

Good Guilt

By Antoine J. Murphy

I'm so guilty of saying it. "Man, My shorty's (kids) gone have a better life than I did."

However; I'm even guiltier of bestowing upon my child a worse life than I ever had. See, my "pops" filled out his absentee ballot by the time I was "this many"...3...years old. And I inked my own absentee ballot 18 days before my daughter's due date, which happened to be 22 days prior to her earthly arrival. I've been gone ever since. The math does itself without being accompanied by rocket science, 21 years and 24 days (and counting); all because I wanted 6-7 figures in my bank account.

Wouldn't that be the best life for her? To shower her in the tenets of the American Dream even if only at the "hood rich" level. Yes, my daughter would have it all. Power Wheels and a Cadillac before she could even drive. Diamond earrings the size of stones, so big they'd weigh her head down like the Thinking Man. Platinum strollers, Jordan's, Gucci this and Prada that as well as other Italian luxuries. Yeah, she wouldn't want for nothing.

But now the opposite is true. She longs for my presence way more than presents. Who knew spending quality time with your kids was part of the parenting process? I should have, knowing there were nights where I longed for my Dad's company and lessons on manhood. When my brother lost his dad my eyes wet their pants as I began to miss my own. Yet, because "boys don't cry" I sucked it up and toughed it out.

Over time gave in to the notion that "money makes the man." That being the case it must also make the Father? So my parenting skills, I mean lack thereof, focused on being defined by "dead presidents" never considering that my unborn baby girl needed me more than some Louis Vuitton diapers. She needs my listening ear more than the next super-smartphone; Needs my arms wrapped around her more than bright red Tommy Hilfiger jackets; Needs my guidance more than a Lexus coupe with GPS; Needs to hear my voice more than artificial intelligence named "Siri"; Needs my friendship more than some Facebook friends; Needs my acceptance more than 1,000,000 "likes" on some website; Needs to see my smile early in the morning and late at night more than some sunshine emoji; Needs my experiential advice more than words from "Dear Abby," Dr. Phil, Cosmopolitan, or Glamour; Needs my stories more than those of Harry Potter or Bella from Twilight; Needs my inherent ability to upkeep her more than she needs "keepin' up with the Kardashians."

Yes this ever precious soul needs her Dad; needs her Father; this one gifted to love her. The one whose image she's made in. I am the one who understands, "gets her," the one with the matching face, matching heart. I am the one who loved her before her 1st day one, and the one who should've always been there.

O' The things we learn later in life. Glad I did. Now I can be guilty. Guilty of giving my daughter the Dad she deserves. Guilty of blessing her with a Father who loves her eternally. Guilty of loving her with every ounce of my being. Guilty of loving her with all that I have, even if it's not enough by someone else's standard. Guilty of loving her nonstop. Guilty of nurturing her. (Yes, she will be all she can be. All she desires to be. So be it). Guilty of teaching her how to overcome generational curses. Guilty of providing her with an abundance of Spiritual Riches. The best money money can't buy.

Now that's a better life.