

# Judge This Book (unpublished)

## Editing Sample from Allyson Brooks

### Author's Original Manuscript

I couldn't imagine doing it any other way. I just figured it's what people are supposed to do. I saw mom do it over and over again while I was a kid...why not?

In short, I related to the black culture and black community through the music I loved. And it paid dividends in some really weird ways.

Like, I ran for middle school class president—and I won. I want to explain how I won, but first I want to make sure you understand another important thing about me.

I am going to use the term "black" instead of "African American" because that's the term we used back then. I don't mean it as a derogatory term—nor did I back then. I was not raised with any semblance of hate for any group of people. For all my mom's faults, I can't think of a single episode where she disparaged anyone on the basis of a category (race, religion, economic status, etc.).

Man, I still remember seeing new stories about the civil rights movement. Keep in mind, I was just a little kid during the high tide of race riots back in the late 60s. One night, I made myself dinner (which was customary to do—when mom was mercifully passed out in her room). I plopped down in front of the little black-and-white TV I won at Shea Stadium, and turned on the news.

On the television, I saw footage of the police setting dogs upon black people and turning fire hoses upon black people trying to stand up for their rights. And I still remember thinking, *How can this be okay? How is it okay to sic dogs or hoses on people who aren't doing anything wrong...aren't doing anything other than wanting to get something to eat or ride a bus or go to school?*

Early moments like that gave me a strong sense of how there are injustices in the world. It also alerted me to the bubble within which I lived—my pure white neighborhood kept me from experiencing the full three dimensions of humanity. Obviously, I didn't have those words when I was seven or eight years old. But the concept was not lost on me.

### Allyson's Re-Writes & Edits

Yet, I couldn't imagine going to the concert any other way. I just figured it's what people are supposed to do. I saw Mom do it over and over again while I was a kid, so why not?

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I want to make sure you understand something very important about me. I know that words have power.

I was not raised with any semblance of hate for any group of people. For all my mom's faults, I can't think of a single episode where she disparaged any individual on the basis of a general category, such as race, religion, economic status, and so on. With that in mind, in this book, I'm going to use the term "Black" instead of "African American." To me, that term never really made a lot of sense, anyway. Lots of Black people in America don't have African lineage; some have Caribbean lineage while others have a big mix of different lineages. And lots of Black people in this big world are not American at all. So, for this book, I'm sticking with Black, and I do so with all respect.

I truly do not want to be perceived as being poised against anyone without reason. Once you demonstrate you're an unapologetic asshole, I will absolutely have a negative opinion of you. Until then, I treat everyone with dignity and respect.

It's how I want to be treated. And that's that.

I learned what I could about Black culture and the Black community through the music I loved. Man, I still remember seeing the stories on television about the civil rights movement. I was a little kid when the Watts riot broke out in Los Angeles. That night, I made myself dinner, which was customary for me when mom was mercifully passed out in her room. I plopped down in front of the little black-and-white TV I won at Shea Stadium and turned on the news.

On it, I saw footage of the police ordering their dogs to attack Black people and turning fire hoses on Black people trying to stand up for their rights. I still remember thinking: How can this be okay? How is it okay to sic dogs or hoses on people who aren't doing anything wrong. Not doing anything other than wanting to get something to eat, or ride a bus, or go to school?

Early moments like that gave me a strong sense of the injustices in the world. It also alerted me to the bubble I lived in; my pure white neighborhood kept me from experiencing the full dimension of humanity. Obviously, I didn't have those words when I was seven or eight years old. But the concept was not lost on me.

Commented [AB1]: As your Editor, I'd like to present a more pragmatic approach to using the term "Black." It is acceptable, especially on a world-wide basis, and I've made that point here. Deference to precedence is a weak premise. The argument is: "If you know it's wrong now, why are you still doing it? You know better!"

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We found spots at the bar and ordered a couple cocktails. Not long after our drinks arrived, a guy slid up behind us and hissed, "Al...hey Al..."

"Yeah?"

"There's a nigger sitting at the end of the bar. You want me to put one in his head and dump him over the rail into the bay?"

All I could think was, *Holy shit...*

Al paused to take a sip of his drink, and then turned to me.

"Okay, Ron...What should he do?"

I was like, "No, nah...seriously, dude...keep me out of this."

Al persisted, "No—you hold a man's life in your hands right now. What should he do?"

I'm sure I turned bleach white on my barstool. I was fucking freaking out internally. I, pretty sure let out a nervous chuckle—nothing was funny, but I didn't know what else to do. I replied like the smartass I tended to be when I got nervous.

## Allyson's Re-Writes & Edits

We found spots at the bar and ordered a couple cocktails. Not long after our drinks arrived, a guy slid up behind us and hissed, "Al! Hey Al!"

"Yeah?"

"There's a n----r\* sitting at the end of the bar. You want me to put one in his head and dump him over the rail into the bay?"

I froze in place. All I could think was, Holy shit!

If you want to jump my shit for censoring that word, go ahead. But I want you to know that that word is not one I like to type out or even read. I don't give a shit who you are—it is fucking disrespectful. End of story.

Al paused to take a sip of his drink, then turned to me.

"Okay, Ron. What should he do?"

I stammered. "No, nah, seriously, dude, keep me out of this."

Al persisted, "No. You hold a man's life in your hands right now. What should he do?"

I'm sure I turned bleach-white on my barstool. I was fucking freaking out internally. I'm pretty sure I let out a nervous chuckle; nothing was funny, but I didn't know what else to do. I replied like the smartass I tended to be when I got nervous.

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entered the studio and looked around. I must say, Joe was amused by the shock on our faces. His sense of humor ebbed in, as he explained that he had no idea what kind of porn we were into...so he purchased a variety pack.

Anyway, one of the Magazines was titled, "Fuck Queens." When you leafed through this fine publication, you noticed that it was filled with striking images of transsexuals in various stages of sexual union.

Ah, tranny porn. Wherefore art thou, tranny porn...?

As a band, Little Caesar was given a gift. We immediately latched on to the title, and started calling each other Fuck Queens. Basically, we were quietly calling each other trannys or chicks with dicks or whatever the politically incorrect terms are these days.

Don't ask me why. We weren't the most sophisticated group of gentlemen.

We recorded the EP, which was called *Name Your Poison*. One song, "Down to the Wire" landed on a Metal Blade Records compilation in 1989, called *Street Survivors*. All in all, that EP represented a good start to our career.

My sister, Sandi, did all the artwork for the EP. She was working with our day-to-day manager, Tony Ferguson, to assemble the track listing and credits for the back cover. Tony called Joe to ask how he wanted his name listed in the production credits.

Joe, being Joe, responded, "Produced by Joe 'Fuck Queen' Hardy."

## Allyson's Re-Writes & Edits

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One of the Magazines was titled, "Fuck Queens." When you leafed through this fine publication, you noticed that it was filled with striking images of cross-dressing men in various stages of sexual union.

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We recorded the EP, which was called Name Your Poison. One song, "Down to the Wire" landed on a Metal Blade Records compilation in 1989, called Street Survivors. That EP represented a good start to our career.

My sister, Sandi, did all the artwork for the EP. She was working with our day-to-day manager, Tony Ferguson, to assemble the track listing and credits for the back cover. Tony called Joe Hardy to ask how he wanted his name listed in the production credits.

Joe, being Joe, responded, "Produced by Joe 'Fuck Queen' Hardy."

**Commented [AB4]:** No. No. And no. As your Editor, I put my foot down on the vile use of the slur "tranny." This is inexcusable. So is the term "transvestite." "Fuck Queens" is fine. It is actually a hilarious term, and I love it. Instead, let us keep this nomenclature in mind: Transsexual—one whose gender identity is different from their assigned gender at birth. Cross-Dresser—a much better term for one who wears clothing of a gender opposite to theirs. Drag—One who dresses as someone of the opposing gender (normally they impersonate a celebrity) for entertainment purposes. Knowing that your words have power is the path to forging good friendships & new fans.