guilty.

Ishmell was a homicidal maniac and the brains of the operation. So long as he thought it was called for, Ishmell had no problem with giving a person the punishment he felt they deserved. After reading statements written by one of his lieutenants against an enemy of theirs, Ishmell did what he classified as the honorable thing to do, and put a bullet in his lieutenant’s head. His thought process was, *If he did it to him, he’ll do it to us*.

After complete vindication of the double murder charges, Ishmell refrained from getting his hands dirty and decided that paying others to do so wouldn’t be a bad thing. He was only twenty-one years old, but thinking like a mob boss.

Lex, who was the middle child at age nineteen, was a gargantuan money-maker for the Bookers. His sharp and witty ideas to out-hustle others in the projects would produce supreme clientele, leaving competition trailing behind. Like his older brother, he too was a menace with guns. Yet, he had a deceitful mannerism that allowed him to keep his anger subdued until the right time to react.

Unlike Keyon, who was brown-skinned and stocky, Lex and Ishmell were a little darker and slenderly built like their father. Overall, the Booker brothers were a trio who had been tightly knit all of their lives. They grew up ridiculously poor until the cocaine epidemic dominated ghettos throughout the United States. It wasn’t until then that they became inner-city entrepreneurs of the concrete jungle.

Young God got down with the Bookers, because he grew tired of being confined to only doing small things for his brother. As time passed, he developed a strong urge to get paid. He knew God didn’t want him in the streets full-fledged, but he also knew that of all the different crews in Bishop Terrace, his brother would be more comfortable with seeing him with the Bookers.

Young God was a smart youngster who was slightly ahead of his time. Just a few months after being recruited, the Bookers recognized and clearly acknowledged that he was a unique prospect in a class all by himself. They came to the conclusion that he was capable of being more than a lookout/hand-to-hand hustler and decided it was time for him to step up.

\* \* \*

Almost home and still discussing the same topic, the teens were bending the corner off of Lambert Street on to Wade Street to enter the projects. Their voices came to a dead pause as they heard loud sounds: *SNAP! SNAP! SNAP!* Everyone froze in their tracks with widened eyes. Then, *SNAP! SNAP!* The teens took off, frantically running toward Zig’s building as additional shots echoed throughout the projects.

“Shut the door! Shut the door!” Young God shouted.

“I can’t,” Tramain retorted. “Your brother’s coming!”

Thereafter, God staggered three steps into the dimly lit hallway and collapsed on his face. His gun clanked recklessly on the floor as his body hit the ground. Young God’s jaw dropped in shock as his heart sank to the pit of his stomach.

“Oh shit!” he let out. “Turn him over. Help me turn him over!” Young God begged, rushing as he reached down for his brother.

Zig and Sher’on quickly responded, moving with speed as they helped to flip God onto his back. After rolling him over, they all were terrified by the striking amount of blood that flowed from his mouth and nose as he snorted loudly with his eyes stretched in fear.

Young God broke into an emotional panic as he witnessed his brother strangling on his own blood while fighting to stay alive.

“Please don’t die! You can’t leave me. I love you. God! I—”

As they locked vision, peering into each other’s eyes like never before, Young God watched it end. A final breath was driven from his brother’s body, and just like that . . . it was over. The reaction in the hallway was almost instant as the young teens lapsed into a frenzy of murmured cries.

The next day, friends and family cluttered their apartment on the Drive, giving support to Young God and his mother as they mourned God’s death. Among them were Young God’s aunts and uncles who immediately flew in from the South to comfort their sister at such a rough time. It was truly a day filled with grief. A mother had lost a son, a brother had lost a brother, and Bishop Terrace had lost one of its most valuable men.

Lex and Young God were in Young God’s bedroom, away from everyone else that was crowded into the apartment. As they sat at the foot of the bed talking about his brother’s murder, Young God wondered why Ishmell hadn’t arrived. Before asking, he got his answer as Lex rose to his feet.

“I’ma leave right now, because I got a few things that I have to do. Before I go, Ish wanted me to let you know that he ain’t come because he’s gonna talk to you tonight, one on one! He already talked to your mother and she knows you’re gonna stay with him tonight. I’ma scoop you up at nine thirty, so be in front of little Kazarr’s building. I’ll see you later.”

While extending his arm to give Young God palm, Lex sensed a significant portrayal of heartache and pain in the youngster’s eyes. He was already upset about God getting killed, but after seeing the look of such torment on Young God’s face, Lex began to feel the pain, as if he had lost one of his own brothers. He then converted the palm effort into a hug and embraced Young God tightly, as he released his next words with a sinister tone. “You gotta stay strong, Young God! We gonna make a nigga pay for what happened . . . Trust me!”

When they let go, Young God slowly nodded his head up and down, wearing an angered look on his face as a single tear rolled down his cheek.

\* \* \*

Bishop Terrace was an infamous housing project plagued with a catastrophic combination of drugs, guns, poverty, and violence. The complex was set up like one big maze consisting of twenty high-rise brick units. The buildings were rundown and grimy on the inside and out. Nearly all of the hallways reeked of urine and were littered with pencils, magic markers, soot from lighters, and spray paint on the walls. The concrete sidewalks bore cracks with weeds sprouting from the fractured cement. Even the children’s playground showed signs of abandonment as what used to be a surrounding fence was reduced to several poles circling a dilapidated sliding board and a rickety set of monkey bars. Unless there was an emergency problem within one of the apartments, Housing Authority rarely came out for maintenance. Remnants of yellow police tape and faded chalk from outlined bodies were also decorative elements of the immense-sized housing complex. The colossal structures represented a section of Elm City that hosted a savage underworld of its own. There were always news broadcasts and front-page stories in the *Register*, talking about the broad daylight slayings and noteworthy drug operations emanating from the Bishop Terrace housing project.

Dealing drugs, cocaine in particular, created a milestone that obliterated indigence for many young men in Bishop Terrace. There were youths as young as sixteen years old driving $40,000 to $60,000 luxury vehicles. Extensive amounts of fascinating jewelry were being purchased for themselves and crew members. They were frequently criticized by older folks who would secretly say that they were stupid for wasting their money in that way. But it didn’t matter to them. Flamboyant spending was the traditional way of celebrating victory over longtime battles of being confined to destitution.

The profits were enormous in Bishop Terrace’s drug trade, yet, it wasn’t all peaches and cream. There was always the dark side of the culture that produced addiction, death, harsh prison sentences, and more. Ultimately, growing up with nothing to lose and going through everyday fist fights, stabbings, and brutal shootings that commonly turned fatal, produced a breed of people in Bishop Terrace who could care less about the consequences and were willing to gain riches at any cost.