

Ijamama Speaks:

Wisdom of a Black Sistah from the Urban Hood



A Satire

Ijamama, a Midnight TV Talk Show Host

Frederick Douglas Harper

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*A Hilarious Modern-Day Black Feminist or Womanist Satire
With Educational and Moral Messages*

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Dedication

(Reatha Mae Harper, My Mother)

Ijamama Speaks is dedicated to my mother, the late Reatha Mae Harper (1922-1985). Just as Ijamama, the main character of this book, my mother was a single parent who possessed a natural and quick sense of humor and wit. She always lifted up neighbors and family members with her humor when they needed to laugh, although she could also be serious when times required her leadership and responsibility as the oldest of eight siblings or as a neighborhood leader. Similar to Ijamama, my mother had a gift of natural intelligence. She graduated from high school as salutatorian or second in her graduating class, but unfortunately she could not attend college because of her need to rear my sister and me as a single parent and the lack of college financial aid during the 1940s. I believe that I inherited my mother's gift of intelligence and her natural and spontaneous sense of humor. For the first time, within this satire, I have significantly employed humor in a book of mine in order to entertain and teach. As a former university professor for 42 years, many of my students stated that they loved to enroll in my courses, because I taught them much while making them laugh much. Certainly, my mother's humor, intelligence, and wit live on within me.

As a child, I recall my mother as being attentive, helpful, and loving to my sister and me. She prepared our school lunches, ironed our school clothes, and nursed us back to health during childhood illnesses such as chickenpox, measles, or a bad common cold. She was almost always at home and available to mother us. My mother didn't drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes, and she loved going to church on Sundays and to church concerts of famed gospel singers when she could afford these.

As with my mother and Ijamama as single parents, I salute all single parent mothers who sacrifice now or have sacrificed in the past to rear their children the best that they could with little to no help. Therefore, I dedicate this book to the spirit of my dear mother and to the many single mothers throughout the world who sacrifice to protect and care for their children.

Frederick Douglas Harper

Introduction

Ijamama Speaks is a satire about a Black woman from the urban Hood who hosts a late night TV show. It is written to be very funny, however, with messages of wisdom and guidance for human living. As a satire, it does not attempt to be politically correct, but rather to be a creative means of using humor to teach universal and timeless values about rightful living and quality living. Also, this book presents examples of victories of the human spirit by demonstrating how people can overcome their destructive, impoverished, or unfortunate past or present circumstance. This book challenges the human mind to think beyond learned childhood beliefs and traditions that shape sexist gender roles as well as unhealthy and irrational cultural practices. Through its characters as TV guests, *Ijamama Speaks* communicates that each of us can transcend misfortune, abuse, and painful challenges in life to find purpose and happiness.

As a creative work of fiction, this book is about Ijamama, a Black woman from the urban Hood, who stands up for her rights as a woman by going topless in 101 degree weather while walking home and seeing men topless as they work on building construction and street repairs. After her arrest by police for indecent exposure, Ijamama is contacted and interviewed by a female reporter from *Hot Heifer*, a high-profile feminist magazine. The popularity of the magazine article, which frames Ijamama as a Black feminist, leads to her job as co-host with host Vonginetta Pensettia on the Hot Heifer Late Night Show. Because of Vonginetta's conflict with Ijamama's raw style and popularity, the TV network gives Ijamama her own late night TV show, "The Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show," a TV show that focuses on African-Americans, Latinos, college students, working-class women, and other diverse groups as target viewers.

Among Ijamama's TV guests are PumpDaddy (an ex-playa and author of *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*), Dr. Fartenstein (Professor of fartology and author of popular books on flatulence), Funkomaster (a millionaire businessman from the Hood who has made millions of dollars from funk-themed products including Funkofreshners that provide a floral scent to a funky house or office, Funkosexostick deodorant for sexual

arousal, Funkomuffins with a caviar taste, Funko Rat Poisoning, and Funkodrawers Cleaner as a spray-on cleanser), Smart-Ass White Boy (whose mission is to educate White people about racism), Celibate Dude (a college student who chooses celibacy to avoid dating drama and to focus on his personal development), Lead Belly (who overcomes obesity by changing his lifestyle and losing more than 200 pounds), Benevolent Angel (author of *The Real Jesus*), Little Red Rapper from da Hood (who has hip-hop hits such as “Don’t Chase da High,” “Cinderella Done Stole Yo’ Prince,” “Beauty and the Bitch,” “Snow Black,” “Jack and the Lima Beanstalk,” “Pull Yo’ Pants up Boy; Be a Man,” and “Humpty Dumpty Can’t Hump No Mo’”), HoneyBaby (a survivor of incest by her father and sexual abuse by her pastor), ProfDaddy (a middle-aged professor who only dates much younger women, ages 18 to 29), Preacher-Teacher (who opposes Black youth playing “the Dozens”), Donnelle Hussleton (author of a book about his ex-wife titled, *My Life with a Cheap Hussy*), Spiritual Teacher (author of *Spiritual Teacher Speaks*), Bootylicious Queens (a rising young female group with hit songs such as “This Booty is Gonna Get You,” “Yoruba Lover,” “Booty over Troubled Waters, I Will Lay You Down,” “Let Me Be Your Honey Bun,” “You’re Gonna Get Some When You Do Right,” “Let Me Be Your Baby Mama, Once You Get a Job,” and “Phone Me for a Booty-call in the Morning”), and Miss Universe (who Ijamama asks very personal interview questions about her sexual life and sexual activities).

This is a hilarious book; therefore, read it with caution and at your own risk. As a warning or caveat, don’t read this book if you were recently stitched up from abdominal or thoracic surgery. If you have a bad heart and are at risk for a heart attack, then don’t read this book until your condition improves or you receive your doctor’s approval. If you have a serious abdominal or inguinal hernia, then don’t read this book until you are medically treated and healed. If you are bloated with gas, then go to the bathroom and try to expel it before reading this book, if you can, or be careful while reading this book around others if you are gaseous. If you have to pee—sorry, urinate for the elite or bourgeois—then do so before you begin to read this book. If you’re at risk for stroke due to exceptionally high blood pressure, then don’t read this book until your blood pressure is significantly reduced or until you’ve taken your hypertension medicine. If you are prissy or sadiddy, then do read this book to loosen up your attitude

and ass, sorry, your gluteus maximus. If you're not at risk and in need of rightful messages laced with honest and outrageous humor to lift your spirit and just make you laugh, then do read this book immediately.

Ijamama Speaks is written to a great degree from my ethnocultural worldview from growing up as an African-American in the segregated South. The Ebonics language of Ijamama is couched in a Black Hood experience to a great degree. It is the Black experience of a strong African-American people who survived slavery and generations of Jim Crow laws and cultural practices, that is, survival partly by use of laughter from humorous interactions, rituals, nicknames, and games such as "the Dozens." Such African-American humor served to generate laughter that provided a degree of hope and light from the darkness and sadness of racial oppression and racial terrorism.

I strongly suggest that you focus on the many positive messages embedded within this book and not allow your perceptions to be distorted by the book's characters or their language. By writing *Ijamama Speaks*, my primary intention is to teach and heal as with many of my previously published writings. Knowledge and moral teachings about life are good for your soul, and laughing out loudly is good therapy for your mental health.

Frederick Douglas Harper
March 2017

EBONICS OR BLACK ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

ain't – am not, aren't, isn't

anotha – another

baby – a term of endearment

badd – good, cool, attractive

befo' – before

bidness – business

'bout – about

'cause – because

da – the

dare – there

dat – that

deep – highly intelligent, “heavy”

dees – these

dem – them

dis – this

diss – disrespect

gig – a job, often in entertainment

gimmie – give me

gon, gonna – going to

gotcha – I understand

greazy – greasy

Hood, the – urban Black

neighborhood

lil – little

mo' – more

nilla – a lightskin African-American

otha – other

outta – out of

peeps – people

phat – refers to a woman with a fine figure or shape (just the opposite of “fat”)

playa – player, so-called womanizer

po' – poor

ride – car or motor vehicle

'round – around

shack up – refers to a nonmarried, intimate couple living together

sho – surely

sistah – an endearing term for a Black female as a racial sister

swag – to walk with a cool, macho attitude, side to side with arms swinging rhythmically

they – when used for “their”

um – I'm or I am

wanna – want to

whas up – what's up, what's happening, how are you?

wit' – with

y'all – you all

yo' – your

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. I capitalize the word Earth in all instances, although I understand that many writers do not capitalize “earth” at all. A conservative rule of punctuation is to capitalize the word Earth when it refers to a planet but not in other instances. A proper noun signifies a particular person, place, or thing, so Earth as a planet satisfies this definition. Also, in capitalizing Earth, I emphasize its importance as our Garden of Eden, our celestial home. Of course, the word earthly is not capitalized, because it is not used as a proper noun but rather as an adjective.
2. Unlike APA Style (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed., 2010) of not hyphenating the phrase “African American,” I have chosen to hyphenate “African-American.” Within this book, I hyphenate African-American in all instances for sociopolitical reasons (to reflect symbolically that Blacks are Americans too and not separate from America) as well as for grammatical reasons, which is the rule of hyphenating a phrase in cases when it is used as an adjective or adjective phrase to modify a noun (e.g., African-American boys).
3. It is my intention and not a lack of consistency when lead character Ijamama pronounces the same word differently at times or uses both the proper Standard English form and the Ebonics form. In Ebonics or so-called Black English, this is called code-switching or switching between the Ebonics system of English to Standard English and back to Ebonics. Therefore, Ijamama may use both “that” and “dat,” or “they” and “their” as a possessive pronoun, for example, as with “they house.” See the following article regarding Ebonics as a dialect or language system with its own rules. I co-authored this article with two of my brightest doctoral students when I was a professor at Howard University:

Harper, F. D., Braithwaite, K., & LaGrange, R. D. (1998). Ebonics and academic achievement: Role of the counselor. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 67, 25-34.

4. Ebonics is economical in that some parts of speech are omitted, or a brief phrase is understood as a complete thought within the context of a dialogue. The following are examples from Ijamama's comments within this book: "No, wrong." This is a complete sentence in Ebonics because it is interpreted as "No, that is wrong." A second example is, "Anotha one?" Within the context of the dialogue and the intonation of the speaker, this phrase is interpreted as "Would you like another one?" A third example is, "You one crazy woman." Although the verb is omitted, this phrase is to be understood as, "You *are* one crazy woman."

Chapter 1

Ijamama Is Interviewed by Hot Heifer Magazine, Part 1

Ijamama meets with Laura Daniels, a writer for Hot Heifer magazine. They meet at a Starbucks coffee house near Ijamama's Black Hood or neighborhood and not far from downtown Baltimore, MD.

Laura: *(Ijamama walks into the coffee house and is greeted by Ms. Laura Daniels. Ijamama had told Ms. Daniels on the phone what she would be wearing in order to identify her.)* Hello, are you Ms. Ijamama?

Ijamama: Dat's me.

Laura: I'm Laura Daniels, the reporter from *Hot Heifer* magazine. How do you do?

Ijamama: Um good; what 'bout you?

Laura: I'm fine, thank you. *(They both get coffee and find a table in a quiet area.)*

Laura: You mind if I record this to avoid lots of writing and to be accurate with your answers? *(Laura pulls out her small voice recorder which has much more recording memory than her iPhone.)*

Ijamama: No problem, and lose the Ms., and how you found out 'bout me?

Laura: Well, we heard about you on Facebook and on the evening news of a local TV affiliate here in Baltimore. *Hot Heifer* staff was impressed with your more than one million "Likes" on Facebook within a week of your

story's posting. What we've gathered is that when it was 101 degrees a couple of weeks ago, you took off your blouse or shirt on the street, and you headed home topless. Is that right Ms. Ijamama; sorry, I mean Ijamama?

Ijamama: Yeah, dat's me. I tell it like it is. It's hot, so I needed to trash some of them clothes. Yeah (*laughing*), I was top naked; or, as my homies say, I was half butt-ass naked. When the cops put them cuffs (handcuffs) on me, you know what um sayin'? I had nothing on waist up but my weave. The police put a towel 'round me and hustled me off the street to a squad car. I asked them police, "How come men construction workers was (were) on the street where I was, and they had no shirt or no top—why you didn't arrest them too?" You know what um sayin' Ms. Laura? If men can go topless, women should be able to do the same, especially when it's just too damn hot outside. Can you feel me?

Laura: If "feel you" means understand you, yes, I can see your point. Also, for your information, I think the phrase is "buck naked" and not "butt-ass naked."

Ijamama: Whatever Ms. know-it-all, Ms. Snow White—nothin' is right; it's who's callin' the shots or writing the game. In my Hood, you know, my neighborhood, it's now butt-ass naked; dat's the latest since your buck naked.

Laura: Anyway, I'm very happy to know that they didn't keep you in jail overnight, but rather they allowed you to go after issuing you a small monetary fine. But tell me, didn't you know what you did was against the law? Didn't you know it was outright wrong?

Ijamama: You supposed to be from dat feminist magazine, and here in my face you tellin' me I was wrong as a woman. What I had the nerve to do was against man's law but not God's law. You know, I read dat in some Hoods, like in some places in Africa, South America, and the South Pacific Islands, it's so damn hot dat women jus' don't wear tops at all. Jus' 'cause people don't do somethin' in this country, don't mean you supposed to know there's a law against it or to accept dat law. Ain't it sexist to allow

men to go topless on the street but not women? Please answer that Ms. Hot Heifer. Look, I believe in being real and keepin' it real; tellin' it like it is; dat's me. Now, write dat mouthful in your White, rich-women *Hot Heifer* magazine. And write it jus' like I said it.

Laura: Well, I guess you're right Ijamama, because that's the philosophy of *Hot Heifer*, as you may know. We, as women, tell it like it is. And we advocate for all women regardless of race or social class. That's exactly why we're here to interview you. You're an example of our philosophy—what *Hot Heifer* believes and represents. So, I stand corrected. You eloquently made your point about man's law for women. You're so right about that.

Ijamama: Yeah, I know um right. Listen up, I done read dat *Hot Heifer*; jus' once, but it got nothin' to do wit' po' women like me—jus' middle-class and rich heifers who look and talk like you.

Laura: OK, OK, touché (French) or rather gotcha (*while looking at her list of questions*). Now, you're street smart, right?

Ijamama: They say I'm street smart and street deep. Yeah, I'm so intellectually deep I sometimes need a rope to keep from drowning in my straight-talk, my divergent thought, my analytic simplicity, my God-given wisdom, my cerebral creativity, and my plain common sense. You see what um sayin' Ms. Vanilla Wafer? Now watch this: “Masbar your pussar and keysar my assar” (*laughing*).

Laura: Ijamama, are you trying to diss me with some of that old-school Pig Latin?

Ijamama: Ain't tryin'; done did it. You got to know when somebody is dissing on yo' ass. Now, back to the serious without takin' what I jus' said as serious.

Laura: You've made your point, and that's why we're going to the street to interview real women like you, women who are on the front line of

survival. Now Ijamama, let me start out or rather continue by asking, what's your real name?

Ijamama: Damn, you jus' said it.

Laura: Well, don't you have two names like other people or three names if you have a middle name?

Ijamama: Can't you understand a answer? My name is Ijamama. You done asked me; I done answered you—next question Ms. Heifer. Print in your article that you interviewed Ijamama, and my homies from da Hood will know who you talkin' 'bout.

Laura: Your name, Ijamama, it sounds African. Would it be the Swahili language, right? *(Laura tries to demonstrate some knowledge of Blacks or Africa.)*

Ijamama: No, wrong. It's like creative "Hood" talk; like it's a nickname that mean "I is yo' mama."

Laura: Oh, I get it. It's like, "I am your mother."

Ijamama: Whatever, Ms. grammar teacher, Ms. Microsoft Word grammar checker.

Laura: OK, OK, let's get to what many women want to hear about. "Do you believe in dieting?"

Ijamama: Yeah, for you—I eat what I can, when I can, except if I have a boyfriend at the time who can afford them fancy restaurants.

Laura: Continuing on the topic of food Ms. Ijamama or rather Ijamama, what about obesity in America?

Ijamama: What about it? If you mean fat folks—been dare, did dat. People who too fat need to listen up and drop dat fat funk, dat's all—drop it like it's

hot, like it's real hot, like it's greazy fat in a pot. You can't get a good man wit' all dat fat grease and dem folds goin' on (*laughing*). You'll soon have a bomb go off—the big stroke or heart attack. Some of dees women so fat dat a man can accidentally stick it in the wrong crease (*laughing out loudly*). Listen up now, I'm not dissing on all fat women, 'cause some of 'em really got trouble burnin' it up; know what um sayin'? It's like Oprah and her battle wit' her weight problem. But she did it. She lost dat weight and then gained it back a few times. I know that a little fat in the right places is good; you see what um sayin'? And like some men like thick women, and some women jus' big bone—dat's all good too. But the main thing is they got to watch that weight for health reasons, jus' like they got to care 'bout how they look. But any way you size it up, unhealthy fat is for real, for-real fat. And over-the-top, wobbly fat is obese fat; like it's life-threatenin' fat.

Laura: Ijamama, let's move on—have you ever been in love?

Ijamama: Yeah, when I was young, very young—jus' findin' out what feelin' good inside meant. Then, later, I was in love with guys if they had money—you know, or like if they had a good job and a nice ride. But I came to my senses 'bout dat too. Now I jus' love myself and othas who care 'bout me or need me. Can you dig it—know what um sayin' Ms. Bourgeois Lady? (*Ijamama pauses to check Laura's facial expression. Laura looks puzzled, and then she asks for clarification.*)

Laura: No, I don't, or, rather, I'm not sure if I do understand, as you said much in so few words, and some words are foreign to me.

Ijamama: In otha words, like um sayin', I had my day wit' men and my fill of men. Now, I jus' want peace, freedom, and a little time with my grandchildren. I ain't got no man now, and that ain't a bad thing. I believe if you can't have the right man, then jus' have nobody. Can you feel me Ms. Vanilla Muffin? (*Ijamama laughs but Laura ignores her muffin comment in order to focus on her next question.*)

Laura: OK Ijamama, continuing on the love theme, I heard, in doing my research on you, that you were once seriously in love with a preacher, and

you fought him when he left you for a younger church woman.

Ijamama: Lil (Little) Hot Heifer, dat right dare comin' outta yo' mouth is as wrong as two lef' (left) feet. Truth is I cooked hot, fried chicken for dat nincompoop, and the second basket of my chicken caused him to say, "I love you Ms. Ijamama." I said, "No sir Reverend, you got dis all wrong. What you love is my fried chicken and not me—not a young, fine chick like me (*laughing*)." I was young then or much younger, in my mid-twenties. One day, he got way out of line by puttin' his hand 'round my waist and sliding it down over my fine, round behind, tellin' me, "God is so good." Dat's when I went up side his gray head and beat his narrow butt into a state of divine forgiveness. Girl, I put a ass-whoopin' on him, causin' two black eyes. Folks was laughin' and sayin', "He looked like a Washington National Zoo panda." I lef' his church after dat. Now, listen up; this don't mean I believe dat all preachers is bad; but he sho (surely) was a bad preacher. Now, you check dat out and write it down right. He didn't leave me for no younger woman. He never had me and my good stuff in the first place. Now, you tell it like it is and like it really was Ms. Magazine Lady or don't tell it at all. You write it down right for that article (*looking serious*).

Laura: What you mean by "good stuff"?

Ijamama: Never mind. Let's go on Ms. Snow White—yo' next question s'il vous plait.

Laura: I see you can speak French or rather use a French idiom.

Ijamama: Yeah, I remember a few expressions from my high school French class. Look, never underestimate a sistah from the Hood or any sistah.

Laura: OK, I surely won't. (*Laura looks down at her notepad to check her list of questions.*) Ijamama, have you ever been married? You do have two grown daughters; isn't that right?

Ijamama: Don't ever ask me 'bout no marriage. Who cares 'bout da past, and what's marriage got to do wit' children or even love? It's good if you got a good man as a partner. If not, you make yo' life good for you and yo' kids. Dat's my answer, if you really need a answer. Why is it a Black woman is expected to be so-called moral or a keeper of White folks' social rules, when a White woman don't? Elizabeth Taylor can marry eight times—one time she married the same man twice, dat Richard Burton guy. Kim Kardashian can have sex on video and pose nude in *Playboy* magazine and still be a marketable brand. Am I right? What's up with dat double standard? Now, you answer dat Ms. Snow White.

Laura: Well, you may have a point, but I'm not interviewing them, so could we get back to you? Were you in love with the father of your two daughters?

Ijamama: I guess I was in love or addicted to sex or both with the father of my first child. Dat's when I was 16—dat's when I got pregnant. My nose was so wide open; you know what I mean? I was so in love or my nose was so wide open dat a person could've drove a 18 wheeler up my nose (*laughing*). That was the first time I had discovered such a physical feelin' of sexual healin'. You could say, "I was young, hot, and addicted to sex" wit' him, especially as a inexperienced schoolgirl. I jus' wanted him all da time, and then it happened. Boom, I got pregnant—my monthly period stopped cold.

Laura: Now, you said father of your first child; you mean your two adult children have different fathers (*with a look of dismay*)?

Ijamama: You got dat right, and what's wrong wit' dat Ms. Goody Two-Shoes. Don't you White middle-class women sometimes marry two or three times and have children from different men or have children and don't marry at all—well, dat's the same. The second man was a good provider and good man. I jus' didn't love him or enjoy being with him most of the times. I jus' took up with him 'cause he helped me wit' my first child. Then, I accidentally got pregnant again. My mama taught me not to throw away any babies (abortion). If you got pregnant and made yo' bed hard, you jus'

had to lay down on it and be responsible. I lived with the father of my second child, my second daughter, but we never got married legally. He was much older, and I jus' didn't want to get married and tied down to him at such a young age. He asked me to marry him though mo' than once.

Laura: (*Laura started to ask Ijamama, "So you weren't married to any one of your children's fathers?" But she ruled this moralistic question out.*) Yes, I guess you right again Ijamama about social expectations, social acceptability, and the different rules for Black women or for poor women, regardless of ethnicity. However Ijamama, let me transition from love and motherhood to your school days. With your straightforward attitude, tell me, did you ever get into a fight or fights in grammar school or high school, as we were told from our street research?

Ijamama: Don't go 'round askin' stuff 'bout me, 'cause you can get a lot of wrong information like you did 'bout dat preacher man. But to answer yo' question, yeah, I would kick ass (*laughing*) if somebody messed with me or my sisters. You jus' had to defend yo'self if somebody jumped up in yo' face or tried to bully you. Some girls tried to mess up yo' face, but what I did was to tear off they skirt first. That would end the fight, 'cause they would run for cover, you know—especially if they had holes in they drawers, homemade drawers, or dirty drawers (*laughing*).

Laura: (*Laura interrupts Ijamama in the middle of her thought.*) Tell me, why you did something to another female like that Ijamama—something so uncouth, something so unconscionable?

Ijamama: Cut the big words Ms. Magazine Lady. Like I jus' told you—were you listening? I only would fight to defend myself or my family. I think White-folks law calls that self-defense. Now, as I was 'bout to tell you, once dem drawers was exposed—dat's what you rich folks call panties or underpants. Well, once dem drawers or dem bloomers was showin', they was too embarrassed, and they lost they heart to fight, especially if they wore po'-ass, flower-sack drawers or drawers with holes in 'em dat caused everybody to laugh. Like I said, they would run for cover or cover-up with the skirt I tore off or pulled down to they ankles.

Laura: I don't understand. What are flower-sack drawers? Is that some kind of discount-store brand of designer underwear with floral patterns or floral print?

Ijamama: No, you damn fool. Sorry 'bout dat Freudian slip; check that; drop that "damn fool" phrase from yo' audio recording—my bad. It jus' mean they drawers was made out of cloth from a 25 lb flour sack bag or two, and the cloth fabric was sewed (sewn) together by they mama to make homemade drawers, especially if they mama had lots of kids and could not afford store-bought drawers for all of 'em.

Laura: OK, I got it. Moving on, please tell me what's your position on antidisestablishmentarianism? I heard that you know about this word.

Ijamama: (*Ijamama smiles as with one who has a secret trump card in a whist or bridge card game.*) Wha, wha, what's dat; you tryin' to trick me or trip me up? Or are you tryin' to diss (disrespect) my school smarts with dat good-for-nothin', highfalutin talk? I'm jokin' girl. Let me get serious and answer your question. Yeah, I heard that word befo'. My mama showed me a magazine from back in the day, *Life Magazine*—where that Black schoolgirl spelled dat word; you know, on the \$64,000 question show where she was locked in dat sound proof box, like a phone booth. I liked that story so much that I learned how to spell dat word to impress my mama. And that little 12-year-old Black girl was from our hometown of Baltimore too. (*Laura observes that Ijamama is switching between the use of "dat" and "that."* Also, *Ijamama looks away in a pensive and solemn mood if not a nostalgic state of recall.*)

Laura: What are you thinking Ijamama ...?

Ijamama: (*Ijamama interrupts Laura before she could finish her question or thought.*) Look, my mama dead, so just don't go dare (there)—don't ask any nosy questions 'bout my mama.

Laura: Ijamama, don't you mean your mother *is* dead or your mother died?

Ijamama: I mean what I said, Ms. Heifer. I can't believe you. This ain't no time for a grammar lesson. You ought to be humanly correct and not grammatically correct. The correct thing to say is "Sorry you lost yo' mama." Dat's the straight-up and righteous thing to say. But you come wit' dat insensitive sh't 'bout what's right and what's wrong. I see right now you got no common sense—none at all. You jus' got stupid, right-and-wrong sense—we right; they wrong. *(Ijamama is close to tears, but she holds back the tears out of pride.)*

Laura: OK; you're right again Ijamama. I'm sorry for that and sorry that you lost your mother. *(After a pause, Laura continues.)* Should we continue, or do you need a break? *(Ijamama manages her anger and sadness; then she motions with her hand and a bow of her head for Laura to continue the interview.)*

Laura: Ijamama, let me change the subject to a topic on the lighter side. What are your favorite foods?

Ijamama: Oh, didn't I answer dat, or was we jus' talkin' about dieting? Well, let me say a little mo'. *(Ijamama pauses in thought for a few seconds and then smiles.)* Girl, now you talkin' my language. Give me some collard greens steeped in vinegar and sugar, sweet potatoes with cinnamon and marshmallows on top, well-seasoned lima beans, macaroni and cheese, potato salad with lots of diced and sliced boiled eggs and sweet relish, buttered cornbread made from scratch, fried fish, fried Baltimore fresh shrimp, fried pok (pork) chops, you know—all dat good soul food. But remember, I told you I eat what I can when I can. But, mind me, I don't believe in eatin' too much fat food—jus' every now and then, 'cause too much macaroni and cheese, buttered bread, and pok chops can take you away from here with a heart attack or stroke, like I mentioned. It's like setting a bomb off in your chest or head. Now, I jus' try to eat healthy, like mainly fresh veggies and a little baked fish and chicken. Most times, I stay away from all dat fryin' like I used to do—unless it's stir-fry veggies and chicken fried in olive oil or veggie oil. You live and you learn, or you don't learn and you die early.

Laura: And I bet you love chitterlings too.

Ijamama: There you go again Laura, makin' prejudicial assumptions. Look, I used to like chittlin's (chitterlings), but when I learned they was hog guts and found out how stink dey smelled before cookin', I stopped eatin' 'em.

Laura: Speaking of food, what wines do you like with your dinner? I heard you have dated big-time business men and even one professor—I bet you like dry red wine—a Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chianti, Pinot Noir, Beaujolais, or a fine French Bordeaux.

Ijamama: What you talkin' 'bout? What's dat dry wine? I like my wine wet. Even better, it's got to be sweet. (*Ijamama laughs out loudly.*)

Laura: But, I thought . . .

Ijamama: Yeah, you thought like Nellie; not Nelly the rapper. I mean old-school Nellie (*laughing again*). Let me get serious—um jus' jokin' Laura. I know what dry wine is. You must be talkin' 'bout dat bitter wine; that's what I used to call it. I had some a few times at a restaurant with my professor man friend; you know, and I ended up puttin' sugar in it the first time. After dat, I slowly learned how to develop a taste for it. I still don't drink enough to truly appreciate dry red wine—but um learnin' to like it some and tell the difference between a good red wine and one that's like vinegar. I prefer a Merlot or a Cabernet Sauvignon. I jus' don't have the money to buy good red wine.

Laura: I bet Dom Perignon is a favorite of yours.

Ijamama: Yeah, you probably thought I never heard of dat expensive champagne. Yeah, my business executive boyfriend or man friend ordered dat through room service. They rolled in dat nice table set-up with a dozen roses. That was the good old days—I was in my 20s then (*reflecting nostalgically with a smile on her face*). Yes Ma'am, I was young and fine

(shapely) back then. Well, young and finer, because um still fine now for my age.

Laura: Wait, wait a minute Ijamama! You mean he didn't respect you enough to take you downstairs to the hotel restaurant and be seen with you in public? Did he think you didn't have enough education for him to take you out in public?

Ijamama: Hot Heifer, he was unhappily married, and I understood the deal from the get-go.

Laura: But you're supposed to be a woman of principle, so how do you explain dating and having sex with a married man.

Ijamama: You know, married rich women or middle-class women do this all the time. And wealthy men probably do it much mo' than the women. We've had married U.S. President who had sex with other women, sometimes right in the White House. But when a po' or working-class woman do the same thing, they get criticized much, much mo'. And look, I don't have to explain a damn thing. Also, you assume I had sex 'cause I'm in a room with a man. Maybe I did and maybe I didn't. I don't have to tell you dat either, and dat's not related to yo' question anyway. I'll jus' say this: I'm also a practical thinking woman. He respected me and he helped me and my daughters, and I respected him and I helped him. And I was cool wit' dat while it lasted. Sometimes, a highly successful man jus' wants a woman who can listen to him. There are many rich people who're married on paper only, but they not really married emotionally. Some of them never really loved each other from the jump. Now, I see you got dat big rock on your finger. Are you a paper wife who's just faking marriage or a real fully-functioning wife? I bet you never got a orgasm (*laughing*), dat you jus' fake one—hollerin' and squirmin' in bed like a bored kitten. I bet you even say, "Honey, don't hurt. Don't mess up my makeup and hair" (*laughing*). Am I right Ms. Snow White?

Laura: (*Laura responds with an expression of irritation but control.*) Well, I don't have to explain or share anything with you either, because I'm the

interviewer. I'm supposed to be asking you the questions Ms. Ijamama.

Ijamama: Now, who's gettin' upset? Told you not to use that Ms. wit' me. You've gotten formal; dat means I done hurt the little sex kitten's feelin's.

Laura: *(Laura bites into her lower lip and collects her composure.)* Continuing along the line of sensual pleasure, what do you think about smoking?

Ijamama: You mean smokin' what, weed or cigarettes?

Laura: Oh, sorry, I mean cigarettes.

Ijamama: It's fine for people who like it or gotta have it. But, like don't blow smoke in my face, and I won't fart in your face or space—can you dig it? Write that in your little bourgeois *Hot Heifer* magazine. People have a right to do what they want, as long as it don't (doesn't) adversely affect somebody else. You see, I do know a few big words when I have to use them or have time to think 'bout how to express somethin' in *Hot Heifer* English. *(Ijamama smiles.)*

Laura: Yes, now you are using the big words, such as “adversely.” But you ask me not to. *(Laura smiles.)* That's double standards baby. *(Ijamama laughs at Laura's awkward use of “baby.”)*

Ijamama: Well, a few words rubbed off on me from some of the people I've met or dated. Plus, I was smart in school and used to jus' read the dictionary for fun. I could've gone to college, but havin' a baby ended all dat. *(Laura again notices that Ijamama uses “dat” at times, and at other times, she correctly uses “that” when giving forethought to her statement.)*

Laura: *(Laura ignores Ijamama's comment about college and continues with the next question on her list.)* Continuing along the line of questions about your preferences, what's your favorite toilet paper?

Ijamama: Now dat's a crazy-ass question, but you talkin' down my alley again. Dat's important. You see, I like dat two-ply, Charmin soft stuff or any soft and thick toilet paper. Make you feel like you can wipe your butt all day with impunity. That's another big word for you. Don't want that little thin flimsy toilet paper where your stink can go through it and end up on your fingers and in your skin pores. And wit' dat thin toilet paper, you have to wind a lot off the roll, you know, a whole lot jus' to get a good puff of paper. You see where um comin' from?

Laura: Yes, I see. I asked that question because *Hot Heifer* staff and I did research on your childhood, and a childhood friend of yours said you used newspaper as a kid for toilet paper.

Ijamama: (*Ijamama gets a little perturbed, but then contains herself and smiles.*) Well, to be honest, we did one time, come to think of it; jus' one time. Dat was during a hurricane when we was growin' up down South in Florida, and we gave out of toilet paper and couldn't get to the store. But dem seven kids who was a block from my house used newspaper all the time. I saw 'em doin' it. Jus' too many butts for they family to afford to wipe; you know what um sayin'? They was big kids too—fat, so they needed mo' toilet paper per butt, I guess, and mo' total square inches of paper for total butts crevice space or volume—geometrically speakin' (*Ijamama laughs out loudly*). You should also know, if you did yo' research right, dat I was good in mathematics in high school—especially geometry where you have to use logic and thinkin'.

Laura: Yes Ijamama, we heard that, that is, the fact that you were good in math and that you could have gone to college, if you hadn't gotten pregnant or if you would have had help. Speaking of pregnancy and children, what do you think about our youth of today?

Ijamama: Great kids; lot of 'em breakin' all kinda (kind of) records to be so young. You, know, when you look at TV, they're doing great stuff like in golf, soccer, that girl pitcher in boy's baseball, music, science, academics in general, tennis, swimming, and gymnastics. We jus' got a few misguided kids like all generations. Most of 'em been misguided by messed-up adults

or our messed-up society—especially those kids with drug problems and in gangs. And listen up, problem kids include poor kids and rich kids. I love the kids of today. Now, some adults look at 'em and say, “All kids are bad.” What it is, these adults need to stop bein' bad examples in movies and on TV programs and in real life—doin' things like fightin', killin', competin' all the time, usin' cuss words (profanity), takin' or stealin' stuff from othas, and dissin' each other. Too many adults are bad role models or examples for our young people. Nowadays, it's like being bad is cool—jus' too much meanness in TV commercials, sitcoms, dramas, reality shows, and dem (them) housewife shows. Whatever happened to love and kindness?

Laura: Speaking of TV and reality shows, what do you think about these reality shows?

Ijamama: Most all of 'em bad; teachin' young people how to hate and fight and take and lie. It's like I jus' told you, bein' bad is now acceptable and even glorified. Well, to me, bad is jus' bad period—always has been, always will be. You can't butter it up or glorify bad. Right is right; wrong is wrong. There is (are) universal rights and universal wrongs, regardless of culture.

Laura: Well, I don't get it. Don't you think that some of these TV programs have entertainment value?

Ijamama: *(With impatience, Ijamama shoots back.)* Look, are you deaf? You asked me; I done answered. If they teach takin' from others, hatin' and hurtin', lyin' and cheatin', stealin' and killin' for entertainment value and no redeeming values, then they bad, period—universally and absolutely bad. There's no justification for bad behavior. Bad is bad, and good is good. A young child can tell you the difference.

Laura: OK Ijamama, so much for that topic; I think you've made your point. I see you feel strongly about TV programming. However, let me move to something else that *Hot Heifer* readers would like to know. How old are you?

Ijamama: Wait a minute. Jus' wait a damn minute. Dat's for me to know and you to find out (*laughing*). And don't use the word "old" with me.

Laura: Well, how come you say that you tell it like it is, but you don't want to tell your age to the public. (*Ijamama reconsiders the Interviewer's statement as if Laura had a point, but before she could comment or answer with her age or else, Laura continues.*)

Laura: Well, listen, we found out. We got your birth certificate.

Ijamama: You don't have my birth certificate. It's home in my drawer.

Laura: You know what I mean. We got a copy of your birth certificate.

Ijamama: Well, why didn't you say dat, fool? Sorry, I used that word "fool" again. I apologize—my bad again. Well, why didn't you say you had a copy Ms. Laura? Now, is it the right copy, 'cause it would not say Ijamama but my baby name or school name, you know what um sayin'? It would say my so-called legal name or birth name.

Laura: Ijamama, why you have to disrespect me by calling me a fool? I'm just doing my job—just getting the facts about you for my interview and magazine story.

Ijamama: Alright, done did it. Again, it's my bad. How many times I gotta apologize? By now, you should know I'm half jokin' most of the times. Next question please. If you can't take the street heat, you can get yo' ass out of the Hood kitchen. Didn't one of dem dead Presidents say dat when he was livin'?

Laura: Yes (*smiling*), but he didn't use "ass." Let me turn to your childhood or girlhood once more.

Ijamama: Don't turn nowhere (*laughing*); jus' ask the damn question.

Laura: Well, did you have toys as a girl?

Ijamama: No.

Laura: What do you mean by no?

Ijamama: Look, you understand English, Hot Heifer, no mean (means) no. Well, some Christmases we did, but most times we didn't get toys, just special foods and new clothes sometimes.

Laura: Ijamama, I get it. It's too painful for you to go into details or to talk about this, that is, to regress to your childhood and bring forth the painful unconscious memories of hardship and sheer poverty. We learned that your father died when you were very young, and your mother reared three girls with little to no help.

Ijamama: Cut the psychoanalysis, and stop tryin' to generate drama from me. Um not talkin' 'bout my daddy or toys or cryin'; not dwellin' on what I didn't have. I didn't have a Barbie and don't miss what I didn't have. I ain't no victim. If you're a victim, you gotta accept bein' a victim. Tell dem rich *Hot Heifer* women that piece of my mind. One thing we had every Christmas, and dat was love.

Laura: I sense a little anger and resentment under your pride, Ijamama.

Ijamama: You can sense whatever you want to Ms. Bourgeois, psychology, college lady. Don't try to psyche or head shrink me. I'll say one thing about my daddy so you won't assume any stereotypical thing like you been doin'. My daddy was a hard-working man in the lumber bidness cuttin' down and loading trees on trucks when we lived down South—the pulpwood industry in northern Florida for makin' paper. He died from an accident on his job, and my mama decided to move North to Baltimore after his death, 'cause she had family up here. So, my daddy was a good family man, a hard worker, a good provider. We had mo' money and mo' stuff when he was alive. Next question please Ms. college lady.

Laura: OK, and I'm sorry about the loss of your father, especially at your young age. Alright, I won't ask more about your family now. Moving forward, how much education do you have? Did you eventually finish high school after your baby's birth and did you ever attend college?

Ijamama: You probably don't know, but gettin' pregnant—dat can stop a girl cold in her tracks, especially if she got little to no help.

Laura: Well, people are in college and have children.

Ijamama: Are you for real? How many po' mothers from the Hood can afford to do college with a little baby, unless they got help? Look, nobody came for me to take me to college to sign up, and nobody much was dare (there) to help me and my daughters, except my mama before she died. And sometimes my older sister helped jus' a little but not much. She had her own life and challenges. And listen up, a poor, single mother with a child got to work for money if she cares.

Laura: Well, back to my question, how much education do you have? I assume you did eventually finish high school.

Ijamama: Now, let me tell you somethin'; I'm 45 years of age. You know dat. I can say dat much 'bout my age. So you can say I have 45 years of education. My education is from life, from the streets, from havin' to work many jobs, and from what I've read and learned on my own—not based on brainwashing school or college books dat's required textbook reading. I did drop out of high school, 'cause I got pregnant, but I ended up passing a test and gettin' my GED, you know, passing a test to get my equivalence of a high school diploma, whatever it's called. So you can write that I have a high school education or the equivalence.

Laura: Yes, GED stands for General Educational Development tests, I think. Well, good for you Ijamama: Now, if you will, I would like to turn to global dilemmas. Regarding world peace, how do we stop the violence and all the wars in the world?

Ijamama: Oh (*looking at the time on her smartphone*), I have to stop here. Remember, I told you I have a hour. I have to get back to my early child care job I run. My older sister is watchin' the little kids for me, but I told her I'll get back in about a hour and a half. We can meet again soon to finish, if you want to. Or we can finish up on the phone.

Laura: What about next week, same place, day, and time?

Ijamama: OK, next Monday morning at 9 o'clock. (*Laura agrees to drive Ijamama home where she runs her child care program for five preschool children whose parents work at day.*)

Chapter 2

Ijamama Is Interviewed by Hot Heifer Magazine, Part 2

Ijamama meets with Laura Daniels, a writer for Hot Heifer magazine, for their second and last interview meeting. They meet again at the same Starbucks coffee house near Ijamama's Black neighborhood and just minutes from downtown Baltimore, MD. After a mutual greeting, Laura turns on her voice recorder and continues with the last question that she asked during the first interview.

Laura: I'll start with the same questions I asked you at the end of our last meeting, the one that you didn't have time to answer. Because you tell it like it is, I would like to turn to global dilemmas, for example, on war and world peace. How do we stop much or all of the violence and the wars in the world?

Ijamama: I don't think we can stop all violence and war in the world, though we must try. First of all, we gotta find a way to stop the shootin', bombin', and terrorism. We jus' gotta find a way to prevent or limit wars or violence of any type, whether between countries, religious groups, gangs, or any groups. President Obama got a lot done by diplomacy and a willingness to talk. You talk to prevent fightin'. You talk to stop fightin'.

Laura: Why do you think men have to find a reason to kill each other?

Ijamama: Like otha male animals, it's just what they do. Men, like male animals, fight for territory or to protect they territory. Territory means food or rights to prey for many animal species. Male animals also fight violently for sexual rights or for mating rights. In the same way, men want the prettiest or best-shaped women, so they fight each other symbolically by

competing in professional sports, the business world, and politics to get money, status, and power which attract the most desirable women for they mating or downright pleasure.

Female animals are more likely to fight to protect they babies or cubs from being eaten by predators, jus' as women fight to protect they babes and children from harm. It's jus' what we females do by nature. We sacrifice and put our life on the line for our children; well, most women do. I believe that women are much more civilized than men. Women create and nurture; men destroy and exploit. Put all of that in yo' *Hot Heifer* magazine as a direct quote from Ijamama.

Men and boys need to stop all the killin'—too many folks dying in gang wars includin' innocent people dying in the crossfire and in drive-by shootings. Also, we got male serial murderers and mass killers of all races—Whites, Asians, and Blacks. And we can't forget dat women are now dyin' in far-away wars when they got little babies back home. One mo' thing, White police, especially, gotta stop killin' Black boys and men or Black people in general for no justifiable reason at all—jus' for being Black.

Laura: And what about the small group of women who pay to have someone killed because of jealousy, lost love, or outright greed.

Ijamama: Yeah, I forgot to mention these types of women killers, but it's a very, very small percentage.

Laura: And what about men who are shooting and killing innocent police for no justifiable reason?

Ijamama: That's wrong too. Black men as well as White men need to stop killin' White police or any police jus' because they're police. Enough is enough, 'cause violence begets violence; know what um sayin'? "Stop the violence; stop the killing"—anotha (another) direct Ijamama quote.

Laura: Yes, I do know and agree with you and will quote you directly. And what about the increasing number and seriousness of global threats and

catastrophes we are seeing now; you know, like earthquakes, hurricanes, and terrorism? How do you think these things will further change our lives?

Ijamama: Yeah, like dat Katrina hurricane and the one that hit New Jersey, and what about dat Tsunami dat wiped out hoods in Japan? And now people are shootin' up public places with dem high power assault rifles like they crazy, and, really, most of them is (are) crazy or with mental problems. And yeah, what about people who are bein' taken hostage and stuff or bein' caught in miles of traffic tryin' to escape a hurricane or whatever—waitin', waitin', waitin'? Listen to me. We sho (surely) gonna have mo' people peeing in they clothes (*laughing*). Sorry 'bout my laughing, but it's really not funny—well, it's funny and sad at the same time. And what about people caught in them flash floods who are bein' drowned in they cars? That's bad. Planet Earth is changin'. This is a new world order. Things gettin' tight, too tight for comfort—no joke. You know, we got more people who are sittin' and sittin' and just trapped in situations, whether sittin' in a plane for hours or trapped in airports due to weather or some terrorist threat. Some traffic is even backed up due to protesters blockin' streets and highways, and that's also wrong. The world has become more hectic and dangerous. Even commercial airlines are disappearin' now, or they pilots are havin' mental breakdown or jus' plain drunk while flyin'—now dat's scary, oh my God! Yeah, I wonder, is the world comin' to an end, or are we on our way out? I mean are we comin' to our end on Planet Earth as a species? We declared war on Earth, and now Earth is fightin' back, and it will win if we don't come to our senses.

Laura: But what can we do to change or resolve these types of problems?

Ijamama: As Malcolm X said in his autobiography, don't remember the exact words, but somethin' like, "If you're doing somethin' and it's not workin', it's only common sense or intelligence to change and try somethin' else." Simply, as human beings, if we don't change our ways, we will die from Earth climate change, or we can die from a cosmic event like a asteroid—jus' like them dinosaurs. We can't kill Earth, but Earth can kill us in its self-defense. You see what um sayin' Ms. Heifer; I mean Laura? I do read what I want to read, and many times I watch the science TV channels

instead of stupid sitcoms and dramas like housewife shows. That stuff is wack.

Laura: Yes, I see your point. Sticking with the status of our country and the whole world situation, tell me, what do you think that people in the world need to do most?

Ijamama: People jus' need to stop goin' crazy; stop doin' crazy things—dat's it. It's that simple. Killin' your children is wrong. Beatin' your wife is wrong. Goin' half way 'round the world to fight in somebody else's backyard is wrong, if you don't need to do dat. Government and corporate stealin' from po' (poor) people and hard workin' people is wrong. Sexual abuse of children is wrong. I can go on and on. If a wolf is babysittin' children and can eat one when that wolf get (gets) hungry, whose gonna watch that wolf? Do you send another wolf to watch him or arrest him; hell no? Who's speakin' up for children? Who's speakin' up for po' people of all colors? Who's stealin' the country and they citizens blind? Think about all that little Ms. Muffin. There're many wrongs—much more serious wrongs than me takin' off my shirt and revealin' my titties on a hot day—oops, I meant my breasts (*smiling*). As a country, we need to get real—for real; dat is, for real, real. We need to get real befo' it's too late. Sorry for the sermon, but these issues matter to me. In other words, we need to learn how to love and care for each other as one human race. You get my drif' (drift)?

Laura: Ijamama, I'm hearing you, but allow me to go back to the top of your comment. You need to explain what you mean about “going crazy.”

Ijamama: (*Ijamama pauses for a moment and then shakes her head.*) Shut yo' mouth; 'cause I don't need to do nothin' but stay Black and die, and I have no problem wit' stayin' Black, but I do have a problem wit' dyin' right now (*laughing*). See, dat's what's wrong with college-educated folks. If the answer is too straightforward or the language is untraditional, then people want you to explain yo'self so they can argue. You know what “goin' crazy” mean (means). You asked, I answered; now you print it like I said it. (*Ijamama laughs, then Laura continues with an expression of annoyance.*)

Laura: But you haven't answered my question. You really dodged it.

Ijamama: Stop the trickery. I see you gonna ask me the same question over and over like a lawyer or police investigator 'til I answer it like you want me to answer it. Well, you know what crazy mean. You jus' want me to explain jus' like you rich folks do. Then once I explain, you can engage me in a debate or argument. Well, jus' read the paper (newspaper) every day or look at TV news; there you go. You ain't dumb. Your readers ain't dumb. I just didn't use one of them euphemistic words or phrases dat you expected, like mentally disturbed, emotionally disturbed, mental disorder, or legally insane. You see, I know a few professional words or rather phrases. I read and think 'bout things. I'm jus' mo' comfortable explainin' things in the language of the Hood—my childhood form of English. I can try and talk dat proper English, but then I'll have to think about everything—to say or search my mind for the White and right words. But really, no English is right; it's jus' the type English a geographic group use (uses). There is Irish English, British English, Jamaican English, Nigerian English, Appalachian White English, and Ebonics or U.S. Black English. Right now, you're usin' Standard English of the USA; ain't dat right Ms. Magazine Lady?

Laura: Remember, I'm supposed to be asking the questions, so just answer and don't interrogate me. I need your answers to my questions and not your comedic reactions or debate. *(Laura shows a modicum of frustration in her voice and facial expression.)*

Ijamama: I've got you upset, and I'll jus' ignore yo' empty bluff—so let's get finished up wit' yo' stupid questions, or um outta here befo' you can spell cat backwards *(laughing)*. If you listened, I really answered your question about the meaning of “goin' crazy” by explaining dialect differences in English. If you weren't listening, play the audio recording that you makin'. *(There's a brief moment of silence as Laura continues her look of frustration or irritation.)* OK Laura, keep it goin' baby.

Laura pauses to think, and she immediately realizes that she has lost the war of words with Ijamama. She could see the bossy side from Ijamama's childhood that earned her the nickname Ijamama or the reputation of “I is

your mama.” Laura realizes that Ijamama had taken control of the interview, and, for this argumentative moment and exchange, Ijamama was her mama. Therefore, Laura realizes that it is best to move on to her next question in order to get the information she needs from Ijamama and, thus, complete the interview.

Laura: Ijamama, what can we do about world hunger?

Ijamama: Honey, gimmie a Krispy Kreme donut (*laughing*)—sorry, sorry, jus’ jokin’. Let me get real, ’cause dat’s a serious question. The answer is simple; jus’ take food from people who got too much and give it to those who need food. It’s dat simple. Well, first you ask them and allow ’em to share or give; and, if they don’t, then you take some of it away, or you take or tax some of their money to buy food for the poor. Government can have a food tax, food bank, or food contribution tax deduction. In our country, restaurants and rich folks throw away good food every day. Sometimes, it jus’ sit and spoil ’cause it’s not used in time. I jus’ don’t understand how people are hungry ’round the world and even some people are hungry right here in our own country, including school children. Jus’ tell me, whas up with dat? Last thing is that we have to provide jobs and ways for people to earn money to buy food or to have fertile land to grow they own food—um talkin’ ’bout in our country and other countries. A start for our country would be to tear down abandoned buildings in poor, urban neighborhoods and teach people how to grow they own food on that land year ’round. But you know who would be the first to fight this idea—the supermarkets and the large drug companies. Now, figure that out Ms. College Lady.

Laura: I see your reasoning—both markets stand to lose money from such efforts. Turning from present problems to the future, what do you think will be the challenges of the country or rather our country in the future?

Ijamama: Same as now; jus’ mo’ of the same and some things worse. Innocent people or victims will be blamed even more. More people will die from violent conflict and natural catastrophes. And there will be more people workin’ longer hours and still not havin’ enough money for a decent life. It’s called the new slavery where the minimum wage is jus’ too

minimum and taxes is (are) too high. Unfortunately, there will be longer lines in public, longer waits for service, longer waits to vote, more hostage situations, and more mass killings of the innocent—unless we can teach people, starting in our schools at a young age, how to live together without anger, hatred, fear, selfishness, and greed. What the world needs now is love, sweet love—ain't that a song?

Laura: Yes, it is a song. Ijamama, what do you think of today's politicians?

Ijamama: I think very little of most. Some are good if they do good things for po' people and people who really need they help. Othas jus' bad—they need to stop stealin', lyin', and helpin' the rich get richer, you know what I mean? They need to stop takin' money for favors from those who pay them or those who donate to they campaigns. *(Laura looks down at her list of questions on her notepad.)*

Ijamama: While you're lookin' at dat list, I got one mo' thing to say 'bout them politicians. We need a good woman in the White House. It's a shame we've had all men Presidents, and jus' one man who wasn't White, President Obama, who's a man I believe was destined by God. The election next year, the 2016 election, will probably be the best chance to elect a woman President. Women care and know how to run things—how to keep da house in order and da family safe, and they not quick to send people to war to die.

Laura: I surely agree with you Ijamama about the need for a good woman as U.S. President. OK, I got so many questions; so forgive me for jumping around from one topic to another. Let me check my list. *(Ms. Laura Daniels glances over her notepad again.)* My next question is, “What do you think about the gay and lesbian movement or the LGBT movement?”

Ijamama: Ain't no movement, or shouldn't have to be. The way I see it, people jus' tryin' to be what or who they are. If they don't botha (bother) you, should you botha them? Many don't have a problem; other people make problems for them. You see what um sayin'? Some people jus' who they are, who God made them to be. And otha people should jus' mind they

own bidness as long as nobody is breakin' the law or harmin' them or somebody else.

Laura: OK, moving on quickly, Ijamama you mentioned taxes a moment ago. My question is why is it you didn't file your IRS taxes, your federal income taxes as well as your state tax returns?

Ijamama: Damn, wha, wha, whas up wit' dat question? What you talkin' 'bout? How you know things like dat? Is you a IRS agent spyin' on my ass or somethin'? Is that why you wanted to interview me? I be damn!

Laura: No, no, I'm not an IRS agent. The magazine has its sources. We have our ways of finding out things.

Ijamama: Well, my answer is jus' like I said a minute ago. Them damn taxes too high, and I didn't have the money to pay mo' taxes for government to mess up. It ain't right for po' people like me to be sucked bone dry. Come to the Hood and you'll see that we get very little help from the feds or the state compared to them rich bidness folks, them rich neighborhood folks, and people in other countries who get them foreign aid handouts. We gotta take care of our own first—you know, unemployed folks, the homeless, po' Hood folks, po' Native Americans, po' rural White folks who can't get a job, people in the factories tryin' to make it on reduced wages and watered-down benefits, people who've lost their jobs to closed factories and jobs shipped off to otha countries, young folks workin' at fast-food joints and tryin' to live off minimum wage or tryin' to pay for dat high cost of college, single-parent mothers working two jobs to earn one salary, and people workin' long hours in the coal mines and riskin' they health and lives for limited pay and benefits. Somethin' ain't right with that picture. Strugglin' Americans should come first, especially those who want to work and will work if they can get a job—those who should be paid what they deserve.

Laura: I hear what you're saying. I also heard you used to do other people's taxes. I guess that is understandable, because you did say that you were good in math or should I say arithmetic?

Ijamama: Don't diss me wit' that arithmetic stuff. I can do problems in my head goin' back to my street bidness—I always had dat gift from God.

Laura: And by street business, you mean hot stuff, right? You just indicted yourself Ijamama, but I won't mention this in the magazine article. However, I did hear you sell or used to sell hot or illegal stuff on the street like copied music CDs, pirated DVD movies, and loose cigarettes. Isn't that right?

Ijamama: Don't you go dare (there). Look, I was on the street when the police saw me with no top on. Did they find anything on me or find me in any wrongdoin' except for not havin' a top on, which was not my bad but they sexist bad law? I've never been found to be guilty of anything illegal or wrong—the topless thing was treated as a warning with a small fine but no jail time, and the fine was later waived when I protested the law as being sexist. I've always had a job and raised my kids the best I could. Street business could mean a lemonade stand or sellin' hot peanuts. You jus' stereotypin' the Hood, right? McDonald's is a street business. They sell burgers and things on the street. (*Ijamama laughs.*) Now put what I tell you in your article and not hearsay from other people you talked to 'bout me.

Laura: OK Ijamama, you made your point. I also heard you play the lottery from time to time—like Powerball and Mega Million. Tell me; what will you do if you win?

Ijamama: I'll buy every unemployed person in my neighborhood a bus pass or train ticket, so they can go look for a job even if it's out of town. (*Ijamama starts to laugh again.*) Sorry, um halfway jokin'. Really, there's not enough jobs in the Hood to go around, so I will probably start some bidnesses, sorry I mean businesses, in my Hood that will create work for people. I will help people to help themselves.

Laura: What kind of businesses?

Ijamama: I'll have to think 'bout what would create jobs. I might buy up some of them little cut-rate stores or corner stores run by outsiders, usually immigrants or non-Black folks. I might clear land so people can grow they own food. I might even start a construction company to renovate some of them abandoned houses or just tear 'em down and build new ones that people can afford to rent or buy. I will use local carpenters and construction workers, even if more people have to be trained in building trades like carpentry and plumbing. I might even start a hair salon and hire somebody from my church to run it for me. All these type businesses will create jobs so people can help themselves. I won't hand out fish, but I'll hand out fishin' poles—can you dig it?

Laura: Yes, I can dig it. You will help people in your Hood to help themselves. But your people are musical and have rhythm, right? Why don't you just buy everyone a musical instrument or pay for voice or dance lessons? Isn't that also like giving them a fishing pole so they can fish for their food?

Ijamama: *(Ijamama gets visibly agitated and then laughs.)* I can't believe what jus' came out of your white mouth. What you talkin' 'bout? Don't ever say "your people" or even "you people" again to me. Don't like dat. And wit' that question, you're stereotypin' Black people again. Ms. Laura, you need multicultural or diversity education, 'cause you evidently grew up in a White cultural vacuum. I'm gonna pray for you after this here interview, "oh my God"!

Laura: *(Laura ignores Ijamama's reaction and continues her line of questioning.)* Have you ever been a singer or tried to sing as a career?

Ijamama: Nope, can't sing. I tried to, but I wasn't that good, I was told.

Laura: What about piano; have you ever taken up piano lessons?

Ijamama: What? Do I look like I owned a piano, ever?

Laura: You don't have to own a piano to take piano lessons, Ijamama.

Ijamama: Well, do I look like I or my mama could afford piano lessons?

Laura: Ijamama, haven't you heard, "Where there's a will, there's a way?"

Ijamama: Well, if somebody had put me in they will, I would have found a way (*laughing*). You listen up woman with a spoiled past. There's no way I could have afforded piano lessons, ever, unless we agreed to give up food. I told you dat we couldn't even afford store-bought toys for Christmas most of the times, after my father died. Do you remember?

Laura: Yes, I do remember. A related question is, what do you do for leisure? What do you do in your spare time? You know, some Hood people play cards, go to nightclubs, go to hip-hop concerts; isn't that right?

Ijamama: You doin' it again, stereotypin' Hood people. I don't do any of them things, and I don't have spare time for fun stuff. I used to do some of them things when I was younger though. Look, there are also some Hood people who listen to classical music, who love words and play Scrabble, and who read much of the day at home or in prison. And by the way, we need to do mo' to get innocent Black folks out of prison or people with unfair long sentences out of prison—including women. Please write those words in your middle-class magazine. That's important to mention, because prison today is free labor or the new slavery. It's mass slavery or mass incarceration.

Laura: Yes, I will. I agree with you about the shameful plight of the prison or criminal justice system in America. President Obama is looking at granting executive clemency or pardoning inmates with exceptionally long or unfair sentences, that is, if he hasn't started these already. I think he's already started pardoning people with unfair or excessively long sentences.

Ijamama: Well, it's a criminal "injustice" system when it comes to African-Americans. Some Blacks in the Hood believe that legal justice means "jus' us White folks." So, if you want to help bring 'bout racial justice, then have yo' magazine write somethin' 'bout dat problem—especially 'bout Black

women in prison since y'all supposed to be a feminist magazine. If *Hot Heifer* is not a part of the solution, it's part of the problem. Somebody once said somethin' like that. I love that quote.

Laura: OK, thanks, and, again, we will or I will suggest this to my managing editor. Moving on or getting back to my question about how you spend your time, what is a typical Ijamama day or weekend?

Ijamama: I don't have no typical day. You want to know what I do from time to time?

Laura: Yes, that's good enough.

Ijamama: I have a child care business—keepin' a few kids until 'bout 5:30 p.m. at the latest. I told you 'bout dat. Afterwards, I might sometimes go and help feed the homeless with my church program. Sometimes, I keep my grandchildren at night or on the weekend, when they parents have things to do or somewhere to go.

Laura: And what do you do for fun?

Ijamama: For right now, that's my fun; see what um sayin'—spendin' time with family and helpin' other people. I've done the club scene and concert thing in my younger years. I also read my newspaper or rather read between the lines of what's in the newspaper. I read my *Ebony* magazine, read a occasional book, and drink my coffee in the mornings—no alcohol or cigarettes. I used to drink and party, but them days over. They gone with the wind. I also look at a lot of educational TV programs. Sometimes, I cook and sell stuff out of my house, you know, hot lunches for people who work in the Hood; the ones who want a hot, home-cooked meal and not dat fast-food junk. But look, I only have select customers from my church. They come around 12 o'clock and eat at my house or take the food with them. I don't want every Tom, Dick, and Harry comin' in on me, especially with my child-care kids. Also, every once in a while, I might do cakes for weddings or a party. So you see, there's always somethin' for me to do. No question, I keep myself busy.

Laura: What do you mean by cooking out of your home? Is that how you got in trouble with the IRS, not reporting all your cash income?

Ijamama: Um not in no trouble and don't you put my private bidniss in your article. If you do, you and dat magazine could have a lawsuit, because I will deny it, say it was a church benefit activity, and say that you misrepresented the interview and outright defamed me. *(Ijamama laughs as follow-up to her half-hearted threat.)* Next question Ms. Heifer.

Laura: *(Laura ignores the threat or bluff. She considers reminding Ijamama that she is audio-recording the interview and the facts, but she realizes that this may start an argument or even end the interview.)* Have you spent much time on an airplane or airliner?

Ijamama: Oh yeah, many times—I used to get on a plane practically every day. You know, when I was in my early 20s.

Laura: Interesting, like were you taking the shuttle back and forth to New York City or Boston for work or for some purpose?

Ijamama: No honey, I used to clean up the seats and bathrooms on them big planes, them 747s and 777s. *(Ijamama laughs again, realizing she had initially and intentionally misled Laura.)*

Laura: No, I'm talking about flying on an airliner, taking a plane on a trip somewhere. You claim to have had rich boyfriends. Did any of them take you anywhere for vacation or fun, or did they just entertain you in a local hotel room?

Ijamama: Laura, that's low—a low blow of gettin' back at me for my interview bad of dissing you *(half-heartedly smiling)*. But to answer your question, one boyfriend took me to Las Vegas once by jumbo jet when I was 'bout 28. I had a good time wit' them slot machines and free drinks. I used to drink back then. Oh, and we also went to some great stage shows and good restaurants in Vegas—great food. *(Ijamama looks off into empty*

space.) Those were the days my dear. Don't ask me what else happened, because what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas (*laughing*).

Laura: Ijamama, your breath is a little funky. Don't you use dental floss and brush your tongue? (*Ijamama looks shocked after Laura's comment or accusation.*)

Ijamama: What you talkin' about. That ain't me, dat's your breath. I've smelled it all along; jus' didn't say anything. Look like you've been eatin' garlic or somethin'—you probably smellin' your own breath and your top lip, so stop blamin' me. I can't afford all dem freaky, funky, seasoned foods that make your breath smell. Lima bean and rice sho (surely) won't give you bad breath. (*Laura looks puzzled and blows into her cupped hands to try to smell her breath. Ijamama laughs at her.*)

Laura: I did eat at an Italian restaurant for dinner last night, lots of garlic seasoning. I guess it's still in my system. Sorry about that question. It was inappropriate—my bad. (*Both Ijamama and Laura laugh at her comment, especially Laura's awkward use of "my bad."*)

Ijamama: No problem. When I said limas and rice, I thought about dis (this) Chinese guy who loved his rice. He was nice and polite and all that, but he loved his rice. I don't want any man any mo' who loves plain rice that much, and I don't want a man wit' the name Jr. either—dat's another date and story. There's too many Jr.'s 'round here, and most of 'em just a shadow of they no-good daddies. But not all of 'em now—don't want to stereotype all Jr. men like you stereotype Black folks (*smiling*). Then you got some men who are duplicates or carbon copies of they daddies, like Jackson II, Jackson III, whether for good or bad.

Laura: (*Laura ignores Ijamama's comment about her stereotyping Blacks.*) So, what does that have to do with bad breath and lima beans?

Ijamama: Nothin', jus' like food on a plate, everything don't have to be related. So let me finish my story please—I mean the story 'bout the Chinese guy and his love of rice, because you mentioned your Italian food

and that led me to rice, which is food. Well, that rice had no salt, no lima beans on top, no gravy—jus’ plain white rice. Girl, I had to let him go. In other words, I dumped him in a nicey, ricey way (*laughing*). I didn’t kick him to the curb or anything like dat. I got class most of the time, you know? He never got to chocolate dessert; you know what I mean (*laughing*)? We never consummated the relationship. I figured that any man who loved white rice so much could never love brown sugar as much, could not love a sweet, brown woman like me as much (*laughing again*).

Laura: Continuing along that same line of dating, what about street guys, regular guys that you dated from your race? Do you have any such stories you can share with *Hot Heifer*?

Ijamama: You mean Black guys? (*Laura shakes her head affirmatively.*) Well, all the rich or well-off guys were Black. Are you jus’ assumin’ that all Black men are po’ or Hood?

Laura: Well, sorry, I mean Black guys like from the Hood or from your High school. (*Laura is trying to cover up her stereotypical assumption about Black men.*)

Ijamama: I had dis chewin’-gum dude. Now, he was Black and from my Hood. He soon got on my damn nerve with dat gum poppin’ noise—little sissy actin’ dude who worked in a restaurant wit’ me. He was cute but didn’t make enough money for me to put up wit’ dat doggone chewin’-gum poppin’. I dumped him too before sexual consummation, jus’ like I did the rice dude.

Laura: Anybody else from the Hood that you dated?

Ijamama: Well, I also dated Chicken Breast who was a Hood restaurant owner and Wild Ox Fart who played football, running back, at my high school. A lot of these guys went to high school wit’ me or grew up in my Hood. Now, let’s get one thing straight; jus’ ’cause I dated them, don’t mean I had sex with all of them, because I didn’t. Usually, I can decide if I don’t like a man enough before I get to that type of commitment. See what um

sayin’? *(Laura shakes her head to signal yes while looking at her notepad for another question.)*

Laura: Ijamama, I can see how you were able to get all these men’s attention. You used to be an attractive girl from your high school pictures. We were able to find a copy of the yearbook for your graduating class.

Ijamama: What you mean ’bout my being attractive from my high school pictures? Homegirl is still attractive—um still an anatomical magnet for men *(laughing while shaking her head and snapping her fingers once)*.

Laura: Sorry, but I didn’t mean to suggest that you’re not attractive now.

Ijamama: Well, as you see, I’m still pretty tight or firm up top and ’round the bottom; get my drif’ (drift). I still got my white teeth. Just about seven pounds heavier since high school, but it’s all good. It’s all in the right places. *(Ijamama stands up and turns around 360 degrees and slaps her butt.)* Dat butt is firm and round; can’t you see? What ’bout your butt Ms. Snow White? *(Laura ignores Ijamama’s comment, because she realizes they’re running out of time, and she wants to get additional questions answered.)*

Laura: Speaking of being attractive Ijamama, they tell me that you were in a sex film; you know, one of those adult films. What role did you play; was it a hooker?

Ijamama: There you go again *(smiling)*. It was nothin’ bad or immoral. I played a housekeeper. I cleaned up the room at a hotel. I didn’t have any speakin’ role. It was like a cameo appearance—is that what you call it? I’ll make money on any job that’s respectable. I went for the audition and got the job—bam, \$100 for less than three minutes of cleaning. They then edited it down to about 15 seconds for the movie.

Laura: OK, let me finish up here. I have a series of unrelated questions; so, if it’s choppy, you’ll understand that I’m trying to get it all in. Why do you think that some corporate executives and corporations steal shareholders

and taxpayers dollars; you know like with all the scandals of corporate heads and the overcharging by military-industrial corporations or contractors?

Ijamama: Simply 'cause they're greedy. Jus' don't give a damn 'bout anything except money and power. They care about themselves more than others. We got greedy business people and greedy politicians who don't give a damn 'bout people like me and mine.

Laura: Well, along this same line and given you brought up politicians, why do some political leaders steal from taxpayers?

Ijamama: Same answer. I thought I answered that question earlier; you know, the one 'bout politicians. They also greedy and selfish—it's dat simple. Well, most of them are. And they main goal is not to help the people who elected them but rather to be re-elected over and over so they can steal and make deals that benefit they campaign contributors.

Laura: Sorry, my questions may be overlapping somewhat. (*Laura is drawing a line through questions as she asks them, but sometimes she has follow-up questions.*) Continuing from my list of questions, when was the last time you had sex, and what does it take for a man to get into your flower-sack drawers? I asked because you do claim to tell it like it is (*Laura smiles*).

Ijamama: Damn (*laughing*)! You just came right off the top wit' dat one, no warning at all—right out of a vacuum. And look, I don't wear flower-sack drawers; never did, but I know you jokin'. Well, been a long time since I had sex. I jus' don't give it up anymore at this age, unless a man is very special. Well, at least, it take (takes) a while and much convincing and commitment. You know, befo' a man can get on me, he gotta respect me, show interest in what um doing, and help me and my family—ain't no free ride on this good stuff (*laughing*). And of course, I will help him as long as he's doing somethin' worthwhile and legal. I need a man with a good heart who is truly interested in me and my family.

Laura: Ijamama, sorry to diverge but “ain’t no” is a double negative.

Ijamama, Yeah, but a negative times a negative is a positive. So, if he jus’ want sex and ain’t spending no money that’s two negatives; so I positively ain’t givin’ it up—understand Ms. Hot Heifer Lady (*laughing*). Seriously, thank you for your grammar feedback. I know the grammatical rules, but I need to change my speakin’ habits, and language habits are hard to change, especially when you’ve grown up around othas who speak the same way. You see; I used “are” instead of “is,” that’s when I’m thinking ahead.

Laura: You took the metro, the train or bus here, right? What do you think about the public transportation system?

Ijamama: It’s OK except for them slow-ass messages, you know, like “Be careful; watch your step please.” Instead of saying dat, they jus’ need to say, “Watch out; your ass could get messed up.” Dat will scare the hell out of you and get your attention. (*Ijamama laughs at her own humor.*)

Laura: That’s interesting.

Ijamama: There you go again; dat word means nothin’—like interesting bad or interesting good. That don’t tell me nothin’, and that’s a double negative; nothin’ from nothin’ leaves nothin’. Dat’s what you middle-class folks say when you don’t want to say what you really feel or think—“that’s interesting.” With my Hood homies and with my redneck homies, we tell it like it is and let the chips fall where they may.

Laura: Mrs. Reeve was wife of Christopher Reeve, the man who played Superman in the movie. Do you know or remember when he was paralyzed after being thrown from a horse?

Laura: Yeah, so what? (*Ijamama is wondering where Laura is going with this.*)

Laura: What do you have to say about Mrs. Reeve’s courage to stay with her husband after his paralysis from that horse-riding accident? Would you

have stayed with a quadriplegic husband if you were in the same situation—a man confined to a wheelchair and unable to use his arms and legs?

Ijamama: Hey, where did dat question come from—from left field? That happened a long time ago, right?

Laura: In 1995.

Ijamama: I was in my 20s then. Well, some of my sistahs, my friends, was sayin' back when it happened, "I ain't staying with no crippled man." But I told 'em, "Stop; dat thinkin' is messed up." Way I see it, I'll really try to hang in there because he's my husband; like for better or worse, to death do us part.

Laura: Ijamama, I think it's "till death us do part."

Ijamama: Smart-ass college girl; dat's the same thing. You jus' lost the whole meaning of my answer by lookin' at the message and not the meaning. You one crazy woman. *(Ijamama reflects on what she has said.)* Sorry, I didn't mean to call you crazy again—it slipped.

Laura: No problem; let me wrap-up. Allow me to go back to your younger days or years. They said you were a fine woman in your twenties. Your friends and those who knew you back then said you could've been a model.

Ijamama: Dat's what I already told you earlier. Well, I know you got dat right. Baby um feelin' you now Ms. Hot Heifer.

Laura: Well, let me finish before you start feeling me. If you were so fine and dated rich men or financially secure and successful men, why were you walking in the heat instead of riding in an air conditioned luxury car or even driving your man's car?

Ijamama: *(Ijamama checked her emotions and reflected instead of reacting defensively.)* I really don't know. I guess I didn't know how to work it, or I wasn't willin' to work them rich men for money or a car like some women

do. I'm not the beggin' or connivin' type of woman. You know what um sayin'? I got my pride, and I work for my steady money. Although I've dated men with money, dat don't mean I was willin' to marry a man jus' for his money. I do have principles. If I don't like a man for marriage, I can't and I won't fake it. As I told you, I had a man with a good job who wanted to marry me, but I didn't want to marry him. Now, that's why I was walkin'. Ijamama cannot be bought or sold. Put dat in yo' article verbatim.

Laura: Speaking of Hood, you profess to be Hood and down, but I heard that you're an electronic genius at computer games.

Ijamama: Yeah, you got dat right. It was a matter of survival honey. In my younger years, I used to go to the computer game store in the shoppin' mall. When I got good at them computer games, I mean damn real good, I went to a amusement game center where all the little rich boys hung out after school and played. I knew they would sneak and bet money, you know, gamble. I would beat 'em every time until I earned a rep (reputation) and nobody wanted to play me. Initially, they thought they could beat a grown woman and thought I jus' didn't know my stuff. Don't judge a book by the cover; don't judge a gamer by her gender or age.

Laura: Don't you think that was wrong to take lunch money from little boys?

Ijamama: I didn't take; I won money. I had personal ethics. During weekdays, I never played before they lunchtime or during school hours, only after school time. Was it wrong to teach them a lesson? Was it wrong to win money for my kids' lunch without hurtin' anybody? Each time they lost, I'll tell them, "Stop the gamblin' if you don't want to lose money." I found out these boys had big allowances from they parents and didn't even miss a few dollars here or there. Now tell me; do you really think dat them rich White boys missed any lunches or home meals? I don't think so.

Laura: Well, as I said, I need to wrap this up. I'll mail you a proof copy of the article before it goes to press if you wish. Otherwise, you can go to the

newsstand in about four weeks. It should be in our next monthly magazine issue.

Ijamama: OK, please mail me a copy Laura befo' it's printed. It was fun. Make sure to get the story right and don't misquote me—you don't want to blow my rep in the Hood.

Laura: I'll do my best, but, anyway, you'll get a chance to see the proof and suggest corrections or changes before it goes to press. Just phone me if you have any corrections or questions. (*Laura gives her business card with phone number to Ijamama.*) Thank you very much Ijamama.

Ijamama: You're welcome and one last thing. I know I sometimes gave you a hard time, but much of it was intentional. I was testing you like people from the Hood many times do to outsiders.

Laura: Did I pass?

Ijamama (*smiling*): Yes Laura, you did.

Chapter 3

Ijamama Co-hosts the Hot Heifer Late Night Show

TV Announcer: Count down to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show, standby please: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, live on the air:

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the Hot Heifer Late Night Show. Join me to welcome our illustrious, articulate, and most poised host, Vonginetta Pensettia.

Host Vonginetta: Hello out there, or rather happy late night: I'm Vonginetta Pensettia, your host. Welcome to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show, a show where we try to represent the needs and interests of women in an entertaining manner. In trying to expand our scope to include all women, regardless of social class, income, racial identity, sexual identity, and affiliation status, we have added a street-smart and charismatic co-host, Ijamama. You may have read an interview of her in the last issue of *Hot Heifer*—our feminist magazine. The positive responses to that interview were so overwhelming that we decided to bring her on as a regular co-host, and I'm pleased that she agreed to join us on the show as a regular co-host. (*Vonginetta looks at Ijamama with a polite smile and continues.*) So join me in welcoming Ijamama to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show.

The audience applauds loudly, and Ijamama smiles and affirmatively dips her head in an appreciative manner. She mouths a thank you and blows a kiss to the audience. The audience applauds even louder and cheers. The TV producers have made a point to include more working-class and racial-minority women of color in the audience.

Ijamama: Thank you, I look forward to workin' with you all and the show and with our fine host, Vonginetta. It's gonna be fun.

Vonginetta thinks to herself, “Don’t overdo it Ijamama.” This was not Vonginetta’s idea, but the producers imposed Ijamama onto the fledgling TV show in an attempt to boost its ratings. The show was in deep trouble due to its recent loss of viewers and advertising sponsors to competing late night TV shows. Ijamama has been brought on as co-host of the Hot Heifer Late Night Show to “tell it like it is” based on reader responses to the magazine’s interview article. She is also supposed to help create more laughter and humor while attracting new ethnic and youthful viewers to the TV show, including working-class women. In the first show, Ijamama makes a couple of modestly funny comments, but she is reserved as compared to her usual straightforward self. Prior to the first show with Ijamama, host Vonginetta had asked Ijamama not to overdo it on the first show. However, prior to the second show of Ijamama’s appearance, the producers and the show’s Director told Ijamama to pick up her comments; telling her, “That’s why we hired you to shoot from the hip, be funny, show your quick wit, and tell it like it is.”

Second Show Co-hosted by Ijamama

Host Vonginetta: Welcome to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show, a show where we try to represent the needs and interests of women in an entertaining manner. I’m Vonginetta Pensettia, your host. And to my right is our co-host, Ijamama. We have a very interesting show tonight. We have a university professor, who is an expert on the much-talked-about global warming issue, and we also have a young woman in her 30s who has been trying to lose weight for much of her adult life, but she just can’t keep it off. She says that she once gave up and attempted to kill herself by cutting her wrist, but the cut was not deep enough, plus she changed her mind and phoned 911. Lastly, we have the author of the exciting bestseller, *How to Have Good Sex with Your Man and Make Him Think That He Did It All*. *(People in the audience laugh softly or giggle.)*

Ijamama: I can’t wait—they all hot topics.

Host Vonginetta: Yes Ijamama, it sounds like we have quite an interesting lineup on the show tonight, but first let's welcome Dr. Earthleen Fisher, author of the hot book, *Burning Up Our Planet: Global Warming*. Welcome to the show Dr. Fisher. Let's jump right to the crisis of global warming. What's happening with our global community, our planetary world?

Dr. Fisher: Well, to make it simple, planet Earth is warming at a tremendously rapid rate, and our global home is being negatively impacted. Within the foreseeable years, the temperature of the Earth will continue to increase by several degrees, causing increased global warming and continued negative consequences in terms of the mass losses of animal and plant species along with extreme weather conditions such as stronger storms, increased floodings, and more severe droughts. Also, with the melting of glacier ice, the oceans will rise and flood coastal lands and vulnerable islands of the world. Speaking of sea level, we're contaminating our oceans and waterways with trash and chemicals that can impact the very fish or seafood that we eat. *(Ijamama keeps her cool to allow Host Vonginetta to take the follow-up lead.)*

Host Vonginetta: And what does this mean for human life as we know it?

Ijamama: Excuse me, but it means our asses gonna burn up. *(Vonginetta looks embarrassingly surprised as with the TV guest, Professor Fisher. However, the Professor, while politely smiling, collects her emotions, and, after thinking about Ijamama's unsolicited answer to Vonginetta's question, she follows with academic civility.)*

Dr. Fisher: I guess it could be expressed straightforwardly in those terms; although I've never heard it put that way. But yes, thousands, if not millions, of people who cannot tolerate extreme heat or survive extreme weather conditions, due to their advanced age or compromising illness, unfortunately will likely die. Also, poor and homeless people who are not privy to air conditioning comfort or safe shelter will be at risk. This has already happened on a small scale during record heat waves.

Host Vonginetta: In some cultures, especially around the equator, people wear little to almost no clothing due to extreme heat, so you're saying other parts of the globe are also beginning to experience such extreme heat at times.

Dr. Fisher: Exactly, we're seeing both extreme heat and more days of warm weather during the year.

Ijamama: When it gets just too hot for clothes, I believe that women should be able to take off their top in public just like men do. I once did that, and I was arrested and fined for indecent exposure. Ain't that a double standard for women when men are allowed do it?

Dr. Fisher: (*Vonginetta restrains herself and allows her guest to answer Ijamama's question, given Ijamama directed the question to her.*) I guess if we're serious about equal gender rights, then, in many ways, if not all, women have to be treated the same or have the same rights and privileges as men.

Host Vonginetta: Yes, our co-host Ijamama almost two months ago stood up to sexist laws when it was more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit in Baltimore. She was walking home in the heat and saw men working on a construction project with no shirts or undershirts—just bare-chested in the outdoors heat. So Ijamama took off her shirt or blouse and went topless also. Yes, and it was a woman, coincidentally, who called the police who then arrested Ijamama (*a few people in the audience gasp to the fact that a woman called the police on another woman*).

Ijamama: Yeah, that's right. I was half naked or what my Hood or neighborhood would call half butt-ass naked. (*People in the audience laugh and applaud. Vonginetta tucks and tightens her lips, while Dr. Fisher raises her eyebrows and then makes a sheepish but innocent smile.*)

Dr. Fisher: Look, I wouldn't do that myself, but, if we think about it as feminist women, Ijamama is a woman who had the courage to stand up for her rights. I respect that. In our Western and Middle East societies,

especially, men often get privileges of which women are refused. However, in many cultures, it's culturally acceptable for both women and men to go topless, because of extreme heat. *(While Vonginetta was looking at her notes in order to ask a new question, Ijamama chimed in with her own question before her host could speak.)*

Ijamama: I read that gas or farts from cows and other animals can contribute to global warming. Is that correct professor? *(Thinking Ijamama was way off script and totally uninformed, Vonginetta looked somewhat embarrassed while trying to conceal her facial expression. After a brief silence, Dr. Fisher smiled amusedly; then she thought quickly to just honestly answer Ijamama's spontaneous and unorthodox question about cow farts and global warming.)*

Dr. Fisher: Ijamama is so refreshingly honest, and, in this case, she is correct again. Gas expelled from animals, especially cows, in the forms of burping and anal gas or flatulence can increase the amount of methane in the atmosphere and thus contribute to the global or atmospheric greenhouse effect. Therefore, this process can certainly influence greater global warming or longer seasons of heat. As long as there is a huge demand for beef, cow's milk, and cheese, we will have a great number of cattle impacting our atmosphere.

Host Vonginetta: *(Vonginetta seems a little frustrated and at a loss for comments and questions probably due to Ijamama's lead in commenting and asking questions.)* Dr. Fisher, we will need to take a break soon before going on to our next guest. Instead of my asking you additional specific questions, do you have any message that you deem very important to tell us about global warming or climate change? You're the expert, so you know what's important for our viewers and audience to know and understand about this global issue.

Dr. Fisher *(Dr. Fisher reflects for a few seconds):* Well, one thing that I want the American people and the American governmental leaders to know is that global warming is real and is simply about climate change. The Earth has always been in a constant state of change, which explains why species

die out because they simply can no longer survive due to a change in temperature or environmental conditions. For example, penguins are at risk in Antarctica due to their diminishing main food supply of krill, caused by warmer temperatures or a less cold climate. For life, one thing depends on another. In Antarctica, decreasing temperatures reduce sea ice causing a decrease in algae which is a source of food for the shrimp-like krill, which is a major source of food for penguins and numerous marine mammals and fish of Antarctica.

Winters are getting warmer and shorter in many geographic areas, and often insects are multiplying to do more damage. For example, a species of beetles have increased significantly and thus killed many more trees and wiped out forestland in North America. Also, ticks, in larger numbers, are attacking and killing many more moose in Maine and New Hampshire. And we know about the dying of polar bears due to warming and, thus, the melting of arctic ice, which affects polar bears' ability to hunt for seals as their main source of food.

We must realize that global warming is not about saving our Earth; it's about saving species and saving ourselves from extinction. Keep in mind that as *Homo sapiens* or as a human race, we are also a species. Many people don't know that 99.9 percent of all species that ever lived on Earth are no longer alive today. They are extinct. They died out because they could not adjust to a change in their environment, a change likely caused by some global event or activities. Keep in mind that our earthly climate is now changing at a very fast rate because of human activities that include the burning of fossil fuels. Many if not most biologists now believe that we are undergoing the sixth mass extinction of Earth's history, such as the mass extinction that killed all dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Lastly, we must realize the seriousness and importance of climate change and the need to save ourselves as a species. Professor Frederick Douglas Harper, in his novel about prophecies for the human race, emphasizes the importance of preventing human extinction, and I quote him: "At all cost, we must assure the perpetuity of our human species and our highly developed technology and scientific knowledge. There is nothing more important for the human race."

Host Vonginetta: Thank you very much Dr. Fisher; you have opened our eyes to this whole problem of global warming or climate change, and everyone should realize that global warming is for real, and it is important. Certainly, President Obama has done much in taking global leadership to address and minimize this problem. *(Ijamama keeps quiet, because she feels that Vonginetta has become irritated by her active participation as co-host.)*

Dr. Fisher: Yes, I totally agree that this U.S. President has done so many good things to address or reverse the negative impact of climate change.

Host Vonginetta: We'll take a brief commercial break, and we will be right back. Again, thank you Dr. Fisher *(the audience applauds as appreciation).*

During the break, Vonginetta turns off the microphone and tries to warn Ijamama about what is best left unsaid or, if said, how to say it. Ijamama responds to Vonginetta, as follows, while the microphone is still turned off.

Ijamama: Look Ms. Censor Mae; this is late night TV. I don't see any children in the audience, and I doubt if children are up this late watchin' this show. Plus, you ain't my judge and jury. They hired me to tell it like it is, to keep it real, and if y'all want some plastic phony show, then I'm outta here. You want me to be real but not for real or not for real, real. You jus' want me to be cute real, as long as nobody is upset—to be so-called politically correct. Is dat what you sayin'?

Host Vonginetta: *(Ten seconds before return from commercials)* OK Ijamama; we have to move on with our next guest. We can talk more about this later.

Host Vonginetta: Welcome back to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show; our next guest has decided to go public and talk about a challenge that many women face today. Ms. Gloria Thompkins, welcome to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show. Tell our TV viewers and our audience seated here tonight what you have tried to do to lose weight and why these methods have or haven't worked. Hopefully, we can give you love and support here tonight, and what you have to say can possibly help many women who wrestle with a

weight problem. Back stage you mentioned that you've tried diets and weight-reducing programs, but you've always managed to start binge eating again and to gain or put on the weight again. Is that right? (*Ms. Thompkins nods as yes.*) Other women, including Oprah, have wrestled with the same challenge. So you are not alone.

Ms. Thompkins: Well, I've tried about every weight-reducing program that's advertised, except I haven't done that stomach surgery yet. I've spent so much money trying to lose this weight and keep it off. I would lose a lot of weight, then I would eventually go back to breaking the rules, and I would gain it all back plus even more pounds at times. Look at me, I'm 5'1" and weigh 228 pounds. That's way too much for my height, health, and appearance. (*During the brief pause, Ms. Thompkins looks down toward the floor with an expression of hopelessness and despair.*)

Host Vonginetta: Ms. Thompkins, do you have a partner, husband, close friend, family member, or anyone who has been helpful or supportive during your weight struggle?

Ms. Thompkins: I'm not married; however, my last boyfriend quit me because I just kept gaining more and more weight. Instead of helping me, he constantly reminded me of how big and sexually undesirable I had become. He would get frustrated and angry with me or even tease me about my weight, and this caused me to get angry with him and then to cry and eat more and more.

Host Vonginetta: Sorry about that, but what about your family and friends? What have they done, if anything, to help you? What do they have to say about your weight? (*Ijamama listens attentively while keeping her mouth closed and allowing her host, Vonginetta, to take the lead in questioning—especially because she's been warned by her host to be cautious about what she says and how she says it.*)

Ms. Thompkins: Those family members close to me will sometimes remind me of how big I am, and that just causes me to eat more. I ask myself, "What's the difference in another slice of pie; I'm already fat?"

Some of my family and friends are also much too much overweight, so they don't see me as having a problem. Being around my family and friends doesn't help me, because there's always lots of food and eating at about every function. It's like food is omnipresent. It's everywhere—after church service, after funerals, at wedding receptions, at family reunions, at class reunions, while watching TV programs, at movies with soda and buttered popcorn, and at my job. At my job, there's often donuts and coffee in the morning and buttered croissant chicken sandwiches with too much mayonnaise for weekly lunch meetings. What can I do? People all around me are constantly sticking food in my face if not in my mouth. And the sad thing is that I eat it. I just can't say “no” most of the times. Therefore, food became my companion, my partner, my lover, and my comfort zone when feeling down and alone. I've been praying for God to send me a good man or somebody to help me, because I want to look attractive again, and I definitely don't want to end up with a stroke or a heart attack when I'm older. *(Ms. Thompkins looks down toward the floor again as if she's lost for additional words or thought if not overwhelmed by self-pity.)*

Host Vonginetta: Maybe this is the time for us to discuss possible solutions for you Ms. Thompkins, but first we have to take a brief commercial break in order to pay our bills. When we come back, we will discuss possible solutions for Ms. Thompkins's weight challenges. *(The show takes a two-minute commercial break and returns.)*

(Commercial Break)

Host Vonginetta: Welcome back to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show; we're here with Ms. Thompkins who's talking about her ongoing challenge of controlling her weight. She says that she's tried about everything, except that stomach surgery, and that her family and friends are not helpful, and some even enable her overeating. *(After Vonginetta's comment, the three women on stage sit in silence for several seconds as if they're searching for what to say next or who will say it. Ijamama feels that she's heard enough excuses, and it's time for her to “tell it like it is” for the show's “helpless” guest.)*

Ijamama: Please listen Ms. Thompkins. Nobody probably ever told you this in this way, or they even probably make excuses for you—dat’s called enabling like Vonginetta said. Others probably jus’ complained about you and put you down behind your back or to yo’ face. So please listen to my plain talk and recommendation, ’cause I believe in tellin’ it like it is to a person’s face and not behind they back. *(Ijamama pauses to make sure the guest is listening. Then she looks Ms. Thompkins in her eyes with sincerity.)* Listen to me; baby you way too fat. You jus’ need to lose the weight—jus’ do it honey. You have to do it; nobody can do it for you. *(The audience applauds as support for Guest Thompkins. Ijamama and Vonginetta join in the applause. During the loud and prolonged applause, Guest Thompkins begins to cry quietly with tears rolling down her cheeks.)*

Host Vonginetta: *(Vonginetta looks a little confused as to what to say or do next; then she speaks as if apologizing for Ijamama’s comment.)* Ms. Thompkins, I hope that Ijamama didn’t hurt your feelings. Of course, her intention was to motivate you and help. *(Ijamama thinks to confront Host Vonginetta’s apologetic disposition, but something told her to wait and ride this scenario out.)*

Ms. Thompkins: *(Still crying a little, wiping her eyes, and sniffing, Guest Thompkins looks as if she is reflecting on what Ijamama had told her. Vonginetta gives her tissue to wipe the tears from her eyes and cheeks.)* Please don’t airbrush or apologize for Ms. Ijamama’s straight talk, because she’s right. She’s so right. That’s what my male psychotherapist told me. It rings true coming from another woman. *(She sniffles, wipes her eyes again, clears her throat, and continues.)* Most of my women friends try to protect my feelings or they enable my problem by feeding me food or overeating with me. To them, it’s like food and laughter are love instead of honestly telling a friend what she needs to hear or protecting her from the wrong foods or from too much food—or just protecting me from myself.

Ijamama: Well Sistah Thompkins, I once had the same problem, being fat—dat’s what it’s called in my Hood or neighborhood. But I decided to drop that fat; ain’t nobody else decided for me. I decided to drop that weight by changing what I ate, when I ate, and how much I ate. I made the conscious

choice myself to be the new Ijamama, to regain my fine figure, and to love myself again. You know what um sayin’? *(Ms. Thompkins looks as if truth is ringing in her ears if not her head—truth from another woman who had been there, in a place where she is now, a place where she had felt enslaved for years, but wanted so desperately to escape but just didn’t know how or didn’t have the strength to do so.)*

Ms. Thompkins: Again, my psychotherapist told me the same thing but in different ways. He said our thoughts drive our behavior and our lifestyle and that no quick-fix diet would be a long-term solution until I resolved in my mind to change. He said that I would have to change the way I think and live. I have to change my lifestyle and my attitude about a healthy diet. Thank you, thank you Ms. Ijamama; I will try to take and follow your advice starting immediately, right after this show. *(The audience again applauds loudly in support of Ms. Thompkins’s oral commitment to change her eating habits.)*

Host Vonginetta: *(Vonginetta chimes in as support.)* Alright Ms. Thompkins, you’ve made your commitment to change.

Ijamama: Don’t say you will try; jus’ say I will *(a few people in the audience applaud as support).*

Ms. Thompkins: You’re right; I will. Yes I can; yes I will *(smiling briefly while wiping tears from her cheeks again).*

Host Vonginetta: Ms. Thompkins, we would not have had you on our show if we didn’t plan to help you. Ijamama has given you much to think about and hopefully motivated you to change your ways. In addition, Hot Heifer, Inc., owner of the Hot Heifer Late Night Show, offers to pay for a six-month program of diet and exercise in a local Metropolitan Health and Fitness Club, one of its centers that’s located most conveniently for you, that is, near where you live or work. We will also pay for a personal trainer at the Club to help you and motivate you. *(The audience applauds loudly.)*

Ms. Thompkins: *(Ms. Thompkins looks pleasantly surprised and shocked as she flashes a big smile.)* What? Wow! Thank you, thanks, and I thank the show and the company so much. You really don't know how much all of this means to me. I will never forget this night, and I'll do my best to cooperate with the program you've offered so I can finally get results that will last.

Ijamama: Don't forget, we'll get you professional support and trainin', but you got to do your part.

Ms. Thompkins: Look, I will honor your trust in me to do right by me for me. I will do my part; thank you all so very much, and, again, thanks to Hot Heifer, Inc. for supporting me and women like me.

Host Vonginetta: You're welcome, and thank you for coming on the show to tell your story. In six months or so, we want you to come back on our show to reveal your progress. *(Ms. Thompkins smiles and affirmatively nods her head.)* Ladies and gentlemen, we'll take a two-minute commercial break, and when we return, we have a book author who will tell you how to get your man to enjoy sex with you, and, at the same time, make him think that he did it all. *(A few people in the audience laugh.)*

Ijamama: I can't wait to hear what she got to say!

Host Vonginetta: We'll be right back after the break, so don't miss our next guest. *(Ms. Thompkins leaves the stage during the commercial break.)*

(Commercial Break)

Host Vonginetta: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show—a show with themes of interest to women and a show for men who are interested in understanding, respecting, and supporting women. Now, please join me in welcoming our next guest, Ms. Connie Sofia Lingus, author of *How to Have Good Sex with Your Man and Make Him Think That He Did It All*. *(The audience applauds enthusiastically.)*

Ms. Lingus walks out onto the stage, over to the host area, and shakes hands with Host Vonginetta and co-host Ijamama before taking a seat between the two of them and to the right of Host Vonginetta who takes a seat after offering her guest a seat. Ms. Lingus is wearing a snugly fitted, sleeveless, hot-pink mini dress with her cleavage showing and shoulders exposed. She has long, naturally dark-brown hair. She is an African-American biracial woman from a union of an African-American man and White Latina woman.

Ijamama: Well Ms. Lingus, let's get right to the point, "How you make a man want it and like it?" (*Host Vonginetta is a little peeved that Ijamama has taken the lead in questioning their guest, because she is only the co-host or sidekick on the show, plus Vonginetta thinks that Ijamama is simply jumping the gun before the guest relaxes and the audience can get background information.*)

Ms. Lingus: That's a broad question right from the start, and, by the way, just call me Connie.

Host Vonginetta: Ijamama, why don't we first get some background on how Connie came up with all of the suggestions in her book? In your book, you mentioned that you interviewed more than 1,000 women who were with a man in a marriage or a long-term, live-in, intimate relationship at the time, couples who had lived together at least for one straight year, right?

Ms. Lingus: Yes, that's right. I wanted to know if they were happy or unhappy with their sexual relationship as well as what the women changed or did, if anything, to please their male partners and themselves. One thing that stood out is that a majority of the women felt pressured to have sex regularly regardless of their mood or state of mind, and, even more, the majority of them at some time in the relationship got tired of sex with the same man.

Host Vonginetta: Interesting.

Ijamama: Yeah, they just got tired of the same old Dick. *(People in the audience laugh or gasp, and Vonginetta has a look of shock, while Guest Ms. Lingus smiles. Vonginetta attempts to cover or even apologize for Ijamama once more.)*

Host Vonginetta: Ijamama, isn't that a poor choice of words to make your point?

Ijamama: Not really, my point is that she was tired of Dick and probably fantasizing about being with Tom or Harry—you know, Tom, Dick, and Harry. *(People in the audience laugh again as Vonginetta tightens her lips as if she is embarrassed and lost for a follow-up. The audience and the TV viewers are beginning to see the creative humor and quick wit of Ijamama's mind.)*

Ms. Lingus: Ijamama, your double meaning of the word or double entendre, as could be construed, is powerfully relevant in the context of long-lasting relationships where sexual fidelity is expected if not demanded. Yes, most women whom I interviewed honestly admitted that they actually got tired of the same man and the same penis. They tended to desire some type of variation in their sexual activity, or they admitted fantasizing about being with another man. In making their sex better, women sought answers about better sex from their female friends, counselors, books, and YouTube videos among other sources, that is, those women who took action to do something about their inadequate sex life rather than suffer in boredom if not pain. Now, Ijamama, I'm getting to your initial question about what they did to improve their sex.

Host Vonginetta: This is the part that many women want to hear, but first we must take a commercial break here, so we won't have to interrupt Ms. Lingus; I mean Connie. We'll be right back in a couple of minutes.

(Commercial Break)

Host Vonginetta: Welcome back to the Hot Heifer Late Night Show—Connie, please go ahead and tell our female audience and viewers how they

can enjoy sex with their husbands or partners and make them know or think that they did it.

Ms. Lingus: Firstly, women need to understand that much of sexual arousal and performance begins in the brain or mind. If a woman communicates to her male partner or husband that she's enjoying sex with him, then he is likely to get more sexually aroused, work harder, and get harder, erectile-wise. For example, one woman told me that her sexual therapist suggested that during sexual activity she should moan, talk dirty sexual talk, and clench things like she is enjoying what her man is doing. She said she went home that night dressed in sexy nightwear and sat at the computer to supposedly work. Seeing her sitting there exposed, her man could not resist, so he initiated sexual contact. She stated that during sexual activity, she moaned, breathed hard, grunted, clenched the bedpost and the sheet, and said things such as "take it, break it honey, do what you want baby, and you feel so good inside me." She said the more she responded in a pleasurable manner, the more aroused her man got, the harder he got, and the more he worked to satisfy her in more than one way. In the process, they both enjoyed the sexual activity more than they had previously when she would just lie on the bed like a log and barely move her pelvic area, waiting for him to get an orgasm. She stated that after they both got an orgasm, she said "thank you," and she asked him, "What got into you? You were like a tiger, but I enjoyed it so much this time." *(Both Vonginetta and Ijamama were lost for words or questions after that hot anecdote; therefore, Connie continued with an afterthought.)*

Ms. Lingus: I might add that intimate partners do lose some of the initial sexual drive and excitement after they live together over time under the same roof and in the same bed. So in my book I suggest a number of things to consider to keep sex exciting and to create novelty. Audience and TV viewers, keep in mind that both partners have to be open to new experiences. These considerations include occasionally sleeping in different bedrooms so both partners can miss each other; using a vibrator or other stimulating sex toys, especially for the woman; watching adult sexual movies together during or prior to foreplay and even during sexual activity if it helps; making sure you're rested and not exhausted before sexual

activity; and spending more time in foreplay before rushing to an orgasm. This especially applies to the man. Being fatigued beforehand, having a full stomach after a meal, or sitting for a long time in a hot tub before sexual activity can interfere with sexual arousal and enjoyment. *(Connie takes a long pause, thinking that she is talking too much.)*

Ijamama: What if their sexual needs are not the same as far as how often they want to do it? You know, if the man wants sex every night or like four or five times a week and the woman don't or rather doesn't.

Ms. Lingus: It's interesting that you asked this question Ijamama, because one young woman who I interviewed told me that immediately after she got married and she and her husband got an apartment together, he wanted to have sex every day immediately after they came home from work for two straight weeks. She stated that he also wanted sex with her on Saturday and Sunday nights. This young woman said that after two weeks of grueling daily sex, she had to find excuses to evade him such as working late at the office or stopping by a girlfriend's apartment in the same building where they lived to hide out for a couple of hours. After telling him she was sore from all of the activity, he still reportedly insisted, suggesting they use a lubricant or some aid to ease the pain—how insensitive and selfish. This is not love from a husband. In my book, I call this vaginal greed or p'ssy (bleep) greed.

Ijamama: That's right; some men just don't understand or care as long as they get theirs—as long as they pop it off *(a few people in the audience laugh and applaud)*.

Host Vonginetta: As you see, I'm shaking my head in disbelief regarding this husband's insensitivity and selfishness. Yet, on the flip side, aren't there also cases where the wife or woman partner starts out wanting a lot of sexual activity, and once she gets married or once she has a baby, she doesn't want sex at all or very infrequently, or she finds herself just going through the motions in bed like a zombie or robot? *(A few people in the audience giggle or laugh out.)*

Ms. Lingus: Unfortunately, that's often the case Vonginetta. We don't understand fully the dynamics of a woman's withdrawal from sexual interest after the birth of a baby. The woman's hormonal levels can change after childbirth. Also, much of her energy is invested in child care, and about 20 percent of women even get depressed during pregnancy or right after childbirth. You and your audience may have heard of postpartum depression after childbirth or perinatal depression around the time of pregnancy and birth. When women experience such incidents of depression, a man must be patient with and supportive of his wife or woman mate and not pressure her for sexual activity. The best things a man can do during these times are to help during pregnancy, to help out more with the baby, and to just be there to listen to his wife or woman and attend to her needs and not to his selfish sexual needs.

As human beings, we put too much value on sexual pleasure or sexual activity in a relationship. Many species of animals only have sexual mating when the female is in so-called heat. Male animals tend not to approach a female if she is not in heat or if she is already pregnant or nursing. Some male animals can smell a female to learn if she is pregnant or in heat, or she communicates her readiness in various ways. Humans are different from most if not all other mammals. We can and often choose to have sex at any time of the year if there are no medical reasons to prevent such. However, as human beings, we need to learn that in marriage or cohabitation, it is not necessary or humanly optimal to have sexual coitus or rather sexual intercourse regularly. That's simply one reason why a couple can get tired of exposure to each other. In psychology, this phenomenon is called habituation, that is, constant exposure to the same stimulus can diminish the value of that stimulus. In so-called marital adultery, the grass may not be greener on the other side; that grass is just new and different. *(The audience laughs and applauds Ms. Lingus's last comment about the grass not be greener.)*

Ijamama takes a deep breath and is about to make a comment or ask a question, but Vonginetta intervenes because time has run out for this night's show.

Host Vonginetta: We have completely run out of time. Thank you Connie; maybe we can have you back on the show another time, because there's so much you can teach us about intimate relationships. *(Ms. Lingus states that she would be glad to return again.)*

Host Vonginetta: OK, this is Connie's book *(Vonginetta holds up the book so the audience and TV viewers can see the front cover)*. Again, the title is *How to Have Good Sex with Your Man and Make Him Think That He Did It All* by Connie Lingus.

Host Vonginetta: Good night everybody, and thanks for watching. I'll see you tomorrow or rather we'll see you tomorrow, that is, if Ijamama continues to co-host. *(Ijamama is wondering to herself: "Why in the hell did she say that? Is she tryin' to get rid of my ass?")*

Ijamama: I'll be back—God's willin'. I have an ongoing contract. Everybody out there, please e-mail or phone in and let the show's producers know if you want me to continue as co-host. *(Quite a few people in the audience applaud as indication that they want Ijamama to return.)*

Host Vonginetta: Again, good night everybody.

Vonginetta is furious about what Ijamama said to request viewer support for her return, but she ignores Ijamama's comment to the audience and viewers. Also, Vonginetta ignores Ijamama completely after the show. She literally turns her back on Ijamama and quickly walks off the stage and to her private dressing room, locking the door. Vonginetta tries to get Ijamama fired after two TV shows, but Ijamama received such great positive responses from viewers that she is offered to host her own TV show, which signs on at midnight. The TV show will mainly target African-Americans, Latinos, college students, and working-class women.

Chapter 4

Ijamama Gets Her Own TV Show: Interview with PumpDaddy

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guest tell it like it is. *(The show's band, Homies from da Hood, plays the show's theme song, an instrumental version of Aaron Neville's "Tell It Like It Is.")*

Ijamama: *(Ijamama walks out to center stage.)* Whas up (What's up)? Welcome to the first Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. Also, please welcome by fabulous band, Homies from da Hood, directed by Nikki. *(Nikki is standing at the piano. She continues to play with one hand while waving to the audience and to the main camera. The all-girls band members also wave while playing.)* If you don't know, Ijamama is my creative, Ebonics, Hood nickname that means, "I is yo' mama." Well, at least that's how it came to be my nickname. The name was created for me as a child by one of my sisters, and it stuck ever since. I have two sisters, and we all were in elementary school at the time. After school one afternoon, the three of us was (were) at home playin', and I kept tellin' my older sister what to do. She called me bossy, and said, "Shut yo' mouth. You ain't my mama." I angrily shouted back, "I is your mama." From that, my other sister, my younger sister, started the nickname Ijamama from the sound of "I is your mama." And it stuck all of these years. So listen up, I'm gonna tell it like it is, 'cause "I is your mama" starting at midnight and for the next hour.

Now, speakin' of tellin' it like it is, I'm talkin' to a guest tonight or rather this mornin' who is an ex-playa. Keep in mind, if you in any type of intimate relationship, you should tell it like it is or don't tell it at all. In other words, you don't have to answer every question a date ask you. You know what um sayin'? Some people jus' ask too much too soon. And what they ask can tell you more 'bout them and they interests in you. Some

people interview you on a first date, askin' stupid-ass or insultin' questions like, "How much money you make?" "Do you do head?" (*People in the audience laugh.*) "Who on your life insurance policy as beneficiary?" (*People in the audience laugh again.*) I had one girlfriend back when we was in our 20s who said a guy asked her on they first date, "Have you ever done anal with a man?" (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*) These type questions downright ridiculous. What um sayin' is, of course, "Tell it like it is," but not too soon, and tell it to the right man or right woman. You don't have to answer anything if you don't want to—you jus' don't. If you don't think a relationship will get off the ground or last, why tell a person your secrets or intimate bidness so they can blabber or broadcast it all over the city—or even worse, so they can throw it back in your face or put it out dare on social media?

Jus' don't volunteer too much information when you first meet a man or woman, and don't answer every question somebody ask you. As an example, if you constipated, you don't have to tell somebody dat on your first date. You jus' don't have to do dat (*a few people in the audience laugh*). Speakin' of constipation, don't bring a guy you datin' into yo' bathroom during your most intimate moments—like when you sittin' on the toilet stool. Close the damn door and lock it until you finish your most personal bidness alone by yo'self, then defunk your bathroom or flush as you go (*people in the audience laugh*). Look, um being funny, but um also tryin' to help some folks out dare.

Listen up at dis, when I was in my early 20s, I had a girlfriend who was constipated—she was constantly eatin' all that dry food and not drinkin' enough water—you know what um talkin' 'bout; eatin' stuff like burgers, fries, pizzas, KFC, Popeyes, Twinkies, donuts, and candy bars. She told me that she had her boyfriend come into the toilet at her apartment and hold her hand as support while she grunted and grunted and pushed and pushed to move her bowels. (*People in the audience laugh and gasp, and one woman in the audience comments, "Say what?"*) She finally got somethin' to come out. She told me it was literally black and hard, and it smelled to hell's gate. Well, listen up; her boyfriend never had sex with her again. She said she kept askin' him, "What's wrong baby; why you don't want to have sex with me no mo'?" And she said he finally told her, "I can't get over your smell and what I saw when I held your hand in the bathroom." (*A few people in*

the audience laugh while a few others moan and gasp.) Well, sadly, that was the end of that relationship—no wedding ring, no marriage, no babies, and no mo' romance. *(People in the audience really don't know how to respond to that story—some laugh or giggle and a few gasp, moan, and express sorrow for the young lady who lost her boyfriend.)*

A Woman in the Audience: That's so funny but also so sad. I feel sorry for her, but she should have known better—what you call common sense or woman's sense.

Ijamama: Look; it's funny but, again, um tryin' to school you ladies on datin' and livin' with a man or whoever. Like listen, don't leave them dirty drawers and bras on the floor or on yo' sink or leave them soakin' in yo' sink *(a few people in the audience laugh)*. These are bad habits, and we jus' don't think 'bout what we do. Another thing, don't jus' throw sanitary pads or sanitary napkins in yo' open trash can or waste basket—wrap them things up or put 'em in a bag so you can't see stuff. And look, don't try to tongue kiss somebody early in the morning when you wake up without washin' out all that bacteria from yo' mouth and brushin' your teeth and tongue—morning breath can be a turnoff *(again, a few people in the audience laugh)*. Sorry for this graphic advice, but it's my job to tell it like it is and also try to be funny when I can in doin' so. I'm talkin' to any woman who doin' these things without thinkin', regardless of yo' skin color and social status. This is sistah to sistah talk. Can you feel me?

A Woman in the Audience: Yeah Ija, I can feel you. Tell it like it is sistah. Some females just don't know. You jus' might save somebody's relationship or marriage.

A Second Woman in the Audience: You so right Ija, but listen up; also some women know right from wrong, but they just don't give a damn 'bout them bad habits.

Ijamama: OK ladies—thanks, I hear you, and I hope other women out dare hearing you and me. If not, spread the word. Now, speakin' of datin', we got a man on the show tonight who knows about datin' and sexual healin'.

In his book, he told it like it was back in the day when he was a playa or lover. We gonna hear all or rather most of his confessions when we return from commercial break. Nikki, have that fine band take us to break. (*Homies from da Hood band and its young woman director, Nikki, take the show to the commercial break with the song “Papa Was a Rolling Stone” by The Temptations, a song appropriate for the next guest.*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Ladies and gents put your hands together for a man who is affectionately known as PumpDaddy or PD. He claims that he used to be the “Mocha Chocolate Casanova of the Americas” in dat book of his titled, *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*.

PumpDaddy walks out onto the stage with swag and approaches a standing Ijamama with a gentle hug as she welcomes him to the show and offers him a seat in the closest of four chairs adjacent to the right of her host desk.

Ijamama: Whas up my man?

PumpDaddy: Everything is “copacetic” as that Black tap dancer Bill “Bojangles” Robinson used to say.

Ijamama: Like what’s new wit’ you? And we’ll talk about yo’ book later.

PumpDaddy: You know me; you know how I used to roll—like a rolling stone; like that Temp (Temptations) song y’all jus’ played. Listen up; things done changed. I can’t chase them young honeys like I used to, and now I don’t want to. Let me repeat myself, “I Don’t want to” with a capital “D.” But when I first retired as a playa, that steam used to build up every once in a while. I used to get that itch like Michael—that itch to return as a playa. But now I’m different; like I’ve had a rebirth.

Ijamama: Yeah, I’ll believe it when I see it. Now, back in the day, you was a playa, but you played women and not basketball if you referrin’ to Michael Jordan.

PumpDaddy: Right, I'm talkin' about that Michael Jordan gettin' the itch, as he called it, to come out of retirement and play basketball again, which he did. I used to get that same type itch, but 'round a pretty or sexy woman—you know what I mean baby?

Ijamama: Read my lips. Don't call me baby, and I won't call you dog. Well, I'll try not to. *(People in the audience laugh out loudly.)*

PumpDaddy: Now ease up sistah; that's mean-spirited. I see right now that you got a attitude from the jump based on my past image.

Ijamama: OK, I'll try not to be too hard on you, but I got to step it up for my girls, my women viewers. So listen up playa; tell me, how many miles you done put on dat pump odometer? What's dat OD reading in number of women you done pulled or scored? *(People in the audience laugh.)*

PumpDaddy: Well, Um 54 now, my age; so you see what um dealin' wit'. I done pleased 'bout 800 women. I ain't gonna lie like dat Wilt Chamberlain basketball dude—well, I guess he was padding the notches on his pump gun when he totaled up his women into the thousands.

Ijamama: Nowadays, dat's young; I mean 54. But look here PD, tell da audience, do you take them pills? You know, to get it up, like hard—you know where um comin' from. I don't have to explain—but, if you don't know, um talkin' 'bout them erectile pills like Viagra and Cialis.

PumpDaddy: Not anymore; I stopped my heavy drinkin', and now don't need them crutches. Also, I take me a long walk every mornin', and um gettin' back into my weight exercises again—you know, barbells and stuff like that. And oh, I'm also eatin' the right foods. So that pump is comin' back to life. I've changed Ija. My life has changed in a big way that's not in my book. I have a new lifestyle and identity.

Ijamama: What you talkin' 'bout; what big change—you done gone transsexual, transgender, or somethin' like dat, and you sittin' here

undercover? What else you could be hidin'—you done turned gay? Although nothin' wrong wit' dat if it's God's will.

PumpDaddy: No, neither one; I'll tell you; jus' wait up Ija. But what I can tell you is I have more respect for women now. I can tell you that much.

Ijamama: OK, I'll believe it when I see witnesses or evidence. Let me move on then—you was once called the dog of all dogs and, affectionately, dogdaddy in your early years. Some called you a pimp of all trades; a Flyguy, a Djay like in dat movie Hustle and Flow, or a Willie Dynamite reincarnated. Ain't dat right?

PumpDaddy: Yeah, you right; I was called that, but I wasn't all of that. Yes, I was a ladies' man, 'cause I dressed so fine, treated my women to fine wine, and subsequently looked upon many fine, butt-ass-naked behinds (*laughing*). I treated the ladies so good, except for one thing—I was never a pimp!

Ijamama: Ladies' man—ain't dat a misspellin' or a misnomer for dog or roaming wolf. Man, you done pumped out, flickering like a light bulb dat's 'bout to go out. I read dat book you wrote; well, dat book you told the ghostwriter to write. You said (*opening PumpDaddy's book*), right here on page 23, well, let me quote you (*Ijamama reads from PumpDaddy's book*): “I had so much sex, I eventually had to use knee pads for the doggy-style position and other activities . . .”

PumpDaddy: (*PumpDaddy interjects.*) Lighten up Ms. Hot Heifer flunky. That was in the past. All of that was to show how a man can change. And don't use me to jack up your TV ratings.

Ijamama: I'm not dissing you. Um quoting you from yo' own book, verbatim. And I can jack up my TV ratings just like you can come up in here to promote yo' book and jack up them sales. I'm jus' tellin' it like it was with you. Now, let me ask you anotha question. Tell me PumpDaddy, did you know how to spell “safe sex”?

PumpDaddy: Yes, s-a-f-e (*laughing*)—look Ija, I always used my raincoat (condom), and I avoided dem women I figured had many men, you know, multiple sex partners—definitely not them sex service workers, you know where um comin' from?

Ijamama: But honestly, wasn't you a pimp at one time and now you disowning dat?

Pump daddy: Like I told you Ija, no, no, no, no-o-o—see right there, you ain't read my book. Well, you haven't read the entire book. People thought I was a pimp. But the ladies would jus' give me stuff, and when I had money, I would give it up to them. They was shoplifting and stuff and bringin' money back to da house; some even had legit jobs. This was no different from them religions where you could have more than one wife. They would come and go as they wished; know what um sayin'? Wasn't no physical abuse or mind-control thing, although some of 'em was addicted to the pump, and some was addicted to their sweet-back PumpDaddy.

Ijamama: Yeah, but you wasn't married to not one of dem women. That's wack.

PumpDaddy: Well, in my mind and how I treated them, I was married to all of 'em—well, the ones I had a ongoing relationship with for some time—the ones I shacked up with.

Ijamama: Yeah, in your mind; you thought you did. Now tell me, how you was able to get all them women—to pull all them honeys into your crib or hotel room?

PumpDaddy: If you remember, I was a bigtime guitar player with bands that played in the biggest clubs and concert halls. I played in bands for bigtime groups and names like TLC, Boyz II Men, New Edition, and yes, Michael Jackson. All them women on the road and even the ones back home in Baltimore followed me at concerts and clubs or jus' wanted me to get 'em in on them parties to meet some of the big-name artists—you know,

the famous celebs. I once even tried to get a gig with Prince, but he always had his regulars.

Ijamama: In other words, you was helpless and all dem honeys just fell in yo' lap, or rather staggered into your hotel room or crib and jus' fell on they backs or rather they knees like a dog on all fours, right? *(Audience laughs loudly.)*

PumpDaddy: Yes, some did jus' that, especially if they were drinking a little too much. But look, I never raped nobody or went with no underage girls or minors, so why you givin' me a hard time for havin' a lot of sex and a lot of fun as a young man? I know women of all colors who just wanted to have sex. Most of them didn't want to get married, but jus' to have fun and meet entertainers or big-name celebs. Lot of them was like groupies—you know what I sayin'?

Ijamama: So why is it you had one woman after another like you a child in a candy store or toy store? Whas up wit' that madness? *(Audience laughs and applauds in agreement.)*

PumpDaddy: Ija, there are rich college students, mostly White, who party hardy and have serial sex partners or multiple sex partners or even orgies, but how many of them would you call a dog, hoe, or a pimp? We have double standards in this country when it comes to race and social class—you see where um comin' from ma'am, mademoiselle Ija, mon chéri *(Ijamama interrupts PumpDaddy.)*

Ijamama: Don't you try and sweet talk me. Don't try and butter my ass up. I know you from back then, though I was much younger than you. I remember some of dem women you was wit'; some of 'em had a lot of baggage (problems). You jus' took advantage of a lot of 'em.

PumpDaddy: Yeah, maybe you right 'bout having baggage, but all of them had very nice trunks (butts). Ija, I want to respect you and yo' show, but you had baggage yourself—don't you remember?

Ijamama: You listen here; I had a child and I was responsible—dat's not baggage. I wasn't generating my own drama from my challenges. I respected myself. I wasn't goin' from man to man in search of love or money in the wrong places. I always worked and had my own cash flow. The difference is you was goin' from woman to woman for pleasure wit' no real commitment thing. Look, did you try and help them women wit' they problems or children—well, the ones who had children? The answer is no. You was jus' selfish, looking out for yo' own pleasure, yo' own sexual pop; and writin' your book was jus' another selfish act of yours to make money. Ain't that the truth? Tell it like it is. *(People in the audience applaud loudly, especially the women.)*

PumpDaddy: Ija, now please allow me to defend myself. Back then, I couldn't help myself; but, remember, I done changed. I'm born again through the church. But let me go back a bit and answer your question 'bout different women in my stable. Sex was like sugar; the mo' sugar you eat, the mo' you need. Sugar is addictive. And as a young man, I wanted different kinds of sugar; not all Hershey bars. I just liked the sweet things, the honeys: soft pink cotton candy on some days or a young, tender, chocolate Baby Ruth on other days. Sometimes, I craved for Mary Jane candy or an Almond Joy. At times, I had a craving for a dark Godiva chocolate or vanilla ice cream. Now, dat's how I saw my need back then to have different honeys. Dat's how I rolled back then as a young man—like variety was the spice of life and variety was available to me. You can say there was a buffet with desserts in front of me all the time, and I tried to sample the best of the sweet things. *(Many women in the audience boo. A few men applaud.)*

Ijamama: Yeah, you equatin' women to candy bars or desserts on a buffet. That sounds like a dog dat gotta have different dog foods, different bones, or to put it plain, to have sex with different stray dogs or any dog in heat *(a few women applaud)*. And I still don't think you done changed much, regardless of your claim of bein' born again and now goin' to church. The truth is you jus' can't do what you used to do and get what you used to get. In otha words, them women ain't hangin' all 'round like they used to be, and you don't have dat pump gun like you used to—you gettin' old man,

well, older. And you ain't famous and popular no mo' (*Women in the audience laugh, applaud, or comment: "That's right Ijamama. Tell him like it is—straight up." "The truth hurts."*)

PumpDaddy: Well, call it what you might. They was willin' to lay down, and I was willin' to lay that pleasure down on them, like I described in my book. Listen again, I didn't rape nobody (anybody) or force myself on no woman.

Ijamama: You cocky son of a (*Ijamama catches herself before sayin' the word. She pauses to collect herself.*) Sorry audience, and I'm sorry PD. I got carried away. Let's change the topic, 'cause I don't want to get into a argument with a brotha and with the TV censors. So go on and tell me 'bout them exercises you used to do to strengthen dat push or pump—you know what um sayin'—the exercises you mentioned in your book 'bout push-ups, squats, weight lifting, and stuff like dat. They might help my married male audience who got erectile problems, strength limitations, or stamina problems. Break it down so they can help satisfy they wives. You heard me, right? I said, "Satisfy they wives." I don't know if you understand that conjugal language. And I said "conjugal" and not "Congo," if you don't know that word (*laughing*).

PumpDaddy: Don't play me small—I've traveled and been around all types. I understand that word conjugal as having to do with marriage, but even more important, thanks for the lead-in to my mentioning the exercises I discussed in my book, *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*. Hold dat book up Ija.

Ijamama: OK, looks like you gonna jus' take over the interview. This is my show. I'll hold up da book when I'm good and ready. Be patient; I'm in your corner.

PumpDaddy: Yeah, I have to speak up 'cause look like you tryin' to bash me instead of interview me and promote a good brotha. And Ija, please stick to the questions them White writers and producers wrote for you.

Ijamama: You better watch it now. I get suggestions, but I decide my own questions or script, and, again, I did read that book of yours, front to back. OK, let me move on and get out of this dogfight with you (*Ijamama laughs and a few people in the audience laugh along with her*). Listen up, I will hold up the cover of the book soon, and, remember, I jus' opened that book and quoted you from it. That counts I hope.

PumpDaddy: Dat's cold Ija; dat's for-real cold. Stop usin' dog with me—you mentioned dog befo' and now you mention dogfight with me. (*PumpDaddy looks dejected and sad.*) I've really changed as I will explain in a few minutes.

Ijamama: OK, you right, my bad; jus' tryin' to be funny and to get you to react. Please, go ahead and tell yo' side or the side you told dat ghostwriter (*laughing*). And what is this life-change you keep talkin' 'bout man? OK, go ahead. I don't want to be funny at yo' expense. And I don't want to be biased by how I knew you when or by what you wrote in your book 'bout back in the day. But I also have to dig for the truth; that's me, and that my job as I see it.

PumpDaddy: OK, as I was sayin', that was the day—lots of fun. I'm sorry now that I did some women wrong. But look, I also did a lot more women right by me. All y'all out dare in TV land who knew me when, if I did you wrong, then I apologize. I'm jus' tryin' to keep it real now, tryin' to do the right thing. I'm workin' on a regular job at Towson State University setting up their sound system for concerts and lectures—skills I learned from working in music all those years. And sometimes I play with a small band at a hotel club in downtown Baltimore.

Ijamama: OK, dat's good to say you sorry and you workin' steady, but please get back on track and answer my question 'bout your strength and stamina exercises. At age 54, I really don't believe you got much pump in your rump considering all them years as a sexual predator—all those years as a Lion King. (*People in the audience laugh.*)

PumpDaddy: I'm jus' gonna ignore all yo' dissing. Well, to answer your question, back in the day, I would run a couple of mile every two days—I was too burnt out from sex to run each day. I also would squat like 200 pounds for dat pump strength in the butt, thighs, and back—to keep my core muscles strong. Then I did my bench presses and curls for my arm strength. Sex, you know, takes a lot of strength, energy, effort, and sweatin'; know what um talkin' 'bout? Like you need arm strength to support your body if you on top. Also, you need butt and thigh muscles to pump in the doggie mode. *(People in the audience laugh. A few men applaud, or say things like, "Yes.")*

A Woman in the Audience *(shouts out):* You're right about that. We don't want a weak man, no five-minute man *(a few women laugh and applaud).*

Ijamama: *(Ijamama adds to the comment from the woman in the audience.)* I know you got that right sistah. But PD, that was then; what 'bout now?

PumpDaddy: Well, I can't chase them women no mo', and, as I said earlier, I don't need to or want to now. I shouldn't have done it back then. Back then, some of those honeys worked for my modeling agency, and some worked in my music store where I sold records, CDs, autographed photos, and other souvenirs. You know, I would bring autographed photos of the stars back from them big road concerts to sell in my music store in the Hood. So what I'm sayin' is I did help some of my women and reward them in other ways.

Ijamama: And did you pay my sistahs right for workin' for you?

PumpDaddy: I had everything goin' at once, and lots of money was comin' in. Well, to be honest, I took most of the money for myself. I didn't pay my ladies what they should've got, but they were paid; plus, I gave them the autographed photos of famous celebs and other little souvenirs from my road trips. They was or rather were young and jus' enjoyin' the life of the entertainment world—just enjoying the ride.

Ijamama: Now, are you tryin' to justify yo' greed by sayin' they got perks by bein' around celebs and the entertainment scene? Truth is you was jus' another user, right? I bet you didn't even pay them sistahs minimum wage. Did you?

PumpDaddy: You right; I admit that now right here, and I'm not proud of that. Also, I confessed to that in my book, *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*. This may be a good time to hold the book up Ija—you're holding out on me.

Ijamama: OK man, just be cool; be patient. We gotta talk 'bout that book first to hype people up; then we'll show them the cover and tell 'em how to get it. Look, let me take a commercial break now so we won't be interrupted when I show the book. Jus' be patient; um gonna do right by you. (*Homies from da Hood band takes the audience to break by playing Marvin Gaye's hit song, "Sexual Healing."*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here with PumpDaddy, an ex-playa who's written a book 'bout his sexual exploits and activities. OK, it's time to pull out dat book, as we agreed. (*Ijamama takes the book from under her desktop and holds it up to show the front cover.*) Here it is ladies, *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*. It's available at local book stores and from online distributors.

PumpDaddy: Now you talkin' Ija. That's why I came here to talk about this hot book on your hot show. (*PumpDaddy looks in the TV camera to further promote his book.*) And it is hot ladies and gentlemen. So go to your neighborhood bookstore or on the Internet and order it now.

Ijamama: Rap to us 'bout how you used to pull dem women—you know, pull them into yo' love net or rather sex bed (*laughing*). The men wanna know how to get a lady, and da ladies wanna know how to keep from being pulled when they don't wanna be taken down to da mat by a playa; you know what um sayin' PD?

A Woman in the Audience: Yeah, yeah; you're right Ija—talk on.

PumpDaddy: The easiest women I got was women who wanted to be got at the moment. Some was ready for action and they wanted to give it up to me. The trick of the trade is a man needs to know and sense who's ready or who's put da eye on you. Baby, you know what um sayin'?

Ijamama: I've been there; did dat. I'm one of them women, or I was when I was younger and a fool in love—or as Beyoncé says, “Crazy in Love.” I was one of those women who could get horny and spot a special man at a party—a man I was highly attracted to. He was like putty in my hands when he got my nonverbal message. Again, I'm talkin' 'bout back in the day when I was young and hot to trot. I would look at a dude and say, “Um gonna get him tonight.” He thought he was pulling me, but I was really pulling him—reeling him in like a big helpless fish on a hook. Of course, I didn't make this a habit, and I made sure I knew the man's background first from ladies at the party. PD, I don't want you or my viewers to think that I was a female dog or rather a dogette on the prowl. I was young, and I had my condoms in my pocketbook or rather purse for those who don't know Hood talk. (*Ijamama laughs with the audience.*) Safe sex was my MO, my modus operandi. Now, it's no sex. (*Again, Ijamama laughs, and the audience laughs with her.*)

PumpDaddy: Dat's right. Men don't jus' get the ladies; many times, the ladies send a message and seduce the men. That's what that Lewinsky woman did to ex-President Clinton. She reeled in the biggest fish in the Ocean. For men out there who are listenin' and watchin', look out for female signs of sexual interest in you such as sexy body language, occasional eye contact with you, frequent smiling, just hanging around you, and suggestive comments to you—comments like, “Could we go somewhere and talk?” I got a lot of action jus' like that. Now, as I say in my book, *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*, once you hit a woman (have sex) two or three times, then she might fall in love or fall in lust with you and will get serious 'bout helpin' you as long as you continue to pump and play—sometimes pump and pay, like with nice dresses,

jewelry, or a job in my music store. I don't know about now, but back then most women I met liked jewelry and fine clothes—nice fingernails and hair. I only bought things for my regulars or my specials; the one-night stands didn't get to the gift stage. They just got into the band's parties or the celeb parties at the hotels.

Ijamama: PD, you sho (surely) sound like a male chauvinist or a so-called sexist, chauvinist pig to me.

PumpDaddy: Maybe I was back then, and maybe I wasn't. It's how you look at the whole situation. Ija, your motto is "tell it like it is," but when you hear the truth from a man, you don't want to accept it or you can't handle the truth. I'm tellin' it like it was, and I'm askin' for forgiveness for any wrongs I've done. Jus' go back and read my book again, and you'll see my confessions. Remember, I was young then, and young men are usually highly active sexually. As a culture, our society dictates the role of women and the role of men when it comes to sexual behavior. We many times forget that women are sexual beings also who can be sexual aggressors but in different ways from men. I also found out that some women were jus' interested in a one-night stand or a one-time sexual affair. They wanted nothing from me but a sexual encounter. Now, what do you call that?

Ijamama: OK, you got a point. Continue PumpDaddy, pump dat book up and push my TV ratings up with more sex talk (*laughing*). Camera Number 1, please zoom in on this book cover one mo' time. (*Again, Ijamama holds up the book for the camera to focus in on the hot cover with the photo of a man and woman in nude embrace, waist up.*) OK, we gotta take another commercial break now so we can pay our bills and stay on the air. (*The band begins to play as a lead-in to the break.*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the show. I'm here with my guest, PumpDaddy. We're discussin' his past life as a R&B musician and a playa of women as he wrote about in his hot book, *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*. (*PumpDaddy shakes his head affirmatively and smiles.*)

Ijamama: PD, what kinda woman do you like or did you like? I bet you like dem high booty sistahs; you know, dem tooter, dem big Hottentot-butt types, dem West African types. *(People in the audience laugh.)*

PumpDaddy: There's more to a woman than her butt. But I sho (surely) don't like 'em flat like an ironing board, and I don't like 'em walkin' like they got a stick up they behind.

Ijamama: Jus' like you had dislikes 'bout some women, I don't like men walkin' like they got a letter in the mailbox—pants or shorts all up in the crack of they butt *(people in the audience laugh and applaud)*. That jus' turn me completely off. But tell me, you still a chauvinist pig, ain't you?

PumpDaddy: Listen up Ija, you keep bringin' this sexist and disrespectful language up, like you tryin' to appeal to them White feminist women out there. Look, one more time, you brought me on your show to tell it like it is or rather like it was and to be for real. Now you done got so big and high-and-mighty and so politically correct that you can't take the truth. Well, I'm not a sexist anymore, and I will tell you why at the end of this interview. I admit; I was a sexist back in my younger years. I admit that in my book. That's why I use the word "confessions" in the title. So please stop beatin' up a brotha for his past wrongdoings or past sins. If I could go back and change things with what I know now, I would, but I can't. What's done is done. *(PumpDaddy speaks with much emotional remorse and regret.)*

Ijamama: OK, you right. I shouldn't judge you by yesterday or rather years ago. Also, I'm curious to know what you got to tell my audience about how you have changed. You keep sayin' you a changed man but you keepin' us in suspense, in the dark. And look; don't put labels on me with dat "feminist" brand. If you want to brand me, call me a womanist or a Black feminist.

PumpDaddy: OK, sorry for my labelin' or brandin' you.

Ijamama: Now, let's talk about safe sex. Havin' all dat sex back in the day, you had to watch out for diseases and things like dat, right? I know you

alluded to that earlier, but tell us more 'bout how you took care of yo'self. And, by the way, how you like that word "alluded"?

PumpDaddy: I know the word, and I can dig your use of it. To answer your question and as I mentioned earlier, I used a condom except for when I had a special lady that I saw regularly, and when I felt confident that she wasn't doin' anything else with anybody else. By the way Ija, what are you doing after your show?

Ijamama: Man, you better get outta my face. I ain't doin' nothin' but runnin' my show these days. No time for datin' or partyin' or sex—got to take advantage of this opportunity and put my viewers and fans first. Plus you so burnt out, I sho won't do nothin' wit' you—sorry, jus' tellin' it like it is old man.

PumpDaddy (*smiling*): Seriously, I was jus' jokin' Ija. I wasn't suggesting anything by that simple question. I was only playin' with you. Look, thanks for the opportunity for me to come on your show and promote my book. Please Ijamama, for real, I was jus' teasin' you. Look, I'm no longer datin' or lookin' for a woman. God has answered my prayers. The surprise I said I would share with yo' audience at the end of our interview is that I got married jus' a few months ago after the publication of my book. She's a very, very nice lady who I met in our church. We both sing in the church choir and are very active with our church's youth and education mission. I also play in the church band once a month.

Ijamama: Wow, now that's a shocker. I'm so happy for you PD. Sounds like you've really been born again. Congratulations on everything. (*People in the audience applaud loudly.*)

PumpDaddy: Thank you Ijamama, and, again, I appreciate you havin' me on yo' show to promote my book. At the end of my book, I recommend to young men not to be a playa. I suggest that they put their energy into gettin' a college education or some type of skill trainin', build a career, save their money, and eventually marry and make a family. Me and my wife, or rather to be grammatically correct, my wife and I are expecting a baby boy in

three months. *(Again, the audience applauds loudly, and Ijamama joins in with the clapping of hands.)*

PumpDaddy: Thank you; thank you all very much.

Ijamama: I'm happy for you PD and proud of your lifestyle changes. I'm sorry I gave you a hard time during my interview. I jus' didn't know. Looks like you really, really changed. You really got it together. Ladies and gents, please go out and buy this man's book 'cause it's a good read. Again, the title is *Confessions and Expressions of a Sex Machine*. *(Ijamama holds up PumpDaddy's book one more time to show the front cover.)* He will need the money from royalties to buy diapers, baby formula, and baby food. *(People in the audience laugh and applaud.)*

A Woman in the Audience: I know that's right—been there, did that. But tell her to breastfeed, no baby formula.

Ijamama: Yes sistah, you right—breastfeeding is better for mother's and baby's health. *(Ijamama considered asking PumpDaddy how his new wife felt about his book and the personal revelations about his intimate or sexual past; however, she realized that there was not enough time left on the show to pursue this sensitive line of questioning.)*

PumpDaddy: Again, thanks Ijamama, and thanks to all of you *(looking at the audience and the main TV camera)*.

Ijamama: Well, that's enough excitement for tonight. As I sign off, remember two things: "Do right and you can't go wrong," and "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all."

Good night everybody.

Chapter 5

Ijamama Interviews Dr. Fartenstein, Professor of Fartology

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guest tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. Tonight, I have an interesting guest, Professor Fartenstein. Now listen up. He has done serious research on farting, so those in the audience, be careful up in here—keep your gas in your tanks (*people in the audience laugh*). I'm glad to be able to get him to come here on the Ijamama show, 'cause he is in high demand. Five of his 10 farting books have been ranked in the *New York Tribune Gazette's* top 10. These books include *Farting Etiquette*, *Fart Prevention Strategies*, *Morning Farting to De-gas Your Body*, *How to Know Your Own Fart*, and *Farting with Freedom in Your Own Privacy*.

There are many fart jokes, and we like to laugh at these jokes, but few of us can talk serious or rather seriously 'bout this sensitive topic. How many times you suffered through somebody else's stink smell or fart? Have you ever had a farting fellow employee who thought you couldn't smell? (*People in the audience laugh.*) Have you ever gone to a concert and constantly smelled farts but not know who did it, whether somebody in front or behind you or on either side of you? And, of course, you can't change your seat 'cause you have a reserved seat. Have you ever been in the car with only you and your date, and you smelled a fart, and the other person thought you couldn't smell it with they car window down? (*People in the audience laugh again.*) Have you ever stepped on an elevator and took your next breath and thought it was your last breath, and there were three people aboard, and the anonymous, guilty one thought that no one else

could know their disgusting fart out of the three people? (*Ijamama and her audience laugh.*)

Listen up, a fart don't have to be introduced. It will introduce itself by risin' to the level or zone of your nose. Those farts are usually the silent ones, and you jus' don't know they comin'—like they catch you plum off guard, bam, wham! (*People in the audience laugh.*) A fart is not phony, not fraudulent, not pretentious, and not farcical, if there's such an adjective—it's jus' what it is, a stink smell right in your damn face and right up your nose. (*People in the audience laugh again.*) And, by the way, I rounded up those big words from my Scrabble game notes and my childhood study of the dictionary.

Well, we have a professor and researcher here tonight to tell you everything you wanted to know about farting, but you was or rather you were ashamed to ask anyone. Please welcome Professor Abraham Fartenstein. (*The professor walks out onto the stage in a dark suit with necktie and over to Ijamama's desk to greet her with a firm handshake.*)

Ijamama: Professor Fartenstein, welcome to the show. Have a seat, and please don't fart now (*audience laughs*).

Professor Fartenstein: (*The professor smiles.*) Thank you, and please don't worry, I don't recommend farting in a crowd or in someone else's presence. This is offensive and against my rules of farting etiquette. My motto is, "Keep your foul gas to yourself if you cannot release it in a safe space or place." (*Someone in the audience shouts out, "Prof, I know that's right."*)

Ijamama: Yes, I agree; the professor is right about that, so very right. Keep it in until you can let it out safely without offendin' somebody else. Professor, I got so many questions; I don't know which one to let out first. Oh, no pun intended (*laughing*). I meant which one to ask first.

Professor Fartenstein: Well, while you're checking your list Ms. Ijamama, I want to congratulate and thank you for bringing up the issue of farting when you were co-hosting that Hot Heifer TV show. That was a courageous thing to do. It's what I call fart consciousness in action. Do you recall? It was about cow farts that contribute to global warming.

Ijamama: Yes, I do remember. It was no big thing Prof, 'cause you know I tell it like it is and let the chips fall where they may. I read a lot, including stuff about climate change and global warming. Please go ahead Professor Fartenstein; tell us 'bout that farting research you doing up there at that highfalutin university.

Professor Fartenstein: Well, right now my job title is Distinguished Professor of Fartology.

Ijamama: Please explain that fart, uh, uh whatever, that fartology thing. Now, that sounds like a funky low-down field of study. *(Ijamama laughs out and the audience joins her in laughter. Having a professor as guest, Ijamama is intentionally trying to use big words and speak Standard English when conscious of it.)*

Professor Fartenstein: You pronounced the word right, fartology as you said. I study flatulence or anal gas; or colloquially speaking, if you will, I study the science of farts. This is a scientific field of endeavor that measures the chemical composition or makeup of a fart, which can be influenced by a person's air intake while eating, the type of food that a person eats, the circumstance of overeating, and the natural makeup or biochemistry of one's body. We also look at the qualities and characteristics of farts, like the stench or stink smell, the volume of a fart, the loudness of a fart, the temperature of a fart, and the frequency of farting incidents. Regarding temperature, the hotter a fart, the faster it spreads. In addition, we have a psychosocial research team that studies individual differences in farting patterns, the sociological contexts of farting, cross-cultural farting differences and practices, and gender differences in farting.

Ijamama: Well, how did you get behind this body of research? Sorry 'bout that "behind" word and "body" word. It's a Freudian slip (*smiling*); again, no pun intended, but, rather, humor was intended (*laughter from the audience*).

Professor Fartenstein: Well, given I have a family name with a prefix as auspicious or appropriate for the topic, I simply awoke one morning with a question in my mind and a fart in my behind and queried myself as to what was to be my research mission in life. As customary, I went to the bathroom and, typically, farting while urinating, I said to myself, “Eureka—I’ve found my academic mission in life.” Ergo, fartology was born from my butt and mind as the science of farting. That morning was a “cafartic” experience that I will never forget—you know, similar to cathartic.

Ijamama: That’s jus’ deep, super deep, deep down dirty deep; but we’re not interested in that physics or chemistry, whatever, of the scent. I want you to break it down for my people in the real world—the language of the lay or the everyday populace. *(Ijamama is intentionally demonstrating her knowledge of words around the professor.)*

Professor Fartenstein: OK, I will try to keep my scientific explanations to a minimum, although it may very well be a challenge at some points.

Ijamama: Now, right off the butt, I mean right on the bat, I must say that you have a nose for makin’ stink money from a real problem and need. *(People in the audience laugh and the professor smiles.)* Tell us ’bout that farting etiquette and some of those juicy or rather smelly stories from your *Farting Etiquette* book. Yeah, I read that book. *(Ijamama looks out over the audience.)* Yeah that’s right; I did read that *Farting Etiquette*, and I recommend it to you, so you won’t be embarrassed in public by your own butt. *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Professor Fartenstein: OK, I will be glad to share some of the do’s and don’ts of farting etiquette. For example, don’t try to embarrass a loved one by farting on his or her parade.

Ijamama: What’s that, what parade?

Professor Fartenstein: Well, that’s metaphorically speaking; for example, there was the case of a teenage daughter who was angry with her professor mother. She tried successfully to embarrass her mother by farting on her

parade. This is what happened. May I proceed with that story? (*Ijamama nods her head for the Professor to go ahead with his story.*)

The daughter came unannounced to the mother's class, which was a doctoral seminar with 10 students whom the mother was teaching. The 16-year-old daughter sat quietly and composed in the classroom for about 10 minutes, then she farted loudly and left immediately and quietly without saying, "Excuse me or see you later mom." (*People in the audience gasp and laugh.*) The mother looked at the daughter with disgust and shock, while the students restrained themselves from giggling or outright laughing out loudly. Although shocked, the students were quite amused, and thus they talked about that farting event for days if not weeks. They even reported it in the university student newspaper under the section on recent university events. Of course, they wrote about it in the university newspaper after they completed the professor's seminar class and received their final grades.

Ijamama: Now, that's deep. It's shocking alright. She embarrassed her own mama in the worst way. That's hard to believe a daughter would do that to her mama who raised her. You got another one of them fart vignettes?

Professor Fartenstein: Well, I once was called to the emergency room to try and convince a man that he had farted and had not been shot. He had a mental disorder called PTSD, which, for those who do not know, the acronym stands for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder that military people can experience after a violent incident or violent incidents during combat. Well, he thought he was back in Iraq in combat and under gunfire and mortar fire.

Ijamama: How that happened?

Professor Fartenstein: I call it the case of a man terrorizing himself with his own rumbling farts. He farted so loudly and for so long, like a rumbling cannon shot, that he went into shock and experienced a myocardial infarction of the heart. As I mentioned, he thought that he was again in Iraq under enemy fire from automatic firearms and mortars.

Ijamama: I told you not to use dem big-ass scientific words. And what you mean he farted and it went through his heart—that my o infarction thing of

the heart?

Professor Fartenstein: Oh, sorry, myocardial infarction is simply a medical term for heart attack. Unfortunately, relatives who observed and reported the incident verified that he died, unfortunately, from panic or extreme fear from his own explosive and sustained farts.

Ijamama: Um sorry to hear that he had to die from his own farts. That's quite unusual, you know; I mean farting yourself into terror and a heart attack. That's downright serious. Um curious; tell me, actually how many times do people fart in one day—I mean like on the average, not everybody?

Professor Fartenstein: People usually have 10 to 14 farts a day based on one research study, but a study of another group found an average of 20 farts a day, so the number varies I guess by day, time of year, and the population that is studied. Some people have more and some fewer on the average, but it depends on their body's biochemistry, what they eat on a given day, whether they overeat in one sitting, time of day or night they eat, and other factors. Sometimes, when people have the urge, they just need to go to the toilet and get all of the gas and solid waste out at once and not hold things in.

Ijamama: And them research studies, what years were they done and on what groups, 'cause I can't see it, unless they takin' a laxative or had some colonoscopy prep? (*Ijamama and a few people in the audience laugh.*) Don't tell me them low numbers, 'cause some people I know have 10 in one rippling sound, you know, like a M-16 machine gun or one of them AK-47 assault rifles. (*Again, Ijamama and people in the audience laugh.*) Well, maybe four or five and not 10 rips—I was exaggerating at first.

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, you're right; there are physiological, cultural, and dietary differences that can influence fart rate and duration. Also, whether a person eats too fast, overeats, and takes in much air while eating can be factors related to excessive farting behaviors. Even more, a person might have lots of gas on one day and very little gas on another day. Again,

it can depend on what they ate, when they ate, and how much that person ate. Also, all of the refined or processed foods of this day and time probably contribute to farting behaviors.

Ijamama: Professor, when I was growing up down South as a little girl, I once heard a fart that could be heard around the world (*the audience laughs*). OK, not really, but it was so loud that as a kid I thought it could be heard by Santa Claus at the North Pole. You got another story 'bout them fart cases from your research subjects? Or what about them do's and don'ts that was in one of your books. But first let me break to a commercial about over-the-counter medication for gas and indigestion (*laughter from the audience*). We'll be right back. (*The show's band begins to play music for the break.*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show! We are here interviewing Professor Abraham Fartenstein about his research on farting. Professor, please go ahead and tell us about them do's and don'ts of farting that you discuss in your farting etiquette book.

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, I have plenty do's and don'ts as stated in at least two of my books. Let me think now and see if I can remember several useful ones for your audience and TV viewers:

Number 1, Don't fart in a sauna, whirlpool, or shower at a fitness club or public gym. If you have gas, go sit on the toilet stool and expel it;

Number 2, Don't fart under a blanket when you're in the bed with another person, for example, your spouse or a partner. The stink molecules are diffused or rather they are dispersed, and the blanket does not hide the smell. It does more to trap some of the smell under the blanket while also releasing molecules of stink to the opposite side of the bed;

Number 3, Don't fart while sitting in the front passenger seat of a car while wearing an overcoat in the winter, thinking your driver will not detect anything through that coat—wrong, because, again, there is the principle of diffusion or spreading of fart molecules. This is also true for the driver of the car or any other passengers who may be seated in the back seat. This is especially relevant if it's winter or in cold weather and all the windows are up and the heater is on;

Number 4, Don't fart on an elevator when you are the only one and someone else or others might possibly board—you're assumed to be the guilty party by being the only one at the crime scene. And, of course, don't fart on an elevator period with others present;

Number 5, Don't fart in church while sitting, kneeling, or standing. There are likely to be people behind you, in front of you, or next to you—plus remember, as I just told you, fart molecules disperse in air or spread up and out;

Number 6, Don't fart at your graduation commencement; graduation robes will not protect you;

Number 7, Don't fart while standing at an ATM machine—thinking no one will come before you finish your transaction. They always do, and they surely will discover your wicked butt (*a few in the audience giggle*);

Number 8, Don't fart on a school bus, city bus, train, or plane. Of course, you could and no one will probably be able to determine the source except for a suspecting person who is sitting next to you or across from you—but it's not fair to force someone else to smell your sickening, inside funky stench in a captive space;

Number 9, Don't fart while twerking in a group on the dance floor—is that the name of the dance when you squat, thrust, or gyrate your butt? (*Ijamama answers, "Yes."*);

Number 10, Lastly, don't fart while engaged in sexual activity, unless your partner is a sniff freak. *(People in the audience laugh out loudly.)*

(Yes, Ijamama had taken some of the professor's farting etiquette ideas in creating jokes for her opening monologue.)

Ijamama: OK, all these make sense, and I won't dare follow-up and ask you about sexual activity and farting *(giggles from the audience)*. Now, what about dem do's? Where in the hell can a person feel free to fart with pride, peace, and freedom? Tell me, do we have to go to a desert or to an isolated beach to fart? *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Professor Fartenstein: OK, these are the "do's" or acceptable conditions or places for safe farting, and, no, you really don't have to go to a desert or remote beach, although I know you were being humorous Ms. Ijamama:

Number 1, Do feel free to fart on a jogging trail or while walking in a park when alone—you're not in a confined space and no one is likely to come near you before the molecules dissipate in the wide open spaces;

Number 2, Do feel free to fart while running a vacuum cleaner, if others may not be within ear reach or rather nose shot; however, be careful if you have heavy, molecular farts and the stink molecules linger for a long time or you expel multiple farts that can saturate a condensed area of the house. That's called fart seriation combined with fart summation and fart molecular saturation. This process or principle involves a series of repulsive fart episodes whose repetitive expulsions of fart molecules increase fart volume, presence, and stench within a confined or limited space. The molecules are usually much more in volume and can linger longer in concentrated density;

Ijamama: Damn, you using lots of big-ass words, but go ahead Professor.

Number 3, Do feel free to fart in a hot shower, if by yourself. Steam or warm water does something to mask or purge the smell;

Number 4, Do feel free to fart on a parking lot if no one else is near—make sure no one is sitting in an open-window car adjacent to yours or near you if you’re on foot;

Number 5, Do feel free to fart in the privacy of your car if you do not expect someone else to board; yet, this can be dangerous if you happen to pick up someone you know unexpectedly. And it would be helpful if you lower your car windows, or at least a couple of them, or turn on the AC if it’s summer time;

Number 6, And, as I mentioned previously, probably the best thing is to go to the toilet, sit on the stool, and get all of the foul gas and solids out when you feel the need to expel such. The impulse to fart simply means something is dying to come out—no pun intended. If possible, try to train your body to eliminate much of the solid and gas waste in the morning a few minutes or more after waking up and overcoming your drowsiness.

Ijamama: Wow; them “Do’s and Don’ts” are very helpful. And all of that’s good, only if a person can or will follow the rules, but what if a farter cannot control himself or herself—you know, a person cannot follow the don’ts or jus’ don’t give a damn? *(A few people in the audience giggle.)*

Professor Fartenstein: Well, that’s a good question Ijamama, because, in that case, a person should apologize for their farting transgression to those who are offended or abused, and they should pray for forgiveness to God as well as to those whom they have offended or abused. Along this line and regarding your question, one of my former doctoral student research assistants wrote a poem about praying for control and forgiveness and offering an apology to those who have been offended or abused by an intrusive fart or farts. If I can recall, it goes something like this—may I Ms. Ijamama?

Ijamama: Of course, please go ahead. *(Professor Fartenstein pauses and then begins.)*

A Farter's Prayer and Apology

Let the ripples end, I implore Thee;
Please accept my forgiveness for my
Many transgressions of foul gas that
Have discomfited and abused many:
In the elevator,
In the classroom,
In the office or meeting room,
In my work space in general,
In the confines of vehicles,
At my home or the homes of others,
At public events,
Among the crowded masses, or
In the open marketplace or supermarket
AMEN

Ijamama: That poem is great—it's "fartabulous." (*People in the audience laugh at Ijamama's creative word, "fartabulous."*) Now, speakin' of public gatherings, tell me this. Based on your professional experiences, like public speakin', have you ever run across any weird fart incidents—you know what um sayin'?

Professor Fartenstein: Certainly, I understand your question Ms. Ijamama. Well, once I was speaking at a religiously affiliated college, and this is what happened: I was speaking on romantic relationships and farting etiquette. This was at an all-women's college—a prudish and conservative type of private college. During the speech with about 400 women in the audience, a young woman on the third row apparently farted loudly, so it seemed. The young woman next to her looked at her in total disgust so as to say, "It was she and not I." The majority, who heard it, looked very embarrassed and angered by this unconscionable act. Whether such was intentional or unintentional, I don't know. Nevertheless, this was the first and last time that such a thing ever happened in all of my lectures or public speaking, and I had never heard of this happening with another professor or public speaker. Clearly, the sound was a fart, that is, based on my experiences of fart sounds and tones. Even more, I can't recall any student in all of my

classes over the years farting out loudly during class meetings, although on a number of occasions, I've smelled evidence of farts—those silent bombs that can ruin your moment and your train of thought.

Ijamama: That's somethin'—and a religious college too. (*A few people in the audience laugh.*) Do you have any more of these ridiculously funny fart incidents for my live audience and midnight TV viewers? I'm thinking that this farting program will blow up my TV ratings—sorry, but no pun intended in the use of “blow up.” (*People in the audience laugh.*) Also, to be serious, your information is also helping to educate many people about farting, especially, things people wanted to know about farting, but they were afraid or ashamed to ask or didn't know who to ask.

Professor Fartenstein: Well, considering your request, I have a few more incidents or cases. One professor who I interviewed for my fart research told this story. He said that he once shared an office with another male professor who farted around lunch time—one or several of those silent atomic bombs per lunch hour. The professor told me that his officemate had changed his diet and started eating his native, cultural foods with spices and seasoning and beans for his lunch, and he just had a habit of stuffing his gut. Once, when the guilty officemate realized the smell from a silent bomb that he unconsciously released was seeping into the office air, he began to move his squeaky chair and scrap his shoes against the tile floor. When the innocent officemate smelled the fart, that he knew did not belong to him, he quietly left the office for about an hour or so—telling his officemate that he was going out for lunch. Ms. Ijamama, we all should remember that you cannot mask or cover up smell with sound. (*People in the audience laugh and seemingly agree by their comments.*)

Ijamama: Now you mention in yo' book—a person on my staff wrote this question from readin' yo' book, *How to Know Your Own Fart*—you mention that a fart got musical qualities. My staff told me to ask you what you meant 'bout that, you know, in that chapter titled the “Musicology of Fartology,” did I say it right?

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, you pronounced it perfectly Ms. Ijamama.

Ijamama: Well, go ahead, explain that. How a fart can be like music, 'cause you can't smell music? *(A few in the audience laugh softly. It's apparent that Ijamama intended to be funny.)*

Professor Fartenstein: You're right, you can't smell music but you can hear it. You also can hear some fart sounds and beats, and they can have different qualities. Some are fast or staccato or like an automatic weapon—like successive musical tones or notes. Some blow out in a half or whole note, a fart that is steady and held for two or four beats, respectively. A whole-note fart of four beats is unusual, but there're cases. Some farts rumble heavily like a tympanic or bass drum or a tuba, and some squeak out high pitched like a flute or oboe sound. Some have a crescendo quality from soft to very loud on the same note and tone. Well, I should stop my explanation here, because music is not my field of study. But you get my point about how fart sounds can have musical qualities, right? At my university, we are doing interdisciplinary research with the Department of Music in trying to decipher the relationship of fart sounds and patterns to musical qualities.

Ijamama: What 'bout them farts dat get louder then they whimper to nothin'.

Professor Fartenstein: Oh, that's what we have classified as a fart arc. You have a crescendo effect in loudness or intensity of sound until it reaches the peak of a curve or arc, then it declines in sound, sort of to a soft or pianissimo level, and then whimpers to extinction.

Ijamama: You said it whimpers to a stink sound. How's dat? *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Professor Fartenstein: No, it whimpers to nothing. I was using a symbolic or metaphorical play on words when I used the word extinction.

Ijamama: Um jus' jokin'. I know what extinction means; like dinosaurs' death as a species. I like to get a certain number of laughs for my show, you

know? That's my job—to inform and entertain; tell it like it is and make people like the show.

Professor Fartenstein: OK, I understand. Certainly, you can get a lot of humor by the nature of this topic. May I mention something else about fart sounds or tones since we are on this topic? Now this really may be funny.

Ijamama: Please go ahead, especially if it's funny.

Professor Fartenstein: Well, speaking of music and fart sounds, I want to refer your audience and TV viewers to our Web site for downloadable fart tones or musical fart tones that can be downloaded to your smartphone as rings. *(People in the audience laugh out loudly and a few gasp.)*

A Man in the Audience: Say what?

Ijamama: It's unbelievable what you can do with a fart or series of farts—the human applications. Would you please shout out that Web site for my peeps (people)?

Professor Fartenstein: The Web site address is very easy to remember. It's simply www.farttones.fart.com. The one-time cost with your credit card is only one dollar per fart-tone ring.

Ijamama: And what you gonna do with all this fart money from the Web sales, because we jus' gave you a plug. No, don't pay us, you can contribute to charities that benefit children, women's causes, and poor folks. You know what I mean?

Professor Fartenstein: Well, we're ahead of you Ms. Ijamama. Already, half of all proceeds go to high-poverty schools, recreational programs in urban Hoods and rural White towns, schools in Haiti, and African schools in remote villages for girls whose families cannot afford to pay for their education.

Ijamama: Now, that's what um talkin' 'bout. That's quite ingenious and benevolent Professor. Yeah, I got a few big words myself. I never once imagined how farts can help people so much. In other words, "farts matter." *(The audience bursts out in loud laughter.)* This topic is gettin' more and more excitin'. *(Ijamama looks down at a writing notepad on her desk and continues.)* Let me check my fart notes here. I want to make sure I've asked you 'bout everything on my list. *(While Ijamama is looking down at her list, the professor pulls what appears to be a sawed-off long gun from his attaché case.)*

Ijamama: *(Ijamama sees this from the corner of her eye and looks up.)* Hey, what da hell; put dat damn shotgun down—security! My God, he got a sawed-off shotgun. *(Dr. Fartenstein calmly turns to Ijamama with a smile, while lowering the gun to his lap.)*

Professor Fartenstein: Sorry Ms. Ijamama; however, I alerted security of what I was planning to do.

Ijamama: Damn, don't scare me like dat. You almost made me fart. *(People in the audience laugh).* Wha, wha, what you need dat for; is it a real gun or what?

Professor Fartenstein: You see, this is simply a laser fart gun to detect a farting perpetrator among a crowd or group. It's a new invention that was discovered at MIT; one of our country's best tech universities. This fart gun uses an infrared laser to send a beam over a crowd, in this case your audience, to measure the chemical composition or air molecules. I will simply scan this laser across your audience like this, and it will pick up a fresh fart and locate it based on its coordinates. It identifies the location of a fart, upon which a computer program in the fart gun then algebraically or algorithmically matches that fart's chemical structure as a gas with the chemical structure of the body scent of a person in the same vicinity of the fart. This highly sophisticated scientific process is called fart localization. Once it locates a farter, it assigns a unique signature. This is called the fart signature or fart print similar to a fingerprint or to DNA markers. The fart signature is a print of the chemical makeup of the fart.

Ijamama: So, is there any victims or, as you say, perpetrators of farterdom out there in my audience? (*Professor Fartenstein waves the fart gun across the audience again like a magic wand.*)

Professor Fartenstein: From the read-out on the monitor of the fart gun, I'm picking up row F, seat 4. I guess that's the 6th row from the front and the 4th seat to my left from the aisle. (*People in the audience busily check their ticket or the seat location from the marking on the arm of their seat. A man in row F, seat 4 looks around.*)

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, don't look around sir. It's you, because this gun is picking up a male fart, and there are two women on either side of you. The chemical signature is concentrated exactly at your coordinate or location; ergo, fart localization has been derived with validity and reliability at 99.9 percent probability of accuracy.

A Woman Sitting Next to the Man Farter: He's not with me, but I did realize that somebody was farting all during the show. I didn't know where it was coming from. (*The man farter, who is visibly in a state of self-disgust and embarrassment, gets up from his seat and quietly leaves the theater's auditorium as everyone watches his departure in disbelief.*)

Ijamama: Now, dat's messed up Professor. Did you have to embarrass somebody to make your point? OK, too late; you done made your point. I thought I warned people 'bout farting up in here. Would one of the ushers catch up with the gentleman and let him know that he can come back after a bathroom visit, and that he can sit in another available seat if he don't want to come back to the same seat or if the two ladies don't want him there? I'll even refund his ticket cost if he don't want to come back in here tonight, or tell him that I'll give him a credit for a future show. We got to do right by this matter. This is messed up, jus' outright embarrassin' for me as host. I really don't want to hurt anybody's feelings.

Professor Fartenstein: I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to cause trouble or embarrassment. I was just demonstrating a technological or scientific

instrument that's a breakthrough. It really is.

Ijamama: And anyway, most people don't understand them big-ass scientific and mathematical words you used. OK Professor, the deed is done, so put dat fart gun back in your briefcase, and let's move on. Maybe this is a good time to take another commercial break. We'll be back after a two-minute commercial break. *(Homies from da Hood band begins to play upbeat commercial-break music.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. We are here interviewing Professor Fartenstein about his research and training on the topic of farting, which he refers to as fartology or the science of farting or flatulence. As appropriate for this fartology show, I now want to welcome a vocal musical group with a song that's in the top 10 among the current hit songs. When we learned that Professor Fartenstein would appear on the show tonight, we went out of the way to get them here on the same night. Ladies and gents, please welcome the Three Farts, singing their hit song, "You Got Me under Your Wind." *(The audience applauds. Afterwards, the Three Farts and their personal band perform for about five minutes.)*

Ijamama: *(The audience applauds loudly at the end of the group's energetic and forceful performance.)* Thank you Three Farts! Audience, please give it up one more time for this rising rock group as they exit the stage. *(The Three Farts and their band exit the stage during the applause of the audience, after which Ijamama returns to interviewing Professor Fartenstein.)*

Ijamama: Professor, in that class you teach, that Introduction to Fartology, please tell us about your own textbook that you use.

Professor Fartenstein: Surely, and do excuse me, because it's an academic course and book, so I have to use technical or some scientific jargon to describe what's in the book. I can explain as necessary.

Ijamama: That’s perfectly OK, go ahead, jus’ tell us what’s in the table of contents—what kind of topics—and if we don’t understand, we’ll ask you, or folks can go to the Internet or a dictionary if they don’t have access to the Internet.

Professor Fartenstein: Well, I’ll just get to the topics and try to explain if something is really technical language. There is the “Biochemistry and Physiology of Farting,” followed by “Cross-Cultural Patterns of Farting Behavior,” and then there’s “The Etiquette of Farting.” Other chapters include “Farting and Human Development: Baby Farts to Elderly Farts,” “Diet and Prescribed Medicines and Their Relationship to Farting Behaviors as a Side Effect,” “Farting and Your Health,” “Genetic Predisposition and Compulsive Farters,” “Farting Behaviors of Animal Pets,” and “The Psychology of Farting.”

Ijamama: Stop right there! I want to ask you ’bout that psychology of farting. Tell us about people who seem to fart when they are under stress or extreme fear. (*Ijamama uses her Ebonics “’bout” at first when she is spontaneous and excited; then, she uses “about” in the next sentence when she switches to Standard English or deliberate speech.*)

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, that can happen, and it’s often unconscious farting. Some people get or release gas or have the need to go to the bathroom for a bowel movement when they have an impending stressful event, such as taking off in an airplane, making a public speech, taking a college exam, or participating in a job interview. Also, there can be excessive farting during pregnancy for women and their guilt feeling of not being able at times to control farts in the presence of their husband or loved ones. Pregnant women may not even be aware of their silent and serial releases of gas. Some pregnant women may even fart out loudly during sexual activity. During pregnancy, there’s an increase of progesterone, a hormone that influences a buildup of gas and, thus, increases incidents of bloating, burping, and anal gas. Also, keep in mind that the fetus or baby is taking up much space, especially in the latter months of pregnancy, thus leaving little or less space for gas buildup.

Ijamama: Yeah, I know about pregnancy firsthand—been there, did that twice. Now, in your book, *Farting with Freedom in Your Own Privacy*, you write about the “Rock-a-bye Syndrome,” which I didn’t totally understand—now what’s that? Please explain that to my audience and TV viewers.

Professor Fartenstein: I’m happy that you asked about that phenomenon. It is an unfortunate circumstance which involves simultaneous expurgation of gas via the anterior orifice and the posterior orifice, thus, creating a rocking or pendulum movement of one’s body due to the propulsion of the forcefully released gas.

Ijamama: I told you not to use them big-ass words; just break it down. Do you mean dat gas comes from the mouth and the butt, rocking people’s world in a nasty way—like back and forth, right? *(The audience cracks up laughing out loudly.)*

A Woman in the Audience: Alright Ijamama, break it down for us baby.

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, exactly, back and forth from the propulsion of gas expulsion or force. You explained it much more succinctly and simply than I Ms. Ijamama.

Ijamama: There you go again with them big-ass words: propulsion, expulsion, and succinctly. You need me as a translator Professor. Look, I see this fartology is gettin’ very excitin’, but we must go to a commercial break, and we will come back and continue with the good farting doctor *(the audience laughs)*. Oh, I mean the good doctor of fartology. *(During the break, there is another commercial about an over-the-counter pill to minimize digestive gas.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show! Please put your hands together again for Dr. Fartenstein, our guest. *(The audience applauds vigorously.)*

Ijamama: Now, Dr. Fart (*people in the audience laugh*)—sorry, I mean Dr. Fartenstein, that’s my Freudian slip, my bad. I read your book, *How to Know Your Own Fart*, and I have the following question for you. How in the hell can you know yo’ own fart if others may be farting in the same zone and have a similar fart smell and if the different farts may be commingling? I see how you can know it if you released the bomb with nobody around, and seconds later the evidence rises to your nose. Break it down on how we can identify our farts and be sure ’bout it.

Professor Fartenstein: That’s a very erudite question Ms. Ijamama. As I mentioned earlier in the interview, just like DNA, fingerprints, and face recognition, I have discovered that a fart has a unique profile. Again, I call it a fart signature. This signature can be scientifically measured or, rather, spectrometrically measured with a reasonable gas sample that is uncontaminated. If two farts reside in the same space, my machine will isolate the unique molecules and assign a distinct molecular signature or structure to a particular person, that is, if there hasn’t been too much commingling of the molecules of the two different farts by means of diffusion and subsequent intermolecular bonding of two different farts. Most farts have a proportion of chemicals or a chemical composition that may include methane, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, and hydrogen sulfide. The percentage of these chemicals or elements can vary for each person based on his or her diet, eating process, body biochemistry, and how various bacteria build up in one’s digestive tract. It is the hydrogen sulfide that gives a fart its stench or stink smell, although it represents only one percent or so of the chemical makeup of a typical fart. Similar to animals sniffing out things, people can in some way sniff out their own fart with proper training. Our only limitation is that as humans we have an inferior sense of smell as compared to many other vertebrate animals such as bears, wolves, and dogs. For example, a dog, depending on its breed, can smell 40 to more than a thousand times better than a human being. You probably can train a pet dog to tell your fart from that of a guest or guests.

Ijamama: Why is this important, and who need a fart signature? It’s like signin’ your presence with yo’ butt, as I may have mentioned befo’. (*People*

in the audience laugh.)

Professor Fartenstein: Well, that's one way of putting it. To answer your question, we have already put this procedure into action, that is, by taking samples at crime scenes, only if we can get there before the molecules diffuse or disperse completely or to a diminished concentration for measurement. We have also been able to secure molecular samples from the seat cushions of spies from various countries and ambassadorial dignitaries in order to track them and ascertain their whereabouts. Sometimes, we even use dogs to track their scent, but mainly we record the signature for future comparison or identification. Yet, this fart signature can change with one's diet and other factors, although the change is not usually significant.

Ijamama: When you demonstrated the fart gun, you talked about each person's fart signature, so I won't spend any more time on that topic, especially since we're runnin' out of time. Changin' topics, you haven't talked about your wife and children. I saw your family picture in that magazine, *Happy American Family*. You have a lovely wife, but I read you got five spoiled kids who eat all kinds of candy and pastries and burgers and stuff. So it seems like you got a few little farters in your own house, is that right?

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, I am blessed to have five little gas tanks (*the audience laughs*). However, I must say that since that embarrassing article about their fast-food diet, my wife has forbidden them from fast foods and have restricted their refined or processed foods, sweets, fats, fried foods, and soft drinks in general. They have even lost weight and have improved their digestive systems and sleep. We really didn't realize how many genetically modified, chemically treated, or processed foods that they were eating.

Ijamama: Now, tell me Dr. Fartenstein, do pretty girls fart?

Professor Fartenstein: Yes, they all do. Whether pretty girls tend to fart around others, it depends on their social status, family upbringing, or their cultural background.

Ijamama: What about the Catholic Pope, Queen of the United Kingdom, U.S. Presidents, and First Ladies of the White House; hard to picture them farting. Do they fart? *(People in the audience laugh out loudly.)*

Professor Fartenstein: Of course, they farted before they received these earthly titles, and they continue to fart during their titles and afterwards, simply because all human beings fart regardless of their status *(the audience laughs)*. But our research suggests that they tend to be very, very cautious not to fart in public during ceremonies or while greeting private guests or public groups. Rather they try to get all the gas out before an engagement, or they hold a fart in until they can get to a private bathroom and sit on the toilet stool. And of course they may watch what foods they eat and how much they eat. This is where status comes in. A woman of high social status does everything possible to avoid farting in public or around a social group. To them, that's a no, no.

Ijamama: Professor, this is my last question, I think. Are there any benefits from farts other than to the farter as a release of gas or pressing tension?

Professor Fartenstein: It's interesting that you raise that question Ms. Ijamama, because I just not too long ago read a research article about potential medical benefits of inhaling a fart or flatulence, which contains hydrogen sulfide that gives it the foul smell. There was a study conducted at the University of Exeter in England. In other words, smelling farts may be able to both successfully treat and prevent diseases—even some cancer diseases.

Ijamama: Say what! The thought or visual image of this is amazin' if not disgustin' *(giggles are heard from the audience)*. In other words, we may see professional farters farting in the faces of patients in hospitals or even spouses and their children farting with pride if not utter sufferin' as they watch TV together. *(People in the audience laugh out loudly. Some people gasp from the thought or image of such.)*

Professor Fartenstein: That's a possibility—that's a real stinking possibility *(there's laughter from the audience)*. Yes, we may even see

synthetic fart inhalers in the future, similar to those used by people with sinus congestion or those with asthma.

Ijamama: OK, this has been very excitin' and helpful, but we've run clean out of time. However, I have one last question before we sign off. Professor, what do you want yo' tombstone or headstone to read after yo' death?

Professor Fartenstein: (*Professor Fartenstein thinks deeply for a few seconds.*) I have to think about that one. Maybe my wish would be to inscribe something like the following words: "He Took the Science of Farting to a Higher Level."

Ijamama: That's it ladies and gentlemen—thank you Dr. Fartenstein for comin' on the show and educatin' our audience and TV viewers about farting. There's so much to discuss on this topic that we may have to invite you back.

Professor Fartenstein: You're welcome; it was my pleasure. I'll be glad to return in the future.

Ijamama: Don't forget to "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all." And remember, "If you do right, you can't go wrong."

Good night everybody.

Chapter 6

Ijamama Interviews Funkomaster

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guest tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Hey out there, and welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I am Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. Tonight, we got a guest who's created a million-dollar bidness or rather business from the theme of "funk." He's a Black man with a clever sense of business. His trade name is Funkomaster, and his company's name is Funkomaster Products and Services, Inc. (*a few people in the audience laugh at the name*). Don't laugh, 'cause this man from the Hood is makin' big bucks and lots Franklins or C-notes (\$100 bills) from his funk products and services. He's funky rich ladies, and his money is funky green. (*People, mainly women, in the audience laugh.*)

You know, we Black folks gotta get back to supporting our own jus' like we did back during racial segregation times when we had to, 'cause we couldn't go to White-only restaurants, nightclubs, and hotels or motels. So we built our own, 'cause we had to and that created jobs for us. Now, we got desegregation, and we have done nothin' but integrate our dollars into a White or non-Black economy without gettin' non-Black dollars back into our Hoods. Malcolm X, in his "Message to the Grassroots," once said we jus' want to integrate and sit on the toilet next to White folks. Well, I wasn't born when he gave his famous speech, but my mama played it for me when I was a teenager.

We Black folks are now even givin' our dollars to first- and second-generation immigrants who charging us high prices in our own Hoods. Like there're them cut-rate stores and corner stores in the Hood run by internationals instead of being owned and run by local Black residents, like it used to be, Black residents who live there in the Hood. You know what

um sayin’? Can you feel me? *(A few people in the audience applaud while Ijamama pauses.)* I guess it’s not outsiders’ fault except for them unfair high prices. They jus’ tryin’ to make a livin’, and we allowing them to use us in doin’ so. *(There’s a moderate applause from the audience, and a man shouts out, “Speak the truth Ijamama, although we know the truth hurts.”)*

Whatever happened to jobs that we had in the 1950s and 1960s—lots of jobs right in our own Hoods? Now, look what’s happened to many of our urban Hoods—high unemployment, violent crime, and many boarded up buildings while the U.S. Congress is giving billions in foreign aid to other countries but practically nothin’ at all for program development in po’ urban Black communities and po’ rural White communities. *(Ijamama figured she should lighten up on criticizing government and include poor rural White neighborhoods in her criticism.)*

So, what do you say? Don’t we need more Funkomasters to build Black businesses to create jobs for Black folks in the urban cities? *(The audience applauds vigorously in agreement.)* As a schoolgirl, I remember seeing a re-run of an old speech by Elijah Muhammad on TV, and he was tellin’ Black people in America to “stop begging the White man.” He said, “Get yo’ own,” and that’s what Funkomaster did and is doin’. *(Ijamama pauses to transition to the introduction of her guest.)*

Ijamama: OK, so much for my opening sermon; ladies and gents, please welcome my guest for the night or early morning, Funkomaster! *(Funkomaster comes onto the stage dressed in a black party suit with black silk shirt and no tie. He gives Ijamama a hug. A former high school basketball player, Funkomaster is about 6'5" tall.)*

Ijamama: Welcome Funkomaster to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like It Is Midnight Show. Mind if I shorten your name to Funko.

Funkomaster: No problem; I appreciate you having me on your fine show. *(Funkomaster is a high-energy personality. He talks fast, gesticulates, and fidgets as he talks and listens.)*

Ijamama: Now, let’s get right to your thing. You invented modern-day funk products, right? Why don’t you tell ’em—you go on; tell ’em yo’self from

jump street what yo' company is all about.

Funkomaster: *(Funkomaster seems caught off guard at first, but he gathers himself.)* Again, thanks for having me on Ijamama. *(Ijamama shakes her head affirmatively as acknowledgment.)* Well Ija, I have a business that provides a variety of Funko products and services. We have a number of very useful Funko products that are hot and selling. Hear me now, we got the Funkometer, Funkofreshners, Funkjam Dancing Video Instructions, Funkosexorama, Funkosexosticks, Funkomuffins, Funko Malt Liquor, Funko Rat Poisoning, Funkodrawers Cleaner, and on and on, etc., etc. Yes Ija, I've got all of these and more products. We got practically everything your viewers and audience need or want to make their lives better.

Ijamama: Now, what do them products do, like for me and my audience out there? What do they do for my homies in need?

Funkomaster: OK, let me break it down. The Funkometer is for measuring the funk level in your home or office. You don't want special guests coming to a funky house. Another version of this product measures funk density as well as funk tolerance in the workplace. Simply speaking, you got to keep your house and your workplace fresh, super fresh. The Funkometer is simple to use. You just plug it into an electrical outlet, and it maintains constant readings of funk measures or funk levels.

Ijamama: And what if that funkometer measures that your house or office is nose-deep in funky scent?

Funkomaster: Well, that's where our Funkofreshners come in. You simply plug each into an electrical outlet, and refreshing molecules are timed to release into the air creating a floral smell or a fruity smell, based on your choice of scent. We also have a product that combines both of these functions—it measures funk levels and automatically dispenses a freshener as needed.

Ijamama: OK, um feelin' you. Go on now—preach on Funko. Um diggin' that creativity in yo' names and inventions. What about them other products?

Funkomaster: The Funkjam Dancing Video Instructions are for people who want to lose weight through my high, calorie-burning movement dance—lots of arm, leg, and hip movement. The Funkosexorama is a series of adult videos for people who have sexual arousal or erectile problems, and they need instructions or stimulating adult movies to arouse them sexually—movies focused on body scent themes and visual stimulation. The Funkosexostick is a deodorant from Mars and Venus or for males and females, respectively.

Ijamama: Wait up! How dem funkodicks work (*people in the audience laugh out loudly*)?

Funkomaster: No Ija, they are Funkosexosticks, that is, funko sticks, not funkodicks. They are simply rubbed on the body—preferably on the neck, the armpit, or the inner thighs. There is a male body scent that attracts women to men, and there is a female body scent that attracts men to women. These rub-on scents imitate the sexual body scents or pheromones that are naturally built into our bodies. These natural pheromones are put there by God to arouse us sexually to make babies, but we often wash these off or mask them with soap, deodorants, perfume, and cologne. This is especially true in American culture. Therefore, to supplement or replace lost pheromones, the funkosexostick is a plant-based-engineered, body-rub-on lotion that is attractive to the opposite sex. It's used just like rub-on deodorant from a stick dispenser. The pink color-coded stick is for women to rub on themselves, and the black stick is for men who want to attract that special lady. Again, you can rub the scent on your armpit, neck, or in the groin area on the inner thigh close to the genitalia.

Ijamama: Wow! Gotcha—these products seem to be powerful and for real. OK, you done said a mouthful on them funkosexodicks. (*People in the audience laugh again.*)

Funkomaster: Excuse me; I'm sorry Ija, but it's funkosexosticks—sticks as in deodorant sticks.

Ijamama: OK (*laughing*), sorry, but I'm jus' being funny as expected. Now tell us 'bout them funky muffins (*a few people in the audience laugh*).

Funkomaster: Oh, you mean the Funkomuffins—not funky muffins. They certainly are delicious—downright scrumptious. These are bran muffin with a scent and taste of caviar or sardines—excellent for a romantic morning brunch with champagne and your favorite romantic partner.

Ijamama: Dat's enticing; very enticing.

Funkomaster: Yes, you got that right Ijamama.

Ijamama: I done had dat caviar-flavored Funkomuffin myself. It's pretty good. Movin' right along, please tell my audience out there 'bout that Funkodrawers Cleaner. That's really a creative twist on the funk theme.

Funkomaster: Yes, of course, of course. This is a spray-on product. You spray your drawers and the chemical agent neutralizes some bacteria as well as the offensive scents of perspiration, urine, and fecal stain—while retaining the sweet funk of pheromones that drive the sexual urge. You can use it when you have to make a booty call, but you have no way of taking a shower, for example, after a long day's work or after playing basketball or tennis outdoors in the heat and there's no opportunity for a shower before meeting your woman or man. Of course, there is a funkodrawers cleaner for men and another one for women. My customers really love this product. They really do. Now, as a disclaimer, the Funkodrawers Cleaner is not a substitute for washing your drawers and changing them regularly or daily. The cleaner is only for emergency use when you cannot change drawers or take a shower.

Ijamama: Wow, you done said a mouthful on dat there product. So you can even spray them drawers when you on a long overnight trip drivin', right? So what you sayin' is like you can use the product when you can't take a

shower or you've been workin' and sweatin' all day and got to make a hot booty call without droppin' by home to shower and change drawers—is dat right? Oh sorry, if you a woman and got to make a hot, hard-rock call with yo' man or her man, whatever (*the audience laughs out loudly*). Let's take a break here for a commercial.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the show! I'm here talkin' to Funkomaster about his company and his Funko products. Continue Funko where we left off. What other products you want to talk about?

Funkomaster: Thank you Ija, absolutely; and while I'm on a product roll, allow me to mention the Funko Rat Poisoning. You know lots of people in the Hood have that problem with those vermin. I see you're looking curious, so let me tell you how it works. The poison powder is flavored with barbecue sauce and mixed into a spicy cheese with a form of explosive nitroglycerin mix. Once a rat eats on this at night, it gets thirsty and heads out of your house looking for water. Once it hits the sun and the spicy hot sauce begin to interact with the nitroglycerin it explodes. And that's all she wrote. That's the end of that pesky rodent—that's one less rat to feed. (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*)

Ijamama: Do (does) this work with all rats or just the grey ones, and what if the sun is not shining on a cloudy day?

Funkomaster: To answer your first question, we haven't tested the product on White rats, because there is not a market to exterminate them. It seems they are mainly viewed as lab animals for research and as pets. So I probably need a Funko product that will cause white rats to mate and create larger and more frequent litters of babies. As far as your second question goes, there has to be minimal sunlight for the rat to explode, or I'm told that the rat can explode if it heats up its body too much by excessive activity. However, the nitroglycerin stays in the rat's system long enough for sunlight to come out at some point or for the rat's body temperature to increase by its activity or a lack of water. Don't quote me on this

explanation, because I'm not a scientist. I paid chemists at Morgan State University to develop this product based on my idea of a minor chemical explosion for rat extermination.

Ijamama: Killin' grey rats and breeding white rats sound like rat discrimination jus' like human racial discrimination. *(Ijamama starts to say that maybe many Whites oppose abortion so much because they fear extermination as a racial group, but she catches herself realizing that such a public statement might bring her harsh criticism and threaten the survival of her show.)*

Funkomaster: Business is about green and not grey or white Ija *(smiling)*. *(Funkomaster pauses.)* There are so many Funko products. Did I miss something?

Ijamama: Yeah, you did. Tell us somethin' 'bout dat Funko Malt Liquor.

Funkomaster: Oh, that's a testosterone builder for men, and its smell on a man's breath and taste on his tongue can set women off to wanting sex like they never have before. It also arouses men better than them erectile pills—you see what I'm saying? Wives, if you want to get pregnant, buy your husband a six-pack. Single women, if you just want good sex, do the same for your man. *(A few people in the audience laugh and applaud.)*

Ijamama: I feel you, but tell me Funkomaster, whas up with this proper English? It sounds so staged, contrived, and not-for-real. You know, I knew you back when.

Funkomaster: Well, you haven't seen me in a while—like for years. I've gotten my AA Degree from the Crosstown Community College. You know, or do you, that my Funko Services branch of my company now translates ghettoese or rather Ebonics for the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies as well as mega corporations. You know, I still have my Funkomaster Products and Services, Inc., which is the parent corporation for both my Funko Products Division and my Funko Services and Consultation, but all the money goes into the same checking account—

Funkomaster Products and Services, Inc., aka Mr. Funko-me, the sole proprietor of the business.

Ijamama: Congratulations; all that is good, but you jumpin' ahead a little too fast. Jus' let me run the interview. Now please tell us how you got to this point of becomin' so successful as a business man.

Funkomaster: Hard work and more hard work, and by getting my edumancation (*Funkomaster briefly pauses*)—excuse me, I meant education.

Ijamama: See you jus' slipped up and slipped back to dat Ebonics. It's all good, but you gotta think befo' you talk when you use another dialect or so-called American Standard English. They call it code switching. I can code switch if I wanted to, but I will lose my natural me, my natural Ijamama communication. I will sound contrived and deliberate in my deliverance of the spoken word or language. You see, our language represents our culture. But it's all good. Don't get me wrong. I do think that we in the business and entertainment world have to work on developing our Standard English, because that's the language of discourse. So I'm workin' on mine with a speech coach, 'cause I now have this show. But I want to retain much of my Hood worldview, because culturally that's who I am.

Funkomaster: Well, it's helped me to talk to so many people in my business transactions who speak Standard English or close to proper English. I've learned to listen and accept feedback. I also have an English coach or speech coach as you, because I have to do a lot of public speaking and marketing of my products. Oh, tell me more about that code switching from Hood English to Standard English. I may have to use that in my Ebonics language consultation with Homeland Security and other federal agencies.

Ijamama: As I said, it means I can switch from Ebonics and talk proper English if I want to. But I'll have to think about what I'm goin' to say, and it won't be natural, smooth, and spontaneous. So I jus' use the language I learned most of the times, because it's natural and it express or rather it

expresses my thinkin', culture, and communication. You know what um sayin'. You see, I had to correct my grammar after hearing what I said.

Funkomaster: Yes, I do. I guess it's hard to overcome or totally change our habits, even if we want to, or to change the way we think or behave. However, I'm in business, so I have to use the King's English, which is the language of business.

Ijamama: King's English; what about the Queen's English? Dat's sexist talk Funko. (*Women in the audience applaud, and one woman shouts out, "That's right Ijamama; school him."*)

Funkomaster: Well, I guess you got a point. It demonstrates your point of how we say things that we learned without giving thought to it like "King's English," without even thinking of its biased or sexist meaning.

Ijamama: No problem; let's funk on (*laughing*)—where were we, or did you finish answering my last question? See, I said "where were we," but I had to think about it first.

Funkomaster: Well, to reiterate, by trusting in the system and working hard, anyone can be successful in business and make big money. The bottom line is whether you can deliver and not whether your English is always perfect; however, decent English in business improves your credibility and image.

Ijamama: So what are you sayin'—have you sold out the Hood? My staff learned that you got few Hood folks workin' for you. What's up with so many Latinos, East Indians, and Whites workin' for you and so few Blacks or people of your own race?

Funkomaster: To answer you, no, I didn't sell out; I bought in. Our homies from the Hood got to realize that education and money are the way. I hire some Blacks, but business is business; so I have to hire some Latinos also. Many of them are willing to work for less. I also have some East Indians who work from their own country for much less per hour. They do

telemarketing and take some of my product orders by phone. I'm sorry, but the bottom line is to stay alive and make a profit. That means hiring people with the appropriate skills and minimizing my labor cost.

Ijamama: In others words, you mean you're outsourcin' as well as usin' illegal immigrants.

Funkomaster: Give an immigrant a break, and not all immigrants are illegals. Also, I didn't mean to imply that I'm hiring illegals. You never know whose is listening. I don't stereotype anymore, or at least I try not to. Cultural diversity is good for business and good for America. And I sometimes need employees who can speak Spanish—persons who are bilingual, like Mexicans or other Latinos. Again, I look beyond skin color to green color, a common color for all people who need and want money. But look, I got many Blacks working for and with me in management, sales, accounting, product delivery, warehouse maintenance, and more. I also have paid internships for community college students studying business, and I'm conscious to try and recruit Black young people, you know, Black consciousness.

Ijamama: OK, I didn't know you were doin' all that. Let's take a commercial break here. Nikki, take us to break with some funky music. *(Homies from da Hood band breaks out with a song by the funk rock band Wild Cherry, "Play That Funky Music." The song's lyrics include the line, "Play that funky music White boy.")*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the show. I'm here talkin' to Funkomaster, an African-American millionaire-plus who's made his money from funk products and services. Funkomaster, I hate to bring this up, but you used to be a high school playa, a woman's man, right? What happened—are you still a playa wit' all that money to spare and share? Are you married or what?

A Woman in the Audience (*shouts out*): Look, I'm single and available. Just show me the money (*people in the audience laugh*).

Funkomaster: Ijamama, you remember what you want to, don't you. Then, you should also remember that I was an honor roll student, that is, after I got my head on right in the 11th grade. Also, do you remember that I was an outstanding athlete in basketball? Now, I still like the girls as in our high school years, but now I'm so busy I've taken little time to date or enjoy the privilege of an intimate relationship. As you may or may not know, relationships take time. And I've been so driven with my work that I'm not willing to take that time right now, unless a woman is really genuinely into what I'm doing and we can be a partnership in business as well as in life. A marriage is a partnership and not a "fun ship." I don't need a woman who's gonna distract me or pull me away from my mission, no matter how good she might look or feel.

Ijamama: Speakin' of feel, I can feel you. This show is takin' almost all of my waken time. I'm glad my two daughters are grown, and I don't have any young kids to raise or take care of at this time in my life.

Funkomaster: Yes, I understand. To be highly successful at anything, you have to put in the time. For me, right now it's about building something, making money, and being successful. I've just been focusing on my business. Also, it's not just about sex now. I'm really looking for or open to that Ms. Right to come along and be a good partner for me and my business and a good mother to our future children. As you may or may not know, I do have one son from a previous relationship. He finished college in business administration and is now working with my company. But don't get me wrong, I'm not opposed to marriage or an exclusive relationship with a good woman. I definitely don't have the interest or the time to be a playa.

Another Woman in the Audience (*shouts out*): If you're a millionaire, I'm that Ms. Right—let's go for it tonight. I got six college credits, and I can help you. (*People in the audience laugh.*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama responds to the woman.*) Yeah, I bet you can help him—help him to spend dat money honey. (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*)

Funkomaster: Let me comment to the sistah in the audience and say, I have no problem spending money on a nice lady. But we have to focus on building together and not being obsessed with spending on material things, spending constantly for our own pleasure, or seeking status and social acceptance for the sake of it.

Ijamama: Speakin' of a nice lady, what's yo' ideal woman? And don't give me that prissy bull. I got a show here—got to entertain; so give me the physical breakdown on the type woman you like. Give me the anatomical specs.

Funkomaster: I don't know how to answer that. What do you mean when you say "ideal woman"? With all respect for small talk, I'm here to talk about my company and not sex. All Black men don't live for sex, and all or most of us are not dogs.

Ijamama: I'm the host, so I have the right to ask the questions. If you only want to promote yo' company, you should have purchased one of them expensive commercial spots on our TV network, you know what um sayin'? Jus' go with me on this question Funko. Once I do my business; you can talk 'bout yours some mo'. Now, what type honeys out there you dig? You a successful brotha with money and a big company—hiring 165 people. I done tracked your company assets and stats (statistics) on that Internet. So you can get about any woman you want—not all but most. You also tall and handsome.

Funkomaster: (*Funkomaster pauses and reflects for a moment.*) OK, I hear what you're saying. First, the woman has to be truly interested in me as a person and believe in what I'm doing—that's number one, numero uno. Now, to answer your question about looks, I like um tall with some butt, of course. Also, I like a lady who's medium to heavy up top—but not too top heavy in the chest. I prefer them chocolate, because that often means they

got some sexual scent, some sweet funk. The lighter ones seem to be bland—but not all the time. Some of them nillas (vanillas for lightskin) can fool you with that blanco funk that’s just right. You know, I’m into natural scent or smells; do you know what I’m saying?

Ijamama: No, I don’t know. Well, I hear what you sayin’, but I’m a woman, so I can’t completely know from your man’s viewpoint or nose-point. Keep it real. Break it down a little mo’ for the Hood. I see why you like ’em tall, ’cause you ’bout 6 feet 5 or so, and I do remember your basketball days. Sorry, but get back to da ladies—not the basketball.

Funkomaster: Well I like that sweet funk, just enough to set you off. I’m not talking about that ammonia funk of women who don’t bathe for two or three days; you know, those women who might take a bird bath and have a habit of not washing between their legs. I got to have good hygiene, but it doesn’t mean a woman has to wash all scent away. I like a little funk, but I’m not into stink women. (*Women in the audience boo, gasp, or giggle. Most men applaud or laugh.*)

Ijamama: Wait, wait, wait, hold up now! You keepin’ it too real. Don’t use dat word stink when you talk about a woman. You can’t be dissin’ my girls, my lady TV viewers and those in the audience too.

Funkomaster: No, absolutely not; you asked me to keep it real; now you’re telling me what words or language I should use. Yeah, I realize that most women are clean and fine with nails done and hair tight and all that. I say most, but not all. Maybe my choice of one word was not the best, but it was my effort to tell it like it is for me.

Ijamama: Now, if you expectin’ all dat, what you gonna bring to the table besides cash? (*Women in the audience laugh and applaud in agreement with Ijamama.*) Look at yo’ fingernails, you got a little dirt and grease underneath—check them fingernail clippers out tonight. Now, what about them drawers, Mr. Funko? If you expect your lady to be clean, you gotta change yo’ underwear every day, even if you have to wash three or four pairs, if you low on yo’ ownership, but you got money. You a big-time

businessman; so dat's not a problem for you. And don't for a minute think that you can overly rely on sprayin' your drawers with that Funkodrawers Cleaner. It's like those men who expect much must also give much. (*Ijamama looks out at the audience, "Right ladies?" A number of women answer, "That's right Ija," as the audience breaks out in applause and laughter.*)

Funkomaster: Yeah, I'm up with that. I got lots of drawers. I can go for four weeks without washing drawers, and I do wear a fresh pair every day. I keep my fingernail cut, but they're a little longer than usual tonight because I've been so busy. I was probably scratching my head and got a little dirt and grease underneath the nails. Thanks Ija; I need to take my fingernail clipper around with me—you're right. I agree with you; men have to be more conscious of our grooming if we expect our women to be right and tight. I'm not dating or involved, but when I do get somebody, I will be even more conscious of your advice. Again, I thank you for the heads up on grooming for men. Grooming is also important for any person who's in business.

Ijamama: And if you scratch your head, make sure to wash your hair—get that dirt out. OK Funko, what else is not right with you. Now, you got all dem high expectations for my ladies, but what's on your hygiene report card? I don't want to have to take you in the bathroom to check for pee stains in the front and stinky streaks in the seat of your drawers. (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*) You know what um sayin'—like dem streaks dat some men have, 'cause they don't know how to wash they butt after a Number 2 in a bathroom—dry toilet paper is not always enough for cleaning yourself. We women know how to keep it clean and keep it real; know what I'm sayin'? (*Women in the audience laugh and applaud loudly.*) We use two wash cloths or wet baby wipes if on a date and expecting anything possibly to go down. Well, at least most of us know how to take care of ourselves. Funko, time is runnin' out. Is there anything else you need to say 'bout Funkomaster Products and Services, Inc.?

Funkomaster: Thank you Ijamama; your audience and viewers can please go to my Web site, www.funkomaster.com, and see other Funko products,

including Funkohood Cologne, Funko Suede Coats, Funko Barbecue Sauce, and Real-Time Funk Music Players.

Ijamama: Let's take a commercial break, and we'll be right back to wrap up our interview with Mr. Funkomaster, whose legal name is Henry Wilson. *(During the commercial videos, there is a commercial video on one of Funkomaster's products, his Funkosexosticks.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I've been talkin' to Funkomaster, a millionaire business man from the Hood and President and sole owner of Funkomaster Products and Services, Inc. Funkomaster, we're running out of time. I jus' have two minutes for you to say anything else 'bout your fine products and services.

Funkomaster: Well, thanks Ija, I just want to inform viewers and your audience about a few more products that can be purchased; however, due to a lack of time, please go to my Web site. Again the Web address is www.funkomaster.com.

Ijamama: And quick now, name a few of dem products that you haven't mentioned at all.

Funkomaster: OK, funko soft drinks, funko chocolate, and funkochips. Funkochips have extra thickness and are fried in chittlin'-flavored frying oil.

Ijamama: Well, we're completely out of time, and you've heard it all right here on the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Thank you Funkomaster; it's been a pleasure to have you on my show. I'm so happy for all of your successes. Keep up the great work in makin' a positive difference, continue to be a credit to your race, and don't forget to help your Hood even more. It's all about sacrificing for the good of needy others. And, look, I pray you find yo'self a good lady partner who's as dedicated and hard-working as you.

Funkomaster: Thank you Ijamama for having me on your show. Likewise, I am happy for your success with the show and everything. I definitely will give more thought to what else I can do to help our Baltimore Hood.

Ijamama: Yes, please do help Baltimore Funko. And Black folks out there like celebs, preachers, and rich business people—all of us gotta do what we can to help Baltimore and other urban Hoods. We need to stop depending on government and White folks. OK, we've run out of time for real. Viewers and audience give it up one mo' time for Funkomaster (*the audience applauds loudly*). Go to his Web site at Funkomaster.com to review his products and services and use them. Remember to "Tell it like it is." And, "If you do right, you can't go wrong." Lastly, "If you're good to yourself and others, God will be good to you."

Good night everybody—I wish you peace, love, and blessings.

Chapter 7

Ijamama Interviews Little Red Rapper from da Hood

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guest tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. For the next hour, I am yo' mama. Please welcome and acknowledge my band, Homies from da Hood. Befo' we start, let me tell you 'bout the funniest thing I heard today on da radio drivin' over here. A man was drivin' in his car and was diggin' up his nose and pulled out a biggy-size booga (booger). It was stuck on his finger, so he tried to flick it out his car window. While looking at that booga on his finger, he ran smack into a garbage truck—head on, knocked him clean off the street and into a double flip of his car. Lucky sucka, he had his seatbelt on and was in a "big-ole" SUV. Well, when the news people got a hold of the story, they headlined the story as, "Booga Man Survives a Snotty Run In." (*People in the audience laugh.*) Hey, I bet and hope he'll keep his hands on the wheel the next time. That's a lesson to all of us. Please pay attention to drivin' and don't be distracted by something that can wait, like a booga in your nose or a text message in your smartphone. And listen up; a smartphone can't be smart if the user is dumb.

I'm gonna take a brief, one-minute commercial break now, and we'll be right back with our guest, Little Red Rapper from da Hood. (*As the producers go to a brief commercial break, Ijamama walks over to her desk as her band, Homies from da Hood, plays Boogie-Man Blues.*)

(*Commercial Break*)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Ladies and gents, we have a positive rapper in the house tonight, Little Red Rapper from da Hood. Now, as you might know, some of this hip-hop or rap goin' on now is highly negative. In like the late 1980s and the 1990s or whenever, there was stuff like, "You know what I want; I know what you want. So let's get busy," somethin' like dat. Now, some of these rappers are tellin' women in their rap songs, to come into their apartment and jus' "take off all your clothes," like time you come through the front door. What's up wit' this madness and disrespect for women (*applause from the audience*). In other words, jus' drop your drawers where you is (are) once you enter my pad (home), once you crash my crib. They don't even want to go upstairs or down the hall to the bedroom now. Whatever happened to romance, a good restaurant, good wine, good music, candlelight, flowers, and romantic kissin'? I guess dat's why some of them movie stars ain't wearing drawers no mo' (*people in the audience laugh*). Things happening so fast nowadays, it makes yo' head swim. Um tellin' you; it jus' ain't good. (*People in the audience applaud in agreement.*)

A Woman in the Audience: Yeah, that's so right Ija—tell it like it is. Women want and deserve appreciation and respect, and they should demand it.

Ijamama: Thank you sistah—now, let me tell you 'bout this Little Red Rapper from da Hood. She's still ain't gave it up; I don't think so. She's holding on to her stuff and the Lord. One disc jockey on radio said, "She's so cute and her stuff is so pure, that if she lay butt-ass naked on the beach, the sun would smile down on her." This good girl uses the Hood language but her rap message is positive; you know what um sayin'?

Look, I'm proud to have a young lady, barely 22, who done gone from nothin' in her pocketbook to everything with 'bout four Top-10 rap-song hits, and she got demands from all over, like movie houses, record companies, and promoters for concerts. So put your hands together and help me welcome Little Red Rapper from da Hood. (*Little Red Rapper from da Hood briskly skips onto the stage, pauses, waves to the applauding audience, and then jogs over to Ijamama's desk where Ijamama greets her*

with a big hug. She's wearing a red hip-hop-style, sleeveless jumpsuit with gathered pants legs that stop about four inches above her ankles. She's also wearing fashionable, high-top, all-red dance shoes and a pink, women's baseball cap with the words "Little Red" embroidered on the front of the cap in red.)

Ijamama: Have a seat baby. I like that hip-hop outfit, and you got yo' name, "Little Red," on that fem pink cap.

Red Rapper from da Hood: Thank you Mama Ija; I pick out my own clothes but also listen to suggestions from my peeps. I mainly do hip-hop fashion and buy from African-American-owned hip-hop clothing lines, but not all the times. The main thing is I have to like what I wear and feel comfortable in it. And by the way, this red outfit reflects my nickname, Little Red. It ain't representing any type of gang color. So, listen up out dare; don't try to tag me by the color of my clothes.

Ijamama: Speakin' of your nickname, didn't they once call you "Lil Red" back in the Hood, seems like most of the times.

Red Rapper from da Hood: Yeah, you right Mama Ija—you remember. Ebonically, most family and friends back in the day called me Lil Red, but other folks called me Little Red. I'm the one who picked "Little Red" as in "Little Red Rapper from da Hood" for my stage name. I didn't want to be another Lil, you know, like Lil Wayne, Lil' Kim, and Lil' Bow Wow. Well, Lil' Bow Wow grew up and is now jus' known as Bow Wow. He's also known by the name Shad Moss. Jus' too many Lils out there, and I didn't want to be another crab in the barrel.

Ijamama: So could I cut yo' long stage name short for tonight and just call you Little Red?

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Yes Ma'am Mama Ija, go ahead; that's just fine with me. That's still my name to people who knew me when. *(Little Red has a cute smile and a reddish-brown, Native-American skin*

tone, which earned her the nickname, “Lil Red” or “Little Red.” About 5'1” in height, she also has a sweet, innocent girlish voice.)

Ijamama: Thanks, but you don't have to be formal. You a grown woman now, but I appreciate the respect. Jus' call me Ija or Ijamama, 'cause I is your mama tonight. And I feel like I was one of yo' church mamas when you were growin' up in Baltimore.

Red Rapper from da Hood: OK, I'll try, but I don't think I can do it; you know what I mean? It's like I've known you all my life in the church and the Hood as Mama Ija or Ms. Ijamama. But look, thanks for having me on your hot show Mama Ija—I appreciate it. And yeah, you're definitely one of my very few church and Hood mamas in addition to my real mama.

Ijamama: I heard you up in New York now.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Well, in White Plains, New York—about 40 minutes from the big city. I had to be close to the big studios to record, but I'm back and forth 'cause my parents are still here in Baltimore and my church is here, as you know.

Ijamama: Now, let's get to the nitty-gritty. Let me hold up your hit CD. Ladies and gents, this is Little Red's first CD, and, as I mentioned, it's got four of the Top-10 hip-hop or rap songs already. Zoom in with the TV camera to show the cover of this hot CD. Check these titles out, “Sleeping Booty,” “Beauty and the Bitch,” “Big Bad Wolf Gonna Take You Down,” “Cinderella Done Stole Yo' Prince,” “Little Red Rapper from da Hood,” “There Was an Old Lady Pimping Hookers Out a Shoe,” “Jack and Jill Done Did It and Fell Down Dat Hill Butt-Ass Naked,” “Jack and the Lima Beanstalk,” and “Humpty Dumpty Can't Hump No Mo'.” Did I name 'em all?

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Yeah, you read most all of the big ones Mama Ija. Mama Ija; sorry, but you missed one.

Ijamama: (*Ijamama looks at the CD jacket.*) Oh girl, you right—I did; that last one is “Snow Black.” These titles can sell the album alone, but you also got a great beat and sound with these rap or hip-hop songs. The deal is they also great for dancin’, I hear. And you got positive messages in your lyrics ... (*Little Red interrupts.*)

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Oh Mama Ija, there’s one more that’s not on the CD. It’s a single. I jus’ dropped it as a positive message to Black boys and young men killin’ each other, like in Chicago, and wearing they pants halfway down they butts tryin’ to be cool. My manager and I felt we had to come out ASAP with a rap to address this serious issue of self-destruction.

Ijamama: And what’s that title?

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: It’s “Pull Yo’ Pants up Boy; Be a Man.” And that’s the rap song I’ll perform after your commercial break. It’s on iTunes now as a single, but it will be the lead rap song on my next CD.

Ijamama: OK, great Little Red—now, you a nice girl who’s keepin’ it real with positive rap. Ladies and gents, her CD titles may sound negative, but her messages take a negative and turn it into a positive message.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: That’s what they say (*smiling*). I jus’ can’t believe it—all the success and attention and money; got to pinch myself each mornin’ when I wake up. I’m sho blessed. God has been good to me Mama Ija.

Ijamama: One thing I like ’bout your raps, your hip-hop music, is that it’s not gangsta rap; it’s not dissing nobody, and it ain’t talkin’ about sex and liquor, luxury cars, expensive clothes, and money all the time. It’s Hood, but it’s funny and positive and not like all that negative rap stuff. Of course, you got to have a little sex these days in movies and records if you want to sell.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Yeah, it's what it is. I try to make it real and halfway decent at the same time.

Ijamama: Now, look, you busy with your bidness and I know you young, but you got any time for da boys, you know, da young men?

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Well, I have to answer that this way. I might as well break the news here on your show Mama Ija, since I love and respect you so much.

Ijamama: What dat baby? Listen up folks; you 'bout to hear a first right up in here! Give it up baby. Listen up audience and viewers, the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show got another first in entertainment news.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Well, this is it. *(Little Red pauses to get everyone's attention and to create suspense.)* I'm engaged! *(People in the audience applaud loudly, and Ijamama joins in with the applause.)*

Ijamama *(smiling):* Say whaaaaat! Who, who, who dat? Tell it all now baby—give it up. *(The audience continues to applaud out loudly. Some comments from the audience include, "Congrats" and "You go girl.")*

Little Red Rapper from da Hood *(smiling and laughing):* My manager asked me to marry him, and I recently said yes after I prayed on it and talked to my parents.

Ijamama: How that came 'bout? I see how it's convenient, 'cause y'all together all the time—workin' together, travelin' together, and stuff.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Listen up to this 411; this is what happened. I was jus' chillin', afraid of the dating scene—like nothing was going down wit' me, just working hard at my art. All this AIDS and the down-low talk had scared me stiff—don't know what you gonna come up against out there. I know a lot of guys look clean and neat, but I couldn't trust anybody. Like I was still a virgin, you know? I was like feelin' if somebody was goin' down with me, they got to wash their hands, clip their

fingernails, and take an AIDS test—plus all the other tests, the whole nine yards. And also, he had to be a church man or man of God. (*Ijamama and people in the audience applaud loudly as approval of what Little Red said.*)

Ijamama: You crazy girl, but um feelin' you—all day long; better safe than sorry. So what you sayin' is dat you had a nice guy workin' wit' you and didn't pay attention to da signs. Just sittin' in the hotel room late at night talkin' bidniss, writing songs, and not thinkin' sex or anything like dat—then you start diggin' each otha in a different way—right? Look out now, um settin' this romantic story up for the “Little Red Rapper.” Now complete the story baby, befo' I go to a break. Or rather, let me go to a commercial break first, so people will stay tuned in and not go to the toilet or go to sleep on me. We'll be right back with my girl, Little Red Rapper from da Hood and her “Breaking News.” (*The show's band breaks out with a few musical bars of Mendelssohn's “Wedding March,” the traditional march for weddings and the entrance of the bride.*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: (*After the break, Ijamama takes off where the interview ended.*) Welcome back to the show. And welcome back to breaking entertainment news with Little Red Rapper from da Hood. So now continue Little Red 'bout how the two of you—you and yo' young handsome manager saw that love light in the late wee hours of the dark night and thus fell in love for marriage and life. Like um gettin' excited and poetic with this story—if not creatin' the plot or scenario on my own.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Yeah, we were so busy workin', I didn't even notice I was already with a good man in spirit but not with body. You know what um sayin'?

A Woman from Audience: You right about that. Give it up girl if the man is good and right for you. Jus' do it, if you ain't already. (*People in the audience break out in laughter.*)

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: The brotha would go to church and get down on his knees for the right reason and pray for the success of my songs and for the welfare of my family and me. I went to church with him in his hometown of Mt. Vernon, New York and saw him do it. Also, he didn't believe in workin' on Sunday mornings and early Sunday afternoons either. It was our time for church. He was still living with his parents in Mt. Vernon, and I was commuting between my home in Baltimore and New York City to produce records and do my business, like shooting TV commercials and stuff. So the good brotha got an apartment in White Plains, New York so when I'm up there working on my music, I will have a place to stay overnight without commuting back and forth to my parents in Baltimore. As you may know, both Mt. Vernon and White Plains are near New York City.

Ijamama: I am so, so happy for you, 'cause, as you know, I saw you grow up in the church and doin' the right thing in school. Tell us a little bit 'bout what yo' plans are for the wedding.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Well, we don't want to spend a whole lot of money on a wedding and a reception. We believe in saving our money for a house and to help other folks. You and my mama taught me that. Look, I've gotten very popular, more than I had realized, and the money is coming into my bank account like I never imagined. But listen up; I don't want to be foolish and just blow my money and play that Hollywood role and image. We both think the same, that is, my fiancé Brandon and me. We both write rap songs, and we want to eventually get our own record company, our own rap label. Well, getting back to answering your question, we would like to get married in a church, but the news attention and distractions may be too much. So we just may have to do a secret wedding with family and real friends, not the false friends who follow money and celebrity, you know what um sayin'? Mama Ija (*smiling*), you know we gonna invite you.

Ijamama: (*Ijamama smiles.*) Thanks baby, I can't wait to see yo' happy day, yo' wedding day. And I'll be honored to be there to share yo' and Brandon's joy. We gotta take another commercial break now, but when we return, Little Red Rapper from da Hood will perform one of her top rap

songs, “Snow Black,” a positive rap about a little Black princess from the Hood who finds her Black prince. Wow Little Red, that sounds like your own personal story.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: It is Mama Ija. It’s our personal story of love, me and Brandon. Brandon collaborated with me in writing this rap song. However, I’ve changed the song that I’m gonna perform. Because of all the violence in Chicago and other urban Hoods, Brandon suggested that I do my new message single that I just dropped, “Pull Yo’ Pants Up Boy; Be a Man.”

Ijamama: OK, that’s great Little Red; you’ve always cared about other people in need. Nikki, please have the band take us to another commercial break with a love song dedicated to Little Red and Brandon’s engagement. *(The Homies from da Hood band plays a song that Whitney Houston made famous, “I Will Always Love You,” as a female vocalist beautifully sings the lyrics.)*

(Commercial Break)

After the commercial, Little Red Rapper from da Hood performs her newly “dropped” rap song, “Pull Yo’ Pants Up Boy; Be a Man.” The Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show band, Homies from da Hood, plays the backup music and rhythm for her rap, while Little Red Rapper’s backup, female group raps, sings, and dances with her. Little Red alerted the band that she had changed songs and gave them the music. The lyrics for the rap song follow.

Um Little Red Rapper from da Hood;
Rappin’ it right like I know that I could.
Um Little Red Rapper from da Hood
Rappin’ it right like I damn sho should.

So listen up boy, if um callin’ yo’ name;
Listen up boy, listen up;
I said listen up boy, listen up;
I said listen up boy, if um callin’ yo’ name;

Listen up boy if you wanna be a man;
I said listen up boy if you wanna be a man:
Pull yo' pants up boy; pull yo' pants up;
Pull yo' pants up boy; pull yo' pants up;
Listen up boy, pull yo' pants up.

If you knocked your baby mama up, and now
you acting like a pup, listen up;
If you knocked your baby mama up, and now
you livin' on your luck, listen up.

Get a job if you can, get a job;
Get a job if you can, get a job—
Any job you can get, take that job,
Take that job!
Get a job if you can, get a job.

Don't be picky; help yo' baby; get a job;
Don't be picky; help yo' baby; take a job;
Get a real job and not a crime job;
Get a real job brotha and not a crime job;
Get a real job to live and not a crime job to die.

Pull yo' pants up boy; pull yo' pants up;
Get a job if you can, get a job;
Put yo' gun down boy; put yo' gun down.

Listen up boy, listen up;
Pull yo' pants up; put yo' gun down;
Get a job; be a man; get a job, go to school—
Wake-e-dy up boy, man up;
Wake-e-dy up man, and man up;
Wake-e-dy up and be a man.

Be a man not a boy; be a man;
Be a man not a boy; be a man;
I said be a man not a boy; be a man;
Listen up, please be a man—
Thank you my brotha; I love ya.

After the rap performance, the audience and Ijamama give Little Red Rapper from da Hood a thunderous applause followed by Ijamama's return to the interview with her young guest.

Ijamama: That's a great rap Little Red—beautiful lyrics and a great rhythmic beat and message. I can't believe it. We're runnin' out of time—time has escaped us. I want to thank our guest, Little Red Rapper from da Hood. Please get online to iTunes or go to a local store to buy her latest album and that single she jus' did. Again, her album is among the top 10 Hip Hop or rap albums right now. It's simply titled, "Little Red Rapper." For all the girls and young women who might be up late and watchin', follow Little Red's example. Be around people who gonna respect you and help you, and do all you can to develop God's light of talent from within you. Hear me; um tellin' it like it is if you wanna better yourself.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: That is so right. Thank you Mama Ija; you always believed in me. May God bless you and guide you in your very important TV show and good work.

Ijamama: You're welcome Little Red, and thank you for those nice and encouraging words. It's a pleasure for me to have you on my show. I'm so happy 'bout your successes. Keep it up. And oh, I look forward to yo' wedding. *(Ijamama turns to the main camera and people in her theater audience.)*

Don't forget to "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all." And "If you do right, you can't go wrong." And remember, "If you're good to yourself and good to others, God will be good to you."

Good night everybody.

Chapter 8

Ijamama Interviews ProfDaddy

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guest tell it like it is. *(Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is.")*

Ijamama: *(Ijamama walks out to center stage.)* Welcome everybody to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. Tonight or rather this early morning, we'll talk about older or old men who can't keep they hands off young women, if not teen girls. Now, listen up, I've seen a few deacons in certain churches in they 60s and even 70s who try to hit on young female choir members and other church members. Some of 'em look like they got black shoe polish on they head, tryin' to color that hair to look younger *(laughs from the audience)*. But they can't hide the wrinkled skin, bad posture, and slowness in movin' around. They can't hide the effects of Father Time. *(A few people in the audience laugh or applaud.)* They simply tryin' to look younger so they can pull them young church chicks, you know what um sayin'? *(A few people in the audience applaud as agreement.)*

Just last week, I saw a preacher with all white hair at a Bible study, not my preacher. He was like a guest preacher. He asked a young sweet college honey if he could take her to dinner afterwards. She told him, "Frankly, I don't even know you, and you're way too old for me. I can be your granddaughter." He was walkin' on a cane but still bragging about how fit he was. He told her, "There might be snow on the mountaintop, but there's still fire in the valley." *(People in the audience laugh and Ijamama giggles.)* When he was praying at the end of our Bible study, I opened my eyes for jus' a few seconds and caught him with one eye open looking at that same young woman's butt. I couldn't believe what I was seein'.

Look, I ain't talkin' against older preachers and much younger women or older men in general and much younger women, 'cause some old men in the Bible had young wives. I'm talkin' about much older men who target young women or minor girls only for sexual privileges, if not sexual healin'. Do you see where um comin' from? (*People in the audience applaud.*)

Um sorry to say, but some old men out there havin' heart attacks 'cause they usin' Viagra, Cialis, or stuff like that and they then get carried away with them young healthy fine girls or young women. These old men jus' not in physical shape to handle them young, hot honeys. And I got to admit that some young females are attracted to older men 'cause older men might be successful and have a bit of money. I'm talkin' from experience, 'cause I dated older men who could help me with my daughters when I was younger. But I just didn't mess with any older man who hit on me. It had to be a man I could respect and be with in a steady relationship—a man who I could learn from and who cared about me and my two daughters and not a man who jus' wanted sexual healin' (*Ijamama and people from the audience laugh*). And mind me, when I say older, I was like in my 20s and the older men were in they late 30s or early 40s, and not anybody in they 60s or older walkin' on a cane or strugglin' with a two-handed walker (*Ijamama laughs and a few people in the audience laugh with her*).

Well, what do you think about this issue of older men with a pattern of datin' much younger women? Listen up, I said a pattern of doin' this. Anyway, in a couple of minutes after our commercial break, we'll meet a professor who only dates much younger women—like ages 18 to 29, 'cause that's his preference—he's 51 years old. (*A few people in the audience gasp as Ijamama goes to commercial break while her band, Homies from da Hood, plays "Let's Get It On" by Marvin Gaye.*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Ladies and gents, homies in the Hood, folks in prison—some who are innocent—people in forgotten rural towns, college students, working America, all young women watchin', and any peeps I missed, please help me to welcome ProfDaddy, Dr. Charles Smith. He is the author of *ProfDaddy and the Young Honeys*. (*ProfDaddy is a brown-skin African-*

American who's about 5'10" in height and normal weight. He comes onto the stage wearing a royal blue suit with a white shirt but no necktie. Standing, Ijamama greets him, shakes his hand, and offers him a seat to the right of her host desk.)

Ijamama: Welcome to the show Professor.

ProfDaddy: Thank you, it's my pleasure.

Ijamama: Now, you say in yo' book, *ProfDaddy and the Young Honeys*, that you only date young women 18 to 29, that you got a doctor's degree and you a professor, and that you got tired of them Booji, educated women. Tell me, what you mean by Booji women?

ProfDaddy: Booji is slang for Bourgeois women or those middle-class women who are picky, like everything has to be socially correct and proper. I dated one African-American Bourgeois woman who has a doctor's degree or rather Ph.D. in medieval literature. She always said annoying things before we had sex, such as "Don't mess up my hair; I just got it done," or "Don't hurt honey; you can get rough sometimes. So just be gentle now." Her constant requests and complaints practically drove me crazy and to the point where I didn't want to have sex with her at all anymore. She was in her 40s and the last woman I dated who was that close in age to me.

Ijamama: How come she was so scared and still she was a mad evil woman. *(People in the audience laugh.)*

ProfDaddy: No, medieval means she was an expert on literature of the middle ages. Like this was a time in history before Christopher Columbus sailed to the Americas. Well, the point is that young women, who are not yet spoiled, tend not to be so picky and demanding. And they are much more appreciative of the little things that you do for and with them.

Ijamama: OK, gotcha. And I know the word "medieval." I jus' couldn't resist the opportunity to make a joke from that word. So ProfDaddy or rather Dr. Smith, you started seein' these young girls, well young women,

18 and older, 'cause you say that they for real with no false front, and they appreciate all that you do for 'em. But, what um sayin' is that don't mean you have to cut 'em short and buy 'em cheap stuff.

ProfDaddy: Who can tell a real diamond from a good Zirconia? Sorry, I mean a good imitation diamond. And what's the difference between a real fur and one that looks real. Plus, most of these young ladies don't even want those things. They'd rather have a smartphone for their music and phoning, a laptop computer, an iPad, or a good pair of jeans or jogging shoes.

Ijamama: But are you cuttin' them girls or young women short compared to how you would treat a highfalutin, educated, Boogi woman? I'm jus' lookin' out for my girls, my strugglin' young ladies in the Hood and those in college.

ProfDaddy: Absolutely not, as long as they're happy; that's what's important. All my women are appreciative and grateful, that is, those few I've dated. (*Ijamama and people in the audience laugh at the word "few."*) And let me be clear that I have only one relationship at a time. I'm not a womanizer. What I like about young women who've grown up poor is that they haven't gotten used to the spoils of Western civilization. A nice dress from Macy, on sale during the Christmas holidays, means much more to a poor, young, sweet thing than a high-earning, educated woman who already has so much that one more dress or pantsuit won't even excite her. The same with a nice restaurant—some of these multiple college-degreed types go to nice restaurants all the time at conferences, on vacations, and during lunch or after work. They sometimes get so spoiled that they even get confused about what makes them happy. For young women without, happiness is having something they want but have never had or scarcely get.

Ijamama: And for you, yo' excitement is havin' sex with a fresh 18-year-old teen or young woman that means more to you than sex with a woman 'round your age, right? (*A woman in the audience shouts out, "That's right. Tell him like it is Ija!"*) So let me get this straight for my viewers; as long as you gettin' pleasure from dem young girls or young honeys, you will buy

them gifts. And I might as well call 'em girls 'cause you stated in a *Diss Magazine* interview that you don't date anything over 29, and according to the Internet—thank God for the Internet—you're 51. Ain't that right? That's a big age gap.

ProfDaddy: I'm at a point in my life now where I don't discuss age anymore. It's just a figment of one's imagination, and it creates a psychological barrier for a financially secure and career-successful man getting together with a young woman in need of mentoring and financial assistance.

Ijamama: You mean confirmin' yo' age to a honey can be a barrier to gettin' into her panties (*laughter from the audience*)—sorry, I jus' tell it like it is. You pay; they play—that's friendship with benefits, not love, right?

A Woman in the Audience: Yeah, tell him Ija—talk to him baby.

Ijamama: Thank you sistah (*to the woman in the audience*). So let's get this straight in street or Ebonics talk. You usin' these young girls for sex, and they makin' a fool out of you. Or to look at it another way, you're gettin' they honey, and they gettin' yo' money. (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*) Again, I'm jus' tellin' it like it is. That's the motto of my show. I'm callin' a spade a spade.

ProfDaddy: To the contrary; it's all mutual or symbiotic. I'd rather look at it this way; I'm helping a young lady, and she's helping me. If you want straight talk, younger women are motivated to be with me because they see a man who can help them with their college studies, mentor them in their professional career, or assist them with their finances. And, even more, if you're saying I'm with a younger woman for pleasure, I would rather be a happy fool than a bored wise man.

Ijamama: Now that's deep; that right there sounds prophetic, like a mouthful. But you really talkin' about takin' care of a young girl; you might as well call them what they look like when they with you. So, what the difference between you and a babysitter, except you're havin' sex with the

baby—dig it? (*Ijamama's audience breaks out in loud laughter, and some in the audience applaud the joke.*)

ProfDaddy: No, no, the difference is, obviously, that these are grown women and not girls or babies. They have begun their monthly menstrual cycle, are of legal age, and they're free to have sex with any adult or legal aged person whom they wish, regardless of that person's age or gender. They are free to live the good life whenever and wherever they wish. I treat my girls, I mean young ladies, right.

Ijamama: You said it right the first time, when you said girls. Because, wit' your experience, you are fattening them up like frogs for a droolin' snake, and, befo' they know it, you on them like white on rice or rather brown, wild rice on sweet butt-ass-naked chocolate. (*People in the audience laugh out loudly again.*)

ProfDaddy: Now, you're coming after me Ms. Ijamama, although I agreed to come on here and tell it like I know it is and to be an advocate for older men who want to date young women and vice versa. Many older men, including me, are even willing to help a young woman through college or secretarial school or to teach her something about life and travel, or rather to mentor a young woman's development. This is much more than most young men their age can do for them or are willing to do for them. Am I right or not?

A Young Woman in the Audience (*shouts out*): You're right Prof. I shodn't want a poor young man who can't do anything but get it up. (*People in the audience laugh.*)

Ijamama: Sorry, but you know I got to raise these issues. I jus' have to ask questions that many viewers have on their minds. I also know you came on to talk about yo' book, so let's show that front cover of the book now. (*Ijamama holds up the book to the TV camera, and the image is also projected onto a screen for the live audience.*) Again, the title is *ProfDaddy and the Young Honeys*, so check it out online or visit your local book store.

ProfDaddy: Thank you for mentioning my book.

Ijamama: In your book, you said you've dated at least two 18-year-old teens. You sure they weren't jus' big for they age and maybe 15 or 16 or even 14—how do you know they were 18?

ProfDaddy: I'm sure. I had them to show me their driver's license or something that documents that they were 18 or older, that is, before I even got physically involved or even took them out anywhere. One girl who claimed she was 18 years old didn't have a driver's license, so I asked her to show me her birth certificate. She couldn't come up with one, so I didn't get involved with her. It's not worth the risk during this day and time. She was fine and good-looking too. I could lose my job and even end up in prison for sex with a minor, as you know.

Ijamama: Speakin' of the risk of breakin' the law with the underaged, do you drink with dem underaged honey rolls? You know what I mean—drink alcoholic beverages. Or do you jus' take 'em to Disney World, McDonald's, and Toys“R”Us—places like that? *(People in the audience laugh.)* My staff researched you and said one of your neighbors saw you comin' out of a Toys“R”Us store with a honey who had an Nintendo game and a mountain bike. I bet people who don't know you jus' sayin', “Isn't that nice; a father spending time wit' his daughter and buying her a birthday gif' or somethin'.” *(People in the audience laugh again.)*

ProfDaddy: Ijamama, I know you're being a little humorous for your show and its ratings, but, really, that's the way some people think. They look at my woman and me and assume the nature of our relationship. For all they know, we really could be father and daughter. And yes, I have taken some 18 and 19 year-old-dates to McDonald's. But I've also dated older women of legal age, like 21 to 29, than not. Even more, some of them enjoy going to a nice relaxing restaurant, and I take them. Certainly, I'll take them to a fine restaurant if that's what they want. But some, especially the 18 to 20, like McDonald's, Wendy's, or a good pizza. Also, most of these young women are in college or some kind of training to improve their lives. I don't mess around with young women who aren't trying to better themselves,

except for one young woman who was supposed to apply to college but never did.

Ijamama: But tell the truth ProfDaddy, and I'm usin' your pen name that's used as author of your book instead of usin' your legal name, because maybe you don't want people checkin' up on you or maybe you jus' want to maintain a bit of privacy as a professor. Also, I guess that mentionin' yo' pen name is good for your book sales. So tell me the truth; it's not jus' me askin' questions and jokin' on you about being with young women, right? Tell me some of your nasty experiences involvin' other people's reactions when they see you in public with a very young woman—know what um sayin'?

ProfDaddy: Yes, we do get strong reactions from some people. One incident comes to mind immediately. I was renting a car once with a college coed. We went to Miami for a week during her college's spring break. A middle-aged Black woman at the airport rental car counter had an attitude while waiting on us. She had a negative or rather nasty attitude from the start.

Ijamama: Well, what happened? Break it down; give it up.

ProfDaddy: When I finished the paperwork, she threw the keys on the counter, or rather slammed them down, and said, "That's it; unless you need something else." I just looked at her in shock, and when I turned to walk away, she continued her nasty tirade, "Do you need a map to children's hospital, a baby chair for the car, or would you rather have a pacifier for that young thing holdin' big daddy's hand?" *(The audience laughs, and so does Ijamama. ProfDaddy continues.)*

ProfDaddy: Well, I try to ignore these types of incidents, because they come with the territory.

Ijamama: Well, that's what you askin' for with a young honey bun on your arm. But tell me Professor, is it true that you've dated teenagers? I bet you use baby wipes with them. *(Ijamama laughs, and so does the audience.)*

ProfDaddy: Now, Ms. Ijamama, I know you are getting ridiculously funny now, and you are putting a big spin on the truth. Technically, you can say I have dated teenagers, because 18- and 19-year-olds can be considered as teenagers. But legally these are also full-grown women and not children or minors. Again, they are capable of having sex with whomever they wish. And let me qualify one thing; just because I date a young honey, it does not always lead to sexual consummation or any type of physical intimacy.

Ijamama: Look you never answered my question. Do you drink alcohol with these babies who ain't of legal age, like them teenagers who're not yet 21? You must be hidin' the truth, 'cause you ignored that question.

ProfDaddy: Absolutely not—I never give an underage woman alcohol, only if she is 21 years of age or of legal age to drink alcohol and only if she wishes to imbibe.

Ijamama: What you talkin' 'bout? You even make 'em buy they own liquor?

ProfDaddy: No, certainly not; the word imbibe simply means to drink alcohol, as I used the term—sorry about using such academic words.

Ijamama: I know that word; jus' being funny. We know many of them young honeys are hot, and they will try new things and slip a drink if you don't watch 'em—right? You know, like they might sneak a drink once you turn your back or while you're napping or sleeping at night. You mentioned somethin' like this in your book. Please tell us about that incident.

ProfDaddy: You can't be more correct, Ms. Ijamama. I must admit that I caught one young 19-year-old college coed late at night standing in front of my family-room bar with a babydoll nighty on, pouring herself a drink of vodka right into her glass of orange juice. I wondered why she kept asking for orange juice or rather going to the fridge to get juice. Then I realized she was slipping vodka into that orange juice when I was in the shower or

working on my computer. Anyway, on that night when I caught her, she thought I was asleep.

Ijamama: Well, I guess she picked vodka 'cause you can't smell it much on your breath, that is, the good vodka. So look, what in the hell did you do? Did you turn her ass over to the police, or did you turn her ass-up over your lap and give her a good spanking? (*Ijamama laughs and the audience also laughs.*) Or did you turn yourself in, you know, to the police? Did you kick her to the curb and out of your life? Or was that honey roll too sweet or too hot to let go?

ProfDaddy: She asked me to punish her but not throw her out. Simply, she didn't want to give up the good life with her sugar daddy. She hugged, rubbed, and wrapped around me like a snake begging me not to dump her or kick her to the curb. Again, she was not in love with me but in love with the things I could do for her. She said in a sweet seductive voice, you my big honey bear, my sugar daddy, so just spank me, and I'll be good to you forever—or as long as you want me. I had heard those “forever” lies before.

A Man from the Audience: I would've spanked her “phat” ass and more. (*The audience and Ijamama break out in loud laughter.*)

Ijamama: So, did you spank your play daughter? Did you spank dat butt? Was that for her pain, her pleasure, or both yo' and her pleasure?

ProfDaddy: You're so street smart Ms. Ijamama.

Ijamama: Yeah, I've been told that. That's why I'm doing this show. (*Ijamama and a few people in the audience laugh.*)

ProfDaddy: Well, continuing, I was hoodwinked, and before I realized what was happening, I simply had put her across my lap in that thin nighty, as she recommended, and I was giving her a spanking on her fine, bare butt. I forgot that she got aroused from spanking or slaps on her buttock; so before I knew it, she had me on the sofa, in the family room, seducing me into sex again. I was planning to call a taxi and throw her out for good, but

she had a way or history of manipulating and making up through sex. She could even make herself cry tears on demand so you would feel sorry for her. It was hard to get rid of her, but I eventually concluded that she didn't want to make anything of herself, so I did let her go, although it took a while. All she wanted to do was to have fun and pleasure and spend my money on things like clothes, jewelry, perfume, and the latest electronic devices. I even offered to pay for her to attend the community college for nurse training, because she claimed she wanted to be a nurse, but she never enrolled. She kept procrastinating and making excuses.

Ijamama: Are you messin' with them young heifers 'cause you think young is shapely and older is not? Now that ain't necessarily true. (*Ijamama, wearing a snugly fitted dress, stands up and pirouettes.*) Look at my fine 40-plus butt. (*People in the audience laugh and applaud.*)

ProfDaddy: Well, Ms. Ijamama, you're pretty decent for your age, that is, what I assume to be your age.

A Young Man in the Audience (*shouts out*): Damn right she's fine. I'll hit that any time of day or night.

Ijamama: Thank you young man. You got good taste in a woman and a good pair of eyes. (*Ijamama continues her interview with ProfDaddy.*)

Ijamama: You said that the drinkin'-spankin' young woman didn't wanna go to college or make anything of herself. But have you helped any of them young women to better themselves educationally, you know, college or trade school like that? You alluded to this but gave us no examples, and how do you like that college word, "alluded"?

ProfDaddy: Appropriately worded Ms. Ijamama, and, by the way, I heard you use that word on another one of your shows. To answer you, yes, of course—I had a young honey about 22 years old with a young child. She was in college and was working at a local restaurant. I helped her from time to time with tuition and books and baby clothes, because she had no help

from her family, the baby's father, or anybody, but she wanted to make a better life for herself and her daughter.

Ijamama: Nothin' wrong wit' dat—a woman needs a good man who can and will help her, especially if she's got a child or baby. I've been there and did that, when I was a young mother. But tell me this; have you ever seen a young woman you didn't like? Or is any young sweet honey game for an old hunting dog? *(People in the audience laugh.)*

ProfDaddy: *(ProfDaddy ignores Ijamama's humor and answers her question.)* Well, I had driven through McDonald's with the illegal drinker, the one I eventually got rid of, and I had seen this young woman with the most beautiful smile. She had a warm face and the friendliest disposition. She always smiled in a seductive or flirtatious manner when I drove through and she was at the drive-through window.

Ijamama: Pick it up; you goin' too slow; we got a commercial comin' up; um watchin' that clock tick down.

ProfDaddy: Well, I gave her my business card after I broke up with the underaged drinker, and we got together at a restaurant. I couldn't tell her shape, because I only saw her upper body in the McDonald's drive-through window, and you know some of them young folks wear baggy clothes or hip-hop clothes that drape over the body or puff out.

Ijamama: So to get to the juicy part, did you all do anything—you know what um sayin'? Tick tock, dat commercial gonna rock you off the air. OK, we'll break here and come back to the Professor's story after the commercial.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the show. OK Professor Smith slash ProfDaddy, please continue that story about that McDonald's honey, that smilin' young lady.

ProfDaddy: Well, after a couple of restaurants and a nightclub, she felt comfortable to come to my house. She said that she was ready for love, and that she hadn't had sex in three years—since she was 18 or a freshman in college.

Ijamama: Now go on; you playin' with us.

ProfDaddy: Well, she went into the bathroom as I sat in the bed after we had kissed awhile. From the bathroom, she yelled out, "I'll be out in a few seconds. I have a surprise for you." Well, she opened the door and came out completely nude, and with arms stretched out, she said, "Surprise! This is all yours."

Ijamama: And what did you do then?

ProfDaddy: Well, I almost had a heart attack. I thought I was looking at a totem pole. She was a wide body, straight up and down, with literally no curves and a big, wide, flat butt. *(A few people in the audience laugh loudly; one man shouts out, "Oh no, oh my God!")* Moreover, she had tattoos over much of her breasts and thighs. I had never seen a Black woman so straight up and down. This was a first and last encounter. She also had large breasts that were sagging more than usual for such a young age.

Ijamama: So, did the two of you do anything, like did you get down?

ProfDaddy: Well, what could I do? We both had been drinking, and here she was ready to go. That's all I'm going to say. It was a moment I won't forget, but one that I would like to forget. I felt helpless and entrapped. I felt that I had to accommodate her and not hurt her feelings. I was not assertive enough to say no, and, thus, I allowed her to hurt my feelings. Unfortunately, we men are socialized not to turn down sex, especially if it's right in front of our faces. However, we need to learn to say "no" just as women take the prerogative to say no to men in any situation. She had a beautiful smile and warm spirit. For me that's good, but it's not nearly enough.

Ijamama: Jus' like most of you men; it's hard to say no to sexual opportunity—like a dog confronted with red meat or a male wolf sniffing out a female wolf in heat. Didn't that incident tell you anything, like you can't judge attractiveness jus' by a woman's age?

ProfDaddy: Well, I guess you're right. I started to think about dating women in their 40s or older after that unfortunate disappointment, but low and behold, another young thing came into my life. And I should remind your viewers that most of the stories I share here are in my book, along with others. Continuing, it was like the word was getting around that I preferred young, shapely women and that I was a sugar daddy, so I became a magnet for young women in their 20s who wanted to be mentored and kept happy with things that money could buy.

Ijamama: We got a few minutes before we sign off tonight. And for those who may be joining us late, um talkin' to Dr. ProfDaddy or rather Professor Smith, who only prefers young women ages 18 to 29. Prof, let me ask you somethin' else. You talkin' 'bout sex with these young, hot things—these young honey buns, but, at your age, do you have trouble gettin' it up, you know what um sayin'?

ProfDaddy: I'll say one thing; I don't need that erectile medicine or the so-called blue pill to get ready for sex. These young things are hot enough to stir my blood and hormones. One of the honeys, this is in my book, *ProfDaddy and the Young Honeys*—sorry, but I had to plug the title of my book. Well, one hot honey gave me three orgasms in a matter of a couple of hours. She simply stayed on me and would not let up with the stimulation. I called her my honey sex machine. She was around 23 and was working on a master's degree in school psychology at an area university—not the one where I work. Anyway, every time she came over to my house, she would immediately run upstairs to my master bedroom and telephone for delivery of Chinese food or a pizza. Then she wanted to look at the BET channel and watch Hip-Hop videos and R&B videos. After dinner in bed and videos, she would want to have sex for much of the night, like until about 3 o'clock in the morning. She was a little too active and hot for me. I found myself often

going to work at the university in a state of exhaustion, until I decided only to see her on weekends.

Ijamama: In your book, you said that you were trackin' one little sweet honey who liked you and you liked her, but you waited until her 18th birthday to take her down to the mat.

A Woman in the Audience: Say what? *(A few people in the audience giggle or boo.)*

ProfDaddy: Well, that's true. She was 17, a freshman in college at a nearby college where I taught part-time. Let me qualify that she was never in a class of mine. She had a crush on me or she wanted to get all the benefits of a successful sugar daddy or both. I met her when I once spoke as a guest speaker in her class. Upon my guest speech, she asked for my e-mail address and started e-mailing me and eventually talking and teasing on the phone. Well, I told her she was too young, and that I wasn't risking my college job for involvement with underaged students. She told me the date of her birthday, showed me proof on her driver's license, and, on the day of her 18th birthday, she called and asked me to pick her up at Wendy's around 10 in the morning, and that she would spend the whole day and night with me. It was summer, so we drove to the beach and got a suite. And the rest was sweet honey-in-the-rock history. Of course, I had to bring her back by noon the next day, you know, drop her off at the same Wendy's near her home. She told her mother that she was going to the beach with a church group that was sponsoring a bus trip, which was half true. She did go to the beach but not on a bus. Technically, at 18, she was a grown woman and legal, and, thus, didn't have to ask anybody to go anywhere. However, she was still living at home and wanted to show respect to her parents.

Ijamama: You mentioned beach, I now recall that you teach at a university in California, so you have lots of nearby beaches. Speakin' of the young college student who lived with her mama or parents, um reminded of another story in your book when you wrote about taking a 19-year-old girl on a date; sorry, I mean young woman, and her 36 year old mother was diggin' on you. Is that really true?

ProfDaddy: Unfortunately, that's absolutely true. The mother would not allow me to go out alone with her daughter, although the daughter was grown and didn't really need permission, but she was still living with mom. I was so attracted to the daughter that I agreed to allow the mother to go to a restaurant with us. I later found out that the mother was also interested in me or rather my money. She was trying to marry me or get me to marry her daughter, because she understood the value of assets and a professional husband with a secure job with family benefits.

Ijamama: You talkin' 'bout all these young honeys you done sampled. Looks like you don't want to marry any of them girls, but you jus' samplin' the child care center of sweet honeys and layin' them out in the baby crib one by one. *(People in the audience laugh, while ProfDaddy chooses to ignore Ijamama's humorous metaphors.)*

ProfDaddy: I have dated some young women for a year or more, and, as I said previously, I believe in one woman at a time. I'm not a player. I could get married if the right woman or the right situation presents itself. Most of the women I date don't want to get married to a man my age, but they want the help and fun that come with our relationship. So we're talking about a two-edged sword. It's not just me.

Ijamama: Yeah, you too old to be a playa—well not old, old, but you're gettin' up there. Well, age-difference-wise, you're old for the honeys you involved with—like more than 30 years older in some cases. But you look good for yo' age. If I wasn't too old in your eyes, I'll take you down to the mat myself and put a p'ssy whoopin' on you so you won't ever look at a young girl again. You'll think you've been whipped with a pleasure stick. *(People in audience laugh out loudly.)*

A Woman in the Audience: Tell him Ijamama what real sexual healin' is about. He jus' ain't had no experienced woman who can rock his world.

ProfDaddy: Ms. Ijamama, I do bet you could rock a man. You still look great for an older woman. Sorry, I mean sweet middle-aged lady.

Ijamama: Check yourself—no dissin’ me on my own show.

ProfDaddy: Ms. Ijamama, now back to your question about not marrying, please let me qualify. It’s not me all the time who want to break up from a relationship. Some of these young women go off to another city to college, relocate for a job, or move on to a younger guy with my clothes and money. Some may bring too much drama, and I decide to get out of the situation for my own blood pressure and sanity. You got some young Hood girls and middle-class suburban girls who have had a rough childhood and they bring their past pain, distrust, anger, and habits with them into a relationship. It’s hard to help these types, and they tend to suck up your time and your emotional energy. Also, if I learn that a young woman is using any type of illegal addictive drugs, that’s it; that’s the end of our relationship. Of course, I would try to get her help first, but if she doesn’t get into counseling or treatment, I’m gone. I’ve even had a couple of girls who were playing me; taking my money and also having sex with a younger guy at the same time and spending my money on the guy. I gave one young sweet honey a \$100 Macy’s gift card for her birthday, and she got angry with me and confessed that she spent it on a younger man. That was the end of her with me. You just can’t trust anybody like that.

Ijamama: Now, let’s get to what my audience might be thinkin’—somethin’ that we ain’t talked about yet. That is, what if you get one of these kids; sorry, young girls; sorry again, young women pregnant. Will you marry her so she can go to the college where you teach free, you know, tuition waiver with your benefits for family?

ProfDaddy: Well, I believe in safe sex, so I always use a good latex condom. As you and your viewers know, this contraceptive has a high probability of preventing both STD and pregnancy. But let me say that I’m not opposed to marrying a much younger woman if things are right. In fact, if we have children and they’re under age 18 when I qualify for social security payments, the child or children can also receive monthly social security payments.

Ijamama: Well, be careful to not get anybody pregnant who's too young lookin', 'cause some girls can lie about they age to get goodies from a sugar daddy. And if you trip over a young honey's fake ID, you're goin' down—down to the jailhouse first, then lose your good teachin' job, know what I mean?

ProfDaddy: Thank you Ms. Ijamama for your warning if not reminding, but I'm always careful. I appreciate being on your show to tell it like it is and promote my book, because older women, the ones I've met, are too old to be free and too uptight to trust love and enjoy sex. That's my experience. *(A few women in the audience boo, gasp, or say things like, "No.")*

Ijamama: Oh my God, no you didn't! Why did you have to say that? But I won't go there, 'cause that's another show, and 'cause we about out of time. Ladies and gents, please show your love for ProfDaddy *(the audience applauds)*. He's a man who is tellin' it like it is and who got the nerve to admit in public that he likes young women, very young women for his age. Go out and buy his book, and remember the title, *ProfDaddy and the Young Honeys*.

ProfDaddy: Thank you Ms. Ijamama; it's a pleasure to come on your fine show.

Ijamama: Well, thank you Dr. Smith for bein' our guest on the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show, and thanks for bein' a good sport in the face of all of my humor and teasin' about you and young women. *(ProfDaddy shakes his head affirmatively and says, "No problem; it's all fun.")* Good night everybody, and remember the teachings of Jesus, to love, give, forgive, and sacrifice for the benefit of others. And always, "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all."

Again, good night; I love you.

Chapter 9

Ijamama Guests: Celibate Dude and the Bootylicious Queens

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guests tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Ladies and gents, welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. Let's get it started up in here. Tonight or this early morning, we'll be talkin' to a young man who ain't got it started with a girl in three years. And believe me, I know about datin'. I ain't done nothin' myself in some years, won't tell you how many, and now um busy with my show. So you know I ain't got time for datin' and drama. But it's different with a woman; we can go a long time and nobody will bug us, but with a man, it's like, "What's wrong with him?" (*A few people in the audience laugh and agree by evidence of their comments and moderate applause.*)

Listen up, the last date I had was a "blind" date. My older sister introduced me to this man. I don't like blind dates, but I went along, 'cause she's my sister. Well, when I walked into the restaurant, she said, "I want you to meet so and so." He was there with her; they had come on ahead of me in they separate cars. Damn, he was so ugly that I thought I was going blind; you know what I mean, temporary blindness? (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*) I passed on appetizer and dessert and got my ass out of dat restaurant right after the main dish or entree. I never ate so fast in my life. (*The audience laughs again.*) When my sister was drivin' me home from the restaurant, she come tellin' me, "Think about it; he's really a nice guy. You'll learn to love him. He will be a good provider." (*Ijamama laughs to herself while gesticulating with her hands and making nonverbal faces to accent her point.*) I said, "Damn it, excuse me please Sis (Sister); if

I want a nice guy, I'll go to a good priest or preacher. And if I want a provider, I'll continue to work hard and provide for myself." (*People in the audience laugh and applaud, especially an applause regarding Ijamama's words, "provide for myself."*)

A Woman in the Audience (*shouts out*): You right Ija; tell it like it is! We women don't need a man just to take care of us.

Ijamama: Let me tell you homegirls, he was so ugly that he would need a team of surgeons to fix his face and an orthodontist for his teeth—the ones he had left in his mouth. He downright need (needs) a live-in dermatologist for that bumpy skin, and he need a personal preacher to pray for genetic engineering to rectify dat ugliness. Looks like his mama had beat him repeatedly wit' a ugly stick when he was a little helpless baby. (*People in the audience laugh.*) Well, dat ugly stick is a old joke from high school. Sorry, I don't mean to go on and on, but the man needed help, and I wasn't 'bout to help him at all. (*After a pause to allow the audience to finish laughing, Ijamama continues.*) When I thought more about his situation, I prayed for him to get plastic surgery help, because ugliness is not permanent this day and time. You really can do somethin' 'bout it, of course, if you got the money or right health insurance. But come to think of it, a lot of health insurance policies don't cover ugliness or elective surgery.

Speakin' about datin', on the show tonight, I have a celibate dude who ain't datin' or in an intimate relationship at all, although he's handsome, unlike dat blind date of mine. I also have a risin' R&B group on the East coast, the Bootylicious Queens. They not only fine as iron (shapely), but they can sing their butts off—no pun intended (*the audience laughs*). All three of them can sing solo, and they switch the solo role jus' like them Pointer Sisters and En Vogue ladies used to do. Well, I'll say more about them when we bring them on, or I'll let 'em speak for themselves. Let's take a break, and when we return, I'll welcome my first guest, Celibate Dude. (*Homies from da Hood band and its female vocalist take the show to break with Donna Summer hot sexy song, "Love to Love You Baby."*)

(*Commercial Break*)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Now, speakin' of blind dates and fine bootylicious sistahs, we got a young, handsome, fine gentlemen here tonight as guest, who say he ain't dated or had sex in quite a while. His friends call him Celibate Dude at his college, 'cause he's tellin' everybody dat he don't need it if all the drama gonna come with it, dat he can wait for marriage or until he finds a woman who's for real. So join me and give it up for Celibate Dude. *(Ijamama continues after the applause ends.)* Oh, when I said "give it up," I ain't askin' you honeys out there to give it up sexually to Celibate Dude tonight. You know what I meant. *(Women in the audience laugh and applaud while some of them even boo Celibate Dude as he walks onto the stage and joins Ijamama.)*

Ijamama: *(Celibate Dude takes a seat after giving Ijamama a handshake and gentle hug.)* Welcome, I didn't know if you were gonna give me a hug or handshake, but you did both, so all that's good. Thanks for comin' on the show. Now, from jump street, let's get this straight up front—and do excuse my street French. Question number one. You sayin' a fine young, Black man like you ain't had no p'ssy (bleep) in three years; is dat right? *(The audience breaks out in loud laughter, and one woman yells out, "Oh My God!")*

Celibate Dude: Thanks for being straightforward, but that's right Ms. Ijamama. It's been a little more than three years, since I was a senior in high school. Now, three years later, I'm an advanced junior in college or a third-year student, if you will.

Ijamama: Now, question number two, could you please tell these fine, phat-ass, single ladies out there in the audience and at home, why and how you done gone three years without sexual healing, as Marvin Gaye would say. *(Ijamama laughs and breaks out with a line or two of Marvin Gaye's song Sexual Healing as a few people in the audience join in.)*

Celibate Dude: To answer your question, I just got fed up with being called a dog. That is, if I decided to end a relationship before a girlfriend did, I was a dog. Therefore, I thought I would just take a break from relationships

and get an evening job, spend more day time in the library, focus on my college courses, spend more time in my college residence hall room studying, visit the university gym regularly to keep fit, and attend church on Sundays to praise the Lord and get spiritual uplift. There's nothing wrong with being celibate. Women do it all the time. After going without it for a month, I figured I could go longer and focus on the Lord's work and on getting my college degree in computer science and information technology.

Ijamama: You a college boy alright; like to give long answers. Now, my third question, let's get this straight, you ain't gay, bi, down low, or nothin' like dat, right? Though nothin' wrong wit' being gay if dat's the way a person is or dat's the way God made you. *(Women in the audience laugh at first, then they get quiet after Ijamama says there is nothing wrong with being the way you are or the way God made you.)*

Celibate Dude: No, definitely not. Read my lips; I'm not gay or bisexual, and everything is working. I'm healthy—no erectile problems at my age.

Ijamama: I guess you won't know if you still can get it hard or not if you ain't had none in years, unless you doing yourself. Don't answer dat yet; let me move on wit' my list of questions. Next question, you ain't anatomically challenged down there; you know, like size-wise; 'cause most of these sistahs want a brotha who can bring it. They want the Rock of Gibraltar. *(People in the audience laugh. A woman from the audience shouts out, "I know you damn sho got that right Sistah Ija.")*

Celibate Dude: Quite the contrary, Ms. Ijamama; I am well-endowed anatomically. It's not the problem of not being able to satisfy a girl or even to get a girl; excuse me, I mean young lady.

Ijamama: Thanks for correcting yourself. So how long you gonna wait before you mine that Golden Box again? See what um sayin'? *(A few people in the audience laugh.)*

A Woman in the Audience (shouts out): That's right. We got the Golden Box; sooner or later you'll have to have it. You'll need to open that pleasure

chest. *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Celibate Dude: I may just wait until I meet someone I know I'll marry, rather than be accused of being a dog anymore. Or even more, I may just wait until I marry Miss Right.

Another Young Woman in Audience: As fine as you are and in college too, I'll give you some tonight if you marry me. *(People in the audience laugh. Another woman in the audience yells out, "He doesn't want you; he can do better." The laughter continues after the comment, ". . . he can do better.")*

Ijamama: Don't mind them hot ladies out there.

A Third Young Woman in the Audience: Yeah, I'll give you some tonight if you got a valid student ID from an accredited college. *(People in the audience laugh out loud.)*

Celibate Dude *(addressing the women in the audience):* Ladies, you know, I've been born again, like a born again Christian, so now I want a woman who is pure. So are you willing to take a virgin test?

A Young Woman in the Audience *(who commented last):* Of course I will, right after we do it.

Another Woman in the Audience *(replies):* Girl, are you stupid, just being funny, or what; talking about after you do it?

Ijamama: OK, OK ladies; let's get on with the show. But we should ask Celibate Dude, "How can you expect a future wife to be a virgin, when you're not?" Celibate Dude, please explain that double standard of yours. Isn't that a sexist attitude?

Celibate Dude: Well, I would like for her to be a virgin, but I guess a non-virgin would be acceptable as long as she is respectable, like maybe she has

had one relationship in the past at the most. (*Women in the audience express their displeasure with laughter, boos, and loud chatter.*)

A Woman in the Audience (*shouts out*): You better go to another country and find you a young Muslim woman. I'm serious.

Ijamama: OK ladies; let's get on with the show. Now, Mr. Celibate Dude, let's get another thing straight. Is you a dog or not; was you a dog befo' and you're now self-repenting for yo' sins of female abuse?

Celibate Dude: Ms. Ijamama, I wasn't a dog, and I wasn't a player. It's OK for a girl or rather young lady to break off a relationship, but if a Black man does it, or any man, for a good reason, he's a dog. Sometimes, both a young man and a young lady can mutually choose to end a relationship if they simply find it's not a good match or will not end up in marriage or a compatible long-term relationship. If a woman does the breaking up, it's no big thing. If a man does it, then he's a dog. That's reverse sexism, or it's also a double standard.

Ijamama: Well, by the way, you don't have to call me Ms. Ijamama. That makes me feel old in the presence of such a fine, young Celibate Dude. (*A few people in the audience laugh softly.*)

Celibate Dude: I'm sorry, but that's the way I was brought up—to show respect for authority or a person's position.

Ijamama: OK, whatever, if it make you comfortable. Befo' I ask Celibate Dude another very sensitive question, we'll take a two-minute commercial break. (*The band plays as the camera cuts away for the playing of three commercial videos.*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here interviewing my guest, Celibate Dude, who hasn't had sexual healin' for more than three years. By the way, his real name, legal name, or

baby name is Anthony. But for the sake of this program and the topic, I'm callin' him by his nickname, Celibate Dude, which he doesn't mind. Celibate Dude, I'm gonna have to ask you anotha sensitive question, but dat's the purpose of my show, to get to the truth and ask what people or viewers are curious to know. Our motto is to "tell it like it is."

Celibate Dude: Please go ahead. I'll try to be honest and open, and, if I don't feel I can answer, I will ask that people accept that too.

Ijamama: Well, if you're not having sex with nobody or rather with anybody, what do you do? Do you make yourself come—you know what um sayin'; like do you do yo'self or masturbate? Sorry for gettin' to the point.

Celibate Dude: Well, I used to, the first couple of months, when I first started missing being with a girl. I would fantasize; you know, think about a girlfriend of the past and then do it or look at an old girlfriend's sexy photo—you know like in shorts or a swimsuit. But after a few months into my celibacy, I gave that up. I have only resorted to self-stimulation a couple of times in the last two years. This was when I had time on my hand and started thinking about and missing a female—you know, like spring break and the Christmas holidays. Most times, I'm so busy with school work, my job, exercise, and my church, I don't have time to think about sex, or I'm just too tired to think about it.

Ijamama: Thanks for being honest in answerin' my question. You've gone more than three years without a piece (*the audience laughs*)—sorry viewers, I mean without sex with a woman or anybody. So what do you do for pleasure—do you eat Snickers all day? (*People in the audience laugh again.*)

Celibate Dude: Ms. Ijamama, I'm sorry for saying Ms. out of habit. I learned that if you give up all pleasure, then it's easy not to want any pleasure. When I took my spirit to the church and the Lord, I decided not only to deny myself sexual pleasure but also to avoid desserts and candy and pleasurable stuff like that, because I learned that the more you eat

sweets, the more you want them. Sugar is really an addictive substance, according to recent research. So, if people start eating lots of sugary foods regularly, they become hooked and develop a craving for it. (*A Woman in the Audience comments, "You right about that. That's why um so damn fat."*)

Ijamama: But look, don't bash chocolate, 'cause we have to support our sponsors for our show, and people have a right to enjoy sweets just like you have a right not to. You know what um sayin'? You mentioned research, which reminds me that studies are sayin' that chocolate is good for your health like in moderation, jus' like red wine is good for your health in moderation. Sometimes, it's not the thing that's bad, but it's jus' too much and too often of that thing. But Celibate Dude, um sure you'll one day enjoy both sex and desserts again. It's jus' gonna be a matter of time before you give in again to sexual pleasure. You guys can't live forever without it; jus' lookin' at us can turn men on, isn't that right ladies? (*There is laughter and applause from the audience, and comments from the audience include, "That's right Ijamama"; "I know you got that right sistah"; and "Damn right."*)

Celibate Dude: Ms. Ijamama, you and the ladies in your audience are probably right, but now I'm at peace with my lifestyle. I feel a sense of freedom from expectations of another person and freedom from the required time of a relationship. Relationships do take time, unless you and your partner have the same interests and activities.

Ijamama: You sayin' you at peace while not havin' a piece. (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*) Again, don't all healthy men need sexual pleasure?

Celibate Dude: Well, some women think that. One young woman at my university once told me that men are just pop-up toasters who should only be around when a woman is ready. This is sexist to think that the man should be ready at any time just like bread in a toaster: to heat up, harden up, and pop up, or rather pop in. By the same token, women often choose when they want to give it up. You know, that's just the way society raises

boys and girls to think once they get old enough to want each other in a sexual way. Also, we are taught that sexuality is not a sharing of two people in love, but it is rather something a woman or female gives to a man who should be grateful to receive it, and he should reward her before she gives of herself, or he should constantly reward her afterwards as long as she is so-called putting out. *(A few women in the audience boo, which is countered by mild applause from a few men in the audience.)*

Ijamama: Well, I would respond to what you jus' said, but we got to take another commercial break and then move on to our next guests. Sorry, but time jus' got away from me. Thank you Celibate Dude, and do stick around. You should appreciate our next guests. I'm gettin' a message now that we must take a break right now. We'll be back in two minutes with the Bootylicious Queens.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Ladies and gents, the Bootylicious Queens! *(A spotlight focuses on and illuminates another section of the stage to reveal the three Bootylicious Queens moving in synch with the rhythm of the music by the show's band, Homies from da Hood. Within a few seconds, the young women, in their early 20s so it seems, go into singing their hit song, "This Booty is Gonna Get You," while gyrating their hips. The three shapely women are wearing tightly fitted gold dresses and peep-toe stiletto heels. People in the audience rock with the beat and the rhythm. Some people even sing along at times with some of the familiar lyrics.)*

A Man in the Audience *(shouts out at the end of the song):* Go ahead and let that booty get me *(a few people in the audience laugh).*

Ijamama: *(After the hot performance, Ijamama walks over to greet the girls group.)* Who's introducin' the group members?

Cinnamon Cindy: I guess I will. I'm Cindy, or rather Cinnamon Cindy *(a guy in the audience yells out, "yeah, so fine.").* To my left is Chocolate

Pumpkin, and to my right is Bootylean.

Bootylean: And by the way, Bootylean is spelled ending in lean like lean meat, because I have very little fat and all firm muscle with a butt that toots out like a Black female Olympic sprinter (*smiling*). Are you men out there feelin' me? (*Mainly men from the audience laugh and applaud, and one man shouts out, "I'm feelin' you from here, and I really would like to feel you for real, real."* People in the audience laugh even more loudly.)

Ijamama: Wow, all them booty names really rock. Tell us how you got these booties—I mean booty names. (*There's more laughter from the audience.*)

Cinnamon Cindy: Well, first, we played around with the concept of “Bootylicious Divas,” but we decided that “Bootylicious Queens” would be both sexy and classy. And all of our “booty” names, of course, are stage names or entertainment names only and not our legal names, as everyone probably knows.

Ijamama: I guess the name game is all 'bout business. Come on over and sit down. Rest them booties, and meet my other guest, Anthony, who goes by the nickname Celibate Dude. (*Celibate Dude moves down to the fourth chair on the end. He remains standing to greet and shake the hands of the three lovely ladies before they take a seat in the three chairs immediately to Ijamama's right.*) Tell us how y'all got started—and you sistahs pretty tall too.

Cinnamon Cindy: I'm 5'10” and the other girls are both 5'9,” that's without the stiletto heels. We were carefully chosen from about 500 girls who auditioned to be in what the producer envisioned as a new girls' group, sort of in the same mode or style of the 90s En Vogue group. The producer and his team who picked us were looking for girls who were sexy, well-shaped, classy, good dancers, and, of course, talented singers. As you see, we all can sing solo, and we are all about the same height with bootylicious figures—sorry about that self-serving booty comment. (*Cindy smiles and*

turns toward the audience.) Men, do you agree? (The men and some women in the audience applaud loudly.)

A Man in the Audience: Girl, you fine as 24-karat gold.

Ijamama *(with a smile):* And Celibate Dude, do you agree?

Celibate Dude: They're fine young ladies alright, and they're also very talented. I'm just wondering, did any of you study music or take music lessons? *(Ijamama thinks privately that these are three sexy, finely shaped Black women, and this Celibate Dude wants to know about their musical background.)*

Cinnamon Cindy: I studied two years at the Berklee College of Music in Boston—one of the best music schools in the country, and I play piano and drums. Bootylean plays piano—she took lessons as a child and teen, and she also plays by ear or whatever it's called. Chocolate Pumpkins and I are learning the electric guitar, so we can add another dimension to our show, just as Prince did by knowing how to play all or most of those musical instruments in his songs.

Ijamama: *(Ijamama looks at Chocolate Pumpkin.)* And what about you Chocolate Pumpkin—you play any musical instrument? I know you learnin' the guitar.

Chocolate Pumpkin *(smiling):* I just sing and dance, other than learning the guitar. I grew up in the South, and I used to sing solo in my church. I also took dance lessons for five years when I was growing up.

Ijamama: Your Bootylicious music is bouncing around the world—y'all on TV shows, iTunes, YouTube, and places like that. And my producer said you guys jus' returned from a concert in London. What was that like?

Chocolate Pumpkin: Oh, it was great! That was our first international trip to perform. I didn't know there were so many Blacks there like from Africa

and the Caribbean Islands as well as so many people of East Indian origin. Also, we didn't know that London could be such a fun place.

Bootylean: And we found out that many young Whites over there are into R&B music and Black musical artists, period. We heard that Beyoncé had just done a big concert there before we arrived. Of course, London was the first stop of our new four-country international tour to promote our newly released hot album.

Ijamama: So, what other countries you goin' to for yo' concerts? And I'll show that hot CD in a minute.

Cinnamon Cindy: We go back on the road next month to Japan and later to South Africa and then from there to Paris. I can't wait to see Paris. All of these international trips are to promote sales of our new CD.

Ijamama: Ok, let me hold up this CD album wit' a pic of these three fine booties in skin-tight dresses—they're also three pretty faces and three talented performers. *(Ijamama holds up the CD for the camera to zoom in on the front cover for TV viewers, and the image is also projected onto a large screen onstage for people in the audience.)*

Ijamama: The title of the CD is "Booty Talk." What are some of your hit songs on this album or CD, whatever they call them these days?

Cinnamon Cindy: Well, the song we just performed, "This Booty is Gonna Get You," is on the CD. Also, other popular songs on the CD include, "Booty over Troubled Waters, I Will Lay You Down," "Let Me Be Your Honey Bun" ... *(Ijamama interrupts).*

Ijamama: Excuse me; I thought you were 'bout to say, "Let Me Be Your Booty Bun." *(People in the audience laugh.)* Um jus' bein' funny. Go on; what else?

Chocolate Pumpkin *(chimes in while Cindy is thinking of other titles):* Another song is "Yoruba Lover," you know, a people or ethnic group of

West Africa—many of whom were brought to America to become slaves. OK, on the same CD, there are “You’re Gonna Get Some When You Do Right,” “Let Me Be Your Baby Mama, Once You Get a Job,” and “Phone Me for a Booty-call in the Morning.” (*People in the audience laugh at the last three titles.*)

Ijamama: Wow, these are all sexy and hot song titles. Speakin’ of booty-call, are you young ladies datin’ or married?

Cinnamon Cindy: Well, our contract is worded in such a way to mandate that we remain single and childless for three years due to the demanding work of recording, performances, and promotions. Regardless, it’s very hard to date or have a steady boyfriend or man because of these same demands on us. I was dating, but my boyfriend and I broke up just simply because I didn’t have time for him, and we were on the road a lot. Any boyfriend will have to be very understanding, accommodating, and supportive at this time.

A Young Man from the Audience (*shouts out*): I will be whatever you want and need (*Ijamama and a few people in the audience laugh*).

Chocolate Pumpkin: I would like to have a man, but he would have to be a very special person who is tolerant, patient, and supportive of what I’m doing right now in my life. So far, I haven’t found that type of man since I’ve been in the music business.

Ijamama: Maybe you guys can hook-up with Celibate Dude at least to be social media friends, ’cause all of you are young people tryin’ to be somebody and make somethin’ out of yourself, and Celibate Dude is doing the same.

Celibate Dude: Straight up, could we exchange e-mail addresses or Facebook names after the show?

Bootylean (*looking at the other two girls*): That’s cool with us. We’re glad to see any Black man in college who’s preparing himself for life and gainful

employment.

Ijamama: Great, we got to take a break now. We need to sell stuff to pay for our show. (*Homies from da Hood band plays music from the soundtrack of the movie, "Booty Call."*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: It's time to wrap-up. Also, I promised Celibate Dude that we would not keep him too long, 'cause he's gotta get back to his college study (*Celibate Dude smiles*). I want to thank him for comin' on the show and stayin' through the entire show and for allowin' me to call him by his nickname, Celibate Dude. Give it up one more time for Celibate Dude. (*The audience applauds, as Ijamama pauses for her punch line.*)

Ijamama: When I said give it up, I mean to clap or applaud. I don't mean give it up in a sexual way to Celibate Dude. (*Celibate Dude and few people in the audience laugh.*)

A Man in the Audience (*reminds Ijamama*): You used that joke earlier in the show.

Ijamama: I know I did. I jus' couldn't resist a second time (*laughing*). Again, thank you Celibate Dude.

Celibate Dude: Thank you Ms. Ijamama for having me on your show.

Ijamama: Also, thanks to our other guests, the Bootylicious Queens, who have an even brighter future than their successes already. Go out and buy that CD or go to iTunes for they songs. Put your hands together one last time to show yo' appreciation for all of tonight's guests (*the audience applauds*). We're completely out of time. Thank you for tunin' in to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Remember, "God is good to those who are good to themselves and others." Also, "If you do right, you can't go wrong." And last but not least, "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all."

Good night everybody. I love you.

Chapter 10

Ijamama Interviews Preacher-Teacher Who Opposes “Playing the Dozens”

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guest tell it like it is. (*Ijamama’s Homies from da Hood band plays the show’s theme song, “Tell It Like It Is.”*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Hey out there, and welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I’m Ijamama, your “tell-it-like-it-is” host. We got a preacher-teacher here tonight talkin’ about Hood people gettin’ rid of some negative habits that go back generations; some of ’em go back to slavery. I can see where he’s comin’ from, but listen up, my thing is negative nicknames we give our kids, other family, our friends, or jus’ people we know. You heard a lot of them nicknames like Boo, Bam, Babygirl, Stinky, Stink Mary, Skunk, Muscle Head, Dodo, Piggy, Skunk, Horsehead, and Lead Belly. (*People in the audience laugh. A woman in the audience shouts out, “You right Ija.”*) A few weeks ago, I read da obituary section of the *Washington Post* newspaper of Washington, D.C., the city where one of my daughters works. One obituary announcement said, “My Stinky; I’ll miss you. You will always be my little Stinky.” Now, with all respect for the dead, somebody is a 23-year-old man, shot dead, and his mama callin’ him Stinky. They took 10 days to have the funeral ’cause gangstas (gangsters) had to buy new outfits and some of da relatives had to come from out of town. If he wasn’t stinky alive, he sho would’ve been stinky if they didn’t get him in the ground. (*People in the audience laugh.*) Sorry ’bout dat; God bless the dead. RIP Stinky, or rather rest in peace.

Now, let me give you another example of these negative African-American nicknames. A lady at my church was comin’ in wit’ her social security check for the church to cash it and take they 10 percent out; you

know what um talkin' 'bout—that tithing thing. Someone saw her comin' in the front door of the church and said, “Hey, how you doin' Babygirl?” Now, listen up; if you got a social security check in your hand and you usin' a two-handed walker, you ain't no Babygirl. *(People in the audience laugh.)* The woman was about 75 years old, and was strugglin' to walk to the front of the church. Some of the kids even respectfully called her Ms. Babygirl without realizin' the meanin' of the name, because it was the only name for her they knew. Can you imagine a child sayin' to a 75-year-old woman, “How you doing Ms. Babygirl?” Oh my God, um shaking my head. I had a great aunt, and to this day, I don't know her real name, 'cause we kids always knew her as Ms. Piggy. She dead now, so I guess the family put her real name on the funeral program and the headstone. I hope they did.

Now listen up to this one. When I was in elementary school in Florida, befo' my family moved to Baltimore, there was a little girl in my third grade class named Vagina Jones. I overheard the teacher ask her on the first day of school to look at her name on the class list to see if it was spelled right or if there was a typo or error. The teacher asked her, “Honey, you're sure your first name isn't Virginia?” The little girl answered, “No, it's pronounced Vagina.” The teacher called all the other students by they first name, but she refused to call Vagina by her first name. She called her Jones. You can imagine the jokes that this little girl had to deal with growin' up. When she was in elementary school with me, the students teased her by callin' her “Little Vagina.” *(People in the audience laugh.)* That's funny, but it's also messed up. Well, after my family moved up to Baltimore, I heard from a friend I kept in touch with that Vagina Jones had become overweight in high school, and she told me some students started callin' her “Big Vagina.” *(People in the audience laugh again and a few gasp. One woman shouts out, “Oh no!”)* You know that kids can be cruel at times. I heard that school counselors once tried to get Vagina Jones's mother to change her first name to Virginia or some other name, but the mother refused to do it, and the father said, “Her mama gave her that name, and I got nothin' to do with it.”

Look, um not even gonna talk 'bout Punkin. I jus' don't like the sound of Punkin. Also, um not gonna discuss Boo; except to say that some kids are named double Boo, like Boo-Boo. Here again, these nicknames stay wit' you 'til you die. You can be 90 years old and little kids be walkin' up to you

and sayin', "Hey Mr. Boo-Boo" or "Good morning Miss Boo-Boo." Some people even grow up and never know a neighbor's real name or may not even know a family member or a relative's real name. When I was in high school, this girl got the nickname Stink Mary, jus' because she was having lots of sex with different guys, so they said. Like she was supposed to be the most sexually active 15-year-old in the school from what the boys said and what she admitted herself. So, one girl got mad with her one day, and called her Stink Mary, and that name stuck to her like Gorilla Glue (*laughter from the audience*). Well, she's 'round 48 years old now, and little kids in the Hood sayin', "Hi Miss Stink Mary," not even realizing what they're sayin'. (*People in the audience laugh or gasp.*) Now, I know that's funny, but it's not right. It's jus' not right to diss a middle-aged woman like that or any woman. She's changed her behavior. She's not sexually promiscuous anymore, but she can't shake her nickname, 'cause folks won't stop callin' her Stink Mary. We got to wake up as a people and realize what we're doing to ourselves and others. We need to take the slave chains off our heads as Malcolm X used to tell us.

One last messed-up name or negative nickname is Judas Mae. Yes, you can believe it or not. When I was President of my daughter's school PTA—you know, the parents' group—I went to a national conference in Washington, D.C. I remember there was an African-American woman there with a name tag pinned to her blouse. Her name tag read Judas Mae Jones. I asked her, "How did you end up with that name?" She said her mother had so much pain carryin' her during pregnancy and in delivery during childbirth that she gave her that biblical traitor's name or negative name. I really don't understand why a mother would do this and not consider the consequences of that name for her daughter. I don't know what in hell some people be thinkin'. Yeah, I guess you sayin' she could change her name, but how many people think like dat. The name become part of them; somethin' they eventually own and accept.

Some people are even using these inappropriate or negative nicknames as part of they e-mail addresses: check this out; they usin' e-mail addresses like:

yourbabygirl222@aol.com;
dododaddy.no2@hotmail.com

sneakypetedick2@gmail.com

and

yobigbootygirl666@yahoo.com

These aren't real e-mail addresses—well, I don't think they're real. I jus' want to give you a idea or examples of what's happening wit' some of these nicknames out there. (*Ijamama pauses to refocus her monologue to the positive.*)

Ijamama: Listen up. All y'all up in here and out there in TV land, let's work on them positive nicknames; names like Queen Latifah or Prince, you know him, "The Artist," or that boxer who calls himself Marvelous Marvin Hagler. Believe in yo'self and yo' children. (*People in the audience shake their heads in agreement, and a few people applaud.*)

A Woman in the Audience (*shouts out*): Don't forget Prince Michael.

Ijamama (*looking puzzled*): Prince Michael who?

A Woman in the Audience (*answers*): You know, Michael Jackson's White son.

Ijamama: Oh my God, now why you got to put White befo' the word son? I forgot Michael Jackson named his son Prince too. You know, I once saw Michael in concert—tellin' people he's a thriller and grabbing his stuff. Mike, we love you, and we miss you so much. Rest in peace.

Now look, I know what y'all thinkin' or wondering 'bout my nickname. I explained it on my very first show, but I'll do it again for people who didn't see dat. At least my nickname is positive. Ijamama came from the words "I is yo' mama." And for y'all who are wondering, I have a legal full name, but I don't use dat except for business, so I can stay undercover; you know, under the radar and not have people check me out on the Internet, look up my phone and address, and stuff like dat. As I mentioned on my very first show, when I was a child, my younger sister branded me with my nickname, because she said I was bossy and tried to act like her and my older sister's mama. I had told my older sister, "I is your mama." So from

them words, my younger sister, who was listening to our argument, jokingly created the nickname “Ijamama” from the sound, and it stuck to me like white on rice, or more like brown on chocolate.

Speakin’ of negative nicknames, we got a man on the show tonight who gonna talk about these negative Afro-cultural ways that’s come down through history or over generations. So please welcome a man who’s called Preacher-Teacher by his students. His official name is Reverend Alvin Hennessy (*a few people in the audience giggle as response to the alcohol-brand-related surname*). He teaches in public schools, and he also got a church mission for youth and young adults. Put your hands together or show your love or give your prayers, whichever you want to do, for the Right Reverend Hennessy. (*People in the audience applaud and a few again laugh softly about his Hennessy name. The Right Reverend comes out, respectfully shakes Ijamama’s hand, and takes a seat to the right of Ijamama’s desk.*)

Ijamama: Right off the bat; where you get that liquor name, that Cognac brand name, Hennessy?

Preacher-Teacher: That’s my real family name; sorry if it also represents something else. And by the way, I don’t drink alcohol at all, and I don’t smoke.

Ijamama: Good for you reverend—no drinking and no smoking. Next, could you share a few of those trinkets before we go to break; then we can talk about the origin? Oops, sorry, but I took so much time in my monologue, we at the time for our first commercial right now, so why don’t we go to commercial. We’ll be right back everybody with my guest, Preacher-Teacher.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I’m here with Preacher-Teacher, an African-American man who opposes young Black folks playin’ the Dozens. Befo’ you give us them examples, why don’t you first tell people who don’t know what it is and why you

oppose this game that's been played by Black kids and young adults over generations. They sho played it when I was in school, and they played it in my Hood on the blocks and in the park.

Preacher-Teacher: The Dozens is simply a game of back-and-forth insults by young Black youth. It is a disrespecting of one's family and culture. The loser can get emotionally hurt when the opposing player gets the upper hand or gets the most and loudest laughs by the judging bystanders and thus wins. Lastly, this game continues a pattern of Black self-degradation, the same pattern that we have in Black comedy and from many Black comedians who make fun of their own people in a disgusting manner. This self-destructive behavior arose from slavery and the era of Jim Crow or racial segregation. And although it's funny and entertaining for the bystanders or audience, it's a contest of wit', creative language, will, and psychological toughness all for the purpose of mentally beating down or hurting another person with negative statements or insults usually about that person, the person's mother, or other loved ones.

Ijamama: Thanks for that excellent backdrop to help folks understand. Now, could you go ahead and give us some of them funny examples so people not familiar with the Dozens can understand.

Preacher-Teacher: Of course, I have a few that I took from students. If only they could apply this creativity to positive prose and poetry. Well, the following example is a dialogue between Dozens players on the theme of being stink and dissing each other's family members—mainly the mother. I had an undercover voice recorder and caught them playing the Dozens in my classroom when I temporarily left the room for a brief meeting with the principal of my school. Alright, I will just state the players as 1 and 2 and read what I transcribed from the voice recording. I would have played the voice recording, but there might be some ethical or legal issues regarding recording these or playing them in public, although this was done in a learning classroom and could therefore be considered ethically as an activity for research related to my instruction. OK, the following are the first examples of the dialogue:

Player 1: “Yo’ mama so stink that a skunk walked into her house and said, ‘Excuse me, wrong address.’” *(People in the audience laugh out loudly. Ijamama laughs out briefly, while her guest only presents a straight face.)*

Player 2 *(replies to Player 1):* “Well, yo’ mama so stink that her nickname in high school was Skunketta.” *(Again, Ijamama and her audience laugh.)*

Player 1: “Listen up to dis (this), yo’ sister so stink, she has been confined to home Internet dating only as ordered by a decision of the state Supreme Court. In others words, she so stink, she’s not even allowed to go outside her house.” *(Ijamama and a few people from the audience laugh, and a man from the audience shouts out, “She must be pretty stink then—can’t even mingle in public.”)*

Player 2: “Well, listen to dis, yo’ brother so stink that two certified zoologists mistook his scent either as a wild ox fart or a rotting dead vulture with a stomach full of rotten flesh and guts from a dead skunk.” *(People in the audience gasp and laugh even more loudly this time. Ijamama laughs and her Preacher-Teacher guest just smiles very briefly.)*

Preacher-Teacher: Well, that’s all I could transcribe from the recording for this one episode or dialogue.

Ijamama: Yeah, I agree with you; these are things kids shouldn’t be sayin’ or doin’, but they’re so funny. They were funny when I was in high school, and they’re still funny. Let’s go to a brief commercial break, and then I want you to give more examples, if you have others. And do explain a little more about why they’re doin’ this—like the psychology behind it. *(Ijamama is conscious at times to try and use proper grammar because she’s in the presence of a teacher. For example, she is conscious to use “they were” instead of “they was.” During the break, there is a commercial about a deodorant product.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here with my guest, Preacher-Teacher, who's talkin' about kids who play the Dozens. OK, let's please read a few more befo' we discuss why they do this and what can or should be done about it.

Preacher-Teacher: OK, if you really want your audience and viewers to hear more of this kind of stuff, but I guess we need to show examples of the Dozens if we're to understand them, change attitudes, and stop this or turn it into positive poetry and creative prose.

Ijamama: Of course, this is the only way we can inform and educate the public; plus, it's funny. And of course, my show is all about tellin' it like it is. Go ahead; it's OK—read anotha one.

Preacher-Teacher: OK, again, this is an example of the use of negative attributes to discredit or what they call diss or disrespect, but it's all supposed to be for fun. Usually, the loser doesn't show hurt or anger; however, if someone is beaten down verbally too much, you can have hurt feelings if not tears, anger, and even violence. That's why I want to stop this game. Surely, there are other ways of recreation or healthy competition.

Ijamama: OK, I agree, but read a couple more so people can understand Ebonics language and cultural creativity from these young Black students. *(Of course, Ijamama wants more funny examples to maintain or enhance her already-high TV ratings.)*

Preacher-Teacher: OK, continuing—this time, they're on the theme of your mother or mama being dumb. *(Preacher-Teacher opens his notebook and begins to read again.)*

Player 1: “Your mama so dumb that once she tried to put M&Ms in alphabetical order.” *(People in the audience laugh out loudly.)*

Player 2: “Well, check this out. Yo' mama so dumb she wouldn't be able to spell cat if you spotted her the c.” *(Ijamama bends over laughing and the audience laughs with her.)*

Ijamama: Wait up! That cat-spellin' Dozens joke is old-school. I remember that one, but it's still funny. OK, I agree with you that kids shouldn't be actin' this way, but they did the same thing when I was in school, and everybody knew it was not personal against anybody's mama or family. It was a battle of the creative minds, in a way, to see who got the biggest laughs or made the other person give up or give out of things to say. It was like seein' who could be the funniest the longest. Please read just a few more for my TV viewers and audience:

Preacher-Teacher: OK, if you insist:

Player 1: "Yo' mama so dumb, she made a negative 50 on her school intelligence test. She added items to the test; then she answered them wrong." *(The audience cracks up laughing our loudly.)*

Player 2: "Well, listen up to this one. Yo' mama so dumb, she didn't even know she was dumb. She wasn't smart enough to realize she was dumb. She was in special education and thought it was for gifted students." *(A few people in the audience giggle but don't laugh out loudly.)*

Ijamama: Now that one is downright wrong, dissing on special education. We need to stop puttin' down othas who are different or with some type of disability. *(The audience applauds Ijamama's point.)*

Preacher-Teacher: As you see, anything goes; there is no limit to talking about people with disabilities or anything because kids want to laugh, and being different or outrageous can make them laugh. With these kids, there is rarely political correctness or social acceptability in what they use as ammunition for verbal battle. The goal is to win "by any means necessary," to borrow a phrase from the great Malcolm X.

Ijamama: Now, you Black, and I admire what you're doin'. But tell me, are the smart kids playin' the Dozens? I mean kids who makin' good grades, 'cause some kids are smart but usin' they smarts in the wrong way.

Preacher-Teacher: No, I've never seen a case where an honor roll or honor society student played the Dozens, but I've heard from one teacher that a kid in her class did, because he was trying to be accepted by all kids. Nevertheless, I've seen some honor roll kids laugh at the jokes but not participate directly in the Dozens contests. I once made a class assignment of the Dozens but using positive criteria, and I offered the assignment as extra class credit toward the final grade for that grading period. The assignment was to use the two positive criteria of "pretty" and "smart"; for example, "My mama is so pretty ... " and "My mama or my sister is so smart ... " I can very briefly share a couple of these if you have time.

Ijamama: Of course, that sounds good, but first I got to take another commercial break, and we'll be right back to hear these as well as look at any other solutions to this tradition of playin' the Dozens.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. We're here with a Preacher-Teacher, who's talkin' about Black kids playin' the Dozens. Well, again, his real name is Reverend Alvin Hennessy—the Right Reverend Hennessy to use his correct church title. Befo' the commercial break, he was talkin' about an experiment in his classroom where he required or rather encouraged his students to play the Dozens as a volunteer assignment, but to use positive attributes that he gave to them instead of negative ones. So why don't you go ahead Reverend Hennessy and mention again what you did and also read examples of the kids' Dozens verses or creative statements.

Preacher-Teacher: OK, the first dialogue has to do with the criterion "pretty" and starts with "My mama is so pretty" It follows the same format of Player 1 and Player 2 of the previous examples that had negative attributes. OK, I'll read examples from my students:

Player 1: "My mama is so pretty that she makes the current Miss America look like a Alaskan Moose." *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Player 2: “I can top that. My mama is so pretty that she won Miss America without havin’ to compete in person. She mailed a video of herself in a evenin’ gown and a swim suit, plus a second video of her dancin’ talent.” *(There’s a moderate laugh or giggle from the audience.)*

Preacher-Teacher: As much as possible, I’m trying to be true to the English dialect of the kids in these vignettes. OK, the next dialogue is based on the attribute of being “smart”:

Player 1: “My mama is so smart that she made a perfect score on the SAT college test, and the test maker flew her up to Jersey (New Jersey) and hired her to construct tests at age 18, and they paid for her college to go to school at Princeton University.” *(People in the audience laugh softly.)*

Player 2: “That’s nothin’; my mama is so smart that she can smell a chemical substance and tell its molecular composition without use of chemical analysis or scientific instruments.” *(People in the audience laugh loudly and applaud this one.)*

Ijamama: Now that’s a good one, but, in general, these are not as funny as the ones with negative criteria. I jus’ don’t know why.

Preacher-Teacher: OK, this last dialogue is based on the attribute of being “sweet”—you may like these more:

Player 1: “My mama is so sweet that Chanel No. 5 scraps off her sweat after she jogs in order to make a new signature brand fragrance of their perfume.” *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Player 2: “That ain’t nothin’. Listen up to dis one. My mama is so sweet that she can pee in lemonade, and diabetics will think it’s a new and improved version of Sweet’N Low.” *(People in the audience laugh loudly and a few gasp.)*

Ijamama: Now that’s outright sick, but it’s sick funny. That’s what makes the funny ones funny; they’re sick funny or outrageous. They’re downright

dirty funny.

Preacher-Teacher: Sorry Ms. Ijamama about that “peeing” or urinating one, but you asked me to tell it like it is. These positive examples of the Dozens are encouraging, but the sad thing about this is that only the honor roll students chose to do this volunteer assignment for credit and not any of the low academic achievers who had been playing the Dozens in the back of the classroom during my absence from the classroom.

Ijamama: This is quite interesting in many ways. I would like to get your opinion 'bout or rather about why this happened, you know, the smart kids only choosing to play the Dozens based on positive traits. However, we've run out of time. It sounds like kids still like the negative ones more, because they see them as funnier. Well, keep experimenting with the positive ones. Maybe you can come back on the show at another time so we can continue this important dialogue.

Preacher-Teacher: Surely, anytime.

Ijamama: Thanks you Preacher-Teacher, Reverend Alvin Hennessy, and, to my TV viewers and audience, remember to “Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all.” And, “If you do right, you can't go wrong.”

Good night everybody—love and peace.

Chapter 11

Lead Belly's Revenge: Declaring War against Food

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guest tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. We gonna discuss the topic of obesity as it's called by doctors and healthcare professionals. But in our Hood and some other hoods, it's jus' called bein' fat. Oprah, you know, the TV celebrity and billionaire—she struggled with her weight for years. So if she can drop that fat, so can you. Being too fat cannot only make you look bad and older, but it's related to or can cause health problems like diabetes, knee problems, heart problems, and more. Being fat is not a crime; it's a threat to your life. Most of the time, being fat is choosin' to be fat by what we eat and drink and how much we eat and drink. Being fat is not a woman's problem only; it's also a man's problem. Listen up to this; once I saw a seriously overweight man in the Hood at a restaurant. He ordered a T-bone steak, pickled pig feet, mashed potatoes with extra butter, and collard greens seasoned in fatback. The server asked him, "What would you like to drink with that?" And he said, "I'll take a diet coke." (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*) For dessert, he ordered apple pie à la mode. You know, this is a person who is out of his damn mind—what a contradiction, a diet coke. (*People in the audience laugh again.*) It's funny, but this is a man who needs help with his eatin' problem and obesity.

I don't want to make fun of fat folks or to tell fat joke, but the truth is sometimes funny. Like some men got stomachs so big, they look like they pregnant—they can't even see they penis when peeing at the latrine (*the*

audience laughs). Now, that's the truth from what I'm told. Some very fat people even find it hard to have sex, 'cause they can't find the right position for movement, and if they do find a comfortable position and go for a couple of minutes, they hearts just too weak to continue. And you know, men got the nerve to talk about overweight women when they might have even more of a weight problem than women or jus' as much of a problem.

I confess right now and here; I used to be fat. After gettin' so big, I jus' didn't care 'bout myself. I was depressed and strugglin' to take care of two children, and food became my lover, my company, and my means to a comfort zone. I was pickin' up too much fast-food junk and drinking too many sugary sodas. Eventually, I came to my senses and realized that I didn't like myself fat, so I made a conscious decision to lose dat weight, to get my fine figure back, to feel healthy again, and to love myself. Tonight we got a guest who decided to do the same thing, to do somethin' 'bout a serious weight problem and health problem that he once had. We'll hear his story tonight or rather this morning, because it's after midnight. But first we have to take a brief commercial break. When we come back, I'll talk to Lead Belly and find out how he lost that weight and that big lead belly that made him look like he was pregnant. *(Ijamama takes a brief one-minute commercial break while the Homies from da Hood band plays transition music.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Ladies and gents, please welcome Lead Belly with his new book, *Lead Belly's Revenge: Declaring War against Food*. *(Upon Lead Belly's approach to Ijamama's host desk, she stands and greets him. He gives her a big hug and a kiss on the cheek before taking a seat.)*

Lead Belly: So good to see you Ijamama; it's been a long time. Or should I just call you Ija as some people do?

Ijamama: Either one, don't matter. Good to see you Ben. Audience, his real name is Ben, but we started callin' him by his nickname, Lead Belly, in high school. Befo' we start, I gotta show the audience and TV viewers befo'-and-after photos of you. My tech people, would you please put them

two pictures up on the screen, side by side (*there a brief pause before the slides appear on the screen*). Now, look at that change of image. On the left picture, you weighed how much?

Lead Belly: Then, I was about 408 pounds, the picture on the left. The picture on the right, I weighed 230 pound. Now, I'm 221 as of this morning when I weighed at my fitness club.

Ijamama: From jump street, tell us how you got dat name, you know, Lead Belly. I think I know, but I want you to tell our audience and TV viewers. Like I knew you in high school as Ben, or Ben Robeson, until the guys started callin' you Lead Belly; then everybody started callin' you by that nickname.

Lead Belly: In high school, I always had a little pot belly as an offensive tackle on the football team. So the guys on the team started callin' me Lead Belly, and the name stuck. I was like 245 lbs then—not nearly the size I was when I decided to declare war on food.

Ijamama: I remember, 'cause we both was in high school around the same time. Though, you were two years ahead of me. Yeah, you had a little bit of a stomach but you was tall, like 6'3", so it didn't show much.

Lead Belly: You right, I was around that height, give or take a half inch. But, you know, among high school kids, it was rare to have a pudgy stomach, so that was unusual. I guess it was a sign then that I was prone to be fat or have trouble controlling my weight. Also, eating too much fast food in high school didn't help my midriff bulge.

Ijamama: Nothin' against fat folks, but how much fat did you have on that frame—the fattest you ever got.

Lead Belly: My heaviest was like around 423, and I was miserable and disabled in a lot of things I wanted to do—things I used to do, but I couldn't do with that weight. I was increasing my weight and looking 450 pounds straight in the face. I saw my image changing right in front of me as I

looked in the mirror, but I still ate and ate as if I was addicted to food, and it was like I couldn't stop. I ate all day, and I had a bigtime habit of drinking sodas, with all that sugar, instead of water. I panicked when a classmate died from a heart attack at age 48. And here I was at 46 then, sitting on a powder keg, waiting for that bomb to explode in my head or chest—waiting for either a fatal stroke or fatal heart attack to happen.

Ijamama: What did your doctor have to say to you?

Lead Belly: He told me more than once that I would die if I didn't change my lifestyle. I had stopped taking my high blood pressure medicine and diabetes medicine. I didn't like the side effects of them pills. Then after that funeral of the classmate who died from a heart attack, I was just stressed out and ate even more. Thank God, I got dizzy and fell out at a grocery store—well, they call them supermarkets now. When I fell out, somebody at the store called the paramedics; you know, the 911 ambulance.

Ijamama: Say what! You sayin' you almost checked out (died) on us. Thank God they got you to that hospital in time.

Lead Belly: Yeah, the hospital found that I was all messed up; sugar way up and blood pressure had shot way up even more since I stopped the medication. I had a diabetic coma along with a mild heart attack. I decided right then to cut way down on the fat, salt, and sweet foods and cut out the sodas altogether and drink mostly water and tea.

Ijamama: Good for you; you lived or survived to write a book about it and to help othas with the same weight problem. It's quite interestin' that it took a medical crisis for you to wake up and do somethin'. That's what they say—people need a crisis to stop eatin', drinkin' alcohol heavily, or to stop drugs. I should say to stop other drugs, 'cause alcohol is also an addictive drug, though many people don't realize it.

Lead Belly: Right, it took a crisis for me to wake up and do right. I woke up in more than one way. I also woke up literally from that diabetic attack and heart attack. It was a medical crisis that could have killed me or put me

to sleep forever, but I guess it wasn't my time Ijamama. I thank Allah for sparing me. It took about a year for me to lose over 100 pounds and to get under three hundred. *(Ijamama notices Lead Belly's use of Allah as his name for God, and she assumes that he had become a Muslim, but she chooses not to go there and get off the weight-problem discussion, which is the focus of his TV appearance and interview.)*

Ijamama: Yes, but you did it. Remember, in high school how we used to diss fat grown-ups and laugh at 'em. As I look back, that was wrong.

Lead Belly: I'm not dissing fat folks anymore, because I used to be one. I'm just trying to tell them if you don't shed some of that weight, you'll have problems with doing simple things, problems with your health, and you will likely die early. Also, I'm telling folks you gonna feel terrible physically as well as feel terrible about yourself psychologically like I did. Being slightly overweight is one thing; being exceptionally large is a serious problem, or it should be. Listen up people out there; eating like a pig plus eating all day is a sign of addiction to food, and it's an unconscious desire to kill yourselves just like people who risk killing themselves from drug addiction. Listen to me; food is addictive.

Ijamama: *(Ijamama pauses to give viewers and the audience time to reflect on what Lead Belly had just challenged them to do.)* Remember Ben, when you and the football guys used to diss them fat girls in high school *(smiling)*?

Lead Belly: Yeah, we did *(smiling)*. I was young and foolish then, and we were making ourselves laugh at the expense or pain of others. Now, I've learned that's wrong, and it was wrong then. Now, I know how it feels to be fat, 'cause I've been there, did that. People would laugh in public and whisper funny things to each other. You knew they were talking about you because they were looking your way when they were whispering and laughing.

Ijamama: So you penned this book to help people, and you came up with danger signs that people should watch out for as signals that they're eatin'

too much and eatin' too much of the wrong foods.

Lead Belly: Yes Ijamama, it's hard to see yourself or realize your bad habits. It takes somebody who's been there to tell you that you're killing yourself. And like alcoholism, you still may not listen until you experience a medical crisis like I did or some type of crisis.

Ijamama: Now let's read off some of the signs people should watch out for, 'cause we got a lot of people out there who're way overweight and candidates for the bomb (heart attack or stroke) at a young age. (*The TV technicians post the first PowerPoint slide with the first sign that one is obese or way too fat.*) You go ahead and read these Ben, and although you use Lead Belly as your pen name for the book, I'm not goin' to call you by that nickname anymore. Although I realize that it's good for sellin' your book and gettin' people to listen to you. Hard for me to transition to Lead Belly, 'cause I've always called you Ben, unlike many of our high school peers.

Lead Belly: I have no problem with the use of my nickname especially when discussing my book and trying to help others to lose weight. These are signs as well as recommendations of what not to do and what to do.

Ijamama: OK, go ahead wit' them slides, before commercial time. Again, these are danger signs that you're eatin' too much and eatin' too much of the wrong things.

Lead Belly: Slide number one: "Stay away from all-you-can-eat restaurants if you're prone to stuff your gut. Be careful at any all-you-can-eat buffets." I've seen people pay for breakfast buffet and then sit around eating until the lunch buffet is put out, so they can also sneak and stay and eat lunch free. I must admit that at times I've done this. This is a totally irrational way of thinking. It's like if something is free, you should get all you can eat.

Ijamama: Yeah, I agree, too much food too often can take you out—can kill you.

Lead Belly: Slide number two: “Ask yourself when eating at home, am I putting too much food on my plate—more than I need? Am I going back to the kitchen or dipping in the pot for second and third helpings?” (*Lead Belly pauses for the next slide and to see if Ijamama has a response, which she doesn't.*)

Lead Belly: Slide number three: “Ask yourself at restaurants, do I stop eating when I feel I’m full? Do I try to eat everything on my plate, knowing it’s too much and knowing that I should get a box to carry some of that food home for later?”

Ijamama: Yeah, I’ve seen that at restaurants, and I have done it myself. It’s like talkin’ and stuffin’ yourself to clean your plate like we’ve been wrongfully taught to do as kids. Go ahead Ben to the next slide.

Lead Belly: Slide number four: “Ask yourself, am I self-conscious about eating in public, at my job events that serve food, or at family reunions, because I’m wondering if I will lose control and overeat like a pig or that others will notice how fat I am and are watching how much I eat?” (*Lead Belly pauses, then continues.*)

Lead Belly: Slide number five: “If you’re a man and cannot see your penis while standing at a bathroom latrine, you’re too fat, too short of penis, or both.” (*People in the audience laugh.*) Ijamama, you may have mentioned something like this one before I came out on stage. I was watching the TV monitor backstage in the green room.

Ijamama (smiling): Yeah, but I didn’t mention a short penis or any kind of small package on a man. (*People in the audience laugh.*) OK, please go ahead Ben.

Lead Belly: Slide number six: “If you have to eat dessert after every meal, you’re likely addicted to sugar, and, even more, you’re loading up on weight-gaining calories, especially if they are baked desserts or sweets like cake, pie, Danish, and donuts. Try to cut down or cut out baked desserts or refined sweets and instead eat fruits or foods with natural sugar.”

Ijamama: Yeah, that's how you get addicted to sugar.

Lead Belly: You're right Ijamama. Slide number seven: "If you develop a habit of eating fast food every day and not being willing to cook or keep healthy foods in your house, you have a problem; you have a big problem." I found myself craving for and often picking up fried chicken, burgers with fries, pizza, donuts, pancakes or hotcakes, and a host of other carry-out foods that were full of fat, sugar, and salt. With more and more fast foods with sodas, I got fatter and fatter. Now I buy fresh veggies and fruit, chicken and fish, whole wheat bread, wild rice, beans, raw unsalted nuts, hot and cold cereal, and other healthy foods. I married again to a wife who believes in healthy eating as I. Before, I had an eating partner who was also overweight, which didn't help either of us. Both of us were guilty of eating unhealthy food and too much of it.

Ijamama: I know what you mean. At one time, I was regularly eatin' some of them things. I was gettin' chubby again when I turned 30, and I was losin' my fine figure. As my weight got out of hand, I realized that I had to deal with myself, so I cut out all that fried fast food and things just like you stopped eatin'. I now cook most times at home and do very little frying. I often steam veggies, bake fish and chicken, and boil peas and beans. If I stir-fry like veggies and chicken, I use olive oil or some other type of healthy cooking oil. I rarely eat pork or beef due to the fat in meat and all them chemicals that they now feed to cows and hogs to make them grow faster and bigger. I may have barbecue ribs at a family reunion or events like that, but I don't eat pork and beef regularly. Oops, I gotta do a commercial now. *(The band plays to entertain the audience during the break. The commercial is a video about weight loss, which is sponsored by Weight Watchers International, a regular sponsor of the show.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here talking to Ben Robeson who goes by the pen name Lead Belly. He has a book out 'bout how he lost more than 200 pounds and saved his life,

you know, from a fatal heart attack or life-ending stroke. You know what um sayin'?

Lead Belly: Ijamama, I want to emphasize that point about heart attack and stroke, especially to Black folk. Too many of our people are at risk for heart attack and stroke. Yes, foods high in fat and cholesterol can eventually clog your arteries, which can lead to a heart attack. Our diets as a cultural group do much to contribute to our high rates of hypertension, diabetes, stroke, and heart attack. Diet is something that we can control as I did. I notice that some of the fast food places like Wendy's and McDonald's are turning to a few healthy choices on their menu. Looks like they are listening to customers or they're listening to the competition like Chipotle and Panera. But I believe it's better to cook your own food and eat at home most of the times. What my wife and I do is to cook a lot of food that can be frozen. Later, it can be warmed up and eaten when we don't have time to cook or don't feel like cooking. We freeze foods in plastic containers, foods like black beans, lima beans, kidney beans, black-eyed peas, and chicken. Sometimes, we might eat beans or peas over a little wild rice with chicken or fish. We also cook and season with lots of green pepper, red pepper, and onions instead of that old-school thinking that you need fatback pork to season. Anyway, in our Islamic religion, any type of pork is forbidden.

Ijamama: Yeah, I do the same, except some foods will not taste the same if they're frozen and thawed out later. There's no problem with beans and peas, but tomatoes and broccoli don't taste right to me after freezin' and warmin' them up—like they turn to mush after thawin' out. Tell me, did you work out at a gym or do anything to burn calories when you were losin' all that weight—all that fat?

Lead Belly: Yes, I did. My new wife used to be a college athlete. She played basketball. We have a membership at a fitness club near us. I met her when I was in school at Morgan State University. Remember, I went there on a football scholarship after high school, but I dropped out after two years. I messed up my knee on the football field and couldn't play anymore. Although Morgan State offered me a job in the Athletic Department, I decided to leave and take a full-time job at the post office to help my mama

and family. My current wife continued and finished college. We became friends again after my divorce from my first wife and during my challenge to lose weight. I saw her at the fitness club working out seriously after I joined, and the rest is history or a gift from Allah. She's the person who introduced me to Islam, which helped me a lot to discipline my life and change my eating habits. She's a good Black woman who stands by her man. Ijamama, I'm blessed to have her in my life, because she encouraged me to lose weight and keep it off. Look, that's the second challenge after the challenge of losing the weight, that is, you have to keep it off and not gain it back.

Ijamama: I agree, some people have a yo-yo mentality—losing weight so they can go back to eatin' the same wrong stuff again. I developed a new lifestyle of healthy eatin' and regular exercise, especially after gettin' my show, because I need to look good in this line of work—don't y'all think I'm looking good? *(There's loud applause from the audience as agreement.)*

Lead Belly: You're looking great Ijamama—you're about the same size you were in high school.

Ijamama: My thing is jogging, either outdoors or at my fitness club on its indoor track. I also go to my fitness club for aerobic classes, and I work on them machines for strength and cardio. I've excluded foods from my new lifestyle like candy bars, pastries and cake, sodas, fried chicken, and burgers. I say normally don't buy or eat, because on rare occasions I may eat a small piece of cake at a birthday party or wedding, or Godiva chocolate during the Christmas holidays, you know what I mean? *(Ijamama pauses to check the time.)* I just noticed that we're runnin' out of time.

Lead Belly: Did we mention the book Ijamama?

Ijamama: Thanks for the reminder—we mentioned it, but I didn't hold up the book to show it. Sorry, I got lost talkin' about food and our high school years. Folks, this is the fine book that could save your life *(Ijamama holds up the book to show the front cover)*. The title is *Lead Belly's Revenge: Declaring War against Food*. Go online or to your local bookstore to get it,

and do read Lead Belly's eye-opening book or rather mind-opening book and story. Lead Belly, that's his pen name for an Internet search or inquiry at your local bookstore.

Lead Belly: Thanks Ijamama for having me on your show and for mentioning my book. It's good to see you, and I'm very happy for your success. We are so proud of you.

Ijamama: My pleasure to have you on Ben. You have a very important message. Ladies and gents, thanks for watchin' my show on TV and for those who came in person to the show, thank you all. Remember, "If you're good to yourself and good to others, God will be good to you." And always "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all." Finally, when it comes to food, "If you do right, you can't go wrong." Also, remember, eat right and don't eat too much.

Good night—I love you all.

Chapter 12

Interviews: Smart-Ass White Boy and Cheap Hussy's Husband

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guests tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage full of energy.*) Welcome to the show everybody! I'm your host, Ijamama. Tonight, I have a guest who writes poetry about race and White folks under the pen name of "Smart-Ass White Boy." He's a freshman in college, but it was his White high school classmates who gave him that nickname, "Smart-Ass White Boy"! As you can see, I like to say that name (*the audience laughs*). He writes under this pen name when he's writin' about race and racial injustices by White folks. He can tell you more about how and why he got that nickname. His mission has been educatin' White folks about they attitudes of racial prejudice, White supremacy, and White privilege. And look, I commend him and thank him for havin' the courage to do so.

Straight up, I really don't need to tell you that we have racial problems in our country. The "Black Lives Matter" movement as a result of unjust police brutality is evidence that we got much work to do as a country. Some White folks need to change they thinkin', but, at the same time, there are other Whites who have changed or are tryin' to understand and change. I really got to compliment Blacks and Whites who are marchin' in the streets against wrongful police brutality and injustices period—tryin' to change things, to make things better for our country. But look, I really don't agree with them marchin' and blockin' them highways and main roads when innocent people tryin' to get home from work and stuck in they cars all tired, hungry, and needing to pee or else (*people in the audience laugh*). That's really messed up—for real. They really need to be protestin' against

members of the U.S. Congress, local politicians, and the court systems that contribute to racist laws and racist court decisions. As Public Enemy rappers once said, “Fight the Power,” the real power. And them protesters need to focus on the bad cops and bad police departments only. You know what I mean. It jus’ don’t make no sense to start shootin’ good cops jus’ because they wearing the uniform—that jus’ ain’t right. Um talkin’ about those police who tryin’ to do right and got a wife and babies at home to love and feed. As my mama taught me, “Right is right and wrong is wrong, wherever, and two wrongs don’t make a right.” So fight da power and fight wrong whenever and wherever, but don’t punish the innocent, regardless of they race or job. Yeah, there’s been some racial progress, but while some Blacks have benefited from change, there are too many po’ Blacks in urban Hoods and small towns who are much worse off. There are jus’ too many po’ people period, regardless of skin color, who are sufferin’ and in need of jobs or work. *(For Ijamama’s diverse TV audience, she didn’t want to give the appearance that she was only interested in African-American problems.)*

Well, let’s take a brief commercial break, and we’ll come right back with our first guest. *(Ijamama’s band, “Homies from da Hood,” breaks out in music to initiate the break as the cameras cut away to allow for the first of two video-recorded commercials.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Ladies and gents, welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Give it up for my first guest, John Brown, who’s known to his friends, haters, and peers by the nickname Smart-Ass White Boy or SAW-Boy. *(Smart-Ass White Boy walks onto the stage. Ijamama shake his hand, greets him, and offers him a seat to the right of her desk.)*

Ijamama: Welcome to the show. How are you doin’ with all that flack you been gettin’ from some of them White folks—and I say some White folks and not all.

Smart-Ass White Boy: I’m good. I’m used to it now.

Ijamama: First, tell us how you got that nickname and yo’ legal name, John Brown. Well, first tell us about yo’ legal name and if it’s related to the famous John Brown who stood up against American slavery and died for his cause.

Smart-Ass White Boy: My family name is Brown, but, yes, my father and mother decided to name me John after the famous John Brown of Harpers Ferry fame who fought and died for his opposition to American slavery. Just as my grandmother, my mother was active in protests for human rights and women’s right, and both my parents wanted me to know right from wrong and to respect the rights of all human beings regardless of race, gender, religion, identity, or status. Ms. Ijamama, just like your inspirational sign-off quote, I was taught, “If you do right, you can’t go wrong.” Our parents taught me and my younger sister to do right in order to live with our conscience and a sense of dignity.

Ijamama: And how did you get that nickname, Smart-Ass White Boy?

Smart-Ass White Boy: Once, I wrote a high school term paper on Stokely Carmichael and the Black Power movement. Of course, Stokely later changed his name to Kwame Ture. My grandma told me about this Black power thing from back in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In writing my essay, I raised the question, “What did or do Black people want?” Stokely of course stated in a YouTube interview that it was logical that Blacks wanted the same things as Whites, which included jobs, economic power, political participation, and fair treatment. But what struck me even more in that YouTube video, Stokely Carmichael was asked by the White reporter, “What can Whites do to help the race problem in America?” Stokely answered the White reporter by stating that Whites must first educate their own people to think differently about race and Blacks—to teach other Whites to stop racist thinking of White prejudice, White supremacy, and White privilege.

Ijamama: So how did your nickname come out of that?

Smart-Ass White Boy: Well, I took Stokely’s advice literally, and I tried to educate White high school students through my classroom reports and comments as well as extracurricular activities, including one workshop during Black History Month. Although some White students admired and respected what I was doing or trying to do, there were a few racially conservative, KKK, skinhead types who threatened me and opposed my activities. These types were spreading rumors that I was turning my back on my own race, and that I was trying to be Black. However, my grandmother and parents always taught me that conscience trumps fear, and that God’s laws trump man’s unjust laws. Also, I had a poetry reading once while in the eleventh grade. This was during Black History Month. At that poetry reading, one racist student shouted out after I read one of my poems, “Why don’t you write a poem about yourself and title it, “Smart-Ass White Boy.” Many in the room of about 100 students laughed, and, thereafter, the name stuck and stayed with me. School kids saw me in the hallway and elsewhere and started to call me “Smart-Ass White Boy.” I decided to embrace the name and use it as a pen name—thus turning a lemon into lemonade. Most of the Black students called me SAW-Boy for short. Several of them told me that they didn’t like calling me Smart-Ass White Boy, because they perceived me as helping their cause. The Black students respected what I was doing so much that they made me an honorary member of their Black Students’ Union.

Ijamama: All that is good, you know, what you doin’. Now, speakin’ of yo’ poetry on race and race relations, I understand that you brought a few poems with you that you want to read for our audience and TV viewers.

Smart-Ass White Boy: Yes, I did. Do you want me to read a couple of them now?

Ijamama: Yes, please go ahead, and give us some background to the poem if we need it.

Smart-Ass White Boy: OK, one thing that White racism does is to portray Whites as superior to other races or ethnicities and as having few to no shortcomings or human frailties. In doing so, media racism has created

fictitious White superheroes such as Superman, Hercules, Tarzan, Batman, Spiderman, 007 spy James Bond, Lone Ranger, Wonder Woman, and, yes, a White Santa Claus who supposedly knows everything about each child and can deliver toys to every house with children overnight or the night before Christmas day. Even new superheroes now include White females in movies like *Ex Machina*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Allegiant*. And yes, George Washington, the first U.S. President, was aggrandized or magnified in image to appear perfect or greater than he was. My grandmother told me that school children were once taught that George Washington never told a lie, which is itself a lie. Therefore, I penned a poem about the true George Washington and his relationship with his rich Anglo wife Martha. Should I share it with your audience now?

Ijamama: Please do; go ahead. I wanna hear this. (*Smart-Ass White Boy opens a folder that was resting on his lap, and he begins to read his poem titled, "Martha and George."*)

MARTHA AND GEORGE

George "never told a lie," so said;
He just told many lies for good cause—
Sometimes for his good cause;
One lie was I love you Martha;
No, George you love my money—
You love my 17,000 acres of land and my
Asset of Black slaves and White servants;
But if you marry me, I'll make you first
President of our future country;
If you make me your wife,
Ergo, you will make me First Lady
Of our new country;
George, I have the money, and with me,
You'll have the fame,
So let's be one and live married the same;
Martha, you have the money, and I'll have
The fame,
So marry me Martha and take my name;
OK, Martha, on my bending knee,
Will you marry me?
If yes, then show me the money;

Show me the deed to your land, and
I'll marry you soon and take your white
Chubby hand.

Ijamama: (*People in the audience laugh upon the last words of “white chubby hand.”*) Wow, I didn't know Martha had all that money, all that wealth.

Smart-Ass White Boy: Yes, Martha's late husband, Daniel Parke Custis, was 20 years older than she. He died and left her all of this land and wealth. A side fact is that Martha and George Washington never had any biological children, but Martha did have four children from her late husband Custis—two of them died in childhood. The two surviving children became George Washington's step children. Another side fact is that Martha's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis, fathered a biracial or Black daughter by the name of Maria Custis. She was reared and educated as part of the Custis family, and she later married into a famous Black family, the Syphax family, taking the name Maria Custis-Syphax. Maria and her husband had 10 children (mainly boys). Maria's White sister, Mary, married the famous Civil War general, Robert E. Lee, who was her third cousin. Therefore, Robert E. Lee had a Black sister-in-Law, and he married his cousin. Marrying a cousin was acceptable back in the day. White folks often try to be so superior and so moral, but there are many embarrassing secrets, many skeletons in their closets or rather our closets. Look at all the White U.S. politicians who have been caught in embarrassing criminal or unethical activity, very often involving money or sex.

Ijamama: Wow, I didn't know all that, but I did know about President Thomas Jefferson who had them Black children by his slave, Sally Hemings, after his wife died. Them White folks was havin' lots of sex back in the day—no radio, no TV, no Internet, no iTunes music, nothing much for entertainment at night except for dinner and then sexual healing. (*People in the audience laugh.*) Go ahead, read anotha poem SAW-Boy—um tryin' to limit callin' you Smart-Ass White Boy, although I like the sound of the name.

Smart-Ass White Boy: No problem with the nickname; well, this next poem speaks for itself. I can't give you the background, because I will reveal the punchline.

TIPPING IN THE RESTAURANT

Arguably, if a server does a good job,
You customarily award 15% tip, and
If it's a great job, you give the person 20%;
You can give 50% if it's Happy Holidays
Or the Christmas season;
And you may even give 100% if you wish to
Contribute to the server's college tuition;
If romantic and hopeful, you may give 200%
If you want to date an attractive server, and
300% if you hope to marry the cuisine server;
And if you're White and want to pay a Black
Server a down payment toward reparations
For American slavery, then tip 1,000 percent
Of the check, like 10 times the cost, "Hello."

(People in the audience laugh and applaud the poem, especially Blacks in the audience.)

Ijamama: *(Ijamama laughs.)* Yes, show us the money for all that free labor our ancestors gave to make White folks and they descendants super rich. Yeah, compensate us for all them years of losses and suffering, right on up through the Jim Crow era during the racial-segregation years of the 1900s.

Smart-Ass White Boy: Ms. Ijamama, I don't want people to think I'm a young White male who is anti-White or against my own people. But I am against White racism, White privilege, White terrorism, White criminal injustices, White prejudice, and wrongful actions of White supremacy. However, by the same token, I also honor Whites around the world and in U.S. history who now help and have helped oppressed and poor people of color—just like my namesake John Brown tried to do and died trying. I wish to mention some of those forgotten Whites in U.S. history who stood up against slavery, racism, and racial injustices—some who gave their lives for these causes. Some of these White freedom fighters are honored in a

poem written by a Black American poet by the name of Frederick Douglas Harper. I Googled and learned about his writings after hearing his name from a guest on the Hot Heifer Show when you co-hosted that show. This is his poetic tribute to White civil rights advocates in U.S. history. I'm sharing this poem to remind us that Whites have fought alongside Blacks for social justice and that not all Whites are racist. OK, this is the poem; the title is "A Tribute to White Civil Rights Advocates in U.S. History":

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank White Americans who stood up for right and justice when it was not popular to do so and when it was even dangerous—many who died for their stand, work, and advocacy for Blacks.

Let us not forget them; let us not forget their sacrifices for right and justice for others and for their country.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank abolitionist John Brown who organized a raid on Harpers Ferry's arsenal in 1859 for a planned military uprising against slavery.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist leader and journalist, who was editor of the abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, and one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Likewise, let us thank abolitionist Wendell Phillips and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* author and abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank Senator Charles Sumner who fought in the U.S. Senate to free Black slaves and to protect the rights of freed Blacks in the South after the Civil War and the end of slavery in the U.S.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank Viola Fauver Gregg Liuzzo, who traveled to Alabama to help with the civil rights struggle during the 1960s. She stated that the civil rights struggle "was everybody's fight." She was shot in the head and killed by "the KKK" while driving her car to help provide transportation for Black civil rights workers.

Let us pause to acknowledge and express our gratitude to Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, two White young men from New York, who traveled to racially segregated Mississippi in 1964 to help with civil rights efforts to register Black voters and were brutally killed along with James Chaney, who was Black.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank the many courageous Whites who assisted Harriet Tubman and others in the Underground Railroad to hide Black runaway slaves in safe houses and assist in their escape to freedom.

Let us pause to acknowledge and thank White lawyers who volunteered their time along with Black lawyers to fight in the courts against racially segregated schools, colleges, public facilities, and job opportunities.

Let us pause now to thank all White Americans who took risks, stood up, and advocated for the rights of Black Americans and other persons of color during years of racial segregation, racial inequality, racial injustice, and racial violence.

Ijamama: Thank you, I love that poem. Ladies and gents, this is John Brown who writes under the pen name of Smart-Ass White Boy. At such a young age, his mission is to educate Whites against racism and attitudes of White privilege, White supremacy, and White prejudice. Thank you for comin' on my show and good luck in your college study and your very important racial work. We'll take a commercial break now and then return with our second guest. *(During the commercial break, Smart-Ass White Boy has to leave to study for a college exam.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. My next guest got a divorce two years ago from a wife he calls the stingiest human being he has ever known. He states that she unfairly got half of their estate during the divorce settlement, although he paid almost all of the bills, includin' the monthly house mortgage payment for over 20 years. To recover some of his lost money, he admits to writing a book about his ex-wife and her stingy ways. Ladies and gents, welcome Donelle Hussleton, author of *My Life with a Cheap Hussy*. *(Donelle Hussleton comes onto the stage, approaches Ijamama, and shakes her hands as she offers him a seat.)*

Ijamama: Welcome to the show Mr. Hussleton. As a start, give us some background about your marriage, like how long, how many kids, and where y'all worked. Then, we'll get into that book and what you wrote about how cheap Mrs. Hussleton allegedly was—a woman you call “Cheap Hussy.” I recall you had a little family information in your book I read, but give my audience and viewers some of that background.

Donelle Hussleton: Thank you for having me on your show. We met at a community college in the Atlanta area. After my two-year degree, I didn't continue college elsewhere to get a bachelor's degree, but, rather, I continued by full-time job with UPS, or United Parcel Service, where I've worked for 22 years. My ex went on to get a bachelor's degree from a Black college in Atlanta and continued work with Amazon but in a higher position in accounting and product management. We have one daughter who is now

a freshman in college at Spelman on a four-year academic scholarship. We did well enough to buy a house in a lower-middle-class neighborhood. It's not in the Hood or a poor urban neighborhood, although we were racially conscious of our Blackness and tried to give as much as we could to help out when possible in the Atlanta Hood and for Black causes in general.

Ijamama: So who paid what bills, and why was your wife so cheap or obsessed with savin' money, or jus' what was she doing with her money if you were payin' most all of the bills?

Donelle Hussleton: Well, the only bill she paid regularly, come to think of it, was her car loan, but that was only for five years, because she's had the same car for some 15 years, you know, no new car or trade-in. She also tithed with her church which was 10 percent of her net salary after taxes and other withholdings. Most times, when I went to church, I went to another church that I attended before our marriage. Occasionally, I went to my ex-wife's church with our daughter just as a family thing. She also contributed significant donations to a non-profit organization called Harriet Tubman Charities, Inc., that helped youth in Atlanta's poor urban Black community. The purpose of this non-profit organization was to feed poor youth before and after school, help them with school supplies, and provide academic support as after-school activities in the form of tutoring, computer availability for doing assignments, and Internet search availability.

Ijamama: Speakin' of food for po' school kids, who paid for food or groceries in your household?

Donelle Hussleton: I did, most of the time. She would occasionally buy a few items she liked from the supermarket or pay for a restaurant check, but I would pay the restaurant check most of the times, that is, the few times that we went out to eat. She said it was a waste of money to eat out and that the food was inferior or not organic, which was probably true in many instances. But eating out with your wife is more than just about food.

Ijamama: I hear you. Now, let's get to the unbelievable things that you mention in your book, 'bout or rather about what your ex-wife did to save

money. Number 1, what about that Saran wrap habit that you mentioned in yo' book?

Donelle Hussleton: Yes, to save money on Saran wrap or any plastic wrap, she would rinse it off after use and hang or stick the section to the glass window or the fridge door to let it dry out for use again. *(People in the audience laugh, gasp, or make surprise-type comments like, "Say what?" "She is really cheap.")*

Ijamama: And you write in your book that she would pee in your toilet at least five times before flushin' it to save on the water bill; is that right? *(People in the audience laugh out loudly.)*

Donelle Hussleton: That's right. Although she would pee five times and mainly use our master bedroom bathroom, she would tell our daughter not to waste water and just flush after peeing three times in the common bathroom that she used. *(A few people in the audience giggle.)*

A Woman in the Audience: Oh my God.

Ijamama: And what about doing a Number 2 in the toilet, you know what I mean? Would she let that stink jus' sit there and funk up the whole house? *(People in the audience again laugh out loudly and a few people gasp.)*

Another Woman in the Audience *(shouts out):* Oh no!

Donelle Hussleton: Well, she wasn't that bad, although she only flushed once for each episode, making sure to get it all out at once and include all used toilet paper before flushing. *(People in the audience laugh once more, after which Donelle continues.)* It was not unusual for the toilet to get clogged or stopped up, and we had to use the plunger to clear it.

Ijamama: Oh my God—that stink jus' sittin' there waitin' and generatin' funk. *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Donelle Hussleton: She did admit to peeing while taking a shower every chance she got in order to save on the water bill, and she suggested that I do the same. Once I even caught her standing on a stool and peeing in the sink, you know, the face bowl. *(People in the audience laugh out loudly.)* I couldn't believe my eyes. I confronted her, and it led to a big argument between the two of us. No, our daughter was not in the house at the time. She had left for school; she was in high school then. My ex-wife claimed that she was not peeing in the sink, but rather she was reaching for something up high in the bathroom cabinet. It's interesting that she had nothing on from her waist down and both of her arms were down with hands on the sink and not reaching up high for anything when I saw her. I couldn't believe my eyes.

Ijamama: I remember reading about that in your book, and I couldn't believe it either. Hard to imagine a woman standing and peeing, but I guess it is possible if you angle the flow right. But listen up, let me play the devil's advocate or simply cross examine you as a witness to what you perceived as peeing. Question number 1: "She did have her back turned to you, right?"

Donelle Hussleton: Yes, she did, but ... *(Ijamama interrupts.)*

Ijamama: Thank you, my follow-up, Question number 2: "Did you see the pee comin' out of her body and going into the sink?" *(People in the audience laugh out loudly.)*

Donelle Hussleton: Well ... *(Ijamama interrupts again.)*

Ijamama: Well nothin', so let's move on. Case is dismissed. What else you feel you had to endure with Cheap Hussy as you called her in your book?

Donelle Hussleton: Well, we lived in twilight darkness in the house at day to save on the electric bill. Also, my ex-wife also insisted on buying much of our furniture and house items from the Salvation Army discount store or from garage sales. She was very compulsive about saving and using coupons, which was a good thing.

Ijamama: Yeah, that's good, 'cause a lot of folks don't save and use coupons—it's like they throwin' money in the trash.

Donelle Hussleton: She learned to sew and would make most clothes for our daughter, except for things like jeans and T-shirts from Walmart, of course. She would go for months with a dirty car. It was a paid-for, 15-year-old silver Honda, as I may have mentioned in my book. She intentionally purchased a silver car so you couldn't see the dust and dirt well, and, thus, she wouldn't have to use house water or pay at a car wash to wash it as often. And when she did wash her car, she went to her church, a community school, or a park and used the water there to save on our water bill. And a thing that pissed me off, sorry about that word. A thing that irritated me until I got used to it was that she never gave me a birthday, Christmas, or wedding anniversary gift—only a greeting card here and there. A funny thing I mentioned in the book is that she was so creatively cheap that she would buy used greeting cards from the Salvation Army store or at garage sales for like 10 to 25 cents and bleach off the names of the sender. *(People from the audience gasp and laugh out loudly.)*

A Man in the Audience: Damn, now that's going a little too far. That's really a cheap hussy.

Ijamama: I agree that some of these money-saving habits were ridiculous or extreme, but you got to admit that some others were good common sense, like usin' coupons, sewing clothes for the family, and not eatin' out a whole lot. We got to take a break now, and we'll be right back in a couple of minutes to wrap up my interview with Mr. Hussleton.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I've been talkin' to my guest Donelle Hussleton about his recently published book, *My Life with a Cheap Hussy*. He says it's a book about how cheap his ex-wife was and her extreme habits to save money. Well, I want to invite a surprise guest here who asked to come on the show when she heard I would be discussin' Mr. Hussleton's book. So ladies and gents,

please welcome Ms. Miserlene Hussleton. *(The audience applauds and a few people laugh at the name, assuming the past marital connection. Ms. Hussleton walks onto the stage accompanied by another woman as Ijamama greets both of them and escorts them to chairs near her desk, after asking Donelle to move two seats down to his right to accommodate the new guests. Donelle stretches his eyes in surprise if not shock or disbelief after seeing his ex-wife there on the same stage with them. He was wondering whether this was a set-up for the show's ratings.)*

Ijamama: Welcome to the show Ms. Hussleton. Please introduce the lady you brought with you.

Miserlene Hussleton: Thank you for allowing me to appear. Ms. Ijamama, the lady who is accompanying me is Mrs. Doris Lawton, my lawyer as well as the lawyer and accountant for Harriet Tubman Charities, Inc. *(Ijamama says, "Welcome" to Atty. Lawton, and Atty. Lawton replies, "Thank you.")*

Ijamama: Now, Ms. Hussleton, as background information for our audience and viewers, you and Mr. Donelle Hussleton, who's seated here, were once married, like as husband and wife; is that right?

Miserlene Hussleton *(looking at Donelle):* Yes, that's correct.

Ijamama: You told me on the phone, befo' I invited you to join our show, that you had read Mr. Donelle Hussleton's book, *My Life with a Cheap Hussy*, is that right?

Miserlene Hussleton: Yes *(Ms. Hussleton glances at her ex-husband again as she answers.)*

Ijamama: So let me get to the point. What do you have to say about what's in that book? This is yo' moment on national TV to either deny or confirm things said in that book or both. This is yo' moment for rebuttal if not yo' 15 minutes of fame. *(Ijamama smiles and a few people in the audience giggle. Donelle looks nervous in anticipation of what his ex-wife might say.)*

Miserlene Hussleton: *(Miserlene pauses in thought for a moment. She had anticipated what would be asked of her and had given forethought to what she would say and how she would try not to get emotional or combative in doing so. Attorney Lawton is attentive and prepared to explain or add comments as necessary.)* OK, some things in the book were taken out of context. Some things were true and admirable about a woman saving money for her family. Some things were true or partly true and embarrassing to me, and a few things were inaccurate and not based on fact and, thus, were downright egregious.

Ijamama: And could you give us examples about which and what?

Donelle Hussleton: *(Donelle continues his nervous demeanor while anticipating what more his ex-wife would say or could say.)*

Miserlene Hussleton: The excessive habits of using coupon, of making clothes for our daughter, about seldom eating out at restaurants, about buying house things from the Salvation Army and garage sales are mainly accurate *(Miserlene looks at ex-husband Donelle with no expression after her deliberate and methodical statement)*.

Ijamama: Go ahead to the embarrassin' stuff.

Miserlene Hussleton: Well, he said I never gave him gifts on special occasions and that I gave him used greeting cards with sender names bleached out. The first claim is not accurate. I did give Donelle a set of golf clubs on one birthday and a tool box with tools one Christmas, because he wanted to play golf with his UPS friends, guys who worked with him, and he liked to do repair work around the house.

Donelle Hussleton *(chimes in to qualify):* Miserlene, tell the whole truth. Not one of these two gifts was new. They both were second-hand items purchased from the Salvation Army store. Essentially, you gave me somebody else's used junk, and you know it *(a few people from the audience laugh while a few others gasp)*.

A Woman in the Audience: Oh my God—now that is cheap, for real cheap.

Miserlene Hussleton: But these were gifts. Continuing with my answer—the greeting cards from the Salvation Army that I gave you did not have the sender’s name bleached out. Well, that was true only in one case of a very beautiful card from a garage sale. The others were unused boxes of greeting cards that I purchased either at a garage sale or from the Salvation Army store. They were unused so they were new.

Ijamama: And what about that story in the book about you peeing in the bathroom sink? *(A few people in the audience giggle or gasp.)*

Miserlene Hussleton: Now, that is absolutely false and outright ridiculous. I was about to take a shower and was standing on a footstool in front of the sink to reach soap up high in the cabinet. He had put bars of soap up on the top shelf of the cabinet when he brought them in from the supermarket. As you can see, I’m not that tall. He accused me of urinating in the sink to save money on the water bill, but I never did such a thing. I guess he thought this anecdote would embellish his book and help its sales. And why would I urinate in the sink when I was about to take a shower, given I did admit to him that I occasionally relieved myself while taking a shower?

Donelle Hussleton: Regardless of your denial about that incident, the fact is that you were excessively and unnecessarily cheap to the point of insensitivity many times to your husband and your daughter. And tell the world, why, why! What were you saving money for? Practically none or little of your salary was spent on our house and family. What good was all of the extreme cheapness and savings? What did you do with the saved money? Where did it go?

Ijamama: Ms. Hussleton, do you have a logical reason for your extreme frugal or cheap ways?

Miserlene Hussleton: We benefited as a family on tax savings from tax deductions—from money that I donated to the church and especially to

Harriet Tubman Charities Inc. for its activities and its community center in the Black Atlanta inner city or the Hood. Also, Donelle didn't realize how much I was sacrificing to help those who were much less privileged than we. He has to agree that our daughter learned how to save and be disciplined in her habits. Donelle, you didn't know that I started a personal checking-saving account in our daughter's name when she turned 16 to teach her how to save and manage a money account, and that I automatically transferred an allowance to her account each month. She also had a debit card. You see, accounting is my job; it is my career. Now, our daughter is independent and has a full scholarship that she earned from hard academic work in high school. We don't have to pay a penny for her tuition or university housing and food. Also, she knows how to save money and how to spend money, only as necessary. And as you recall Donelle, when she was a baby, we agreed to put aside money for her college. That's where some of the money went or will go. I'm now transferring funds to her checking-savings as needs arise for her personal and incidental college expenses, plus she automatically gets a monthly allowance that's electronically transferred from my checking account to hers.

Donelle Hussleton: But, did you have to abandon your husband to do these things? No, you didn't. You don't really fully understand my sacrifice for all of those years due to your extreme and illogically cheap ways and your insensitivity as a wife.

Miserlene Hussleton: Look, if you want to play the public blame game on TV, you abandoned me for TV sports with beer, golf with your UPS buddies, and working part-time on a second job for a number of years, which was unnecessary.

Donelle Hussleton: Don't you realize why I did what I did, because you were almost always gone with church activities, your Tubman Center for kids, or whatever else you might have been doing. You didn't want to go to restaurants or do some of the things that normal married couples do. It's the opposite; you abandoned me as your husband. Yet, I still paid most all the family bills and did my duty as a man, as a father, and as husband, until I simply couldn't take your extreme and insensitive ways anymore.

Ijamama: OK, OK, let's not get into a no-win argument about who did the other person wrong or who suffered most. This is a good time to take a brief commercial break to give both Hussletons time to reflect and think about the past. *(As appropriate to the argument of the Hussletons, Homies from da Hood band plays the hit song "Stand by Me" by Ben E. King from the 1960s.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Mr. Hussleton had the last word befo' the commercial break. Ms. Hussleton, do you want to reply to what he said?

Miserlene Hussleton: Donelle, I agree I failed you in some ways as a wife. I could have done better. You got tired of me and my ways, and I now understand. But there was a reason for my extreme sacrifices. And let me say one more thing. I thought it was wrong for you to write a book to discredit your former wife, if not the mother of our child, and to even use the phrase "cheap hussy." That hurts; it hurt me a lot. And please know that I did all I could to restrain myself from suing you for defamation. *(Donelle looks down in a remorseful manner, but he offers no apology or statement of regret or contrition.)*

Ijamama: *(Ijamama seeks to move the dialogue in another direction and away from the blame game.)* So Ms. Hussleton, please tell us, what did you do with all the money that you saved by your husband payin' most of the bills plus the two of you not spendin' money on things people normally spend money on in they marriage? Where did the money from your salary go besides church, Tubman Charities, and a minor savings for your daughter? *(Attorney Lawton listens attentively but feels she must eventually defend her longtime friend and client.)*

Attorney Doris Lawton: Maybe I should answer that one, because Ms. Hussleton is too modest and humble to do so. I've known Miserlene, Ms. Hussleton, for more than 15 years as a friend and as legal advisor and tax

consultant for her Harriet Tubman Charities, Inc., which is a non-profit corporation that must file tax reports as a corporation. Ms. Hussleton is Harriet Tubman Charities, Inc. People don't know that she is its founder and major financial contributor, because she doesn't seek titles, credit, fame, or awards. She doesn't seek public attention for herself, and she doesn't brag about how much she gives to a cause and what she's accomplished in helping our Black youth. Rather, she's a person who prefers to stay under the radar or work behind the scene. That's why I've been President and the face of the non-profit charities group for years. In short, she founded Harriet Tubman Charities, Inc., she gives more money than any other person to its cause, and she has spent more time with her mission of love than any other person—a mission of helping poor Black children. That's what has happened to much of her earned money. Another thing Mr. Donelle Hussleton, your former wife was not primarily concerned about personal tax deductions; plus, she really didn't want you to know that she was giving most of her salary to a cause to help the poorest of kids. So much of what she spent with the Charities activities was never deducted on her personal tax statement or rather both of your joint taxes. I've seen her pay for personal things for needy children that included gift cards for food, sports equipment for after-school play, snacks and drinks for kids who came to the Center after school to use its computers and the Internet for homework, and taxi or Uber fare for kids to get home safely from the Harriet Tubman Center at night if they had no one to pick them up. Many of these expenses for urgent needs were paid in cash or by credit card straight from Ms. Hussleton's purse and not through the Center's or non-profit corporation's fund. And yes, she spent much of her personal time raising money for the Tubman Charities Corporation from churches, businesses, and working individuals. Her own employer, Amazon, was a regular, big contributor to our youth. The youth center had significant ongoing bills such as rent, utility bill, phone bill, and more. Therefore, we needed much money to sustain our activities.

Ijamama: We're runnin' out of time. I really don't know what to say to close this out, except that sometimes we sacrifice for the good of needy others. Mr. Hussleton and Ms. Hussleton, it seems both of you sacrificed much of yourself for the success of your daughter. You evidently did many

things right if she was able to earn a full scholarship in a quality college. And both of you have sacrificed in your own special ways to make a real positive difference in the lives of poor Hood kids, although Mr. Hussleton you didn't know the reason for the sacrifices that you were makin'. I congratulate both of you for the good that you have done to help young people, includin' your daughter. I want to thank both of the Hussletons for comin' on my show. Also, thank you Attorney Lawton for your participation and explanation. *(All three guests reciprocated by saying "thanks for having us" or just "thank you.")*

Ijamama: Ladies and gents, tonight we have heard about examples of real religion and spirituality in action, and that is "love." Love is the center of all good religions, and love often comes through sacrifice for others, givin' to the most needy, and, yes, forgiveness. Remember to "Tell it like it is," and "If you do right, you can't go wrong." Lastly, "If you're good to yourself and others, God will be good to you."

Good night everybody, I love you.

Chapter 13

Interviews with Miss Universe and Spiritual Teacher

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama and her guests tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. Now, befo' we welcome our first guest tonight, I wanna talk about them toys—no, not your kids' toys or your niece's or nephew's toys. Um talkin' about them toys for grown-up women—them sexual toys you hide and use in private for yo' own pleasure, yo' own sexual healin' (*people in the audience laugh*). Look, if you are toy-dependent and have been for years, you need to give it up and get yo'self a real man or whatever (*people in the audience laugh*). The only justification for regular dependence on them toys is if you usin' them to prime up or arouse you for yo' man. Ladies, y'all deprivin' these men of they inalienable right to pleasure and happiness—know what um sayin'? (*A man from the audience shouts out, "Tell them Ijamama."*) Don't look at me; I know um not doin' anything now—too busy with my show; so I have a real reason. But listen to me; when Mr. Right comes along, um ready to please him wit' for-real sexual healin', and I won't need them sexual toys. (*Ijamama gyrates or grinds her hips in a sexual motion, as people in the audience laugh and applaud.*) Although hear me now, I have nothin' against women who need to use them toys to wake it up (*a few people in the audience laugh*).

Speakin' of bein' busy with my show, I got a guest tonight who's probably too busy for sex 'cause she got a hectic schedule as Miss Universe. Well, I'm guessing she's too busy. We'll see what she's doin' in all them fancy hotel rooms or suites. But let's take a commercial break first.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. We got a beautiful and elegant lady with us tonight, so put your hands together and help me to welcome Miss Universe. *(Miss Universe elegantly walks onto the stage with a big, warm smile. She's wearing a beautiful, knee-length white, fitted dress and her Miss Universe sash worn diagonally across her body from her shoulder to her hip. She pauses, strikes a pose, approaches Ijamama, shakes her hand, and is offered a seat in the guest chair closest to the host's desk.)*

Ijamama: How you doin'? Now you a fine, tall heifer, I mean lady. If I was into women, which um not, I'll check you out myself. *(People in the audience laugh.)* Sorry, I'm jus' being funny—partly what um paid to do. Also, I'm glad to see a woman of color as Miss Universe. How tall are you child?

Miss Universe: Thank you Ijamama for having me on your show. I'm 6'1" without my heels.

Ijamama: Yeah, that's very tall for a woman. Look, please tell these ladies from the Hood and other neighborhoods out there, if they can have hopes of ever risin' this high in the business of beauty contests.

Miss Universe: They certainly can. But first they must believe in themselves. If you believe, many things are possible. *(Miss Universe turns to talk into the camera as she continues her answer.)* If you believe in yourself and work toward your goal, almost anything is possible. But first you have to be blessed by God with some beauty or physical attributes. It helps to be tall, but you never can tell. You really don't have to accept the expected or the norm. Also, if you even have good natural beauty, you can't mess it up. You've got to work out consistently and keep your weight down with all of the competition out there now. You just have to be on your game, just like a finely tuned athlete. Getting some experience in beauty contests may help, but it's not absolutely necessary. The first step is to apply for

your state's title, and, if you win, then you are entered into the contest for the Miss USA title. If you win your country's title, you represent your country in the Miss Universe contest. That's how it's usually done for the USA. Of course, other countries also send their country's queen for the global Miss Universe competition.

Ijamama: What about them white teeth; are they for real?

Miss Universe: Of course (*smiling*); well, this is a gift from my parents and indirectly from God. But you can mess up good teeth if you don't take care of them. You shouldn't eat a whole lot of sticky candy and drink too many soft drinks or sodas, or you can end up with tooth decay. Also, listen young ladies, you have to brush your teeth regularly and floss. You know, use your dental floss to get those food particles from between your teeth and under your gums, or they will turn to bacteria and cause gum problems and other health problems—not to mention bad breath. There is new dental advice now that flossing is not necessary, but I believe safe is better than sorry. You have to keep your mouth clean and pretty, because that's what you use for talking, smiling, and, yes, kissing. (*People in the audience laugh, and Miss Universe smiles with her advice.*) Also, don't forget to brush or clean your tongue daily or sometimes twice a day, depending on what you eat. If you have the money or some type of dental insurance, then visit a dentist regularly for examinations and dental cleaning to keep your teeth white and your gums healthy. And remember, you can always get your teeth fixed with today's applied sciences of dentistry care, including orthodontics. Much can be done nowadays with dental technology and oral surgery to make you look even prettier than you are. Do you agree ladies? (*Women in the audience applaud.*)

Ijamama: You right about all that; you gotta be clean up top and clean down bottom—you know what um sayin'? (*People in the audience laugh and shake their heads in agreement. Miss Universe looks a little uncomfortable if not confused, but she chooses to ignore what seems to be a rhetorical question.*) Now excuse me for askin' this Miss Universe, but you have them chaperones go everywhere with you, is dat right?

Miss Universe: Yes, we have assistants and advisers, but we have a little time to rest and have our privacy.

Ijamama: What my viewers want to know is if you have a boyfriend. And if you do or if you want to date, how can you have privacy with them chaperones around almost all the time?

Miss Universe: Well, I don't have a so-called boyfriend now, although I do have a few friends that I keep in touch with by text message and phone mainly. I really don't have time for a steady partner or romantic interest with my demanding schedule, and it looks like it will be this way for the whole year of my commitment as Miss Universe. And, of course, you can't be married while you hold the title of Miss Universe; that's why it's called Miss Universe and not Mrs. Universe.

Ijamama: What you mean; are you sayin' all year without any man playmate? Well, I guess business is first, because I don't have time for a man myself. I'm tryin' to give most all of my attention to this TV show. *(Ijamama suddenly realizes that she should focus on using Standard English as much as possible, because she doesn't want Miss Universe to look and sound better than she.)*

Miss Universe: Yes, you are so right Ijamama. This is work and not play, although it's rewarding and a great learning experience with all of the travel and cross-cultural interactions with people. As I guess you know, as you just mentioned, a career or job at times can be all-consuming.

Ijamama: Yeah, you're right about that. Now, here we go with the big question. Miss Universe, what a lot of viewers want to know out there are things like are you a virgin, and, if not, when was the last time you gave it up; you know what um sayin'? *(Miss Universe is shocked, but she smiles and maintains her composure. Some people in the audience laugh out loudly while a few gasp.)*

Miss Universe: Yes, I think I know what you are asking. But do you have to be so graphic or explicit?

Ijamama: Sorry, but with my viewers, you got to be clear about what you're sayin'. You can't have them guessin' and readin' between the lines. So please, overlook my language and answer the question, the best you can, but be truthful. My motto is to "tell it like it is."

Miss Universe: Well, I'll put it this way. I'm not dating anyone and not physically or intimately involved with anyone.

Ijamama: Now you doing like the politicians; not answering the question completely; you know, the part about whether you a virgin or not and, if not, the last time you did it.

Miss Universe: *(Miss Universe takes a deep breath and pauses for a few seconds to mull over the question.)* Sorry, but, if you don't mind, I'd rather not dignify that type of question. And, with Miss Universe, your status of virgin or non-virgin does not matter. In other words, you don't have to be a virgin or prove that you're a virgin to compete at any level. However, you're expected to have a respectable and honorable character and personal past.

Ijamama: Well I do mind that you didn't answer; but I still have to ask you the real-life questions. So if you don't want to answer that one, let me move on to another one.

Miss Universe: OK, thank you. And Ijamama, I do remember your show's complete motto to "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all." *(Miss Universe is outwardly composed but internally on edge, because she doesn't know what additional personal questions that Ijamama might ask.)*

Ijamama: OK, you got a point, but I still have to do my job and ask you. Continuing with my interview questions, my viewers are not interested in makeup and dresses or "who you're wearing." They want to know the nitty gritty about you as a person. They want to know the real you as a woman and human being. So here's another one of them personal questions, "Have you ever gone down with another woman?"

Miss Universe: Gone down; you mean gone downtown shopping or to the shopping mall with a girlfriend? *(A few people in the audience laugh. Ijamama looks at her guest with that look, and then smiles.)*

Ijamama: No Miss Sweet Muffin, I mean, “Have you ever been sexually involved with another woman?”

Miss Universe: *(Miss Universe knows she has to stay poised and controlled—true to her image and title, so she does not allow the question to get her flustered or visually agitated.)* No, I haven’t, but I don’t pass judgment on women who choose a certain orientation or are naturally inclined to be with women instead of men, or those who prefer either a woman or a man. Some choose and some are just made the way they are, and I have learned to believe that we just have to accept some people as they are without passing judgment just as we would not like to be judged ourselves.

Ijamama: Wow, I like that answer! But, are you jus’ sayin’ that because it’s politically correct?

Miss Universe: Of course not; it’s the way I was brought up; you know, to respect people regardless of their way, identity, and status in life. Just because you have a certain preference, status, identity, or orientation, this doesn’t make you a bad person or good person. It makes you different. Ijamama, you asked, and I have answered you. To use your words, I’m telling it like it is, and I’m also telling it as I see it.

Ijamama: OK, I know you got that right. Some of them goody-two shoe heifers in church always tryin’ to put down others, but come to find out they often got lots of skeletons in their own closet. They forget that Jesus accepted everyone who came—the woman at the well, the tax collector, and the prostitute who washed his feet.

Miss Universe: That’s so right. We’re all human beings. We’re not perfect, and we’re not all the same. We are just inclined to be our natural selves and

our cultural selves, and we're all vulnerable to our weaknesses and imperfections.

Ijamama: Well said child. Now, I'm gonna hit you up again with another one of them personal questions. Hold on now and ride it out. You on them trips from city to city and livin' in all them fancy hotels and being alone late at night lookin' at TV or lookin' at them four walls. (*Ijamama starts to improvise on the lyrics of a popular TV theme song and to sing the best she could.*) Bad girl, bad girl, what you gonna do; what you gonna do when pleasure calls for you? (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*)

Miss Universe: (*Miss Universe smiles.*) I guess that's a question embedded in song lyrics, but can you please be a little more specific? I don't understand what you are asking. Or are you just making a statement rather than asking a question? And certainly, I'm not a bad girl (*smiling*).

Ijamama: Like, what you gonna do; like do you rub yourself and bust dat nut? (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*)

Miss Universe: What nut? I don't understand the question. Are you asking if I have a masseuse to massage me after a long day of activity or whether I rub myself down like in the bathtub with a sponge and bath oil or some type of exotic oil from a tropical nut? (*Ijamama and people in the audience laugh at Miss Universe's naiveté.*)

Ijamama: No, no Miss Honey Bun, let me break it on down a little more with Standard English. What many women out there want to know is do you masturbate or use toys for self-stimulation sometimes when alone and lonely in your hotel room? (*Miss Universe is surprised if not shocked, but she maintains her poise and smiles with grace.*)

Miss Universe: I knew when I came on your show that you would ask some tough and poignant questions about my private life. That's all fair. But to answer by not answering certain questions will be only fair to my crown, so my answer to that question is no answer.

Ijamama: So you gonna leave it up to my audience to make they own conclusions.

Miss Universe: (*Miss Universe smiles again gracefully.*) As a woman with the title of Miss Universe, I will have no choice but to do that. Some answers, whether you say “yes” or “no,” will still leave doubts in the minds of some or will erupt into controversy that will distract from the many good things that I’m trying to do and that I’ve been charged to do. I also have to be cognizant that gossip tabloid magazines and newspapers will pick up any answer that I give to such questions and have a field day of hypothetical exploration and assumptions. Also Ijamama, I again remind you of your belief, “Tell it like it is, or don’t tell it at all.” Well, I’ve chosen the latter, that is, not to answer the question.

Ijamama: Well, again, I guess you got a point. Now since you’ve been so nice and polite and not got upset with my tough questions, at least not outwardly upset, let me give you some easy questions now. You got that lean body—tall and slim with evenly brown skin; so what you like to eat. Some ladies want to know that, especially if they’re tryin’ to control that fat and keep that weight down.

Miss. Universe: I try to stick with not eating too much. It’s like I learned as a teenager that the more you eat, the hungrier you get. I mainly eat fish, veggies, nuts, and fruit. But occasionally I may eat bread, and I may also occasionally eat ice cream or some other type of dessert at a restaurant, but usually not the whole dessert. Also, I have been known to sneak barbecue ribs and cook-out stuff once or twice a year—like at a family reunion or a holiday event. The main thing you ladies need to know is not to eat between meals, not to nibble all day, and not to eat late at night. That’s how you can pick up lots of calories and pounds. Also, remember not to eat too much at one time or to stuff yourself like a turkey (*smiling*). And, of course, avoid a habit of eating fast foods, they tend to have lots of calories, and avoid or minimize drinking soft drinks that have a lot of sugar.

Ijamama: Now tell us what you doing this year to help the world. You know, don’t you all have like a theme or mission of what you plan to do—

like one Miss Universe of the past helped out with the global AIDS problem.

Miss Universe: Yes, I have been focusing on giving confidence and inspiration to little girls who have been hurt in life. Those who have been subject to sexual abuse, physical abuse, trauma from war violence, and orphaned due to loss of a parent or both parents—you know, like orphans of parents who died from AIDS or who got killed in war or ethnic violence. Many of these girls are in African and Middle-East countries. Mostly, I meet with groups of girls only; however, sometimes, I also support little boys if they're a part of the group with whom I meet.

Ijamama: Have you been to any Hoods or Black neighborhoods, or you jus' goin' to them other types?

Miss Universe: No, I really go everywhere; including Africa, South America, India, China, Mexico, poor urban Black U.S. cities, and poor rural White U.S. towns.

Ijamama: Thank you very much Miss Universe for comin' on our show—you've been very gracious in addressin' my very difficult personal questions. You passed my interview test, and the world should be proud of the way you carry yourself. I wish you well for the rest of your reign. God has blessed you, so please continue to give to and help others in need. We have to take a commercial break now, and Miss Universe will have to leave during the break because of her demanding schedule. So please put your hands together one more time for Miss Universe. *(The audience applauds loudly as Miss Universe says, "Thank you" and gracefully makes her exit. The Homies from da Hood band plays for the live audience as the TV cameras are paused while the video-recorded commercials run for the TV viewers.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. My next guest is a African-American professor who has been called a

Spiritual Teacher by many. He has authored a number of books and poems on spirituality. Two of his 26 books are titled *Spiritual Teacher Speaks* and *God's Gifts*. His name is Frederick Douglas Harper, but he often writes under the pen name, Spiritual Teacher. I first learned about his writings from a guest on the Hot Heifer Late Night Show, when I briefly co-hosted on that TV show—and I mean very briefly (*Ijamama laughs*). Some of you might have remembered my short tour of duty on that show, right? (*A few in the audience laugh. Also, Ijamama has been practicing Standard English at home in front of her bathroom mirror, especially in pronouncing words such as "about, that, and because" instead of "'bout, dat, and 'cause."*)

Later on when I got my own TV show, a guest on my show by the name of Smart-Ass White Boy read one of Spiritual Teacher's poems. Since then, I had been tryin' to get Spiritual Teacher to come on my show, and I finally succeeded. He kept refusin' me, tellin' me he's not interested in public appearances but only writin' and publishin' the many ideas that come to him in dreams and visions from a spirit existence. Spiritual Teacher, or rather Dr. Harper, used to be a university professor, but he retired several years ago to devote his life totally to spiritual writing and spiritual teaching. Ladies and gentlemen, please put your hands together and help me welcome Spiritual Teacher. (*Spiritual Teacher walks out onto the stage and over to Ijamama's desk as the audience continues to applaud. Standing, Ijamama shakes his hand and offers him a seat. He's dressed in grey pants, a black sports jacket, and a white open-collar shirt with no necktie.*)

Ijamama: Welcome to the show. You don't mind if I call you Spiritual Teacher, do you?

Spiritual Teacher: No, not at all.

Ijamama: Let me ask you right off the top, what is spirituality? And is it the same as religion, or is it different; and, if so, how?

Spiritual Teacher: To me, religion and spirituality are not the same. Religion is a way of thinking and living based on institutional teachings and laws of man. Spirituality is a way of thinking and living based on one's relationship to God and all sacred creations. We learn religion from others;

but we discover spirituality from that which is within and around us. We have different religions, and each religion has a way that is based on its founding prophet and the teachers of its sacred texts or scriptures. Of course, some of the prophets of major religions include Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad. We are usually taught our religion by our family, culture, and religious institution, but we discover spirituality when we seek it and find harmony, peace, and balance with sacred creations—including animals, plants, and natural earthly forms. We find spirituality when we find a balance within ourselves of body, mind, and spirit. We find spirituality when we find the light of talent and love within us and share these with others. We find spirituality when we learn to listen to The Universal Spirit, my name for God, and its spirit guides that come into our minds and hearts. And of course, we find spirituality when we learn how to love, give, forgive, and sacrifice for good cause. To me, a truly spiritual person is at a higher level of spiritual growth than one who is religious. A spiritual person transcends the beliefs of a single religion or a single prophet and, thus, accepts the spiritual teachings and writings of multiple prophets of good. A truly spiritual person does not have an allegiance to one religion and one prophet. A singular religious allegiance over generations has created hatred, jealousy, competition, and even violence between and among religions. This thinking as a way of allegiance is a belief that one's religion and major prophet are the right way or better than another religion and its major prophet.

Ijamama: A lot of people on the Internet or on social media are going around sayin' they're spiritual and not religious. But I know a few of 'em, and they're no more spiritual than a lamp post or a grazin' cow (*a few people in the audience laugh*). So, could you please explain more about the beliefs and the ways of a spiritual person, so my audience and these Internet folks will know how a spiritual person is supposed to look and act?

Spiritual Teacher: As I wrote in my book, *Spiritual Teacher Speaks*, the spiritual person loves without condition, gives without expectation, and willingly offers and accepts forgiveness. Also, the spiritual person lives in peace, finds and maintains a purpose or mission in life, accepts pains of life without destruction of self or others, avoids many of life's temptations and

pleasures, is not concerned about buying or accumulating a lot of earthly material things, and sacrifices for the good of needy others. Furthermore, the spiritual person respects life and other sacred creations. Lastly, a spiritual person often demonstrates a sense of freedom and courage and seeks universal truth. Jesus and other spiritual prophets lived and taught many of these ways.

Ijamama: And who else among the livin' and dead do you regard as highly spiritual people? Give us some recognizable names so we can further see how a spiritual person is supposed to look, be, or act—you see what I'm sayin'?

Spiritual Teacher: Yes, I do. First of all, I believe that truly spiritual people are usually anointed or called by God before birth. There may also be cases where a highly spiritual person may be called upon after his or her near-death experience or some other life-changing experience or crisis. Highly spiritual persons do not necessarily have to acquire or possess a religious title such as pastor, imam, priest, or rabbi, although they may have such. As I see it, truly spiritual people help the maximum number of needy human beings in significant ways, and they change the world for the betterment of the human race and Earth itself. Spiritual people sacrifice most all of their awakened time for the purpose of developing themselves and helping others. They are tantamount to being a missionary for the highest and most worthy causes. In my opinion, the names of highly recognizable spiritual people who come to mind include Mother Teresa; former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, especially for his global contributions to humanity after his Presidency; former U.S. Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Barack Obama; Haile Selassie; Albert Schweitzer for his great humanitarian work in Africa; the great poets Rumi and Kahlil Gibran for their spiritual writings; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Harriet Tubman; Helen Keller (*Spiritual Teachers pauses to think of others*); Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi; the 14th or current Dalai Lama; Desmond Tutu; Sitting Bull who was a great Native American; Edgar Cayce, arguably the greatest clairvoyant of the 20th century; Nelson Mandela; Muhammad Ali who was love himself and who was loved by the world; and Malala Yousafzai. There are worthy others. Again, I would definitely include the great prophets of major religions or spiritual ways

such as Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius, Abraham, Moses, and a few others.

Ijamama: That's a mouthful; they all good people. But who is Malala?

Spiritual Teacher: As a girl age 15, Malala was shot in the head in Pakistan in 2012 for attending school and advocating education for girls in an Islamic culture where the Taliban banned formal education or schooling for girls. She received medical treatment in England and miraculously survived and recovered. She has advocated globally for children and for the education of disenfranchised girls, and she became the youngest Nobel Prize winner ever at age 17.

Ijamama: Oh, I remember that Malala girl now. I once saw her on TV speakin' at the United Nations after her recovery from being shot. Yes, she was very impressive—a great speech for a teenager. She was advocatin' for the rights of children and girls. I remember a female news commentator callin' her the most popular and respected teenager in the world. I really believe that she was chosen and sent by God to do His work. Also, I believe she survived for a Godly reason. Some angels come in small packages. *(A few people in the audience laugh softly or applaud, and one woman shouts out, "That's so right Ijamama.")*

Spiritual Teacher: Yes Ms. Ijamama, I agree with you. I do believe that Malala's life was divinely spared, and that she was chosen and anointed for her mission and role.

Ijamama: Spiritual Teacher, do you personally follow these spiritual beliefs and ways that you teach for others and write about in your books? In other words, do you live by what you preach?

Spiritual Teacher *(smiling)*: I certainly try to, and I think I do well, but I'm constantly evaluating how I can do better or do more. My adult life has been about continuously learning, trying to stay healthy, and helping others through my educational teaching, therapeutic service, positive writings, and my development of helping programs and organizations over my years. I've

also helped members of my immediate and extended family, and I've given financial contributions to worthy causes and groups. No human being is perfect at living totally and consistently to all of these spiritual beliefs and ways at all times. Yet, we should strive to be the most spiritual person that we can be. We all can do better and sacrifice more, especially if we are blessed much to do so. Only when we give and love as our natural way do we receive total fulfillment, happiness, and peace. True fulfillment and personal peace are greater than pleasure of the body and possession of earthly things. I believe that there are two types of spiritual people; those who create for good and those who serve for good. I like to think that my adult life has mainly been one of spiritual creation and spiritual service.

Ijamama: You said no human being is perfect. So are you sayin' that Jesus was not perfect?

Spiritual Teacher: *(Spiritual Teacher pauses in thought before answering, while Ijamama silently anticipates his reply. He certainly didn't want to offend believers of Christianity while also being true to his spiritual beliefs.)* Jesus was a human being, who was at God's highest level of spiritual being and living.

Ijamama: Professor, you didn't answer my question. You only re-stated the human condition so we could conclude that Jesus was not perfect, because to you he was a human bein'. So let me ask you in another way. Could you say more about your last answer and how you see Jesus?

Spiritual Teacher: I view Jesus as one of the greatest prophets ever anointed by The Universal Spirit or God. He was simply a spiritual healer and teacher, which we often forget. That's who he was, and he was as he lived—a life of teaching and healing. It is unfortunate that in ways, the real image of Jesus has been distorted and transformed mainly by people of European descent over historical times and then exploited for selfish economic, political, and institutional purposes. For example, Jesus was designated as a God by man, and his image was often projected as a White or Caucasian European with blue eyes, evidently for reasons of racial oppression and exploitation of people of color. To explain further, if a Black

person is taught to worship a White prophet who was designated by man as a White God, then Black people or other oppressed peoples of color would subliminally worship their White supremacist oppressors and view them as being in the image of God and, therefore, superior and privileged. However, the truth is that the real human Jesus who lived and died was not a God, he was not White, and, based on where he lived, he did not have blue eyes. *(People in the audience are quiet and attentive.)*

Ijamama: You're right about Jesus not being White. I once saw a science program on TV where researchers found that people who lived where and when Jesus lived were not White but brown. I finally got my Black church here in Baltimore to put up a Black Jesus statue and to remove the White Jesus with blue eyes from the crucifixion cross. Our new Jesus is a brown Jesus with black hair and brown eyes.

Spiritual Teacher: I congratulate you and your church. Yes, I am saddened whenever I see a Black church with a White, blue-eyed Jesus on a cross or images of a White Jesus on its stained-glass windows. I might also mention that I once visited one of the oldest Christian churches in Greece. It was in Thessaloniki, Greece. While there in that old church, I saw the image or sculpture of a brown Jesus with kinky black hair upon a cross. I later researched Christianity in Greece, and learned that Greek scribes hand-wrote copies of some of the first Christian Bibles, because there was no printing press at the time, and Hebrew and Greek were the popular, written, Western languages of that period. As one of the early sites of Christian churches, the people of Greece evidently knew how Jesus looked during ancient history. I also learned that Greece, Israel, Syria, Ethiopia, Jordan, and Armenia were among the first countries to adopt Christianity and to build Christian churches. One debatable account is that Ethiopia, in Africa of course, was the first country to build a Christian church. We also know that the *Holy Bible's* reference to Abyssinia has reference to a land that is part of modern-day Ethiopia of Africa, a land of brown people. We also know that the Jewish leader Moses married a Black woman from Ethiopia if not a region named Cush that was just south of Ethiopia. And don't forget, Moses was born in Egypt, also called Kemet, which, of course, is in Africa. What I'm saying is that over historical times, Europeans of power and

influence have intentionally changed the accurate facts of history for their exploitative convenience.

Ijamama: This conversation is excitin', and I have more questions, but I must take a commercial break first, because we cannot depend on the Lord only to keep us on the air *(a few people in the audience laugh as the show's band starts to play music for the break)*.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here talking to Professor Harper, also known as Spiritual Teacher. He has a book titled *Spiritual Teacher Speaks* along with other spiritual books. This is a copy of that book. It's available for purchase at your local bookstores or on the popular Internet websites. *(Ijamama holds up a copy of the book so the camera could zoom in on the front cover.)*

Spiritual Teacher: Thank you.

Ijamama *(continuing her interview)*: Of course, I read yo' *Spiritual Teacher Speaks* and browsed through a couple of yo' other books, includin' *God Gifts* and *The Light Within Us*. I learned a lot and got much insight from yo' viewpoints and wisdom. In yo' writings, you sometimes refer to God as The Universal Spirit. I think you also mentioned that name or phrase a moment ago in answerin' one of my questions. Could you please explain yo' name for God?

Spiritual Teacher: Yes, I may use the term God sometimes as here on your show, because people are familiar and comfortable with that name. However, in my writings, I often refer to God as The Universal Spirit, because I've come to believe that God is the one universal spirit that has no gender or no one place of residence. That is, because I now believe that God is a spirit existence or spirit dimension and not a spiritual entity. God is everything and everywhere as one whole of connected spirit energy. If God is everything and everywhere, then God cannot be an entity or one thing that is apart from other things. I believe that God does not sit on a throne,

and God does not exist in the image of man. Again, I believe that God is one universal spirit or The Universal Spirit which is a spirit existence or a spirit dimension.

Ijamama: So are you sayin' that God is the same as what we call heaven, since heaven is supposed to be where our spirit goes after death of the body? Because Jesus said that we go to heaven to be with God.

Spiritual Teacher: Yes, I do believe that when we go to heaven as spirit, we go back to God as spirit energy, because God as The Universal Spirit is heaven. Also, while living on Earth, we can allow the Spirit of God to come into our heart and mind. However, to receive the Spirit of God, I believe that we have to prepare our heart for God to come in, and we have to prepare our mind for the gift of God's knowledge or answers to our questions. Our prayers to God reside more in our constant thoughts than in our uttered words. This doesn't mean we shouldn't pray in our spoken words, but we must rather pray constantly by our thoughts and actions. For example, when I begin to write a new book, knowledge comes to me to include in the book as I write. It is hard to explain. It just happens. In other words, God's knowledge, wisdom, and truth are likely to come to those of us who constantly ask for such in our thoughts and actions. God's knowledge and truth may come in dreams, through conscious thoughts or visions, through helping persons, through dialogue with a person, and through spirit guides that speak through our thoughts. There is an old 19th century hymn which states, "God moves in a mysterious way/His wonders to perform."

Ijamama: Wow, you said a lot—that's deep. Yes, I'm familiar with that hymn or those words. And what or who are these spirit guides, in case I didn't ask you that earlier?

Spiritual Teacher: I believe that spirit guides are instruments of The Universal Spirit's will or God's will. They may be the spirits of our ancestors but not necessarily so. Spirit guides may also be the spirits or souls of others who lived previously on Earth but who are not necessarily our direct DNA ancestors. However, we have to be aware that all human

beings descended from the same Homo sapiens group in Africa, so we are all related in some way just as we are all members of the same species. Spirit guides may provide critical messages and knowledge to us, or they may protect us in times of danger or a near-death experience, especially if it's not our time to die, that is, because of some purpose that we have yet to fulfill. Spirit guides are the same, I believe, as what we call angels.

Ijamama: And how do you know when the Spirit of God or these spirit guides come to you or come into your life in some way?

Spiritual Teacher: Sometimes spirit guides of God can give us knowledge without our awareness. In other words, we can know without knowing that we know. This has happened to me in my writings and my life. In other instances, I believe people receive messages or knowledge in dreams or in their conscious state, usually when they are physically alone, and sometimes when they are among others but alone in a spirit state of consciousness. There is no scientific method of knowing if something is right. We feel or sense that it is right; we just intuitively know. For example, my book's title, *Spiritual Teacher Speaks*, came into my consciousness without effort, and I knew it was to be the title of the book. In another instance, I had been trying to figure out or research a title for my spiritual novel, *The Durabone Prophecies*. As I typed the novel into my computer, a psychic or clairvoyant character in the story, in dialogue with her son, gave me the title for the novel. In the story, the son, Dr. Durabone, was writing a book that included prophecies from his clairvoyant mother, and he wanted to give his mother credit in some way. Of course, the son and his mother's family name is Durabone. When the son as author asked his mother how he could give her credit for contributing God's prophecies through her, which were to be included in his book, she contemplated for a while and then answered, "Just call them the Durabone prophecies." When I typed the words from my mind and hands, I knew without doubt that this was to be the title of my novel: *The Durabone Prophecies*. When spirit knowledge or wisdom comes into our awareness, we know it when we see, hear it, or think it. In the case of the title for my novel, I knew it was right immediately—it was a sort of Eureka moment. (*Spiritual Teacher pauses as*

if he is considering more to say but at the same time not trying to make his answer too long.)

Ijamama: Yes, I remember that Greek mathematician Archimedes who said that word, “Eureka,” when he finally got the answer he had been searchin’ for to a problem. Maybe God gave him the answer. I guess when you ask God over and over for an answer, you stand to get the answer you’re searchin’ for through some medium or spirit guide. Spiritual Teacher, you look like you have more to say on my question about spirit guides. Please go ahead.

Spiritual Teacher: Well, I might add one last thing about spirit guides. Many members of the Catholic Church believe in great heavenly saints who once lived as humans on Earth and performed miracles in helping others as did Jesus. Catholics believe that great or canonized saints were special on Earth and they are special in heaven or with God as heaven. They are able to intercede with God for humankind and able to intercede directly with a person or event on Earth. Therefore, Catholics may pray to God and to or with great holy saints of the Church. I believe great Catholic saints, in essence, are likely to be spirit guides. Sorry for the long answer if not the amendment to my original answer. *(Spiritual Teacher smiles and people in the audience laugh politely and applaud.)*

Ijamama: Let me ask you a few quickie questions, because we’re runnin’ out of time; so please be brief. You wrote in one of your books that you don’t believe in the Garden of Eden version in the Bible, so could you explain that to our viewers and audience? And all you fundamentalist Christians and evangelicals out there please don’t write me about Spiritual Teacher’s answer. *(Spiritual Teacher smiles and people in the audience laugh.)*

Spiritual Teacher: I believe that the Garden of Eden is not a place on Earth, but it is Earth, itself. Earth is God’s garden of many species of plants and animals as miracles of life. I also believe that Eve was non-white and that man evolved from her and not the opposite. We have to ask whether stories from or interpretations in the *Holy Bible* are, in many cases, sexist,

because men wrote mostly all of these scriptures and may have excluded stories and versions by women writers like Mary Magdalene. I will keep this answer short and, thus, will not comment on Adam and Eve as related to the symbolic if not sexual meaning of the snake and the apple or the fruit (*people in the audience laugh as Spiritual Teacher smiles*).

A Woman in the Audience: Yeah, it means men should keep their snakes in their pants unless God calls on them to mate with a chosen woman and make a baby, of course, after marriage. (*People in the audience, mainly women, applaud in agreement and laugh out loudly.*)

Ijamama (*Ijamama smiles*): Look ladies, I'm not talkin' about snakes and apples. But I do agree that it's been men who founded religions and mostly men leaders runnin' these religions, you know, like Priests, Cardinals, and Popes in the Catholic Church; reverends, elders, and bishops in Protestant churches; rabbis and cantors in Judaism; and Imams, mullahs, and ayatollahs in the Islamic faith. I'm thinkin' Black Protestant churches are likely to have female church leaders like pastors and even bishops. The AME church—you know, the African Methodist Episcopal church—elected its first female bishop in 2000, Bishop Vashti McKenzie. And I heard they elected a few more women Bishops since then. Look, I don't know the percentage of women leaders in religions, but I bet not nearly as many as the men. Anyway, I wonder whether men of traditional religions conspired to keep women from takin' positions of leadership in they churches, temples, mosques, synagogues, or other places of worship.

A Woman from the Audience: Don't wonder sistah Ija; yes, men did conspire and still do.

Spiritual Teacher: I agree; there has been a conspiracy that continues to this date to prohibit or minimize women leaders in religious institutions. If one looks at The Last Supper painting of Jesus and his disciples by Leonardo da Vinci, the person seated to Jesus's immediate right is a woman, who is believed to be painted as Mary Magdalene. Leonardo da Vinci was brilliant in subtlety and symbolism in his paintings. We often assume that all 12 disciples were men; therefore, we fail to see in da Vinci's Last Supper

that the person seated next to Jesus has the face of a woman, and she is leaning away from Jesus so as not to show any intimate affinity to or favoritism from Jesus. Some of the disciples had long hair, so one would have to look closely to see that the individual seated next to Jesus with long hair was not painted to be a man but painted to be a woman. In several places in the New Testament of the *Holy Bible*, names of women followers of Jesus are mentioned, yet the history of female leadership in the early Christian movement has been distorted, omitted, altered, or kept under the radar. I think that Leonardo da Vinci knew or believed that Jesus had a female disciple or females as disciples, but he could not publicly avow this because he feared persecution by the Catholic Church. As a last note on this topic, I Googled “the 12 disciples of Jesus” and found that all the names were names of men or male names. Scriptures and historical documents often omitted, discounted, or discredited female followers of Jesus after his crucifixion.

Ijamama: Yes, sexism is alive and has been, but women are risin’ up to take more leadership in all arenas of society—right ladies? (*Women in the audience applaud along with a few men.*) Let me switch to anotha topic, because we’re runnin’ short of time. In one of your books, you mentioned that in God’s existence or in heaven there is no such thing as time. The question is how can we eliminate time or how can there be no time? We live by time all day and every day, from moment to moment.

Spiritual Teacher: In order for time to exist, there has to be “change” and “distance.” In heaven or with God, The Universal Spirit, nothing changes. Once we die, our image as spirit energy stays the same. Also, in heaven there is no distance between things or places, because everything is connected as one whole or as one existence which is heaven or The Universal Spirit. On Earth, we have change, for example, change in seasons, in our age, in our human body, in the chemical composition of materials, and so forth. On Earth and in all of the material Universe, we have distance between places and objects, for example, between cities, between countries, and between Earth and the moon.

Ijamama: That makes sense. Now, you also mentioned in one of yo’ books that the *Holy Bible* should not be a closed book. Why is that? And I hope you don’t get a lot of protest letters from preachers and other viewers about your *Holy Bible* idea. (*Ijamama smiles and a few in the audience laugh softly.*) I guess we all should have an open mind as did Jesus.

Spiritual Teacher: *The Holy Bible* and other sacred texts contain stories about and teachings of God’s chosen or anointed prophets as well as other chosen people of God. This I believe. These are stories that often teach us valuable spiritual lessons about how to live. In other sacred texts, we also have writings of wisdom by spiritual teachers or prophets. Across the ages, we’ve continued to have spiritual stories and anointed prophets of wisdom; therefore, I believe that worthy stories should be written and added to sacred texts of the *Holy Bible*, the Quran, and other sacred books as appropriate. I believe leaders such as Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. were anointed by God to be significant and benevolent leaders for the difficult period in which people of their times lived. The tragedies that befell them and their families are supposed to teach us a lesson if we look beyond the tragedy and the pain for the spiritual messages of God that lie therein and the lessons that these leaders taught by their life and words. Certainly, all three of these leaders were charismatic and were inspirational in their writings and public speeches. All three died from a gunshot wound, and their lives and their deaths altered national and possibly world history. Likewise, in the *Holy Bible*, we have leaders and their inspirational stories and teachings such as in the cases of King David and King Solomon. There certainly are spiritual stories and wisdom of cultures and times other than those in the *Holy Bible* and other mainstream religious books—spiritual stories and wisdom that need to be added to these religious texts.

Ijamama: In one of yo’ poetry books, you state, and I quote: “I write message poetry, therapeutic poetry, and educational poetry. I am a messenger and a servant of God for good cause.” In mo’ or rather more than 30 years, you have now published more than 1,000 poems and 17 books of poetry. How did you learn how to write such beautiful and meaningful poetry?

Spiritual Teacher: A gift cannot be learned. It can only be developed and enhanced by its use. It is given to us from God or from The Universal Spirit. A gift of such light of talent is born or anointed within our soul. I believe that I was anointed to write poetry because it comes to me easily as with, I guess, other poets like Edgar Allan Poe, Langston Hughes, Rabindranath Tagore, Rumi, and Kahlil Gibran. Writing is simply what I do. It is what I was born and blessed to do. Also, when you are given spiritual knowledge, I believe you must write it down and share it with others, or such knowledge will no longer come to you. My father's father was a writer by interest and possibly gift of natural talent, but he could not fully realize his gift. He had a college degree, worked at the U.S. Post Office, and wrote a book manuscript that he never could get published and, thus, was never able to share it with the public. According to my father's sister, my grandfather's book manuscript was lost or discarded after his death. I sometimes wonder if his soul or spirit was expressed through me and some of my writings, and if his soul or spirit within me accomplished his goal of publishing his book, which was my novel. Interestingly, my novel was on a similar theme to what I heard was the topic of my grandfather's book manuscript. He, Daniel, wrote about a perfect society titled "Utopia II," and I wrote about prophecies for a future world or society. I never saw or read my grandfather's book manuscript, and I did not consciously write *The Durabone Prophecies* to complete my grandfather's goal. It was just something I felt I needed to do—something that I was destined to do without my conscious knowledge of such. Again, we can know without knowing that we know.

Ijamama: In your writings, you often write about a person's soul and spirit. Also, in your last answer, you spoke of soul and spirit. Do you see these as the same or different, and, if different, then how are they different?

Spiritual Teacher: I'm still trying to understand fully the soul and the spirit as related to the person. I'm sorry, but I'm not ready to answer that question with confidence. I have sought an answer to this question, but knowledge from The Universal Spirit or a spirit guide has not yet provided me with the full wisdom of understanding, or maybe I haven't recognized an answer that

has already been presented to me. Remember, I previously said that we can know without knowing that we know. I do think that the living human body houses a soul. And I do think that our spirit, upon death, leaves the body and goes to another existence which is to The Universal Spirit or God, which is the same thing that Jesus taught as well as other prophets. However, is one's spirit the dynamic expression of that person's soul? Can a person have more than one soul? And does or can a soul from a past life be reborn in a new body in order to complete work from a past earthly life or to serve some needed earthly purpose? This is akin to or similar to the question of reincarnation. I often ask myself, "Was President Obama the second coming of King Solomon, a wise leader, or some other great and wise leader of Egypt or elsewhere in African? Were his two parents chosen to create a body that would house a soul that was destined to be a significant world leader in a time of global crisis and challenges? And was he destined to marry the right woman, Michelle, to partner with him in his grand mission?"

Ijamama: Spiritual Teacher, thank you for finally agreeing to come on my show (*smiling*). I wish you well in your spiritual work.

Spiritual Teacher: You're welcome, thank you for having me on your show, and thanks for staying after me to get me to come on your TV show (*smiling*).

Ijamama: Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together and show your appreciation for Professor Frederick Douglas Harper, also known as Spiritual Teacher. Remember, "If you're good to yourself and good to others, God will be good to you." And, "If you do right, you can't go wrong." And finally, do as I do, "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all."

Good night everybody.

In Ijamama's interview of Spiritual Teacher, she consciously chooses to use the formal phrase "ladies and gentlemen" instead of "ladies and gents," because of her guest's educational status and former professorial position.

Chapter 14

Ijamama Speaks at Chemical Valley Middle School's Commencement

Ijamama is seated on the auditorium stage at the Chemical Valley Middle School as the invited speaker for the commencement of the 2016 graduating class of eighth graders. This is a public school located in a small town of West Virginia—a school where one of Ijamama's future guests, HoneyBaby, attended as a girl. Also on the stage are the county's Superintendent of Public School, the school's principal, the president of the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and the president of the Student Council, among other dignitaries, leaders, and program participants. Ijamama is composed and is wearing a traditional knee-length, navy blue dress with a silk scarf that is royal blue and white (the school's colors). She also has a corsage of pink and white flowers, pinned to her dress, which the school provided for her. She is wearing traditional black pumps as footwear. After the National Anthem, the invocation, and other program preliminaries, the school principal introduces Ijamama as the commencement orator.

School Principal: Good morning boys and girls and the rest of the Chemical Valley Middle School family, I am pleased to introduce to you a woman who has risen from poverty to the highest level of American television success. She now has the number one late night TV show. She is street smart, self-educated, and has risen above the challenges of injustice and discrimination due to race and gender. She is especially a champion of children's rights and women's rights. Her name has even been mentioned as a possible candidate for President of the United States due to her Harry Truman-style plain talk, common sense, and personal ethics. She's decisive and willing to act on her conscience. One of her closing quotes on her TV show is, "If you do right, you can't go wrong." She is one of us; not necessarily by race, but by her background and how she raised herself up from a humble beginning. She's known by her stage name, Ijamama, and

she would rather use this name in her public appearances. Therefore, please join me in welcoming our commencement orator for this year's graduation exercise, Ms. Ijamama, host of the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. *(The audience applauds loudly, especially the graduating students—many of whom had followed some of Ijamama's late night shows on TV if not video clips on YouTube and postings on Facebook.)*

Ijamama: *(Ijamama walks up to the podium and places her speech on the sloped top. She is deliberate and takes her time.)* First, I would like to thank your principal, Mr. White, for that gracious introduction—thank you sir *(turning to look at Mr. White just briefly)*. Second, eighth graders, I congratulate your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other family, and community folks who helped you to get to this point in your life. Also, I acknowledge and congratulate your school teachers, administrators, counselors and any other school staff that helped you along your way. I once heard a public speaker say if you see a turtle on top of a fence post, you know that the turtle got help to get there. So there are many grown-ups who helped you to get to this point in your life. Lastly, I congratulate every one of you for finishin' your eighth grade and moving up to high school. Please give yourself a well-deserved, big-time applause *(seemingly, the entire audience applauds loudly and graduating students cheer)*. *(Ijamama was cautious to use her best Standard English. She had practiced her speech for this very important group of youth on their special day. Her trusted TV staff had warned her to "get your message over and be brief.")*

Now since I've said all of that, let me say *(pausing to get full attention)*, Whas up *(flashing her charismatic Ijamama smile)*? *(The kids break out in laughter and yell back, "Whas up Ms. Ijamama.")* Look, I know some of you all have been stayin' up late watchin' the Ijamama show when you should have been sleepin'. You must have learned about me somewhere, because you thought enough of me to invite me to your graduation to speak to you and share your special event. Or maybe you saw a video clip of my show on YouTube, Facebook, or local news. Whatever, I do thank you for your invitation. I'm honored to be your commencement speaker.

If it's OK with your parents and your other adult loved ones here, I would like to talk to you for a few minutes as if I'm your mama, because my nickname, Ijamama, was created by my younger sister from the sound of

the Hood phrase “I is yo’ mama,” which means “I am your mama” in Standard American English. My nickname, Ijamama, was given to me by my younger sister, because I always tried to tell both of my sisters what to do or how to do somethin’, and they said I was bossy and trying to be their mama. But I guess it was a natural God-given leadership within me even as a child. You see where I ended up—with my own TV show (*a few people laugh and applaud softly*). So listen up, having confidence and takin’ leadership like I did as a child is not always a bad thing.

Although I can be funny on TV, I can also be serious on TV and in real life. Sometimes you can even use humor or funny stuff to make a serious point, especially about how to live life the right way. Today, I will be mainly serious. Maybe you heard or saw me when I was on the Oprah Show when I first started my own TV show. There’s one thing I remember that Oprah told or rather advised me to do. She advised me not jus’ to put on a TV show to entertain, but I should use my God-given talent to influence good—to help make a positive difference in the lives of people every day and everywhere. I remember that advice, and I try to do it on every one of my shows. Today, I will try to do the same here with you—to say things that will be meaningful and helpful to you. I say this because you are important for your future and our future. You are important to me.

I’m not gonna try to be a brainiac or intellectual in my speech to you—or act like a college graduate, because I’m not. I do have what some people call street smarts or God-given intelligence or plain common sense. My street smarts and knowledge come from my experiences, hard times, and jus’ from looking, listening, reading, watching educational TV, and thinking about my life and the world. Also, my knowledge of life comes from what my mama and family taught me, what my Sunday school teachers and good neighbors taught me as a child, and, of course, what my good school teachers taught me back in the day. And last of all, I think whatever I have as far as natural intelligence and personality came from God’s gift to me to be used for good purpose or used to help others.

I have written down a few notes, and I will try to speak, jus’ a little, to you the graduates and for your very special occasion, but Ijamama ain’t gonna change too much because I am who I am, and to try to be totally somebody else, I will lose my message for you today. Do not role model my English because it’s not right many times, but it’s the way I learned to talk

jus' as you may have a Hood or neighborhood language of your small town or your coal miner community. I can speak so-called Standard English, if there's such a thing, but it will not come out naturally. The main thing here this morning is that I communicate a message of good and right to you, that I tell it like it is or like I see it, and that you value and find helpful what I will tell you.

Listen up now; the first thing I want to tell you is don't ever, ever let people take pleasure by laughing at who you are, laughing at you being different from what they think is acceptable. Tryin' to put you down will say more about who they are and how low they can go—you know what I'm sayin'? *(Some kids shake their heads affirmatively or applaud lightly.)* So if these types of people or bullies try to diss you or rather disrespect you, they really diss themselves by tryin' to be so-called better than somebody else. Each of us has a culture, and no culture is necessarily better; it's just different from another or other cultures. The important thing is to be what you supposed to be by God's design, not what somebody tells you that you're supposed to be. Sometimes, you might choose your way and make your road to a purpose in life or even to fame, and sometimes you'll find the road or path by circumstance and by your choice to accept an opportunity that is created by circumstance. That's how I got my TV show. Circumstance created opportunities, and I accepted the opportunities which led to my own TV show. But whatever, listen to the voice within you or a message from God and then make a choice for you. Do you see what I'm tryin' to say? *(Some of the students applaud softly or shake their heads positively in agreement.)*

Write the script for your life and then play you. I believe in each one of you as a unique child of God—born into this world for a purpose. You can go far and you can rise high if you want to, only if you want to. So I challenge you. I dare you to go high and far in your life. You can also serve and help if that's your main callin'. However, be the best you can be at whatever you choose to do or whatever you do. I believe that if you're good to yourself and good to others, God will be good to you. I believe that if you do right, then you can't go wrong. I often say these things at the end of my TV show.

So please listen up as I briefly provide this additional advice to you, and then I'm respectfully out of here, because you don't want me running my

mouth all morning *(there is soft laughter from some of the students):*

Number 1: Learn as much as you can and help as many as you can. *(Ijamama pauses to allow that thought to sink in.)*

Number 2: Don't forget your family and your Hood or the community from where you came. You really have a responsibility to help others who are in great need, especially if you become fortunate and blessed to do so. *(Ijamama again pauses, taking her time and allowing the wisdom to sink into each child or teen.)*

Number 3: It doesn't matter where you come from, but it matters where you're goin'. Choose the right path of "growth" and "giving." These two G's are important in living right. Remember to always grow or learn and to always give to those in need, as much as you can.

Number 4: It's not so much how you talk but more important what you say. It's the meanin' and intention of your message and not always the style of your language. However, try to learn and practice Standard English which may come in handy in job interviews or in certain jobs. Yes, in my job, I've learned to try to change my English habits without losing who I am and how I communicate—without losin' my Ijamama edge. A degree of so-called Standard English is important in my work, because my job deals with communication, and people throughout the country and in many parts of the world are listenin' to what I say and the questions that I ask my guests.

Number 5: It's not how people look at you, but how you see yourself. Respect yourself and others will respect you. Don't allow either compliments or criticisms of you to go to your head and mess you up. Just take life in stride and stay even keel like a boat in motion to its destiny. Remember, bullies don't matter, unless you allow them to get into your head or under your skin, right? *(A few students laugh and some even applaud loudly along with some professional staff.)*

Number 6: You gain respect from others by earning it; so jus' work hard and do good things. And as I said earlier, "If you do right, you can't go

wrong.” Respect is not simply given; it is earned. Self-esteem is not given; it is also earned. You jus’ don’t adopt self-respect or buy it.

Number 7: No matter how big you get in life, love the Lord, love yourself, and love your family. I should also include, “love your true friends.” Are you feelin’ me (*smiling*)? (*The kids loosen up and laugh.*) Talk to me, are you feelin’ what I’m tellin’ you about love. (*One student yells, “Yes Ms. Ijamama, we feelin’ you.”*) OK, talk to me. I jus’ want to know if you’re with me and if you listenin’; plus, I can’t resist being funny sometimes (*laughing briefly*).

Number 8: If you ask me, don’t be a user and don’t let other people use you beyond what you want to give to them based on what they deserve or need from you. (*Ijamama pauses to allow this statement to sink in.*)

Number 9: Remember, Christmas or other religious holidays are times to give to the needy, sacrifice for good, and forgive those you have hurt or done wrong. It’s not a time to brag about what you got for Christmas or to compare gifts. Remember, Jesus taught that we should love, forgive, give to needy others, and sacrifice for the benefit of those most in need. There’s a common sayin’ that if you’re not a part of the solution, you’re a part of the problem. Be active for positive changes as a student. Also, vote and be involved in makin’ positive changes when you become a grown-up. If you don’t participate to make positive social changes, you may be a victim of the changes made that will affect you. As one of my TV guests once said, “If you’re not at the table, then you’re on the menu.” (*Students and others in the audience giggle and applaud.*)

Number 10: Don’t resort to or depend on things that can destroy your body and spirit, destructive things like addictive drugs. Addictive drugs can enslave you and even kill you—jus’ don’t do it. Listen to yo’ commencement mama, “Jus’ don’t do it!” (*Teachers, administrators, and staff, mainly, applaud loudly.*) And in case you don’t know, alcohol is also a drug which is addictive if you drink too much, too often. No, not now (*smiling*), I’m sayin’ if you drink too much alcohol as a grown-up of legal

age. You've heard of alcoholics, right? Well, these are persons who are addicted to alcohol, and they need help just as other drug addicts need help.

Number 11: Whoever you are as far as your ethnicity, gender, social class, cultural group, job, or identity, remember that you are unique as a person and you are a member of the human race. You're a child of God. We are different from others, but we also have things in common with all other human beings. At birth, you became a beautiful flower from God's human seeds of life. You are a unique flower in God's garden of life, God's earthly Garden of Eden. Always act like you're special, because you are.

Number 12: Be who you are or who you're comfortable being, as long as it works for you and is not a bad thing. Oprah told me that TV producers wanted her to change her name at first, but she refused to do it. And look what happened. Her name is different, and it's now a brand name. The name Oprah is unusual if not unique, but it's her name. And look, the name Oprah is now a household name. The same thing happened to me, when my TV producers suggested that I change from Ijamama to another stage name when I started my show, like Mary or Sue. I told them, "I'm Ijamama and I don't want to be somebody else." I once Goggled my name and found out that I may be the only Ijamama in the Universe. Now, isn't that cool? *(Some students in the audience shake their heads in agreement and laugh.)*

As I conclude this talk to you, I challenge you to work hard and do your best, and your best will help prepare you for whatever you choose to do as a grown-up. Do your best in whatever you do in high school, whether academics or classwork, athletics, music, leadership, or extracurricular activities. As your commencement mama and orator, I want you to know that I love you, and I expect you to do good things and great things in life. I believe you can. I believe that you will. As grown-ups, we're depending on you to make our world a better place. As you begin high school, there will be teachers, counselors, administrators, and others there to help you and to push you forward in life in positive ways. Again, congratulations and thank you for allowing me to share this very special moment with you. May God bless you and your families. *(The students, parents, teachers, and others in the audience applaud loudly as Ijamama takes her seat on the stage. Most*

people in the audience continue to applaud as they rise from their seats to give Ijamama a standing ovation.)

School Principal: *(Principal White returns to the podium after Ijamama takes her seat. He personally compliments Ijamama on her talk after shaking her hand.)* We at Chemical Valley Middle School sincerely thank you very much Ms. Ijamama for traveling to be with us on this auspicious occasion and for presenting a very inspiring and meaningful message to our young people. We also express our gratitude to you for paying your own travel expense and not charging us, knowing that we're always short of school funds. We surely appreciate that. May God continue to bless you and guide you in your very important work. The President of our Student Council would like to present something to you and make a few comments.

Marcia Hughes (President, Student Council): Ms. Ijamama, on behalf of the graduating students of Chemical Valley Middle School, class of 2016, I thank you very much for being our commencement speaker. Your message was on point and very relevant to the challenges we face today as youth as well as those that we will face in the future in high school and as grown-ups. We would like to present a plaque to you as a small token of our appreciation. Let me read what's on the plaque: "To Ms. Ijamama . . .," sorry but we didn't have your real name. OK, again, "To Ms. Ijamama/ The Best Host of Late Night TV/ Continue to Tell It Like It Is/ We Love You Too." *(Marcia gives the plaque to Ijamama, and Ijamama gives her a big hug.)*

Marcia Hughes: We also wish to present you with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. *(The captain of the boys' basketball team steps forward and gives the flowers to Ijamama, who says, "Thank you." Ijamama also gives him a hug.)*

Ijamama: Thank you for this beautiful plaque and for the very meaningful words on it. I will put it on the wall in my office at the TV studio. I will always cherish it and remember all of you when I look at it. Also, thank you for the beautiful flowers. Yes, I will continue to "tell it like it is" as long as I have breath in my body. I have one last thing to say. I heard that your mascot is a "miner," like a coal miner. So I leave you with one more

challenge or wish (*Ijamama pauses briefly to get total attention*), “Go miners!” (*Ijamama smiles and raises her right fist high in the air as she holds her plaque and flowers with her left hand. The students laugh and raise their right arms high with clenched fists and yell back, “Go miners.” Then they applaud once more for their commencement orator as Ijamama returns to her seat on stage.*)

Ijamama was concerned that she had not been funny enough as the students may have expected. However, her purpose was to be brief and give them good advice that they could think about, remember, and use in later life. As Ijamama flew on her flight back to Baltimore, she felt that her job had been done well enough and that she had made a positive difference in young lives. She reflected and thought to herself, “God continues to use me well.”

Chapter 15

Ijamama's Co-host, "Baddass White Girl from da Hood," and Interview with HoneyBaby

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the party as Ijamama, her new co-host Simone, and her guest tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks out to center stage.*) Whas up? Welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your "tell-it-like-it-is" host. We got a hell of a show tonight, as usual. Thanksgiving is next week, and I know you feelin' it. I know you ready to eat like a pig and to eat pig (*Ijamama and her audience laugh*). Well, you probably eat both turkey and pig—them salty hams. Why is it that we give thanks for God's food by eatin' all the food we can eat on Thanksgiving day and through that holiday weekend—turkey, ham, dressin', mac and cheese, sweet potatoes and sweet potato pie, collard greens, cranberry sauce, and more. You know what I'm sayin', right? (*People in the audience laugh and applaud.*)

One Woman in the Audience (*shouts out*): Yeah we know; we got to have it Ija. (*Standing at center stage, Ijamama pauses and then looks at a young woman who is already on stage and seated in a chair next to Ijamama's host desk.*)

Ijamama: Yeah, you got that right. This young lady is my new co-host. Her nickname is "Baddass White Girl from da Hood"—like that's the long version of her nickname. Her trusted friends simply call her Baddass for short or by her real name, Simone. She grew up in the Hood, and although she's very lightskin, she's as Black as any sistah can be. She's Black conscious, street smart, college smart, and she carries much junk in her trunk—no flat butt there (*Baddass White Girl smiles, and Ijamama and*

people in the audience laugh). So give it up and warmly welcome Baddass White Girl from da Hood. Treat her like Hood, because she is Hood. She's Hood to the red bone. And treat her like family of this show, because she is now family, know what um sayin'? (*Baddass White Girl is about 5'8" tall, finely shaped, has a beautiful smile, and is wearing a soft-grey sheath dress that stops about three inches above her knees and clings to every angle and curve of her beautiful body. She is seated with her beautiful legs crossed.*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama walks over to her host desk and Simone stands to greet her with a gentle hug. Ijamama takes her seat at the desk.*) Welcome to the show Simone.

Simone (Baddass): Thank you very much Mama Ija for having me as your co-host. I really appreciate this opportunity.

Ijamama: Proud to have you on my team. I call her Baddass for short but definitely not at our church (*a few people in the audience laugh*). At church, everybody calls her by her baby name, Simone. And you don't need her full name so you can try to check her out—she deserves her privacy just like me. And listen up; I can't call her Baddass on the show every time, because my pastor will call me out on it, which he should. Yeah, my pastor is a good and righteous man, unless some of these preachers.

Simone (Baddass): Again, thanks Mama Ija for having me as a regular on your show. I'm so honored. You know I've been watchin' your show, and now I'm on stage with you watchin' your back like I've always done since I was a little girl. I can't believe it. And allow me to say whas up to my peeps out there in the Hood and to everybody else out there in TV land. Yeah, this is me; or should I say this is I? Yeah, I'm nilla (vanilla or lightskin) on the outside but Black to the red bone and chocolate flowing through my veins and arteries. Can you feel me out there (*looking in the main camera and out toward the live audience*)?

Ijamama and persons from the audience laugh and applaud.

A Man from the Audience (*shouts out*): Yeah, we can feel you baby. You're lookin' good, damn good.

Ijamama: Stand up Simone and do a slow 360 to let them see that trunk, that round butt of gift from your African-American mama. (*Baddass White Girl stands up, smiles, strikes a pose, and then slowly spins around 360 degrees on the balls of her feet somewhat like a ballerina's pirouette.*)

Simone (Baddass): Yeah, this is all me. God has been so good to me.

Another Man from the Audience (*sings out lyrics from a hit song of the early 1990s*): Whoomp, there it is; whoomp, there it is (*referring to Baddass's looks and fine shape*).

Ijamama: Ladies and gents, listen up; Baddass Simone not only looks good, but she is highly qualified for TV work. I recommended her to be my co-host, and the producers and staff checked her out. They so-called vetted her, and she came out of that investigation as clean as drawers washed with Clorox bleach and as fine as 24 karat, 99.99 percent pure gold (*people in the audience laugh*). Well, I want you to know that she jus' finished a college degree at the Community College of Baltimore County with courses in TV programming and media technology.

Simone (Baddass): That's right; thanks Mama Ija.

Ijamama: Some of you may be wondering why I would have a fine young lady in her 20s to co-host with me. Well, I don't see her as a threat or competition, or don't see it as a jealousy thing but as an asset to the show. She's not only highly qualified for TV work, but I've known this girl, or rather young lady, since she was knee high to a duck and in our church. She was always a good girl and earned good grades in public school. As many of you know, I believe we all got to look out for our young people; to give them a chance or opportunity for experience.

Right now, we got to take a commercial break. But one mo' time, put your hands together and welcome Simone while our own Homies from da Hood band take us to the break with music for the occasion. (*As a tribute*

and welcome to Baddass Simone, the band plays an old-school popular song, “She’s a Bad Mama Jama” by Carl Carlton as the TV cameras cut to commercials. Immediately, the audience begins to sing along with the band, “She’s a bad mama jama, just as fine as she can be” Baddass waves her arms left to right with the music in the way that fans at a football or basketball game do.)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Simone, befo’ we welcome our first guest, let’s talk about how you got that nickname baby—you know what um sayin’, the nickname Badass White Girl from da Hood and later jus’ Baddass for short.

Simone (Baddass): OK, well, like I was 14 and had started to develop up top and down around the hips; know what I’m sayin’? A guy in the park saw me one Saturday with another girl, a school friend of mine. I was wearing tight jean shorts. He said, “You ain’t no White girl wit’ dat Badd ass. You look like a Olympic sprinter—you show got a sweet booty. Damn, you got some tight junk in dat trunk. You a baddass girl.” That’s exactly what he said and how he worded it as I can remember, because it stuck with me word for word.

Ijamama: And how you felt about that comment when he said dat or rather that (*Ijamama corrects her English*)? Audience, I have to be careful about my English with a college lady on the set. (*A few people from the audience laugh. One person yells out, “Ija, jus’ be yourself.”*)

Simone (Baddass): Like I was 14, as I said, so I saw it as a compliment. I already was feeling like a woman. My estrogen was just bustin’ out all over my new body. You know, folks were wearing tight jeans and short-shorts that hugged your skin and stuff then.

Ijamama: And you sayin’ that this incident started your nickname, Baddass White Girl, right?

Simone (Baddass): Exactly, this same guy in the Hood started callin' me that and other kids in the Hood and at school joined in on the nickname—it caught on. They eventually cut it short and sometimes jus' called me Baddass. It was not a teasin' things but rather a compliment as I saw it and other kids saw it. Of course, they wouldn't use that nickname around school teachers or any respectable adults, like in church.

Ijamama: Now Simone, if you really were White—it'll be no big thing. But you Black, right? You jus' a lightskin or a biracial Black like Jordan Sparks, Sade, Mariah Carey, Lisa Bonet, Halle Berry, Drake, and our own U.S. President Obama who got a White mama and Black Kenyan daddy, right? But you a little lighter than some biracial folks; however, you unmistakably got that naturally curly, long, brown hair and thicker-than-White-folks lips that show you up as Black. And you grew up in a Black Hood or Black culture, right?

Simone (Baddass): Yeah, you're right Mama Ija. I learned in my multicultural psychology course in college that, to a great degree, culture defines us and how we act and what we like or prefer. Some biracial Blacks who identify as Black are sometimes raised in a White culture, like President Obama. I was born both legally Black and culturally raised Black, so I'm strictly Hood. Not like I grew up in a White Hood or with a White family like some of them half-white celebs. Sorry, I'm not knockin' them, because I accept them as Black too—the more the merrier.

Ijamama: Yeah, tell the audience how you got dat light—you know your skin color, if you don't mind.

Simone (Baddass): My mama is African-American, like Halle Berry or Lena Horne color, and my daddy is White. My mama was a singer in numerous nightclubs; well, she still sings. She met my daddy who once came to see one of her shows. They both were young, and he was in the military, baddass U.S. Marines. Anyway, to make a long story short, they fell in love or whatever, and here I am. My mama named me Simone after the famous singer Nina Simone. My grandmama mainly raised me, because my parents were both away most of the times with their careers—mama

traveling all around the country singing most of the year, and my daddy was overseas much of the time as a career military service man. I saw very little of either of them, but, you know, it's all been good for me so far in life.

Ijamama: You got that right girl. You're not a victim unless you accept being a victim. The main thing Simone is that you had love growin' up, your grandmama, your aunt, your church, your school, your Hood, and your parents whenever you saw 'em, whenever any one of them popped in. Y'all know that African proverb that, "It takes a village to raise a child." OK, we got to take a short commercial break before bringing out HoneyBaby, our guest for tonight's show.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here with my new co-host Simone, also known as Baddass White Girl from da Hood or Baddass for short. We have a guest tonight or this morning who has a new book out about her journey to transcend her old lifestyle and her choice to survive incest and other sexual abuse in order to help other women who are or were captive to abusive men. Her book is titled *HoneyBaby: Every Man's Sweet Thing*. Ladies and gents, please join me in welcomin' HoneyBaby to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. *(HoneyBaby walks onto the stage, turns slightly toward the audience and smiles, and then walks over to greet Ijamama with a gentle hug before taking a seat immediately to the right of Ijamama's host desk. Simone speaks to HoneyBaby before she sits and then moves a seat over to the right.)*

Ijamama: How you doing?

HoneyBaby (Mia): Thank you; I'm good, considering my life journey.

Ijamama: Yeah, yo' journey has had some rough spots and challenges before the sunshine and rainbow came. I read your book, plus my staff pulled out some powerful segments to consider for my list of interview questions I initially made up. I just don't know where to start in askin' you

questions, because there's so much to talk about. Now you grew up in a rural small town in West Virginia that's almost all White folks, right? Take it from there as related to yo' story. Please give us some family and growing-up background and then get into when and how the abuse started.

HoneyBaby (Mia): You're right about my background and West Virginia. The sexual abuse or incest started with my biological father; we called him daddy. I have two sisters, one who's two years older and the other is four years younger. My father wanted a son, but my mama didn't get pregnant again. My older sister and I always wondered if she may have gotten one or more abortions or secretly used birth control pills to avoid a fourth child, because she had told my daddy over and over that they couldn't afford another child. It seems our parents were always arguing about something, and they didn't care if we heard them or not. Daddy was drinking a lot when he wasn't working at the chemical plant, working in our veggie garden, or taking care of the hogs and chickens. When we became teens, my older sister and me, he told us that it was his job to introduce us to sex or "break us in" as he called it (*a few people in the audience gasp*). We didn't know any better, so we believed him, although we may have wondered in our immature minds. He got my older sister first when she was 15—she told me about it when it happened. She told me it hurt at first but was not bad after a while. We both were confused at times but brainwashed to think that it was something we had to do, that we should listen to our parents and do what they asked or told us to do. We wondered if other fathers also did this. It started with my older sister during the summer when we were not in school, usually when mama had to work on the weekends at the hospital as a medical assistant—like keeping medical records, taking appointments for patients, and doing whatever else they needed her to do. Mama saw it as a great job, because she had no college, only a high school diploma. Also, my daddy told us not to tell anyone, not even our mama about what he was doing to my older sister and planned to do to me.

Ijamama: And when did yo' daddy start havin' sex with you?

HoneyBaby (Mia): He started on me when I was the same age, 15. My older sister was then 17 and about to start her last year of high school. Late

during that summer before school started, she had refused to let him do anything else with her. My sister questioned why he repeatedly did it to her when he said he was only going to break each of us in. She said he slapped her and tried to rape her when she refused him, but she fought him off and threatened to tell his wife, our mama. That same summer month in early August, he came into the bedroom that my older sister and I shared. My older sister abandoned him so he focused his sexual energy on me as the next victim in line. I was on our computer at the time. Conveniently for daddy, Mama was at work, my older sister was at her summer job at the movie theater, and my baby sister had gone to the same theater to see a movie. I think my daddy gave her money to go to the movie to get rid of her so we could be alone at the house. I could not afford to take time to go to the movie, because I had a computer project to finish for a summer camp program.

Ijamama: So how did he come onto you that first time, that is, if you feel up to sharing the details? (*HoneyBaby tenses a little and bites into her lower lip.*)

HoneyBaby (Mia): (*HoneyBaby gathers herself and sits up straight with confidence.*) No problem—well, after he came into our bedroom. He just stood behind me as I sat looking at the computer screen. I had a nervous and fearful feeling. I could sense his unusual or eerie presence as he rested his hands on my shoulders. I said something like, “What you need daddy; you want me to fix you some lunch?” There was a pause, then he said in his husky voice, “It time for you now,” as he reached over my shoulders and started squeezing and massaging my breast through my T-shirt with both of his large hands.

Ijamama: And did you say anything to him or resist?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I was afraid, shocked, and felt helpless like a robot or zombie under someone else’s control. In a way, I knew it was coming, but I had no advanced warning that it would happen on that day and so soon. Again, I guess he turned on me after my older sister stopped him from

doing it to her. I should've known he would turn on me as his alternative after her resistance.

Ijamama: And what did he do after squeezing or massaging your breasts?

HoneyBaby (Mia): He took my hand and led me to my bed. He unzipped my shorts and pulled down my shorts and removed them. Then he removed my panties as I lay there. I was paralyzed and could not say no, say stop, or could not run from the bedroom. I just laid there and waited as a patient waits for a doctor or dentist to do what he has to do. He took a tube of lubrication from his pocket, squeezing some on his finger and then rubbing it on and in me to ease entry I guess. Then, I felt the pressure as he pushed, but I just laid there and said or did nothing as he went about his pleasure or business with me. No, he didn't use a condom, later telling me he withdrew before orgasm. He also didn't try to kiss me on the mouth. It seems like it was over in a matter of several minutes.

Ijamama: OK, we're running against the clock, so could you speed things up? Like what happen after that; did he try it again?

HoneyBaby (Mia): Over the ensuing year, he did me about three more times before I stopped him just like my sister had done. I had told my older sister what was happening, and she kept telling me to stop him. She also said to me, you might even get pregnant if he continues. Right after I stopped my daddy, my older sister and I went to our mama and told her everything. We didn't want our baby sister to be the third victim. I was 16 then, and my sister had just turned 18 during the winter of that year, her senior year in high school. Mama didn't believe us, saying we were trying to get her to divorce our daddy because of his heavy drinking and his arguments with her. It was more than his arguments. We also believe he slapped mama around or beat her up at least three times, giving her a swollen lip and face that we saw at breakfast a couple of times and a black eye on another occasion. Anyway, she told us we'd better not tell a school counselor or anybody about what we had told her about our daddy, because "they might believe you" and send the police for our daddy and, thus, give him jail time that would mean loss of income from our family. To our

knowledge, she never confronted our father about our claim. To make a long story short, my older sister finished high school and got married immediately afterwards to get out of the house. I moved in with my grandma—my mother’s mama—who lived in the same town but closer to my high school.

Ijamama: And did your younger sister remain there with a sexual predator?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I told my grandma what daddy had done to me before she allowed me to move in with her, and she later moved my baby sister in with us when I was a senior in high school and my baby sister was almost 14 then. I don’t know if grandma ever confronted our mama about what I told her about daddy. In order to get my parents to let my baby sister come live with us, my older sister and I threatened to go to Child Protective Services to report our father’s incest or sexual abuse, which is what it was. This would have forced them to give up my baby sister to foster care if not to live with grandma and me. When I first moved to grandma’s, I was 16, and I became very involved in grandma’s church to drown out my traumatic past.

Ijamama: Let’s take a commercial break, OK, and we’ll return to talk about your preacher and that church. I remember reading that in your book. *(Ijamama’s co-host Simone listens attentively, but she doesn’t want to be too active during her first night as co-host. So she listens, observes, and allows Ijamama to take the lead. She sees her job as being supportive of Ijamama and not competitive.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I’m here talkin’ to HoneyBaby; that’s her pen name. Her real name is Mia, and I won’t tell her full name for privacy. Let me show you Mia’s recently published book. The title is *HoneyBaby: Every Man’s Sweet Thing*. *(Ijamama holds up the book so the TV camera could zoom in on the front cover.)*

Ijamama: Mia, go ahead and briefly tell us about that preacher man. I had a run in with a preacher man myself when I was much younger, in my 20s. *(Ijamama laughs, remembering how she had beaten up a preacher who touched her inappropriately.)* However, I was a grown woman, and you were jus' a minor or teenager when you were abused and exploited.

HoneyBaby (Mia): The pastor of my new church, my grandma's church, was about 48 years old at the time, so I heard. He was a fiery preacher who preached fundamentalist Christian sermons based on the scriptures. I had been volunteering a lot for church activities and youth programs, so the pastor noticed me. My grandma as a member of this all-White church thought it was a good idea for me to volunteer and keep busy to get my mind off what had happened to me with my daddy. Well, the pastor asked if I wanted to work part-time for the church, helping with records, finance, and church correspondence. My grandma thought it was a great opportunity for me to get experience and make my own spending money. In the beginning, the pastor gave me work to carry home, and then he had me come to his study at church to work on records and correspondence like on Saturday mornings or a few times after school. For some reason, I could feel his eyes on me while alone with him as we worked. He eventually started touching, then kissing, and finally consummating with penetration and later oral. He said it was the will of God who sent me to lift him up in spirit. I really didn't understand how he could say that when he was married with five grown children, older than I was. I was still 16, going on 17 then.

Ijamama: What about the time in your book when you said that he called you the Lamb of God?

HoneyBaby (Mia): Yeah, that was the nickname he gave me—the Lamb of God as if I was a young lamb sent to him by God for sacrifice in lifting him in his mission of the church.

Ijamama: And tell us how that relationship ended so we can move on.

HoneyBaby (Mia): Once I was working in his study with him at the church. I think it was during a Saturday morning. I could tell he was horny

and teasing around to see if I wanted to do something. We had been involved sexually two times before. I told him I was on my period, you know, my menstrual period. He still wanted to kiss and touch. Then he pulled up my skirt and pulled my panties down and off. I was wondering what he was planning to do. As with our first time having sex, I again felt paralyzed. I just couldn't say stop. I may have told him once more that I was on my period. He ignored me; he just didn't care. He just removed my sanitary napkin—you know the pad? *(There were gasps from people in the audience. One woman in the audience shouted out, "Oh my God!")* This feeling of paralysis or inability to act was the same feeling I had felt with my daddy. As I learned later in therapy, it was an inability to be assertive, to say "no" or to express opposition to something I didn't want. Anyway, he went down on me; you know what I'm saying, right?

Simone (Baddass): *(Simone replied just to show some involvement.)* Yes, you're saying he had or did oral sex.

HoneyBaby (Mia): Right, I just laid there feeling helpless and numb. When he finished and raised his head, I could see that his lips and front teeth were red *(a few people in the audience gasp or giggle)*. He looked at me with a silly smile on his face and stupidly said, "The blood of Jesus is upon me." I was utterly disgusted, and I felt his reference to Jesus was blasphemous and hypocritical. As I put on my sanitary pad and panties, I made a conscious decision within my mind never to let him touch my body again. It took anger for me to confront him. Also, I had lost any remaining respect that I might have had for him. I immediately quit the church job, explaining to my grandma that I had too much school work. I never told her or anyone in the church what happened. I eventually quit that church and joined my older sister's church, because I just couldn't sit there every Sunday and listen to a hypocrite.

Ijamama: Why is it you didn't report him to higher church authorities or to the police? He was having sex with a minor. You were a minor.

A Woman in the Audience: Right, what he did to you is a low-down shame and a crime.

HoneyBaby (Mia): He threatened me. He said that he knew about me and my father having sex. He said to me, if I reported him, he would tell this to the police and also tell the police I was a flirt and a liar. He said he would tell the police that he gave me work to carry home, but I insisted on coming to his church office to do the work. I felt ashamed and afraid, as if I had done something wrong, having sex with a married man. However, later in therapy, I was told that this pastor committed the crime of statutory rape of a minor, not to mention his unethical church behavior of adultery and sex with a member of his congregation. I later learned in my social work college study that sexual predators almost always use their authority or some means of threatening or bullying the victim into silence.

Ijamama: Damn, what's wrong with some of these so-called preachers? Are they men of God or men of sexual pleasure? *(Several people in the audience reply, "pleasure," as Ijamama continues.)* And why is it they cry and admit to sin only when they get caught with they zipper or pants down? Remember famed TV preacher Jimmy Swaggart got caught with a prostitute and Jim Baker who was found to be havin' a sexual relationship with his secretary? Old hypocritical preachers like these two should only get down on they knees to pray, and they both were married too. *(People in the audience laugh and agree by their light applause. One woman comments, "That's so right Ija.")*

HoneyBaby (Mia): Leaders in the church should be role models and should always sacrifice their needs and desires in order to help others. That's exactly what Jesus did.

Ijamama: Absolutely, they definitely should not be sexual predators. For the sake of time, let's move on from your preacher story to your experience in Chicago. Go ahead baby. Rather, let's take a commercial break first befo' starting your Chicago experience.

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here talkin' to HoneyBaby, the author of *HoneyBaby: Every Man's Sweet Thing*. She's talkin' about how she survived sexual abuse by men, educated herself in college, and now helping other women who have been abused in different ways. Go ahead baby and talk about your life after that abusing, no-good, low-down preacher. And this was a bad apple, because most preachers are probably good people, so I don't want to bad-mouth religious leaders.

HoneyBaby (Mia): The last year of my high school, I dated and was intimate with three guys around my age for the first time. It was easy for me to attract boys. The girls at my high school said that I was a magnet for boys. They started calling me HoneyBaby, and girls wanted to hang out with me because they said I attracted the cute boys. After sex a couple of times with a boy, I would find a reason to argue with him and break up. As I look back, I knew how to have sex, but I didn't know how to love or be loved. Also, I guess I was role modeling my parents who argued much of the time.

When I finished high school, I moved to Chicago. A guy I had been talking to on social media and by phone invited me to come there and live with him while I looked for a job. Instead of seriously looking for a job, I was drinking his beer and watching TV all day long while he was at work. Sometimes, I cooked for him just before he came home from work, and the other half of the time, I was in the bed watching TV when he came home and nothing had been cooked. Basically and as I look back, I was depressed much of the time. I also was going to restaurant-type clubs at day to get free drinks and lunch by men I liked and gave that look. I even had sex with several of the guys I met, although I was also having sex with the guy I lived with. I did make the club guys use a condom, and I told them I was married in order to avoid any phone calls. The guy I was staying with eventually threw me out of his apartment.

Ijamama: And then, briefly, what happened next?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I was homeless, so I phoned a couple of guys I had met in clubs, and one took me in off the streets. He hooked me up with drugs. At

first it was marijuana and then I started using cocaine with him. To support my habit and help out with our rent, he got me into prostitution or work as a sex service worker. I was not a street walker. I met Johns or customers on an Internet Web site. I would keep half of the money I made, and he would take the other half for my so-called rent and our drug habit. When I didn't bring in enough money, he would beat me up. I was at my lowest point, so I called my older sister. She told me to find a good church program for troubled women who didn't have a home. I found a Catholic program for troubled women. It cleaned me up from drugs and got me to believe in myself. I was 19 by then. I was blessed to have a very good counselor there. Interestingly, she was a middle-aged White woman from my home state of West Virginia. She found me a scholarship at Bowling Green State University through a federal grant program to help young White women from rural small towns as well as Black women from urban cities. God sent an angel, my counselor, to put me on a rightful path.

Ijamama: Great, you turned your life around with help from another woman. That's what our parent corporation, Hot Heifer, Inc., focuses on—women helpin' women. And what did you study at that university?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I majored in social work so I could help other young women who were victims of incest, sexual abuse as a minor, and drug addiction. I also studied and focused on the growing problem of human trafficking of girls and young women for coerced sexual purposes. There's a whole underground international sex crime industry out there.

Ijamama (*looking toward Simone*): Simone, do you have a question for Mia?

Simone (Baddass): Yes, I'm just wondering; are you or have you been in contact with your father?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I haven't talked to him since I left his house to live with my grandma at age 16. Maybe it's time to confront him about his incest. Christmas is right around the corner, so I thought about sending a Christmas card to my parents, and a separate letter to my father to tell him

what he did to me and my sister was wrong and against the law and tell him that he has the right to ask for our forgiveness and God's forgiveness. Also, I need to resolve this past issue within my own mind, and this would be a beginning as far as reaching out to my father.

Ijamama: I think that's a good idea. The Christmas season is a time to give and forgive. And what about your sisters; have you seen any of them since you left your hometown, or do you talk to them from time to time by phone?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I'm closer to my older sister. We talk from time to time, and she has visited me, once alone and another time with her husband. My baby sister is married now. We don't talk as much, except on her birthday or major holidays. In fact, I haven't seen her since I left home right after my high school graduation.

Ijamama: So what are you doing now? You were 18 when you left home and moved to Chicago, and you're 26 years old now, right?

HoneyBaby (Mia): Yes, you're right; I'm 26. As you know, I published the book that you showed which tells my story and educates girls and women as well as families about threats and negative consequences of incest, sexual assault, drug addiction, and human trafficking. As I mentioned, stories in my book are true to incidents but names and places are fictitious for confidentiality—including the names of people, the names of churches and my school, and the name of the city of my childhood. Also, as you know, I used a pen name, HoneyBaby, to protect further my identity and that of others in the book. I'm presenting speeches all over the country to tell my story. In addition, I'm training professional helpers and religious leaders through workshops. Presently, I'm working on a master's degree part-time in counseling while working full-time as a social worker with a program in Detroit to help troubled women, including runaway girls, the drug addicted, sex service workers, victims of spousal or partner violence, victims of human trafficking, and women who are in the criminal justice system. Many of these girls and women were victims of incest or child sexual abuse, and their problem tended to compound into their young adult

years, which was my story before I was helped to transcend my situation and my past. I chose not to be a victim anymore but rather to become a survivor, that is, once I accepted counseling and made the conscious choice to go to college. A psychiatrist, William Glasser, once wrote in one of his books that we can choose a “failure identity” or a “success identity.” I chose success as my identity and life’s path.

Ijamama: I commend you for your courage in healin’ yourself, educatin’ yourself, and now helpin’ girls and women with the problems you once had. I hope that the rest of your family is good, especially your sisters. *(Ijamama turns to the main camera and the audience.)* I urge all of you to speak up against wrong and to help when and where you can. There’s a sayin’ that “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Now, that quote really should be for good men, women, and youth to do nothin’. We all have a responsibility to do somethin’ if we see wrong. Don’t jus’ accept wrong or stand by and watch wrongful behavior.

HoneyBaby (Mia): Also, another one of those common sayings is, “If you’re not a part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.” I’m now part of the solution for girls and women.

Ijamama: Yeah, I agree. I’ve even used that quote several times including one time for my speech to a graduating middle school class earlier this year. *(HoneyBaby was aware that Ijamama had spoken at her middle school, but she didn’t want to acknowledge this on TV and blow her cover back in her hometown as the true author of her book which of course used a pen name for author. Nevertheless, some of her hometown folks had learned of her book and its personal revelations.)*

Ijamama: Simone, do you have another question, while I’m checkin’ my list of questions?

Simone (Baddass): Mia, are you in an intimate relationship now, or do you have a boyfriend or rather man friend?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I'm very busy with work and school, but I do have a guy who is a fellow graduate student, and we hookup from time to time as our busy schedules allow, but it's not a heavy thing headed for marriage as I see it. I really need to continue to work on loving me in order to love another, because I never learned the true meaning of love. I was never taught how to love or shown how to love. But now I am learning how truly to give and to listen to others, and I believe that those things are prerequisites for love, that is, learning how to love and be loved.

Ijamama: Befo' we wrap up the show, I again want to remind the viewers and my audience that most preachers or religious leaders are good people, but there are problems of pedophiles among some priests and pastors, and there is sexual abuse of minors by some preachers and some school teachers. And then there are girls around the world being forced to be sex service workers, and also there are little girls ages 12 and 13 being traded away by they parents as child brides in exchange for dowries. In the case of dowries from wealthy men, it's like selling your daughter for money and assets when she has no say-so about who her husband will be and in some cases when she is actually too young for sexual activity. And yes, incest is the hidden secret among families regardless of race, social class, or geographic areas, so let's not brand West Virginia. This problem is universal throughout the USA and the global community. Mia, do you have anything else to say befo' we sign off?

HoneyBaby (Mia): I challenge girls and women, including mothers, to speak up about or stand up against family incest; for women to stand up against spousal or partner violent abuse; and for college and university administrators and students to stand up against campus rape and unjust slap-on-the-wrist criminal sentences for sexual assault. I guess your viewers may have heard about a male college student in California who recently served only three months for raping a college female student. Girls and women are at great risk for abuse. Remember everybody, incest and sexual rape of minors are crimes of secrecy and silence, and they must be prevented or addressed as crimes.

Ijamama: Thank you HoneyBaby or Mia for coming on the show and for all the good that you're doing. I also thank you for your courage to tell your story and even more to stand up for girls and women. I wish you continued successes and blessings. Ladies and gents put your hands together to show your appreciation and love for Mia. Also, do buy her book and read her story and powerful message. Again, the title is *HoneyBaby: Every Man's Sweet Thing* authored under Mia's pen name, HoneyBaby. Remember, "If you do right, you can't go wrong," and "Tell it like it is, or don't tell it at all." HoneyBaby had the courage to tell it like it was, thank God.

Good night. We love you.

Simone (Baddass): Good night everybody (*waving to the camera and the audience*)

Ijamama first heard about Mia's book when she was the commencement speaker at Chemical Valley Middle School in West Virginia earlier during the 2016 year. One of the teachers at the middle school, who gave Ijamama a ride to the airport upon her departure, privately suggested that she read Mia's book and possibly invite her to appear on her TV show. She gave Ijamama a copy of Mia's book as appreciation for her contribution to the school's commencement. The teacher also told Ijamama that Mia was a graduate of Chemical Valley Middle School. When Ijamama initially contacted Mia to invite her to appear on her show, she told Mia that a teacher at her former middle school had heard about her book and had recommended her for appearance on her TV show. When Mia initially received Ijamama's phone invitation, she mentioned to Ijamama that her older sister had told her that the word was getting around town that she wrote a book about her sexual abuse, regardless of the fact that Mia had used a pen name as author and had avoided using real names of people and places in her book.

Chapter 16

Christmas Spirit: The Anti-Claus, Benevolent Angel, and Warm Reunions

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Wake up and join the holiday party as Ijamama, her co-host Simone, and her guests celebrate the holy holidays and tell it like it is. (*Ijamama's Homies from da Hood band plays the show's theme song, "Tell It Like It Is," as Ijamama walks out to center stage.*)

Ijamama: Welcome to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm Ijamama, your host. It's just days before Christmas, and we're in the spirit as you can see by our decorations. I'm here with my co-host Simone, nicknamed Baddass (*Ijamama walks to her host desk where Simone is already seated in the chair adjacent to the immediate right of the desk. Ijamama takes a seat instead of standing for her introductory monologue.*) Simone, I love that "Christmassy" red-fitted dress that you're kickin' here tonight. And look, we are here with our fabulous band, Homies from da Hood. Give them some holiday love folks (*the audience applauds*).

Simone (Baddass): I'm in the spirit of the season, and my dress is holiday spirit, and what's in the dress is also spirit (*Ijamama and the audience laugh*). And what about that classy, sexy, "Christmassy" green dress that you're rocking tonight Mama Ija? You're killin' it; you still got it. (*People in the audience applaud in agreement.*)

Ijamama: What can I say? I guess you're right (*laughing*). Everybody out there, we're in the spirit and the holiday mood—all day, all night, all early morning, all December, and all holiday season. So Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, and Happy Holidays to all and to anyone we left out. (*On the stage, there are two beautifully decorated 10-foot*

Christmas trees and four large pots of red poinsettia flowers lined up in front of Ijamama's host desk.)

Simone (Baddass): I think you covered all the season's holidays Mama Ija.

Ijamama: Because most Americans, I guess, celebrate Christmas as a religious or cultural holiday, I wanna talk a little bit about the meaning of Christmas, because I think for many Americans it's only about fun, gifts, and lots of eating. In other words, many of us have lost the true meanin' of what Christmas should be. Keep in mind that it's a religious holiday, for real. I'll say that one more time. Christmas is a religious holiday, or it's supposed to be a religious holiday.

A Woman in the Audience: Yeah, you right about that Ija. It's a religious holiday and season.

Simone (Baddass): I second that motion and emotion Mama Ija and Sistah in the audience.

Ijamama: *(Ijamama continues after the comment from the audience and Simone.)* Thank you good sistah in the audience, and thank you Simone. Yes, it is definitely a religious holiday season to celebrate the birthday of Jesus and what he taught and stood for. He tried to teach us love, givin', forgivin', and sacrificin' for others, like he did. I had a guest once named Spiritual Teacher who reminded me of that. But it looks like Christmas has become a holiday to celebrate Santa Claus and each other and a season for stores and shopping malls to make lots of money. A lot of these stores in the malls are advertisin' for Christmas sales before Thanksgiving and some before Halloween—now that's blasphemously wack.

Simone (Baddass): So true.

Ijamama: Listen up, I was in a shopping mall a few days ago, buying my little gifts and stuff, and I walked right by this Santa Claus set-up—little kids waitin' in line to sit on his lap, take a picture with him, and tell him what they wanted for Christmas.

Simone (Baddass): Yeah, I bet it was a man and not a woman Santa Claus, and he was a White Claus too, right?

Ijamama: Yeah Simone, he was all of that. And I don't know about this Santa, but I bet some of them Santas, White and Black ones, could be child sexual abusers or so-called pedophiles. That's why some men apply for and get them Santa jobs to be around children and have them sit on they laps. Now, folks out there, tell me; would you allow your child to sit on the lap of a big fat stranger, because that's exactly what's happenin'? (*A few people from the audience laugh or shout out, "No" or "Hell no!"*) Sometimes, we do things without thinkin' or observin' carefully and askin', "Why?" We jus' blindly follow traditions or cultural practices without askin' any questions or raisin' any suspicions or doubts. It's the same as allowin' your five-year-old child to go out of town overnight on a preschool field trip, when that child is jus' too little to fight for self or know when he or she is being abused.

A Man from the Audience: I never allowed my children to sit on a Santa's lap or to go out of town overnight on them field trips.

Ijamama: Thank you sir (*to the man in the audience*). So what I'm sayin' is why Santa Claus gets all that play on Christmas day and durin' the holiday season and not Jesus? Why we makin' a God out of Santa, see what um sayin'? We tellin' little kids, "He knows when you are sleepin'; he knows when you're awake; he knows when you've been good or bad, so be good for goodness sake." Truth is Santa don't know a damn thing except when his payday is due and when his next meal is comin' (*people in the audience laugh out loudly*). The real deal is you better watch out because JC is comin' to town on his birthday and not some freaky fat-ass Santa. That's the real deal, the real meaning of Christmas. JC, you know, Jesus Christ is comin' in spirit to your hearts with messages of helpin' and givin' to others durin' a time when we should be celebratin' his teachings as a messenger from God almighty—as a spiritual teacher and healer. He's comin' in spirit to spread joy to us and to set the stage as a time for forgiveness to and from those we love or should love.

A Woman in the Audience: Amen, preach Ijamama—preach honey.

Simone (Baddass): That’s so right Mama Ija. But did anything else happen with that big, fat, fake-bearded Santa at the shopping mall? *(A few people from the audience laugh.)*

A Woman in the Audience: Go on Ija; tell it like it is; you so always right.

Ijamama: Thanks sistah *(addressing the African-American woman in the audience)* and thank you Simone for watchin’ my back and gettin’ me back to my holiday story after I reminded everybody about the real meaning of Christmas. Anyway, this fake, fat Santa started singin’ to me after I walked up and exchanged a few words with him. Like he started singin’ *(Ijamama sings the lyrics)*, “I know when you’ve been good. I know when you’ve been bad. I know when you’ve been good or bad, so be good for goodness sake.” And dig this; he was lookin’ back and forth between my face and my butt as he sung.

Simone (Baddass): Say what?

Ijamama: Yes he did Simone, and I said to him, “Shut up; you don’t know a damn thing about me stranger.” *(People from the audience laugh.)* Then he had the nerve to ask me to sit on his lap. Can you believe that?

Simone (Baddass): No he didn’t; no he didn’t *(stated in a disposition and expression of disbelief)*.

Ijamama: Yes he did. He said, “Come sit on Santa’s lap and tell me what you want for Christmas.” I told him no, no, no; never, never, never. Then he told me he was comin’ down my chimney and to give him my address. I said, “What time, so I can light a fire to burn yo’ fat butt right back up that chimney?” *(People in the audience laugh again.)*

Simone (Baddass): And if he’s supposed to know everything, he should have known your address from jump street. But yeah, we know that’s a

mythical lie about Santa that's fed to innocent little kids.

Ijamama: *(Ijamama checks the countdown clock to break.)* Well, so much for Santa. We gotta take a commercial break, and we'll be right back to talk with Benevolent Angel who will tell us the real meaning of Christmas and Jesus. *(The Homies from da Hood band breaks out with a jazz version of "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" to lead into the commercial break.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Tonight, we have a guest who writes under the pen name of Benevolent Angel. The title of her popular book is *The Real Jesus*. I invited her on the show, because it's a time of year when many people celebrate the birth and life of Jesus. She claims to have received messages both from spirits that she believes to be the spirit of Jesus and the spirit of Mary Magdalene. Ladies and gents, please welcome Maria Magdalene, better known as Benevolent Angel. *(Benevolent Angel walks onto the stage as the audience applauds, and Ijamama stands to greet her with a handshake and invites her to take a seat in the first chair next to her host desk, as Simone moves down to the next chair. Age-wise, Benevolent Angel is in her late 30s. Her family moved from Peru to Austin, Texas when she was a child. A Latina-American, she grew up in Austin and later received a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas in Austin.)*

Ijamama: How are you Benevolent Angel? I hope it's OK to use your pen name.

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): Yes, no problem—I'm fine; thank you.

Ijamama: First of all, what is an angel, and why you use that name for yourself?

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): An angel does not have wings, but, rather, an angel is in spirit form or with spirit. An angel is the same as a

spiritual helper of God that can reside with God or reside on Earth in the body of a living person. A person on Earth can be born or anointed with a strong soul or spirit for goodness. Or a heavenly spirit can work through a human being in doing God's work on Earth. Regardless, an angel is a spirit that does the benevolent or good work of God. Jesus was an earthly spirit in the flesh, and he is a spirit that is now with God. His spirit can also come to us or reside within us just as Christian churches often sing and preach. I could have used Benevolent Spirit as a pen name for my book, but I felt that Benevolent Angel sounds better. What do you think?

Ijamama: I agree about the pen name. So you are a good angel or good spirit doing God's work, right? And how did this happen? Did you just wake up one mornin', looked in the mirror, and said to yourself, "I think I'm gonna be an angel?" *(People in the audience laugh lightly or giggle.)*

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene), smiling: No, it's not that simple. Have you heard about people who are born with genius ability in a specialized area such as in piano, math calculations, or artistic painting or drawing, and they have practically no training? Or have you heard that some people can acquire an exceptional ability after a head injury or blow to the head? *(Ijamama interrupts to speed up Benevolent Angel's answer.)*

Ijamama: So which one you, and how all this relates to Jesus, the focus of yo' book?

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): Well, when I was in college, I once went to an amusement park during spring break. I rode a roller coaster and was thrown off, receiving a concussion. I was not securely locked in the roller coaster seat. I had headaches for a few weeks. Then the headaches stopped. After two or three months, I started getting dreams and visions from time to time. All of these had to do with the life and messages about Jesus in some way. I couldn't get this information at will; it just came to me in dreams, visions, or thoughts—especially thoughts at times upon immediately awakening in the early morning or middle of night, like 4 o'clock. I would always write these incidents and messages down on a notepad or voice record them on my iPhone.

Ijamama: And what information you got about Jesus? I know you mention some things in your book, *The Real Jesus*.

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): In dreams I was shown an image of a man in different settings who apparently lived years ago based on his dress and surroundings. I was told in the dream that this was Jesus. He was seen in long robes and sandals at times in a library in Egypt reading scrolls and at times on a harbor or dock where trade ships were loading and unloading. He was questioning men who traveled from other countries and traded around cities of the Mediterranean Sea. In another dream, I saw Jesus seated with priests or wise men high up in mountains seemingly talking, but I could not hear what was being said. I could only sense that the men with Jesus were older and wise. I was told in dreams and visions that these were depictions of activities during the lost years of Jesus between his childhood and the age when he started his ministry and healing—that these were years when God was preparing Jesus for his work as a teacher and healer. In essence, the dreams and visions suggested that Jesus was always about learning during the lost years when God had him in preparation for his mission.

Ijamama: And how did Jesus look when you saw him in dreams and visions—I mean his physical features, not his dress?

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): He was slightly above-average height when he stood among men on the dock who traded from ships that came to cities along the Mediterranean Sea. He was medium to light brown in skin color with Black hair and dark or brown eyes. He had a charisma about him that demanded attention. He had a calm or peace about him and an intensity of presence that suggested his God-given wisdom and natural spiritual powers. It seems he was often talking with men from other countries, and they appeared to be exchanging ideas and information.

Simone (Baddass): I once saw on a TV science program that anthropologists concluded that Jesus was brown with short or shoulder-length Black hair. They had used forensic science like police use to

reconstruct facial images from skulls that were found near ancient Jerusalem during the time when Jesus lived and traveled in that area.

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): Yes, I also read about that study involving anthropologists, archeologists, and other experts, that is, when I was doing the research for my book. Researchers on that team also looked at what the Bible mentioned about how Jesus looked as well as ancient paintings and drawings of how people looked who lived in that geographic area during the time of Jesus's life on Earth. Then I went to YouTube and found a video about the research and saw how the scientists reconstructed the face of Jesus and how he was likely to look.

Ijamama: Benevolent Angel, you mentioned in your book, *The Real Jesus*, that the image of Jesus with white skin, blue eyes, and long brown hair is a myth, and you also write that there are other myths about Jesus. (*Benevolent Angel inhales as if she is about to comment. Ijamama says, "Go ahead."*)

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): Sorry to say so, but Jesus was not born December 25th, although we celebrate his birthday during this month and on that day of the month. Interestingly, Ethiopians celebrate Christmas on January 7th, because many Ethiopians are orthodox Christians. Based on biblical accounts of sheep grazing and the position of the stars, some theological researchers and some astronomers now conclude that Jesus was more likely born during the spring months, not during the winter.

Ijamama (laughing): Wow, let's send for Jesus's birth certificate (*people in the audience laugh*). I'm jus' jokin'.

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): Also, I saw in a dream that Jesus was not the biological son of God, but rather Jesus's soul was assigned to a baby to be born to Mary and Joseph. So God is the Father of the soul of Jesus, a soul that was anointed and designated for the body of the biological son of Mary and Joseph—a soul that would generate God's spirit of love, giving, and forgiveness. Jesus was anointed by God before birth to be a living soul with a mission of spirit to teach and heal in God's name—also,

to literally change the Roman Empire through the gospel of his teachings that lived on long after his crucifixion.

Ijamama: So does this mean Mary was not a virgin when she became pregnant with baby Jesus.

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): In one of my Jesus dreams, I was told by a woman narrator that Jesus's mother, Mary, was not a virgin in the biological sense, but men of scriptures wanted her to appear pure and as a saint. Yet, I was told in this dream that the status of Mary didn't matter, because God moves and works through people regardless of their status.

Ijamama: Did this woman narrator in your dreams ever reveal her identity or say who she was?

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): She once said, "I am MM, and I come to you with truth because of your name and the window that was opened to your mind and soul after your accident—you remember, the roller coaster accident?"

Ijamama: So the woman in the dream was Mary Magdalene, right? What else did she say, because we're runnin' out of time?

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): You're right about her name. From seeing her many times in dreams and visions of Jesus, I assumed that she had to be Mary Magdalene, which also matches the initials MM. She said, "Tell them not to confuse the real Jesus with the image of Jesus created by man. Do not worship a false image of Jesus but appreciate him as God's messenger and follow his message as your way of living." In another dream, she said, "Do not dwell on the crucifixion or on how Jesus died, but, rather, follow his teachings of love, sacrifice, and giving to needy others, as well as his teaching and examples of forgiveness. This is the way. This is the true way. This is the only way."

Ijamama: So, what does all of this say about Christmas?

Benevolent Angel (Maria Magdalene): Christmas and the whole holiday season beg of us to rethink how we can help others, how we can share with each other, and how we can sacrifice for the good of others in need. The whole season of Christmas is to remind us of how we should love instead of hate, how we can offer and accept forgiveness, how we can take each opportunity to do better and make ourselves better so the world will be a better place. It is a time of the year to cleanse our souls and recommit our spirits to goodness or benevolence.

Ijamama: That's a mouthful of Christian challenges to leave with our audience and viewers and maybe a good point to take a commercial break. Ladies and gents, this is Maria Magdalene's or Benevolent Angel's book, *The Real Jesus*. (*Ijamama holds up the front cover of the book for the TV camera.*) Get it, read it, and give a copy or copies to others as a Christmas gift, because it tells us how we should celebrate Christmas and how to live a truly Christian life of unselfishness. Benevolent Angel, please stay with us as we continue to celebrate Christmas by bringing back special people or previous TV guests of mine who are doing much to help others in the spirit of Jesus. They are doing exactly what you suggest as far as helping others. *Nikki*, please have the band take us to break with some good Christmas music. (*The Homies from da Hood band plays the upbeat, "Joy to the World."*)

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. I'm here with my guest Maria Magdalene, also known by her pen name as Benevolent Angel, also my co-host Simone, and the most exciting band in the world, Homies from da Hood. We're celebrating Christmas and the whole holiday season in a joyful, meaningful, and spiritual way. As we continue our celebration and conclude this very important show, I want to bring out several persons includin' previous guests of my various shows. I will ask them to make a brief comment or update us about what they've been doin' and to tell us their plans for Christmas, only if the plans include makin' someone else happy or better. First, I welcome Laura Daniels. Without Laura, I wouldn't have this show. She discovered me by

interviewin' me for *Hot Heifer* magazine a little over one year ago. Come on out Laura and join us. (*Laura comes out to the loud and appreciative applause of the audience. Ijamama greets her with a big hug and offers her a seat next to her desk as Maria and Simone move down a chair.*)

Ijamama: Please sit down. I love you Laura, and how you doin' (*smiling*)?

Laura Daniels: I'm good; I'm very happy for all of your successes (*smiling*).

Ijamama: Well, thanks to you and *Hot Heifer*; you discovered me, and I remain forever grateful. Please update me and our audience on what you've been doin' since I last saw you over a year ago at our last interview meeting.

Laura Daniels: Well, I've been promoted from Senior Editor and Reporter to Managing Editor of the magazine, which means I have full editorial decision-making about what the magazine publishes, of course, with input from my staff.

Ijamama: Congrats; that's great! I knew you would continue to do well. Cream rises to the top (*both women smile*). And how will you use your power to make a positive change for strugglin' girls and women as part of the Christmas spirit and New Year's resolutions, unless you've already made changes to uplift females.

Laura Daniels: In brief, *Hot Heifer* magazine will provide writing workshops and part-time jobs at our office in Washington, D.C. for high schoolgirls from urban schools. We've already set up a *Hot Heifer* Scholarship at Howard University's School of Communications in Washington, D.C. for a worthy girl from the urban inner city who wants to study journalism or film.

Ijamama: Wow! That's cool Laura, that's the Christmas spirit of givin' and helpin' schoolgirls and women; thank you so much.

Laura Daniels: Well, it's my pleasure and *Hot Heifer's* social responsibility to give back, especially to girls and women. (*Ijamama asks Laura to stay and for the three ladies on stage to move down, one chair each, to make room for her next guest.*)

Ijamama: I now want to welcome Henry Wilson, a previous guest on my show who you might remember by the name of Funkomaster, that's his business or brand name. Come on out Henry. (*Henry or Funkomaster walks briskly onto the stage and over to a standing Ijamama who greets him and gives him a big hug as he towers over her at his height of 6'5".*)

Ijamama: Have a seat Henry and tell us what's new and how you and the business doin'.

Henry (Funkomaster): I continue to work hard, and the business continues to increase in size and value with new funk products and increased sales. It's all about M&M or marketing and management as well as riding the funk theme (*people in the audience laugh*). And no, I haven't married yet, because I'm just too busy building my company.

Ijamama: Remember, I challenged you to give back more to your Hood in Baltimore when you were on my show. In this season of Christmas givin', what can you pledge to give or do for the Hood or what have you done?

Henry (Funkomaster): Well, I have a surprise for you and young people of my home city of Baltimore. Ija, I plan to build an after-school center in the heart of the Hood. I got the idea from that African-American woman on your show a while ago who had done this down in Atlanta. What's her name?

Ijamama: You mean so-called Cheap Hussy, but her real name is Ms. Hussleton. She and her husband sacrificed much to give much. I like that word, "sacrifice." She was not cheap without a purpose. She was jus' givin' to her church and spendin' lots of money to help young folks in need, much more than spendin' on herself and her family—what a sacrifice.

Henry (Funkomaster): Yes, that's her. Well, on your show, Ms. Hussleton described the after-school center that she founded in the Atlanta Hood, and I plan to do the same in Baltimore. I've already bought an old building and a bit of land next to it. Beginning in January, after the Christmas Holidays, I will start the renovation of the building, and we will furnish it and set up computers with Internet connections and other necessary equipment, devices, and supplies. An African-American construction company will do the renovations, so that's jobs for our local people. I've assigned one of my Funkomaster staff members to start looking into a manager for the center and its activities. I also asked her to look into college student interns and volunteers and other upstart staff and arrangements. My Funkomaster planner for the after-school center will also fly down to Atlanta to talk to Ms. Hussleton and her people and to observe how their center works. *(Funkomaster realized that he was long-winded and that Ijamama had admonished him to be brief before the show started. Therefore, he decided to abruptly end his comment about what he planned to do to help young people.)*

Ijamama: Thank God and thank you Henry; I'm so proud of your Funkomaster plans to help our young folks. To my viewers and people in the audience, we need organized activities to keep kids away from gangs and away from boring time and idle minds that can cause addictive drug use and violence. OK, we have to take another commercial break now. We'll be right back to wrap up things. *(The Homies from da Hood band, directed by its female director Nikki, breaks out in another Christmas song, which is an improvised jazz version of Jingle Bells by the famous trumpeter and composer, Wynton Marsalis.)*

(Commercial Break)

Ijamama: Welcome back to the show. We're here celebratin' the Christmas season and remindin' people of the true meanin' of Christmas—a time to love, give, sacrifice, and forgive—a time to spread joy. I have with me as special guest, Benevolent Angel, author of *The Real Jesus*, and I have a guest from one of my previous shows, Henry Wilson, who's also known by his business name, Funkomaster. I also have the woman who discovered me

by interviewin' me for *Hot Heifer* magazine, Laura Daniels. And, of course, I'm here with my co-host Simone and our fabulous band and its director, Nikki. Now, I want to bring out another previous guest from my show and a hot rapper, Little Red Rapper from da Hood. Come on out Little Red, and tell us whas up with you and your music. (*Little Red Rapper from da Hood skips onto the stage, pauses and waves to the applauding audience, and then jogs over to Ijamama's desk where Ijamama greets her with a big hug and offers her a seat. As usual, she is dressed in all red. Little Red quickly acknowledges the rest of the guests by smiling and speaking to the entire group.*)

Ijamama: Now, briefly tell us what's new, like any plans for babies yet, because you had jus' got married when I last saw you at your weddin'—also, any new rap songs?

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: Thank you Mama Ija, and hi Simone. Y'all, me and Simone grew up in the same church. (*Simone smiles and replies, "Whas up girl?"*) To answer your question Mama Ija, it's all good, and no baby yet; too soon. We've decided to focus on my music career for a few more years and to build up our music business and save our money. I do have a few new hits and a couple of TV commercials that you might have seen. One commercial is for the Red Roof Inn, you know, the hotel chain, and the other is for Red Lobster Seafood Restaurant. You see the color connection: Little Red, Red Roof, and Red Lobster (*laughing*).

Ijamama: I saw the Red Lobster commercial—nice. Now, what the names of them new rap hits? And while you at it, also tell us what you doin' to help other folks in the Christmas spirit. Break it down for me because we runnin' tight with time.

Little Red Rapper from da Hood: My latest album is titled "Don't Chase da High." It's all about stopping all the drug use by young people nowadays and stopping the overdose deaths, and it's also about stopping gang violence and Hood shootings among youth, especially like what's happening in Chicago. The album speaks to mirages and traps in life, like the mirage of pleasure instead of true happiness and fulfillment, and it

speaks to the traps in life like the trap of drug addiction and the traps of hate and violent competition instead of love and collaboration. As far as helping, and I know you always remind me to give back to my Hood or rather our Hood. Well, me and my husband Brandon are identifying young talent from the Hood to promote on our new record label. Yes, we now have our own record label. Also, I was just talking to Mr. Wilson, Mr. Funkomaster, right? *(Little Red looks at Funkomaster and he shakes his head to confirm.)* Anyway, we were talking backstage about his plans for an after-school center for school kids, and I have promised to give a donation in computers or cash or both. *(Little Red again looks at Henry Wilson, Funkomaster, and he shakes his head and smiles in approval and says “thank you” to express his appreciation for the promised donation. Funkomaster begins to applaud Little Red and others on the stage and in the audience join in with the clapping.)* Mr. Funkomaster, my next album might even be titled, “da Funkobeat,” designed especially for dancing. *(People in the audience laugh softly or say things like, “Alright now,” or “I’m feelin’ you,” or “I can dig that.”)*

Ijamama: Little Red, I’m so proud of you and your positive rap music, and I thank you for helpin’ our youth with your record label and plannin’ to do even more with Funko’s after-school center. You know, I believe that if we’re blessed, we have to give back or lift up othas. *(Ijamama’s other guests and Simone shake their heads in agreement or make agreeable comments such as, “That’s right.”)*

Ijamama: *Ijamama pauses for a few seconds to make a transition to end the show, realizing that only two minutes remain.*

Simone (Baddass): We have a surprise for Ijamama and the audience. I would like to bring out the Director of the Ijamama Child Care Center and children from the Center. *(The Director comes onto the stage followed by 10 preschool children, ages four and five. Ijamama observes with surprise but sheer happiness and pride in seeing the children so cutely dressed. The girls are wearing red skirts and white blouses with green and red floral print collars, and the boys are wearing olive green pants, white shirts, and red bowties.)*

Ijamama: Oh my God! This is my older sister Rosa and the children from our child care center. *(Ijamama rises to meet her sister as they both rush toward each other. They embrace as the children form a line and face the audience. A little girl from among the children gives a beautiful bouquet of flowers, in Christmas colors, to Ijamama before taking her place in line with the other children.)*

Ijamama: Again, this is my sister, Rosa Bland; she runs our child care center *(Rosa smiles with pride and joy)*. Simone, thank you for arranging this—what a pleasant surprise for this Christmas show. *(Rosa is wearing an outfit that’s similar to the young girls’ skirt-and-blouse combination.)*

Rosa Bland: I know you’re running out of time, but the kids would like to end the show for you by singing a Christmas carol, only if there’s time.

Ijamama: *(The producer holds up a sign.)* OK, our producer says we can go over an extra five minutes, and they can edit and cut to reduce the show to one hour as needed. *(The show is always done or videoed in the early evening, edited, and then shown starting at midnight. Moreover, Simone had warned the producer of surprise guests at the end of the show and a possible need to go overtime.)*

Rosa Bland: Oh, great, thank you. *(Rosa looks at the kids to get their attention after giving the band the cue to start the music. The Homies from da Hood band had been informed ahead of time that the children would sing, so they start playing “Silent Night.” Within seconds, Rosa gives the cue to the children to start singing as she directs them. Everyone looks upon the children with admiration, joy, and excitement. After the singing, the audience gives the children a thunderous applause.)*

Ijamama: Thank you Sister Rosa; there’s nothin’ like children to lift our holiday spirit—what a blessin’. Also, thanks to all of my special TV guests; thanks to our band, Homies from da Hood and its Director Nikki; and thanks to all of our TV staff and their families. To those in the audience, thank you for comin’. To TV viewers who have been faithful throughout the

year in watchin' our show, I thank you very much. Nikki (the Band Director), please have the band to play some Christmas music, and will all of my guests please come to the center stage and join me as I say, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Good night. *(The band plays "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," as guests stand and move around on center stage greeting each other and complimenting the child singers and Rosa. Ijamama and Simone wave to the audience and to viewers via the TV camera.)*

Ijamama and Simone: Good night everybody and Happy Holidays!

Chapter 17

Ijamama is Guest on the Larriet Queen Show

TV Announcer: Welcome to the Larriet Queen Show with our magnificent host, Larriet Queen.

Larriet Queen: Good evening everybody, it's 9 p.m. Eastern Time, and we're coming to you live from New York City, a city that never sleeps. I'm your host, Larriet Queen, and tonight we have a truly phenomenal woman as our sole guest. She rose from modest beginnings in urban Baltimore to become host of one of the hottest, top-rated late night TV shows, the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. She is street smart, an advocate for the poor and disenfranchised, an advocate for children, a natural feminist, and a woman who educated herself through diverse readings and selected educational TV programs that she has viewed over more than two decades of her 46 years of life. Ladies and gentlemen join me as I welcome the popular and twitter-trending TV personality, Ijamama. (*Ijamama briskly walks onto the stage with a smile, waves to the audience, and walks toward Larriet Queen's table desk as the audience welcomes her with thunderous applause. Young adults in the audience chant, "Ija, Ija, Ija, Ija—we love you Ija."* Larriet Queen greets Ijamama with a handshake and invites her to take a seat directly across from her at the table desk with "Larriet Queen Show" inscribed on its front side that faces the audience and the TV cameras.)

Larriet Queen (smiling): How are you, and thank you for coming Ijamama? I'm happy to have you on my show. Should I address you as Ijamama, Ms. Ijamama, or by your legal name?

Ijamama: I'm good, and thank you for invitin' me to your fine show. And to people in your audience who shouted out their love, I love you too. And just call me Ijamama. Before you start askin' me questions, I have one

question for you, if you don't mind. (*Larriet Queen dips her head a couple of times to indicate it was fine. Realizing that Ijamama was unpredictable, Larriet was curious and had no idea what Ijamama would ask her. Ijamama pauses a few seconds for suspense effect before asking.*) Are you the wife of that older TV personality, Larry King? (*Larriet smiles from both relief and amusement, and a few people in the audience laugh.*)

Larriet: No, he was once my competition on TV. Larriet Queen is my stage name or entertainment name just like yours is Ijamama. And please don't ask me how I got it (*Larriet smiles*).

Ijamama: OK, gotcha (*smiling*).

Larriet Queen: Ijamama, I read your interview in *Hot Heifer* magazine's September 2015 issue. That was about a year and four months ago. I was impressed with the brevity and the common sense of your answers to thought-provoking and complex questions. Also, I've been impressed with how you've run your TV show to educate and inspire your audience and viewers and to teach them the right way of living, while also being funny and entertaining. So, I invited you on my show to share some of your common-sense wisdom and some of your street smarts both as a woman and a person of color who has lived real-life experiences and learned much about issues of our country, our world, and human beings. (*Larriet Queen pauses.*)

Ijamama: Thank you. (*Ijamama told herself in advance that she would try to be polite and non-combative but still truthful and principled in her answers.*)

Larriet Queen: The New Year celebrations of 2017 are over, and in a couple of weeks and a few days, a new U.S. President will be inaugurated and sworn into office. This event will mark a new era in American history—a billionaire businessman with no public-service leadership experience will head the most powerful nation on Earth for the first time; a businessman who defeated a woman who was expected to win and become the first female U.S. President, and a businessman who alienated quite a

few people in his rise to the Presidency. What do you think all of these things mean?

Ijamama: *(Ijamama pauses for a few seconds to think about the question.)* The old Ijamama might have said, “Our country done gone plum crazy.” But I’ve changed, so this is my answer now. This past election means our country missed the best opportunity ever to elect a woman President and a person, regardless of gender, who was one of the most qualified Presidential candidates ever. Time will tell whether President-elect Trump will be good for our country and our world or not. Time is truth of what will happen; all else doesn’t matter. But from what I see, he must change his bad ways and listen to logical and compassionate advice, or he will continue his negative comments and ill-advised threats. A person’s past behavior many times predicts future behavior, but I hope and pray that this is not the case, that he will be an exception to the rule. The fact is he will be our next President, and we must help him so that he can help us while also keepin’ him true to what’s legal and right. *(Ijamama figured that she had said enough, because she realized that her TV show could be canceled by the rich and the powerful. She admired and respected Oprah for getting her own TV network, because she felt that no one could fire Oprah or cancel one of her TV shows or programs—no person except Oprah herself.)*

Larriet Queen: You mentioned that past behavior many times predicts future behavior. President-elect Trump was born into a family of wealth, so seemingly he never has had to go without, to worry about having a job, or to struggle to fulfill his basic needs. My question is do you think he can feel or understand the suffering of Americans and the suffering of peoples of the world and thus be able to focus on helping others versus punishing others? Also, do you think that he will focus on helping America’s poor and needy, like you’re doing, versus helping the rich to get richer or himself to get richer?

Ijamama: I really don’t know what path he will take. He can choose a path of light or goodness or a path of darkness or pain and destruction. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama learned about the struggles of life as well as good values and principles of livin’ as kids. Hillary’s mother struggled on

her own as a teen and Barack's mother struggled to raise him as a single parent before he went to live with his grandparents. Both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama learned values for helpin' others from their parents as positive role models. We'll see if President Trump has the capacity to use the Presidency to help many who're in extreme need, because I haven't seen evidence of that in his life story. If he is successful in helpin' the multitude of Americans in extreme need of jobs, including unemployed Whites in small towns and unemployed Blacks in urban cities, this will be a good start to his havin' a successful Presidency. I urge him to keep our country out of unnecessary war. Also, if he is to be an effective President, he must stop the blaming, bragging, and bluffing—the three “B’s.” Also, he needs to stay off twitter and stop reacting to things that don't matter (some people in the audience applaud and some laugh). Sorry, the old Ijamama would have had a shorter answer to that question.

Larriet Queen: And how would the old Ijamama have answered that?

Ijamama: The old Ijamama would have answered, “The new President will help poor folks and Americans in need if he jus' ‘do it’ and stop dat blamin’, braggin’, bluffin’, bitchin’, and tweetin’. Jus’ stop it.” *(People in the audience laugh and applaud loudly. Larriet smiles, and Ijamama laughs with the audience.)*

Larriet Queen: Allow me to shift our focus to the world scene, especially given you just mentioned keeping our country out of unnecessary war. Nowadays, there are wars and violent conflicts in many parts of our world. Speak to us on war and violence. Certainly, war and violence are the opposite of giving and loving.

Ijamama: *(Ijamama pauses in silence for a while to think about the question.)* One important war is the war against mother Earth. If we don't change our selfish ways of livin', we will lose this war and suffer even more from climate catastrophes or even die out as a species. The second important war is that between countries, war between groups within countries, violence between neighborhood gangs, and homicidal violence. Such conflicts are many times based on mistrust, greed, hatred, jealousy,

anger, and fear. Sometimes violence is based on revenge or allegiances to groups like ISIS. The third important war is the war within each of us as human beings. This is a war of fighting the darkness within us—those selfish and destructive impulses, urges, or demons. I once read that, “It’s bad to fight with another, but it’s even worse to be at war with yo’self.” (*A few people in the audience applaud.*)

Larriet Queen: And what should be our country’s role in war and global violence? Some of my questions may be similar to or overlap with questions in your *Hot Heifer* magazine interview, but, if that’s the case, we can see how your thinking may have changed in almost a year and a half of new experiences.

Ijamama: (*Ijamama pauses in silence again before speaking.*) We should prepare to defend against violence within and outside our country. But we should talk first and make every effort to prevent global violence. Our country should also talk to end violence or war, instead of always trying to win. We should go to war only if we have to defend our country or if we have a dog in the fight. Think about it; did we really have to join a civil war in Vietnam? Did we really have to attack Iraq that was later found not have a nuclear bomb program or be a threat to us? And what were the costs of these wars to our country in lives, veterans with disabilities, and tax dollars spent? What did we gain from these two wars as citizens, if anything, except for people and companies making lots of money from these wars, you know, that so-called military-industrial complex? President Obama has been a wise and courageous leader when it comes to diplomacy instead of military aggression of sending out thousands of troops to die on foot in Syria. A strong and courageous national leader sometimes must say no—no more! When will men learn that unnecessary war is stupid, and it’s an act of group suicide? (*People in the audience applaud.*) When possible, we should choose peace over war, restraint over aggression, and sharin’ over greed. You see what um sayin’? (*People in the audience applaud again, but loudly this time.*)

Larriet Queen: Yes, I do. But please explain more about the consequences of war for our country or any country.

Ijamama: A country that overtaxes its people and overextends its military, for the sake of war, declares war against itself. There are examples throughout history that should teach us that too much unnecessary fightin' is not good for our country or any country. Wars can sink a country into deep debt. (*A few people in the audience applaud.*)

Larriet Queen: It is stupid, but why? Why do you think men fight, because you're right; by nature, women do not normally fight or lead in wars or start wars? I know there are a few historical exceptions—very few—of female leaders in battle or in wars such as Joan of Arc of France, Boudicca of Celtic Britain, and Yaa Asantewaa of Africa. I'm not talking about female political leaders, but women warriors who actually fought and led battles. And it seems that these women warriors only fought to save or try to save their people. They were not aggressors but defenders against violence toward their people, often when their men didn't take leadership as warriors. So, again, why do men fight and kill so much and so often, while women tend not to fight as a group by nature?

Ijamama: From what I've read and seen on educational TV, I believe that men are no different from many other male animals, you know, like male wolves and lions. Male animals fight for territory and for mating rights. Animals like wolves and lions will fight intruders to their hunting territory which threaten their prey or food sources, or they fight to gain territory with prey or food. Also, individual male animals fight each other, sometimes to the death, for the privilege to mate with a female or a group of females. I've seen these patterns of male animal fights over and over on TV channels like National Geographic and Animal Planet. Men do the same. They fight as countries for control of global territory, and they compete for mating rights with women. Examples: ISIS is fighting for territory in Iraq and Syria, and they are kidnapping women and girls for wives or mating privileges. Drug dealers fight to protect territory and gain territory for customers, and customers mean money from drug sales for dealers to buy things and to attract the finest women. Also, for more than 300-plus years, European countries fought or competed for territory in North America, although there were Native Americans already living here. There are other historical

examples of European countries seizing, occupying, or colonizing territory in Africa, Asia, Australia, and elsewhere for the natural resources or geographic value of the land or territory. During wars, military occupation, colonization, and outright slavery, women and children have suffered along with men and boys. During wars, military occupation, colonization, and slavery, women have been sexually raped and children have lost fathers and mothers to violence or have been killed themselves. War or oppressive violence is so unnecessary and so, so ugly. (*People in the audience applaud loudly.*)

Larriet Queen: And what about women and female animals? Do they fight for any reason?

Ijamama: Female animals almost always fight to protect their babies or their young from bein' eaten or harmed by predators—even if it sometimes means riskin' their own lives. (*Ijamama has practiced over and over to use appropriately “their” as a possessive pronoun instead of “they.”*)

Larriet Queen: (*Larriet Queen pauses to contemplate her next question, because she didn't realize that Ijamama's answer would be so brief.*) Given that you just talked about mating, sexuality, and war, what do you have to say about “love”?

Ijamama: I once read that “Love is *a priori* to creation, and it is the antithesis of hate and destruction.” I never forgot that quote. I like that word “*a priori*” and hope I pronounced it right on live TV (*smile*).

Larriet Queen: Yes, you did (*smile*); well, based on how I've heard others pronounce it. (*Larriet pauses to reflect. In her private thought, she is amazed at Ijamama's breadth of knowledge and how she had improved her Standard English skills since her first TV show more than one year ago.*) Please go on, looks like you're still thinking and have more to say. I paused a moment ago because it seems you were thinking.

Ijamama: Oh, I was quiet because it looked like you were also thinkin' and maybe wanted to comment on what I said. (*Ijamama had learned from her*

many TV interviews to listen with her eyes as well as her ears.)

Larriet Queen: It seems like both of us were thinking or processing, but do go ahead with my question about “love,” that is, if you have more to add.

Ijamama: Thank you—well, the capacity for love is within all of us as humans. However, to realize the love within, we must demonstrate it to another, whether family, friends, a partner, or people most in need. It is not enough only to say, “I love you.” We must demonstrate our love. To do so is to reflect the true love of God and to show our love for God through our benevolent actions. Mother Teresa once said something like that. I also read that true love is unconditional and lasting. A person should never think or say, “I will love you if ...” True love is givin’ without condition or expectation, and it is sometimes shown as a sacrifice without regret or complaint. Above all else, it is the true love of ourselves that is gained from our accomplishments and the good that we do and have been blessed to do for the sake of others. *(Ijamama admits that some of her ideas come from her TV guests and her readings of their books.)*

Larriet Queen: I love your answer, but you didn’t mention intimate love or sexuality in a loving relationship.

Ijamama: I’m avoiding sex, I guess, because I’m not getting any now, and that’s by choice *(people in the audience laugh)*. My sex life these days is working with my TV show. OK, let me get serious. All love is the same or should be the same, including a sexual relationship. But sexual intimacy is not always love, especially if it’s only or mainly motivated by pleasure or privilege—P and P. In other words, an attitude of “give me what I want in exchange for my sexual pleasure” is not love; it’s a deal or an arrangement. Sexual pleasure for privilege or bartering sex for benefits is not love or at least not mutual love. It’s what some folks now call “friends with benefits.” *(People in the audience laugh and then applaud.)* As Tina Turner once sung, “What’s love got to do with it.” What President Obama and wife Michelle have is true love with intimacy. *(A few people in the audience applaud loudly.)* What I see is they married for real love and still have love for each other and for their daughters. You can tell Michelle and Barack’s

mutual love for each other by their body language, facial expressions, and sweet comments to each other.

Larriet Queen: Could you say a little more about marriage, love, and sex?

Ijamama: Let me first say, I've never been married. But that will not keep me from giving my opinion (*people in the audience laugh*). First of all, regular sex or sex-on-demand should not be expected or required as a condition of marital love. For example, sometimes a woman jus' might not feel like doing it, and she might jus' use the excuse of a fake headache if the husband starts sniffin' up behind her butt or outright askin' for sexual healin'. (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*) You know, if a man loves his wife or partner, he should realize when she is not ready or not in the mood, then he jus' needs to stop beggin', back off, or stop tryin' to get on her, right? (*People in the audience laugh again and a few women applaud.*) Jus' the opposite, sometimes husbands may be exhausted from a long day's or night's work, or they may be stressed out from their job and jus' not interested in sexual activity but jus' needing to rest, relax, or have a good listening ear. Unlike humans, most other animals, if not all, only mate when the female is in heat or ready, but humans do it anytime, year-round—how uncivilized (*people in the audience laugh*). We're jus' sexual savages (*Ijamama laughs at her humor along with a few people in the audience*).

Larriet Queen: (*Larriet smiles. She chooses not to follow up on Ijamama's answer but, rather, to move ahead to another question.*) Let me shift to another topic, because we're running out of time. What can we do about White racism in America?

Ijamama: (*Ijamama pauses for several seconds to contemplate an answer.*) Now, that's a hot topic, so I need to be careful. First thing I'll say is that not all Whites are racist, or, at least, many Whites try their best not to be. Racism exists in the minds of some Whites, usually in their attitudes of racial privilege, racial supremacy or superiority, and racial prejudice. I once had a White young man on my TV show by the pen name of Smart-Ass White Boy (*a few people in the audience laugh*), and I remember him sayin' that "our thoughts drive our behaviors," and that White racist

thoughts can drive racist actions by Whites. White racism becomes a problem for Blacks when White racist thoughts cause White racist actions like unjustified police beatings and killings of Blacks, disenfranchisement of Blacks by racist laws, unjust racist court decisions, and racially unfair social rules and employment decisions. Whites who are racist have to free their minds of false racial assumptions about Blacks and other people of colors while also freein' their minds of White superiority and White privilege. No so-called race is naturally superior to another, and no race or ethnic group should be entitled or privileged in our country. In fact, I once read that there is no such thing as a pure biological race anyway, because most of us have mixed ethnic ancestry. Also, we all are one human race that descended from the continent of Africa. We are of the same species which is Homo sapiens or modern humans. So what's the big fuss about racial or ethnic differences—jus' stop it? (*People in the audience laugh and applaud loudly.*)

Larriet Queen: (*Larriet Queen considers asking a follow-up question about the “Black Lives Matter” movement, but she doesn’t want to get bogged down talking about race relations, because of the limited time remaining.*) Let me switch to another controversial issue or topic, which some people regard as another form of killing. What are your beliefs and thoughts about abortion?

Ijamama: (*Ijamama looks down for a moment in silence and deep thought before responding.*) Wow! You caught me off guard with that question. I'm still working through my beliefs about abortion. It's a question or issue I've struggled with over the years, especially bein' a church-going Christian woman. I have two daughters; my first was born when I was a teenager, like 17. I got pregnant at 16. I never gave thought to abortion during my two pregnancies. Growing up in my Black Hood or culture, we were taught that women “don't throw away their babies,” and “If you make your bed hard by gettin' pregnant, you jus' got to lie down on it.” When it comes to abortion, I believe there're ethical questions like, “Should a married woman have an abortion without her husband's knowledge or input? Should minors be able to have an abortion without the consent of a parent or notification of a parent or parents? Should a woman be allowed to have repeated abortions

as if usin' it as a contraceptive method? Should counseling and a minimum time period for consideration be required before the abortion is done? Do or rather does abortion only involve the termination of a future livin' body, or does it also mean the termination of a soul that's been assigned by God to a biological baby or life of a mother and father? I believe these are ethical, moral, and spiritual questions that should be considered by a pregnant female and others involved. Don't get me wrong. I'm not sayin' I'm totally against abortion, but each case must be subject to conditions, specific laws, and ethical considerations. But, I do believe there are situations when abortion may be appropriate or acceptable with no conditions.

Larriet Queen: And what are these situations or exceptions that may warrant abortion?

Ijamama: I'm talkin' about incest or sexual abuse with a minor that can result in pregnancy, as long as the minor is not too young or not at medical risk for such a procedure. Also, I believe in abortion, without condition, in the case of rape of a woman. In addition, there may be abortion in situations of a life-threatening medical risk to the pregnant female. Keep in mind that the human body sometimes aborts the development of a baby if there is a medical problem or risk. Of course, we call this a miscarriage. It is interesting how the body can detect if somethin' is wrong and therefore prematurely expel the embryo or fetus from the womb—this is a natural abortion, I guess.

Larriet Queen: Thank you Ijamama for your answer. We have to take a commercial break now, and we'll come right back with more Ijamama and a wrap-up of the show.

(Commercial Break)

Larriet Queen: Welcome back to the Larriet Queen Show. I'm here with my guest, Ijamama, host of the Ijamama Tell-It-Like-It-Is Midnight Show. Ijamama, would you please tell us your views on death and dying?

Ijamama: If you would have asked the Ijamama of almost a year and a half ago, I probably would have briefly answered, “Dying is when you almost dead; death is when you dead and gone.” (*People in the audience laugh.*)

Larriet Queen: Interesting and funny, but what about the answer now from the new or changed Ijamama?

Ijamama: Well, death is definitely somethin’ that all of us have in common (*smile*). The way I see it, life of the biological body is a period of preparation for birth of the spirit to another dimension of existence. After earthly death, I believe that our spirit lives on in another existence just like Jesus and other prophets were tryin’ to tell us. Also, in a way, our flesh lives on in the DNA of our children, grandchildren, and other descendants, if we are so fortunate or blessed to have descendants. What I’m sayin’ is that life is not one discrete earthly event, but life is continued from generation to generation—from our ancestors to us to our descendants, if our bloodline or family line is continued. In other words, we live on in the flesh of our descendants, if we have children, and we live on in spirit in another dimension of existence—not another place but another existence that does not have a physical location. I read this in a book by Spiritual Teacher, whom I mentioned earlier. He says the following in that book, “I am of those before me, and those after me will be of me.” Therefore, “death and dying” is not or should not be seen as we now see it. Life continues in more than one way, like in our DNA and in our spirit. We should not mourn or grieve an earthly death, but rather we should celebrate an earthly life, especially if that life was well lived. And yes, I believe in death with dignity or the right to die with dignity. (*Ijamama pauses as if thinking of more to say but at the same time thinking that she’s spent too much time on this one question.*)

Larriet Queen: (*Larriet considers a follow-up question to Ijamama’s answer about “death with dignity,” but she notices that Ijamama is still thinking.*) Looks like you’re still contemplating more to say on my question about death and dying.

Ijamama: I'm beginnin' to believe that some souls of previous lives may even come back to planet Earth in the physical body of a newly born human being. One of my guests wrote a book titled, *Return to Life*. It discusses research on very young children who could remember their past life or lives with much detail. Not only these children remember their past life or lives, but research on what they revealed proved to be accurate once their accounts were investigated and documented. These children tended to lose their past-life memories as they got older—like around five or six years old.

Larriet Queen: So are you saying that you believe in reincarnation of the soul or of some aspect of the living being that can be reborn later in a new physical body?

Ijamama: Well, I guess I'm sayin' I've become open to this as something that happens or can happen. Sorry, but I'm sounding like a politician who avoids direct answers to a simple yes-no question. Again, I'm becomin' more like my TV guests if not more like the book authors I've been reading and interviewing lately. The old Ijamama would simply answer your question this way, "Yes, you got dat right." (*Ijamama smiles, and people in the audience laugh.*) There would be no conditions, explanations, or qualifiers. The old-Ijamama answer is black or white, yes or no. As the new Ijamama, my final answer is "yes." (*Ijamama smiles and a few people in the audience laugh.*)

Larriet Queen: Ijamama, allow me to move forward to another topic for the sake of time. You had mentioned security in public places in the *Hot Heifer* article, so please speak to us about airline security or public safety nowadays. What will be our challenges in the future regarding security of human life and limb?

Ijamama: Maybe all of these security measures might be needed for this day and time, but mark my word, security will get even tighter. People in the future may have to walk through them checkpoints at airports with see-through clothes or even naked and with see-through carry-on bags. (*People in the audience laugh. Many of them were waiting for Ijamama to show more of her old trademark sense of humor and wit.*)

Larriet Queen (*smiling*): A year and several months ago, you used butt-ass naked in your magazine interview for *Hot Heifer*. Why are you now just using naked? (*People in the audience laugh again.*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama smiles.*) I changed, or I was changed. In our world as well as in the Universe, change is the only constant. But, for the sake of your audience and viewers, the Standard English word “naked” is jus’ a synonym for the Hood phrase “butt-ass naked.” And listen up Larriet, you got to know out to say “butt-ass naked” with the right Hood accent or intonation, like I jus’ said it. You see what um sayin’? (*People in the audience laugh out loudly.*)

Larriet Queen: Thanks, I will have to practice my Hood or Ebonics idioms or expressions. Ijamama, could you speak to us on music; because each generation claims it has the best singers or musicians?

Ijamama: God sends greatness for each era and to every music genre or venue. But each generation thinks their musicians or rather its musicians are the best ever because that’s what they know. That may be all that they know. I have iTunes (*there’s soft laughter from the audience*)—yeah folks, I really do—and I listen to good music from different genres and across different time periods or generations. The great clairvoyant or psychic of the 20th Century, Edgar Cayce, once stated, “If you learn music, you’ll learn most all there is to know.”

Larriet Queen: So evidently you’ve learned music as Cayce suggests. So who or what are some of your favorites?

Ijamama: Of course, I like R&B. I also like rock, country, and gospel—I listen to it all, including old-school music of the 50s like Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, the Staple Singers, and Frankie Lymon. I can also dig music by Old-school jazz singers like Dinah Washington and Sarah Vaughan. According to my mood, I can even get into baroque, classical, or impressionist music, especially melodic piano compositions by Chopin, Beethoven, Debussy, and Mozart. (*Ijamama smiles and then continues.*) Oh,

did I surprise you Larriet with my breadth and diversity of musical interests? I always wanted to take piano lessons, but we couldn't afford it. But when I was a teen and around electronic pianos, I learned that I could play a song or musical pieces by ear or by jus' hearing or knowing how it's supposed to sound. I was told that such ability is a gift from God or from The Universal Spirit. Oh, The Universal Spirit is the name for God that's used by one of my former TV guests that I mentioned earlier by the pen name of Spiritual Teacher.

Larriet Queen: Ijamama, you have the money now, so it's not too late to learn piano. And yes, to be truthful, you did surprise me with your breadth of interests in and knowledge of music. That's a broad range of musical interests and knowledge for any person. You continue to impress and amaze me. Can you feel me? *(Larriet laughs, and Ijamama and people in the audience laugh loudly along with her.)*

Ijamama: Yes, I can understand you; jus' don't know about feelin' you. It's jus' how them words came out of yo' mouth that challenges authenticity. I once read that Marshall McLuhan, a philosopher and expert on the media, said, "The medium is the message." When Trump was runnin' for U.S. President; you know, that Donald Trump guy who bullied and branded everybody—and now about to become President? Well, he said many outrageous and insulting things, but there were followers of his who still supported him, regardless of what he said or did. He was the message and not what he said or did. Why, because for many Americans, he was symbolic of the hope for what they wanted and wished for, whether it was hope for turning back the racial and gender clock or hope for getting a job and a better life. It's like he promised everybody everything, so we'll see what he can deliver.

Larriet Queen: Ijamama, you certainly are informed and well read, which demonstrates that a person doesn't necessarily have to go to college nowadays to know things. Knowledge is free, especially in a culture or country like ours with easy access to the Internet, even if a person has to go to a public library to use a computer. Also, cable TV has so many more channels or choices now compared to years ago.

Ijamama: Right, you only have to possess the motivation to learn and to know things. I've always had that drive within me, going back to my school days. Learnin' is a lifelong process as I see it. And since I got my TV show, I am even more motivated to learn things in preparing for my guests. I spend more time now than ever reading and searching the Internet, mainly as preparation for my show. Knowledge has become my partner in life, and readin' has become my sexual fulfillment—can you dig it? *(People in the audience laugh and applaud.)*

Larriet Queen: I hear you, but, being married, my husband and I are not feeling you when it comes to reading as sexual fulfillment *(people in the audience laugh)*. Now, please speak to us on money, the so-called “root of all evil.”

Ijamama: The old Ijamama would answer that question this way: “If you don't have it, you worry about how to get it. If you have lots of it, you worry about how to keep it or spend it.” *(People in the audience laugh softly.)* I've learned that the key is to give away much of what you don't need to help others or to invest in others. Giving is a way to true happiness and fulfillment. I had an uncle who used to say, “I've never seen a money truck at a funeral.” And, by the way, the old Ijamama answer is the same as the new Ijamama answer to that question. *(People in the audience laugh.)*

Larriet Queen: I can imagine that you're making lots of money now as a TV personality with high ratings of your popular show. How has your new-found money and fame changed your life, and don't tell me it hasn't? It always does for better or worse. I know you already have inadvertently mentioned some ways of how you have changed, such as how you answer questions now and changes in your spoken English.

Ijamama: With such a blessin', I've tried to keep my feet on the ground—to stay grounded in the values that I learned as a child. When you're blessed, you have people who are happy for you, admire you, and respect what you've done or have. You will also have the haters and jealous types, as well as those who grin in your face and try to take advantage of what you

have. So far, I've been able to stay in my same house in the Hood. I've renovated much of the inside and installed a good home security system. You know, I can't have people bustin' in on me or breakin' in while I'm at the TV studio, especially if they know my schedule. Many people in the Hood respect me for what I'm doing to help our people, so they watch my home for me and are not likely to break in when I'm not at home. The main thing is that I'm much more able now to help others who are truly in need, especially in ways to help them to help themselves. You know the old sayin' that you don't give people fish; you give them a fishin' pole. And I guess you also have to give them fishin' bait to help them get started. I believe in that old sayin', "God helps those who help themselves." Also, I sometimes end my TV show my remindin' people, "If you're good to yourself and others, God will be good to you."

Larriet Queen: And with changes in your status and your financial income, how or what have you done to help people in your Hood or your neighborhood?

Ijamama: I give quite a bit to my church for the youth and educational mission. I also turned my child care business over to my older sister, Rosa, to manage, and now we are co-partners in this worthwhile business. I purchased a building for the child care center, so I don't have to run it out of my house as I did befo' my TV show and my increased income. Sometimes, I go to the center to help Rosa for a few hours, when um not tied up with my show, but not as much as I want to, because I'm so busy. The child care center has a sliding scale for charging a parent or parents based on their annual income or financial status, which they have to prove with tax reports, salary check stubs, or whatever. I also bought out a so-called cut-rate store in the neighborhood that was owned by non-Blacks who didn't live in or care about our Hood, and who were sucking the financial blood of our people with high prices. I hired a couple of trusted neighbors to run that store, and we lowered prices on most things.

The whole idea is to use my resources to lift up others in my Hood, and any profits will go right back into the business or into a new business to help employ people in my Hood. Right now, I have plans with three women from my church to set up a restaurant in our Hood, because many Black

women can cook and too many urban Blacks are eatin' unhealthy fast-food junk. There is so much to do, and there are good people in the Hood who are willin' to work if they only have an opportunity or if someone with ideas and resources is willing to take the leadership to do somethin'. (*Ijamama looks into the TV camera.*) Listen up, to all Black celebrities out there or others with wealth, please invest in poor, run-down urban neighborhoods. People need help, and they need it now. This is also the case in many poor White Hoods that's lost jobs when factories shut down or moved to another country.

Larriet Queen: All those things sound great—congratulations on helping your neighborhood or Hood. And what about that white Escalade that one of your TV sponsors gave to you, I guess for the purpose of driving around as promotion for its brand?

Ijamama: What about it, and how did you know about that (*smiling*)? Listen up, I didn't see myself showing off in that big, luxury SUV, and I didn't ask for it. I really could barely climb up to get into the driver's seat (*laughing*). Since I didn't want to drive it around myself, the show's sponsor, Cadillac, agreed that I could keep it as long as I didn't sell it and if I used it for our Ijamama Child Care Center and as long as my name appeared on the front doors of both sides of the SUV. In other words, as long as the Ijamama name or brand appeared on the vehicle as part of the child care center's name. We use the Escalade to take kids home or pick them up, only in cases of emergency. We also use it to shop at the grocery store and pick up food once a week for the children's breakfast, lunch, and snacks and for other incidental errands. I allowed my sister Rosa and her husband to keep the Escalade, because she was havin' constant trouble with her car. Rosa and her husband live outside the urban city or Hood in a working-class neighborhood. Again, I didn't want to show off a luxury vehicle and have it parked in front of my humble house. Some people from my past—you know, childhood and school days—who still live in my Hood already think I'm a bigtime celebrity who is rich. But listen up, I don't see myself in that celebrity group or light or I try not to. I have a staff member from the TV studio to pick me up for work and drop me off at home, or I use Uber for my personal transportation. If I eventually buy or lease a car, it

will probably be a simple sedan like a new Ford or Chevy. I've been blessed, so I don't need to get the bighead or let my TV show go to my head. I must stay grounded as much as possible.

Larriet Queen: Ijamama, do you know how to drive a car?

Ijamama (*laughing*): Well, I have to tell it like it is. I have an expired driver's license, and it's been awhile since I drove. So the answer is I knew how to drive and maybe I still know. (*Ijamama smiles and a few people in the audience laugh.*)

Larriet Queen: OK, let's move on Ijamama. You have been called a feminist. Are you a feminist?

Ijamama: I don't particularly like labels or bein' put in a box. But if I had to choose, I would say I'm a womanist or a Black feminist. The way I see it and from what I've read, feminists are likely to be White women who protest for the gender rights of women, especially White women. But womanists fight for the rights of all women regardless of ethnicity or social class, including poor women, you know? Hot Heifer asked me to do my TV show because they wanted to expand their focus beyond a White middle-class, female audience to women of color, women of poverty, working women without a college degree, and college students. You can say I'm for human rights or the rights of all oppressed and sufferin' human beings, especially women and children.

Larriet Queen: Ijamama, the world knows very little about you, because as you said on your TV show more than once, "I try to stay under the radar." Could you please tell people just a little about your family? We know you have two sisters and that your older sister is working with you at your child care center.

Ijamama: You right; I like to fly low, like under the radar in my personal life, but still I rise publicly by the will and grace of God.

Larriet Queen: (*Larriet Queen is silent, patiently waiting for an answer to her question.*)

Ijamama: (*Ijamama pauses in thought.*) I'm hesitatin' because I got to think about what I want to share with the public. OK, I have a younger sister who lives in Florida and with the military, a career enlistee with the U.S. Navy. My older sister, Rosa, jus' has one son, and my younger sister in Florida doesn't have any children. I have two grown daughters—it looks like girls run in my family line. My mama had three girls, and I have two girls. One of my daughters is 29 years old and the other one is 27. Both of my daughters finished college. My older girl is working for federal government in Washington, D.C., and my younger one is in Baltimore working as a school teacher. My first-born daughter is divorced and has no children, and the younger one is married. They have a girl and a boy—my two lovely grandkids. The girl is five and the boy is three. I babysit a lot on the weekends to give my daughter and her husband a break and for me to enjoy my grands (*smiling*), you know, especially while they're still little, innocent, and active. Sorry, but I meant to omit family names for their privacy, except for Rosa who already was introduced last month on my TV Christmas show.

Larriet Queen: And what about your real name or legal name Ijamama? You chose not to share your real name in the *Hot Heifer* interview that was published, although you were asked that question, right?

Ijamama: That's right, and I'm still not ready to publicly broadcast my legal name, although a few people have searched and found it on the Internet. I want to enjoy the little privacy I still have for as long as I can, and I definitely don't want to be a victim of identity theft. Some stage or entertainment people have one public name like Beyoncé, Ciara, Brandy, Usher, and Prince. I'm in that one-name group for now; you know what I mean? (*A few in the audience laugh softly.*)

Larriet Queen: Some of my viewers thought that your TV interview of Miss Universe, on your show, was a bit harsh and disrespectful. I did see that show and felt a little uncomfortable about a couple of questions that

you asked. Do you regret some of the questions that you asked Miss Universe, and how would you answer those who felt that you were harsh or disrespectful?

Ijamama: The old Ijamama would have said, “It’s what it was—no explanation offered; no disrespect intended.” However, the new Ijamama will answer you this way: First of all, I don’t regret the questions that I asked Miss Universe. She understood befo’ she came on my show that the purpose is to “tell it like it is” and that I would not sugarcoat or ask all safe or easy questions. As humans, we all tend to be curious about other people, but we’re fearful or ashamed to ask them certain so-called embarrassing questions. I was subtle and polite in askin’ very hard questions. When she didn’t understand subtlety, I had to be explicit—like askin’ her point blank if she ever masturbated in hotels when she was lonely and out on the road or if she had ever been sexually involved with a female. I simply asked what many viewers, especially women, may have been wonderin’ or curious to know. It was really hard for me to ask some of those things, but I felt I needed to be true to the purpose of my show and the expectations of my viewers. As a credit to Miss Universe, I thought she handled my difficult questions well, and I told her so at the end of the interview. She only proved that as a beauty queen she could think on her feet or rather think on her butt. *(People in the audience laugh regarding thinking on her butt.)* She proved she could handle or answer challenging questions with grace. *(Some people in the audience applaud Ijamama’s answer if not Miss Universe’s performance on Ijamama’s TV show.)*

Larriet Queen: OK, that certainly makes sense. *(Ijamama interjects before Larriet can ask another question or change the topic.)*

Ijamama: Sorry, but one last thing—are TV viewers and commentators harder on women TV talk show hosts than they are on male talk show hosts? We also have to ask, if Trump were a woman, would he, as a she, have been elected President of the United States with those same bad behaviors? Just think about it—women are seen differently and held to a higher standard than men, but we get paid less. *(People in the audience, especially women, applaud loudly.)*

Larriet Queen: As a talk show host, I can agree with all of that. Continuing along the same line Ijamama about TV guests, do you have a lineup of some of your guests for this 2017 year? Who are some of the people you have booked to be on your show or those you've asked or plan to ask to be on your TV show as guests?

Ijamama: Great question; I will have a former prison inmate who agreed to come on my show who served eight years in prison for violent rape.

Larriet Queen: Granted, I know that the issue of rape is highly important, but what is so unusual about this man's rape case or experience that warrants a TV appearance?

Ijamama: Well, the unusual thing is it's not a man who served time for violent rape. It's a woman. And before you ask me how she raped a man, she didn't rape a man. She raped another woman at gunpoint after retraining her with handcuffs and leg or rather ankle shackles (*a few people in the audience giggle or gasp in disbelief*).

Larriet Queen: Oh, now that should be an interesting interview, although the incident was unfortunate. I know you will get her to tell the details of the rape incident like it happened, and that you will also ask her provocative questions about life in prison and how she may have changed. And who else you asked or who else has committed to be on your show?

Ijamama: Well, I plan to have a 91-year-old woman who will discuss her book titled, *50 of My Most Embarrassing Moments in Life*. Also, I will have Dr. Fartenstein to come back on my show—this time to discuss his recently published book, *How to Eat Right to Minimize Your Farting* (*people in the audience laugh out loudly*). You should get a wind of that show or watch that one too (*Ijamama laughs at her own humor*). I'll also have a young man who started sellin' drugs on the street when he was 12 years old so he could support his sick mama and his little sister.

Larriet Queen: I saw your show when Dr. Fartenstein was on. It was informative but also outright amazing. Do you have any big-time celebrities who are lined up for your show or who are on your to-be-invited list—any famous people we may know?

Ijamama: I sent a formal invitation to the future First Lady, Melania Trump. Yeah, if she shows up, I will be polite, but I will ask her tough, real-life questions that my audience and viewers want to know. You know what um sayin’—like did she marry for money or love? If she won’t accept to come on the show, I told my staff to try and get Trump’s daughter, Ivanka. I think she is very smart and she cares about government support as far as tax deductions for working women who pay child care or women who have elderly parents who live with them. I’ve also invited Michelle Obama to appear on my show. I really would like to have her on the show, because she is an ideal role model of what a girl from the Hood or any hood can rise to become. Not jus’ risin’ to become First Lady, but earning a law degree from the best in the country, Harvard University. I pray and hope that Michelle Obama will run for U.S. President in the future. Women must stand up in politics before men destroy our country. *(People in the audience, especially women, applaud loudly.)*

Larriet Queen: Yes, it’s a shame our country has never had a female President, when many other countries have. Hillary Clinton really tried hard twice. Maybe we should start grooming younger women leaders for the job. Of course, without question, Michelle would be a great Presidential candidate. She is much younger as compared to current, visible, political female leaders like Hillary Clinton or Elizabeth Warren. OK, my last question for you is one of the same questions that the *Hot Heifer* magazine reporter asked you in her interview almost a year and a half ago. Why did you take off your blouse or shirt when walking on a public street during that hot summer day of 2015?

Ijamama: *(Ijamama thinks for a few seconds.)* I really don’t know for sure. Somethin’ came over me besides the heat. I jus’ did it. I’ve thought about that over and over, and I now believe that it was God’s will to lift me to public attention for a purpose to come. It was more than the hot weather on

that day or my belief that women should have the same rights as men to be topless in public in extreme heat—although that was part of my reason and my explanation in the beginnin', and I still believe that. It was like my body went into motion as if some powerful external force had taken over. I had no control over doin' what I did, and look, I had not been drinking alcohol or was not on any other psychoactive drug. I was in my right mind. I jus' took off my shirt, and I didn't have a bra on due to that extreme summer heat. As I remember, it was like an oven outdoors on that day.

About a month after my incident, while in church, my preacher mentioned the Bible story of Moses when he came upon that burnin' bush and how God told him to take off his shoes, and how God spoke from the burnin' bush to tell him, "You are standing on holy grounds," and how God told him to lead his people from bondage out of Egypt. Well, I now believe that God directed me to take off my shirt as a way of bringin' me to the public attention of the nation and leadin' me to my own TV show so I could help many people through my work and my mission as God's work for me. I really believe this more and more as time passes and as I receive blessings and thus am able in many ways to pass blessings on to othas (others) in need. What happened to me had to be divine destiny, because it happened so fast, and opportunities jus' opened up for me, and I accepted the opportunities laid out befo' me. That's why I'm makin' the best of this labor of love to help others in many ways—as many ways as I can. I believe now more than ever that "God moves in a mysterious way; His wonders to perform," as that old hymn goes. *(Ijamama looks away in the empty spaces of the moment as if reflecting on what she had just said.)*

Larriet Queen: Thank you very much Ijamama; it's been a joy to have you on my show. I wish you continued success with your TV show and with all the good things that you are doing and planning to do to help women, children, and people in dire need.

Ijamama: You're welcome. It was my pleasure to be on your show.

Larriet Queen: Good night everybody from the Larriet Queen Show. I'll see all of you tomorrow night.