

"LOVING THE IMAGE"...

By: TYJUANE PRIDGEN

PANTHER: It's only twelve something and it's cooking out here already. The sun's radiate heat is beaming on my face and this wife beater shirt is soaking wet. My face and arms are full of sweat. (PANTHER WIPES HIS FACE)

MONEY: OMAR'S PORCH IS HOT, I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M SITTING ON THIS CEMENT.

Slim: It's too hot

OMAR: (OMAR EXIT THE HOUSE) HERE'S THE SODAS. I ONLY HAVE ONE FLAVOR.

PANTHER: WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

OMAR: SHAY HIT ME ON FACEBOOK. SHE WANTS TO COME OVER. (OMAR SPEAKS IN A SMOOTH MANNER)

MONEY: YOU'RE STILL DEALING WITH HER, AFTER THAT NONSENSE SHE PULLED AT YOUR JOB?

Slim: YOU'RE CRAZY DOG.

OMAR: I'M STILL DEALING WITH YOU AND MONEY, Slim. AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE YOU GOTTEN PANTHER AND ME IN. I MUST BE CRAZY.

MONEY: WE'RE BOYS FOR LIFE. REMEMBER?

PANTHER: NO, OMAR AND ME ARE BROTHERS FOR LIFE, WE BEEN LIKE PEAS IN A POT SINCE GRADE SCHOOL, WE GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL TOGETHER AND NOW WE'RE PLANNING OUR FUTURE. YOU AND Slim ARE TWO CONFUSED DUDES.

Slim: HERE WE GO WITH THIS HOLLYWOOD TALK.

PANTHER: YOU THINK JUST BECAUSE WE GREW UP IN DECATUR GEORGIA INNER CITY, WE CAN NOT SUCCEED. FOR 24 YRS WE'VE SURVIVED.

OMAR: HOLD UP! YEAH I'M STILL KICKING IT WITH SHAY. SHE APOLOGIZED FOR MAKING A SCENE AT THE LIBRARY.

MONEY: Why ARE you still working at that Library? you're NOT MAKING REAL MONEY.

OMAR: I MAKE ENOUGH PAPER TO SUPPORT ME WHILE I'M WORKING ON my film PROJECTS.

Slim: I REMEMBER how you USE TO RAN AROUND with that dumb CAMERA EVERYDAY.

MONEY: AND how you AND PANTHER PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL PLAYS, WRITING SCRIPTS.

PANTHER: Forget ALL that, FOR you to BE SO smooth with those GREEN EYES AND WAVEY HAIR. YOU'RE A SUCKA FOR LOVE, THOSE SILLY GIRLS GOING TO BE THE DEATH OF YOU. SHE ALMOST COST YOU YOUR JOB.

OMAR: I'm good I TALKED with my SUPERVISOR. SHE UNDERSTANDS my PROBLEM.

PANTHER: MAN STAY FOCUS ON YOUR VISION.

Slim: PANTHER YOU'RE CHASING A DREAM TOO WITH ALL THOSE PICTURES YOU BE PAINTING AND DRAWING.

PANTHER: MY WORK SPEAKS FOR THEMSELVES. I'M SELLING MY WORK ONLINE. SEE YOU AND MONEY DON'T UNDERSTAND ART. I BRING MY ANIMATED CHARACTERS TO LIFE WITH PAINT, MY FANS THAT FOLLOW ME ARE AMAZED AT MY WORK. IF YOU UNDERSTOOD ART, YOU'LL SEE THE PASSION THAT I EXPRESS IN MY WORK.

OMAR: THAT'S RIGHT TOGETHER PANTHER AND I ALWAYS CREATE NICE ART. PANTHER BRIGHT BOLD COLORS AND MY VISION IS REAL.

MONEY: THAT'S WHY YALL ARE BEST FRIENDS, BECAUSE THE BOTH OF YOU ARE DREAMING.

PANTHER: YOU'LL SEE US BLOW, BUT BACK TO YOU OMAR. IF YOU ALLOW

SHAY to get away with that, what do you think she'll try next,
Besides I thought you and Imani was back on track.

OMAR: PANTHER don't worry I have it under control. I have SHAY and
IMANI under control.

PANTHER: Alright Bro, so what's going on tonight?

OMAR: It's Saturday, Let's hit the club.

PANTHER: You know SHAKA want us to stop by the youth center tomorrow
at noon to talk about this new project he's working on with the
youth.

OMAR: We won't stay out to late.

PANTHER: That's what it is Bro.

SHAKA: I want this play to have an imagination that's out of this world,
hopefully you two brothers will use your creativity to take us on a
journey. I want these kids to see and admire the beauty of art,
exposing them to art. This could inspire some to look into
other areas besides rap. Like writing scripts, playwriting and drawing.
Things you guys love to do.

PANTHER: I think we can help with the production and some nice skillful
designs.

SHAKA: (SHAKA with a confident smile) There's no doubt in my mind, you two
brothers are talent.

OMAR: Why do you put so much trust in us?

SHAKA: There's a lot of things you two don't know about me. At 42 years old
my voyage in life was not easy. I had to search and search until
I was able to find what I was looking for. I did a stint in

PRISON, DURING THAT TIME I EARNED A G.E.D., TOOK SOME COLLEGE COURSES THRU THE MAIL. I RECREATED MYSELF FOR THE BETTER. NOW FOR THE PAST 12 YEARS I WORKED AS A COUNSELOR FOR TROUBLE YOUTH. DURING MY FREE TIME I TRAVEL TO DIFFERENT INSTITUTION FOR YOUNG BROTHERS THAT'S IN THE SYSTEM. SPEAKING ON DECISION MAKING, BEING ABLE TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES AND MOVING PAST THE STREET PHILOSOPHY. THE BOTH OF YOU HAVE SO MUCH TALENT, BUT YOU'RE STILL STUCK INSIDE THE BOX.

PANTHER: WHAT KINDA BOX YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT SHAKA?

SHAKA: YOU'RE STILL GLORIFYING THE STREETS, IT'S LIKE YOU'RE AFRAID TO CUT THE UMBILICAL CORD. THE TALENT AND SKILLS THE BOTH OF YOU HAVE, YOU NEED TO BE THINKING ABOUT WAYS TO BREAK INTO THE CORPORATE WORLD. YOU REMEMBER WHAT NAS SAID IN HIS SONG "PROJECT WINDOW" SO MANY WAYS OUT THE HOOD, BUT NO SIGN SAYS OUT! YOU HAVE TO THINK FOR THE LONG TERM.

OMAR: SHAKA MAN, YOU DON'T SEE PANTHER AND ME ON THE CORNER SELLING DRUGS OR HURTING ANYBODY. WE GRADUATED FROM SCHOOL, DON'T ~~do~~ THAT MEAN SOMETHING. WE HAVE HONEST JOBS, PLUS WORKING TOWARDS OUR CAREER.

SHAKA: THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I ADMIRE YOU, I SEE SPECIAL THINGS, BUT YOU'RE STILL IN LOVE WITH THE IMAGE. YOUR HARD EARN MONEY, YOU'RE INVESTING IT IN SILLY THINGS YOU HAVE ALL THE DESIGNER CLOTHES AND LOOK AT THAT CHAIN AROUND YOUR NECK, THAT THING COST MONEY. REMEMBER IT TAKES CAPITAL TO MAKE CAPITAL. YOU SHOULD BE INVESTING IN YOUR CRAFT, DEVELOPING DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS, GOING TO DIFFERENT CONFERENCES, LOOKING FOR INVESTORS. PANTHER YOU'RE A LITTLE MORE FOCUS, YOU ALREADY NETWORKING YOUR ART. BUT YOU'RE WASTING YOUR MONEY TOO. SO MANY BROTHERS LOVE THE IMAGE. LOOK AT ALL THE BROTHERS WHO MAKE IT IN THE MUSIC WORLD, THEY GET THEIR ADVANCES ~~to~~ BUY THE CARS AND JEWELRY TWO C.D.'S LATER THEY'RE NOT EVEN WORTH \$15,000 DOLLARS.

SO DO YOU SEE WHERE I'M GOING, YOU SEE MY CREATIVE PICTURE I'VE DRAWN?

PANTHER: I FEEL YOU.

OMAR: I SEE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING SHAKA, BUT I THINK WE'RE FOCUS, ALL MY LIFE I'VE DEDICATED MYSELF TO MY CRAFT MY DECISIONS ARE ALWAYS CAREFULLY THOUGHT. I'M DETERMINE TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

SHAKA: I'M NOT TRYING TO DISCOURAGE YOU OR DISS YOU BROTHA, I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE I ADMIRE AND RESPECT YOUR WORK I JUST DON'T WANT ANYTHING OR ANYONE TO HINDER, STAGNATE OR STOP YOU FROM BEING SUCCESSFUL, BECAUSE MISTAKES ARE OUT THERE.

(SHAKA PAUSED TO ALLOW HIS MESSAGE TO ASORB)

SHAKA: SO WE'RE READY TO GET TO WORK. OMAR YOU AND I WILL WRITE THE SCRIPT AND HANDLE THE PRODUCTION. PANTHER YOU'LL DO ALL THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION, DESIGN AND PAINTING. ONCE WE BRING EVERYTHING TOGETHER, IT SHOULD BE A NICE PROJECT.

PANTHER: THAT'S COOL.

SHAKA: (STOOD TO LEAVE) THIS A GOOD THING YOU TWO ARE DOING, HELPING THE YOUTH CENTER WITH SOMETHING POSITIVE. WE ALWAYS NEED TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY, WHO KNOWS WHO YOU MAY INSPIRATE.

OMAR: THE FOOD SMELLS GOOD.

PANTHER: I DIDN'T KNOW THIS SOUL FOOD RESTAURANT GET DOWN LIKE THIS, I NEARLY SWALLOWED THIS BROWN CRISPY CHICKEN

OMAR: THE BROWN RICE, FRIED CABBAGE AND BUTTERMILK ROLLS IS GOOD TOO.

PANTHER I THINK SHAKA HAS US CONFUSED.

Panther: (wiped the corner of his mouth) why you say that?

OMAR: WE'RE NOT RUNNING THE STREETS HURTING ANYBODY OR HUSTLING DRUGS. OUR MONEY IS HONEST.

Panther: I don't think the brotha was saying that.

OMAR: Why wasn't he, he ACCUSED US of having links to the streets.

Panther: OMAR HIS EXACT WORDS WERE "WE ARE glorifying the streets".

OMAR: It's all the same fam.

Panther: Not really, I kinda understand his views.

OMAR: Panther we can't hide or run from where we're from.

Panther: I know that, but it's a big world out there. Remember we have plans to show our art to the world.

OMAR: (OMAR laid his fork down) you're still focus on your projects AND I'm doing the same thing. So what's the ISSUE? So what if I spend my money on clothes AND jewelry. I deserve to treat myself, I work hard.

Panther: LISTEN OMAR I agree, but think about if we really dig deep down AND get a 100% focus. Stop the clubbing so much AND lay low from the cats that isn't about shit. Eventually trouble will find us, The other night when slim AND money got to beefing with those dudes if they situation would've turned ugly we would've been in the middle of it all.

OMAR: Those our boys we grew up with them, we always had each other backs.

Panther: NO you AND I always had each other backs. (Panther pointed towards the two of them) Besides OMAR we're older AND ~~we're taking a different~~ ~~you~~ the road we're taking is different from our boys. Man Shaka is right we have to change our perspective AND really start thinking corporate.

OMAR: Panther that's always been our objective.

Panther: I know, I know bro. But it's time to cut the dead weight, AND get focus.

OMAR: I'm already focus.

PANTHER: YEAH, ALRIGHT. SO HAVE YOU DEVELOPED A CONCEPT FOR THE PLAY?

OMAR: WE'RE GOING TO DEVELOP A PLOT WHERE THERE'S A CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO GUYS OVER A GIRL, INSTEAD OF GETTING INTO A PHYSICAL BATTLE, THEY'LL DEAL WITH THE CONFLICT THROUGH THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION. BASICALLY COGNITIVE SKILLS AND PROBLEM SOLVING. ALSO DIFFERENT SCENES WHERE THE YOUTH CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH THE ART OF DANCING.

PANTHER: (SMILED) I'LL DEFINITELY BE ABLE TO CREATE A PERFECT IMAGE THAT WILL REPRESENT THE STORY LINE. I'LL ALSO PAINT SOME HISTORICAL ICONS. I'LL HAVE MALCOLM IN A PICTURE POINTING TO HIS MIND.

OMAR: SHAKA WANTS ME TO HELP HIM WRITE THE SCRIPT, BUT HE WANTS ME TO HANDLE THE PRODUCTION AND THE CAMERA. DAMN! BRO. IT'S LIKE HE WANTS ME TO CREATE A MOTION PICTURE.

PANTHER: YOU CAN HANDLE THE PROJECT?

OMAR: YOU KNOW MY SKILLS.

PANTHER: YEAH. THE BROTHA ONLY TRYING TO PUSH OUR SKILLS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

OMAR: I KNOW MAN. SHAKA IS GOOD PEOPLE.

PANTHER: HE'S ALL ABOUT PULLING THE NEXT BROTHA UP. HELPING THE NEXT MAN. A LOT OF THE YOUTH LOOK AT SHAKA AS A FATHER FIGURE. SINCE HE'S BEEN COUNSELING AT THE COMMUNITY YOUTH CENTER, HE INSPIRED A LOT OF KIDS TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL.

OMAR: (OMAR NODDED HIS HEAD) SHAKA IS CHARISMATIC AND LOYAL.

PANTHER: THAT'S WHY I HAVE HIS BACK, AND CHERISH HIS ADVICE.

OMAR: I'M WITH YOU PANTHER. ALL THE PROJECTS WE DID CAME OUT THE BOMB. SKYS THE LIMIT.

PANTHER: THAT'S BEEN OUR MOTTO SINCE WE WERE YOUTH DOING ARTS AND CRAFTS. (PANTHER REACHED ACROSS THE TABLE TO POUND HIS BEST FRIEND UP WITH SOME LOVE.)

SHAY: I KNOW YOU'RE LYING OMAR. EVERYBODY TOLD ME THEY SAW YOU AND IMANI TOGETHER.

OMAR: I ALREADY SAID WE WERE CHILLIN, HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT? MY HEAD READY TO BURST FROM YOUR MOUTH SHAY.

SHAY: YOU TOLD ME FOR ONLY A DAY. I HEARD ALL WEEK.

OMAR: WHAT DIFFERENT DOES IT MAKE I SAID WE WERE TOGETHER.

SHAY: IT MAKES ALOT, BECAUSE YOU'RE SPENDING MORE TIME WITH HER. IS IMANI YOUR GIRL NOW?

OMAR: I'VE EXPLAINED TO YOU THAT SHE'S A FRIEND NOTHING MORE.

SHAY: THAT'S WHAT YOUR MOUTH SAY

OMAR: WELL I'M SORRY IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME.

SHAY: (SHE STARTED TO SNAP, BY GETTING LOUD)

OMAR: (OMAR CLEARLY TUNE HER WORDS AND ENERGY OUT)

SHAY: OMAR DO YOU HEAR ME?

OMAR: YEAH I HEARD YOU.

SHAY: SO ARE YOU GOING TO CUT HER OFF

OMAR: IMANI IS MY FRIEND. DO YOU SEE ME CRYING ABOUT ALL THE DUDES YOU CLAIM WHO'S YOUR FRIEND.

SHAY: THERE'S NO NEED, THEY'RE FRIENDS.

OMAR: THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING ABOUT IMANI.

SHAY: WHAT DO YOU AND IMANI HAVE IN COMMON.

OMAR: WELL SHE'S NICE, PRETTY AND THE OPPOSITE OF YOU. SHE'S MATURE.

SHAY: FORGET YOU OMAR.

OMAR: SHAY ~~do~~ WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE SO ARGUMENTATIVE, EVERYTHING IS A DISPUTE BETWEEN US.

SHAY: NO, YOU NEED TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT I'M A STRONG WOMAN, RESPECT THAT. (SHE POINTS AT OMAR)

OMAR: A WOMAN RESPECT THE WAY SHE CARRY HERSELF. IMANI INDEPENDENT. SHAY YOU DON'T WANNA WORK, ALL DAY YOU BE WITH THEM CHICKEN HEAD CHICKS DOING NOTHING. AND THAT MOVE YOU DISPLAYED AT MY JOB WAS SO IMMATURE. YOU EMBARRASS ME AND YOURSELF.

SHAY: I DON'T GIVE A "F" WHAT THOSE OLD LADIES THINK ABOUT ME AT THAT LIBRARY.

OMAR: SEE THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING. YOU HAVE NO RESPECT, AND NOT TO MENTION YOU NEARLY COST ME MY JOB.

SHAY: YOU NEED TO FIND ANOTHER JOB ANYWAYS, WHO WORKS AT A BORING LIBRARY. PANTHER AND YOU ARE THE ONLY DUDES IN YOUR CREW WHO'S LIVING THAT FANTASY SHIT, WRITING PLAYS AND DOCUMENTATION. SLIM AND MONEY MAKING MONEY RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE SEEING THEIR PAPER.

OMAR: YOU'RE FREE TO BOUNCE ANYTIME YOU'RE READY.

SHAY: THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO ANYWAYS.

OMAR: NO I JUST DON'T NEED ALL YOUR NEGATIVITY IN MY EAR.

SHAY: THAT'S WHAT ~~YOU~~ I MEAN OMAR YOU THINK I'M BEING NEGATIVE. BUT I'M GIVING YOU REALNESS, YOU CHASING THIS DREAM OF ALL THIS ART, FILM AND LITERATURE SHIT. SNAP OUT OF IT AND GET WITH THE PROGRAM.

OMAR: SHAY YOU WANT ME TO RUN THE STREETS SO BAD, IF YOU WANT A STREET DUDE THAT'S GETTING MONEY, WHY DON'T YOU GO AND GET ONE.

SHAY: THERE YOU GO AGAIN, YOU WANT ME TO LEAVE.

OMAR: I did not say that, but I'm telling you again that I'm comfortable with my job. I have food, clothing and shelter that I provide all by myself. I don't depend on anybody to do for me. I have a passion for the art, and soon I'll achieve my dream.

SHAY: Yeah! Right, only in your dreams.

OMAR: That's cool if you don't believe in me.

SHAY: Anyway, when the next time you'll be free to come by?

OMAR: I'm not sure, we're working on a project for the community youth center.

SHAY: Are you getting paid for it, because I need to borrow some money.

OMAR: No I'm not getting paid, it's for the youth.

SHAY: Those kids don't care about no Shakespeare, or Romeo Juliet shit.

OMAR: (Laughing) Shay you're so ignorant Spike Lee and Tyler Perry are a few black film makers. And what about all the black actors and actresses, the youth like. Exposing their minds to the art may inspire them to want to act.

SHAY: Man take me home, I'll talk to you later, you're crazy as hell.

SHAKA: Panther your work is beautiful brotha. The picture has luminous sparkling colors that jumps off the wall bringing the imaginative of the mural a sight to behold. The red, black, green and yellow help the design to shine. Look at the look on the brotha's face, his Caribbean restaurant stands out brighter now.

PANTHER: YOU LIKE IT

SHAKA: (TURNS TO PANTHER). BROTHA THIS IS NICE. YOUR SKILLS ARE SO RAW.

PANTHER I'M PROUD OF YOU, YOUR CREATIVITY IS STRONG. THE WAY YOU PAINTED THE ELDER EDUCATING THE YOUTH ON PREPARING A DELICIOUS CARIBBEAN CUISINE. IT'S TRUE A PICTURE SAYS A THOUSAND WORDS. PEOPLE WILL SEE THIS MURAL AND WILL BE ENTICED TO TRY THE FOOD.

OWNER OF THE RESTAURANT: (HEAVY WEST INDIES ACCENT) YOUR WORK IS GOOD BRETHREN. I REALLY LIKE IT.

PANTHER: THANK YOU.

OWNER: I HAVE YOUR MONEY FOR BOTH PAINTINGS. THE PORTRAIT ON THE CANVAS I LIKE TOO. THE ELDER WITH PURE WHITE HAIR, SKIN DARK CHOCOLATE SHIRTLESS IS A WARRIOR. IT'S GOOD HE SIT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CIRCLE SURROUNDED BY THE YOUNGER MEN. THIS SHOW BIG STRENGTH.

PANTHER: THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED, RIGHT?

OWNER: YES BRETHREN. WE CAN DO MORE BUSINESS IN THE FUTURE, AND I'll SHOW YOUR WORK TO ALL MY FRIENDS. I HAVE FRIENDS ALL OVER, A LOT OF FRIENDS FROM HOME COME EAT HERE.

PANTHER: I APPRECIATE THAT. PANTHER ACCEPTED THE CHECK)

SHAKA: I'M SERIOUS YOU DID A WONDERFUL JOB PANTHER, YOUR SKILLS CAN TAKE YOU VERY FAR. THERE'S SO MANY THINGS YOU CAN GET INTO WITH YOUR EYE.

PANTHER: I'M FOCUS.

SHAKA: I KNOW YOU'RE FOCUS, BUT YOU NEED TO BE FOCUS A HUNDRED PERCENT.

PANTHER: I'M STICKING TO THE SCRIPT (PANTHER SPOKE WITH A LITTLE FRUSTRATION)

SHAKA: PANTHER I'M NOT DOUBTING YOU. I HOPE YOU BELIEVE THAT I HAVE A LOT OF FAITH IN YOU AND OMAR. I JUST WANT YOU TO RISE ABOVE THAT STREET MENTALITY. I HATE TO SEE THE BOTH OF YOU BROTHAS WASTE YOUR TALENT. THE WORLD IS MUCH BIGGER THEN THESE STREETS, AND THERE'S SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES OUT THERE, BUT YOU HAVE TO BE WILL TO GO GET THEM.

OMAR: I'M SORRY I'M LATE, I GOT HELD UP AT WORK THE NEW ORDER OF BOOKS CAME IN.

SHAKA: DON'T SWEAT IT, PANTHER WAS JUST SHOWING ME HIS PROJECT. OMAR WHY DO YOU HAVE A BAND-AID OVER YOUR EYE, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

OMAR: OH THIS NOTHING. A SMALL CUT.

SHAKA: WHAT HAPPEN BROTHA?

OMAR: SOME OF THE GUYS AND ME GOT TO FIGHTING AT THE CLUB LASTNIGHT.

SHAKA: OVER WHAT?

OMAR: MISUNDERSTANDING

SHAKA: YOU WAS FIGHTING TOO PANTHER?

PANTHER: I WASN'T THERE, BUT I HAD TO BOND HIM OUT.

SHAKA: (SHAKA SHAKES HIS HEAD IN SHAME) OMAR YOU WENT TO JAIL FOR A

MISUNDERSTANDING, I THOUGHT YOU WAS BIGGER THEN THAT BROTHA. THIS PROJECT WE'RE PUTTING TOGETHER DEALS EXACTLY WITH THAT PROBLEM. YOU HAVE TO PRATICE WHAT YOU PREACH. THAT'S THAT IMAGE YOU'RE GLORIFYING.

OMAR: IT WAS NOT MY BEEF, ONE OF MY BOYS GOT INTO IT. THEN ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER. IT WAS ONLY A MISDEMEANOR.

SHAKA: MAN I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU SOMETIMES. INTELLIGENT AS YOU ARE, YOU'RE STILL BEING LED DOWN THE WRONG ROAD. YOUR FRIENDS ARE IN THE STREETS, THAT'S THEM. YOU ON THE OTHER HAND SAY YOU WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF YOURSELF, BUT YOU ALLOWING YOUR FRIENDS TO PULL YOU INTO TROUBLE. IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF IN SOME TROUBLE YOU CAN'T GET OUT.

OMAR: SHAKA TRUST ME, I'M GOOD.

PANTHER: OMAR YOU COULD'VE GOTTEN IN SOME SERIOUS TROUBLE LAST NIGHT. SLIM AND MONEY GOT FELONIES FOR THAT FIGHT. THAT GIRL GOT HER FACE SPLIT OPEN WITH 40 STITCHES.

OMAR: COME ON PANTHER DON'T YOU START AGAIN. I HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR CRYING LAST NIGHT.

PANTHER: ALRIGHT I DON'T WANT TO HEAR NOTHING WHEN YOU GET LATE, IT'S YOUR WORLD OMAR.

SHAKA: OMAR WE HAVE TO DRAW THE LINE IN OUR LIFE AT SOME POINT BROTHA. I UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU'RE LOYAL TO YOUR FRIENDS, BUT BEFORE YOU SHOW YOUR LOYALTY TO ANYONE YOU MUST BE LOYAL TO YOURSELF, YOUR GOAL AND VISION. EVERY MAN SHOULD MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS AND HOW THEY WANT TO LIVE. SOME WILL MAKE IT IN LIFE AND SOME WON'T. I KNOW YOU FEEL I'M ALWAYS CRITICIZING YOU YOUNG BROTHA, BUT I'VE SEEN YOUR KIND BEFORE, I WAS INCARCERATED. I MEET SO MANY TALENT CATS - WHO MADE THAT ONE ERROR

that changed the course of their life. Many of their stories were the same in one way or another. Bad influence, peer pressure or hanging with the wrong crowd.

OMAR: I understand your point Shaka. Being incarcerated isn't in my future.

SHAKA: (He stared at Omar, then turned to Panther) Panther where do you see yourself in five to ten years?

PANTHER: Enjoying life with a lot of success

SHAKA: (Nodded towards Omar) And you?

OMAR: I'll be on top of my game. Since I was young I've always felt strong towards my life.

SHAKA: That's good. You should have confidence, because your skills in the art are strong. But there'll be a time when you'll have to choose.

OMAR: Shaka you have me wrong. I'm 100% focus on my craft, I don't have absolutely no ties to the streets. I've explained this to you before.

SHAKA: I understand that, but you're in love with the image, and that's dangerous. The play we put together, the same script you basically wrote yourself speaks about positive decision making, being able to communicate through problem solving. Changing the way we see things in life.

OMAR: I understand Shaka

SHAKA: Omar. You and Panther can be successful with some hard work, focus, discipline and dedication. I know the two of you understand our past history, that's why you're giving back to the youth center with your time.

AND all the projects the two of you did in school plays shows your passion for the arts. But success comes with discipline, that's what you're lacking Omar. Don't allow no one to mess up your life. Remember I'm here to knock you Brotha. I love you too much to knock you down. I made an oath to help others. I hate when I see young people loose, especially if the playing field isn't level evenly.

OMAR: SHAKA I feel you. You're right. I have to discipline myself more and practice what I preach

(SHAKA, PANTHER AND OMAR all hugged)

SHAKA: I appreciate you brotha's help with the project, I'm excited about our message.

OMAR: I have the up most respect for SHAKA

PANTHER: The brotha has a beautiful heart.

OMAR: At first I thought he was trying to diss us and not respect our love for the arts.

PANTHER: Nah, I understand the man. Pushing pass things that aren't beneficial for our future is a must.

OMAR: For starters I'm done with Shay. She don't have any faith in my vision. Then money and slim they'll always be my boys, but I can't get caught up in their affairs.

PANTHER: I agree. We have to think bigger. We know exactly what we want

to do with our lives so we should be going after our vision a little harder.

OMAR: I'm with you PANTHER.

PANTHER: I KNOW you ARE. FOR HERE ON OUT. WE going to CHASE the SUBSTANCE AND NOT THE IMAGE.

OMAR: I LOVE you BRO.

PANTHER: I LOVE you MORE....