

# Yes... My Retarded Ass Signed Up

## CHAPTER ONE *Life Before*

By Michael Devere Mayhew

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For starters, *Yes... My. Retarded. Ass. Signed. Up* is the acronym for U.S ARMY backwards. If that was hard to figure out, I may not be the only retard on this page.

*Damn...* It seems like yesterday I was at home trying to decide on which direction I wanted my life to go and how much cereal I had before the milk ran out.

I've always admired a good adventure; I was just too lazy to seek one.

Call me crazy or a thrill seeker but my life didn't have the purpose that I thought it deserved. One thing led to another and before long I saw my life for what it really was; *Empty*

On March 1, 2002 I lost my job at this bullshit security company. I'd been working there (or more like hiding there), for over three years. When the company lost there renewal contract, I didn't know whether to laugh or panic. On one hand, I had unemployment to look forward to. I could sit on my ass and collect a check every two weeks. On the other hand, I had no more cozy job to depend on.

At the end of the day, I realized my job security was more important to me. I'd built a routine around this job that became my everyday existence.

I'd wake up at 8:30am every morning. I had to catch the 9:05am bus to Downtown, Newark New Jersey. At the time, my girlfriend Loren and I shared an apartment. If Loren woke up as horny as I was, I'd catch the 9:10am bus.

*Not a problem...*

It was the winter of 2002 and I was seriously overweight. I was determined to get in shape before the summer. I'd be at the YMCA gym working out by 9:30am. I would exercise for about an hour and then hit the showers.

My job site was a ten minute walk from the gym. I'd make it to work by 11:00 am or a little after. I'd usually be on my first break from 11:15am to 1:00pm. Sometimes longer, depending on the day. I'd take my final lunch break at 1:30pm and go home by 7:00pm.

Some readers might wonder where I'm going with this. It's just a simple comparison of the life I had and then what life became overnight. Once I lost that security job, I collected unemployment. My life took an interesting turn after that.

First, my girlfriend Loren and I started having irreconcilable differences. Loren's cousin claimed she saw me on a date with another woman. She even called Loren at 6:00am to tell her the great news. Once Loren moved out, the landlord wouldn't renew the lease on the apartment. I had to leave by the end of the month.

Two weeks later, I moved into my friend Mulley's apartment. That's when I started smoking marijuana on a daily basis. I went from the occasional blunt smoker, to a chronological chronic abuser. Mulley and I were like *Cheech and Chong*. Whenever I smoked weed, Mulley would get high and versa-

vice. Ironically, Mulley and I started selling weed together. Needless to say, the money wasn't as high as we were.

At the time, I had other side hustles that kept me above the poverty level. I can't really reveal all that information. (I love my readers, but I'm not going to jail over a book). Let's just say that it was lucrative and kept me well occupied.

I started buying designer clothes, jewelry and even purchased my first real car; a 1995 Honda Del Sol convertible. Not very expensive but not bad for a *nigga* with no job. Life had a pretty decent face at that time and the U.S ARMY was the furthest thing from my mind.

Every smart hustler knows that you can easily out hustle yourself with out the right investments. I didn't have enough money to play the stock market, so I decided to invest in myself. I took some of my extra money and wasted it on a rap demo.

*Yes...* I was another black man from the ghetto trying to be an aspiring rapper. {I hope that didn't shock anybody). I had dreams of becoming the next *Jay-Z* or at least *Mr. Cheeks*. I spent countless nights trying to promote my demo. I would go to New York City on Monday nights to *Sean "P. Diddy" Combs*, *Club Justin's*.

Monday's were Industry Night at *Club Justin's*. M.C Search from the hip hop group *3<sup>rd</sup> Base* would host the event. I had plenty of people make me false promises, but after everything was said and done, my demo became the next hot thing to hit the garbage cans.

Things became so hopeless I stopped taking life serious. Everything was a joke. The only thrill I had left was my sex life. Sex....sex...sex...and sex...

Did I mention *sex*?

The summer had just started and I already fucked Debra, Kenyetta, Kim, Yolonda, the other Kim, her ...her...and her. And countless others. Even my ex-girlfriend Loren would come by for some nostalgic dick. Now that I think about it, sex must be every man's twenty minutes of Heaven. From the moment we get pushed out the pussy, we spend our lives trying to get into some.

I blame my sexual behavior on depression.

*O.K...* I take that back. I was actually born horny.

I had sex on my mind before the umbilical cord was cut. *True story....*

At the age of 9, my 17 year old baby sitter took my sex drive to the next level. [T] was in her senior year at high school. Everything [T's] boyfriend taught her; she would come home and teach me. I don't know what *she* gained from our experiences, but I would never be the same.

Back then, folks didn't call it *molestation*. It was considered coming of age. Looking back, I realize my energy could have been put towards something more constructive; I just needed better opportunities.

At age 27, I began reflecting on my life. I had no future, a useless past and every moment felt like a drip going down the fucking drain. I was already feeling lower than dirt but the devil kicked me in my teeth when I met Chanay.

Chanay was this young girl that lived on Mulley's block. I had sex with her and my soul took an all time low. It was like putting instant trouble in the microwave.

For starters, Chanay was too young for me. She wasn't a virgin. Her brain just didn't seem to catch up with the rest of her. I'll say this much, God didn't do Chanay any justice giving her a grown ass body and a juvenile mind. I know these things happen all the time, but then things went from inappropriate to trifling.

A month into our secret relationship, I decided that Chanay needed to earn my love. Of course her young ass thought this was all one romantic soap opera.

Chanay agreed to my terms and by the following week I had her sucking dicks for my pocket change.

I still remember the first trick Chanay hooked up with. Chanay was always on the Internet in those silly ass chat rooms. Some older dude had been harassing Chanay to hook up with him for months. I suggested that she make it worth our while and set up a place where they could meet.

I drove Chanay to some remote area in Newark, New Jersey. This older Caucasian dude met us over there and I checked him out. Before long, I was getting 150 dollars a pop. The dude became a faithful client for a good three months and had his way with Chanay about twice a week.

It didn't stop there. Chanay would also hook up with some of the other young knuckleheads from around the way. Their money wasn't as strong as the older guys but it added up. Nobody suspected that Chanay was tricking for somebody else. Most people just thought that she was desperate for cash.

Things were cool for a few months. And then Chanay got in over her head. She decided to hook up with this strange dude from New York via Internet. I told Chanay that it wasn't a good idea. Against my better judgment, she went anyway. That's when the shit hit the jet propellers.

Chanay called my cell phone to inform me that she was on her way to New York City somewhere. I told her to *chill* and wait for further instructions. Chanay went anyway and the dude raped her.

When Chanay first told me what happened I dismissed it as a cry for attention. Chanay isn't exactly the most credible person to buy something from.

Instead of checking on her, I avoided Chanay for a few days. I figured I'd give her time to become honest.

A week later, I ran into Chanay coming up the street. I was already walking down the block so there was no way to avoid her. I had to face the ugly truth.

Chanay's top lip was busted and her right eye was a little bruised. I didn't want to speculate so I gave Chanay a quick hug and told her to give me a call later. Before I could walk off, Chanay stopped me and pulled out \$240 dollars.

There was more. She spent some of it during my *hiatus*. Shamefully enough, I took the money. My budget couldn't afford a conscience. Besides, I told her not to go.

Meanwhile, my situation was going from bad to worse. My long time friend Mulley wanted me out of his apartment. I'd overstayed my welcome. I didn't have any real place to live so I moved in with my father and his family.

My father's heart is big, but his apartment was small as shit. I had to leave my clothes in the trunk of my car because there was no place to put them inside the apartment.

It was crazy; the sad part is, I wanted to live at my father's apartment. I had enough money to get my own place but I refused to live alone. I have a childhood phobia about being by myself. I've always had room mates in the past or I lived with a girlfriend, but never alone.

My mother had already sold the house that I grew up in; living with her wasn't an option. Most of my friends and associates were comfortable with their living arrangements. In other words; I couldn't find a roommate to save my life.

I set up shop at my father's abode and contemplated my existence

A wise man once said,

“Never ask what else can go wrong, because there's always an answer”.

Chanay was now out of control. I couldn't leave my cell phone on because she would call me every 42 seconds. Chanay went from a submissive little kitten to a nagging *bug-a-boo*. She wasn't even making the money anymore. Chanay decided that she was going to take her bad experience and turn her life around. Now she wanted to know if I still loved her. There was no easy way to tell Chanay the truth. She only seemed to believe me when I was lying.

Chanay finally convinced me to meet her at some park up the street from her house. I was reluctant but I decided to go anyway. When I arrived, Chanay handed me a medical form verifying her pregnancy.

I told Chanay it wasn't mine. It took me almost two weeks to convince her not to have this child. When I assured Chanay how devastated she would be if the baby turned out to be from her rapist, she became nauseas and had the abortion.

What doesn't kill you should make you stronger.

Not necessarily.

Sometimes you just die on the inside and you don't realize your dead.

I had no job, no where to go and my finances were running low. Not to mention, I was still broken hearted about the music business. I would often visit my mother and have small chat sessions with her. There were times I wanted to tell this lady about my real life story and pray that she would knock some sense into me. My mother didn't raise me to be a low life.

This would have been the perfect time to put my faith in God. I have a terrible relationship with my Savior and I just didn't know where to begin. Instead, drugs became my new religion. My weed habit was now mixed with coke and amphetamines.

It was obvious that I was *burnt out*. My father never said anything but I'm sure everybody noticed. I couldn't be around my family looking like *shit*. I had to do something. Even if it meant living by myself in some lonely ass apartment.

Every other day, I would check the newspaper ads for a place to live. My mind was so *cloudy* that I couldn't deal with the renters of the apartments. The renters would take one look at me and say "Let me get back to you."

I still didn't realize how far gone I was until I *fucked up* with Vanessa. I met Vanessa one night at a bus stop on her way home from work. We initially exchanged phone numbers and said that we would hook up later.

Vanessa was bored, so I told her to ride with me and get some *trees*. I called Mulley and convinced him to let me use his apartment for the night. Mulley worked overnight so Vanessa and I had the place to ourselves.

Everything was cool at first. Vanessa was looking good in her tight jeans and high heel stilettos. We were both getting high off the weed, but I would go in the other room and take a few hits of the *powder*. I'd come back to the room and we would watch some rap videos on the all music channel. I was ready to make my move and take Vanessa into the bedroom.

Some *Snoop Dogg* video came on and Vanessa got all excited.

She started watching the video and screamed "I love that nigga!"

I looked at Vanessa and snarled, "What the fuck did you just say?"

Vanessa harmlessly repeated herself, "That's my Dogg, his album is HOT!"

I wasn't upset. I like Snoop *too*. But the drugs had a mind of their own.

I told Vanessa, "Get the fuck out!"

Vanessa laughed and went back to watching television.

"O.K." I thought. "*This bitch thinks I'm playing.*"

I calmly walked into the kitchen, pulled out a butcher knife and went back into the living room with Vanessa.

Vanessa looked at me and smiled.

That's when I slammed the butcher knife on the table and yelled,

"I thought I told you to Get The Fuck Out!!"

The look of horror in Vanessa's eyes was almost surreal. She barely had enough nerve to breathe. Vanessa slowly went to move off the couch and fell on the floor. I stood up with the butcher knife, while she scrambled to get up. I watched Vanessa run towards the door like a scene from *Psycho*. She fumbled with the knob and kept staring back at me to see how close I was.

At that moment I came to my senses. I tried to offer Vanessa an apology. It was too late for that. Vanessa yanked open the door and ran out the apartment.

I stood in the room for a while and thought about what I did. I really couldn't believe that I could do something so stupid. Not only was I an official *nut* case; I chased off a perfectly good piece of ass.

Even worse, Vanessa could very well be on her way to the nearest police station. I thought about it and decided to go after her. *Bad Move*.

I got in my car looking for a terrified woman in the pouring rain. I figured Vanessa would at least let me drop her off at her house. *Negative*.

When I caught up to Vanessa she freaked out. Vanessa ran in the middle of the street and started flagging down cars for help. The more I tried to reason with her the louder she screamed.

One car stopped momentarily. Vanessa was acting so hysterical that the driver pulled off when he saw me walking towards her. That's when Vanessa took off her shoes and started running up the street. I let Vanessa go about her business. I didn't know what to expect but I knew this shit wasn't good.

I went back to Mulley's apartment and started thinking about my next move. I didn't want to over react. I couldn't afford to sleep on the situation either. In the worst case scenario, Vanessa might tell the police that she'd just been assaulted. That's when I thought about leaving town all together. I just didn't want Mulley to come home and have some dumb ass cops interrogating him. Mulley doesn't deserve those headaches. *I needed an alibi.*

I left Mulley's apartment about 1:30am and went to pick up my friend Kenyetta. Kenyetta was actually the closest thing I had to a girlfriend at the time. She was about 31, light skinned, real cute with a *phat* ass. I met her at a fashion show one night. The sex was pretty good so we decided to keep in touch. We had an open relationship so I was hoping Kenyetta would understand my dilemma without over reacting.

Kenyetta was still half sleep when I told her to meet me down stairs. I had to keep yelling in the phone to stress the urgency of my phone call. When Kenyetta finally came downstairs, I explained the situation and convinced her to come back to Mulley's house with me. Kenyetta agreed and I coached her on what I needed her to say.

Basically, Kenyetta was with me *all* night. Vanessa dropped by to say *Hello* and became offended when she saw Kenyetta. I told Vanessa to leave and she became even more disgruntle. If the police showed up, I had every intention on making Vanessa look like a stalker. If Vanessa decided to show up with some lunatic brothers of her own - *Well.....at least I wouldn't die alone.*

Kenyetta and I waited at Mulley's apartment for almost two hours. She watched me in silence, waiting for some type of excuse. As the tension grew thick, Kenyetta's anxiety turned into contempt. Or maybe fear....

Kenyetta finally asked, “What would make you do something like this?”

I’ll admit; I felt a little bad. Not to mention stupid. I still didn’t offer Kenyetta any apologies. I couldn’t even look at her. Kenyetta had two small children at home. Getting her mixed up in my bullshit was unethical even by my standards.

Drama wasn’t part of my everyday life and this was definitely drama. I felt the need to pray. *Yes...* knees bended, hands together, real humble...pray. My relationship with God wasn’t all that. I just prayed that God was a much more forgiving being than myself and could always forgive me.

Kenyetta was a little shocked but she kneeled down with me. I clenched her hand in mines and we prayed together. We were like two lost souls looking for peace. I still never felt so alone.

The next day I worked up the nerve to call Vanessa. I managed to keep Vanessa on the phone long enough for her to tell me that she made it home safely. Vanessa said she was fine and then told me to never call her again. *Click!*

*“Fair enough.”* I thought. I had bigger problems to worry about.

Things finally took their toll at my father’s house. We both agreed that I needed to move. No hard feelings. A man has to be a man. I looked into a few apartments in my price range but to no avail.

My friend Debra from Long Island called me one afternoon. She hadn’t heard from me in a while and wanted to know if I was alright. When I told Debra about my situation, she invited me to come live with her.

I was apprehensive at first. I wasn’t ready to leave New Jersey. In retrospect, it was the best thing for me. If I had my own place in New Jersey I would still be lonely. Debra was offering me a chance at an affordable rent and companionship. She still lived at home with her family but I would pay her parents rent and share the upper level of the house with her. I moved out the next day.

Long Island turned out to be just what the doctor ordered. All the stress I built in New Jersey seemed to disappear when I settled in Debra's house. I had to adjust to the quiet atmosphere and slow pace of things. It was still the best thing for me.

Debra and her family greeted me with open arms. Granted I paid my rent on time and cleaned up after myself; everything was cool. I even became drug free.

I didn't have access to drugs the way I did in New Jersey so I learned to live without. I spent most my days with Debra; playing video games and having sex. Hey... There's just some things Michael Mayhew doesn't live without.

Even though I had my own room, I spent most nights in Debra's bed. Her mother didn't exactly approve, but were all grown folks. It is what it is.

Debra and I became closer than close. I almost felt my life take on a new meaning. I still wasn't employed; *however*, I had enough money put to the side until the right job fell into my lap. Eventually I took a job at a local Dept. Store and became a respectable contributor to the family.

Debra worked for the I.R.S and was also in the ARMY Reserve. She had to serve that weekend Soldier obligation; [two weeks out the year, one weekend a month]. Debra's the one who suggested that I should join the ARMY. She claimed they were looking for lunatics like myself. I would tell Debra that I only like to wear green on the inside of my pockets and we would laugh it off. There was no way I was joining the ARMY.

I've actually been to see a couple of military Recruiters in the past; one for the Navy when I was 19 and an ARMY Recruiter when I was 26. I had my reasons for not joining and I felt that it was too late for the military bullshit.

Debra convinced me to give it some thought.

Later that night, Debra's mother informed me that my stay at their house was only temporary. I needed to find another place to live by the end of the year.

Somehow the world just seemed against me

*"Fuck it"* I thought.

I went back to New Jersey and spoke to the ARMY Recruiter I had dealt with the previous year. For better or worse, it was time to make a change.