

15th December, 1995

### GET ME THE 'REAL' MIDWIFE

DEAR DIARY, I got a phone call at six o'clock this morning. My sister Sheba said I'm in labour. I said no; not today. It's my work Christmas party and we're going to The Grand Maisonette for a banquet and then staying at their hotel after the party, I can't miss it and it's been paid for. I said Sheba, it must be *Braxton Hicks*. She said I don't think so, it feels like a horse is trying to kick me off the bed. I said OK. Well keep me informed. She called again just before seven and said no this is real; we need to go to the hospital NOW. She told me that I was being picked up by her best friend Nicole who was coming any minute now and hung up.

When myself and Nicole arrived at Sheba's, she was at the door ready and calm. We took her bags, pillow, book (I don't know when she thought she was going to have time to read) and her CD player and headed for the car. Nicole drove and I sat in the back. Well Lord Jesus in his heaven, after about two minutes into the journey, Sheba wound down the window, stuck her head out and made a blood curdling scream into the traffic. I'm telling you, I thought we crashed and I didn't know it. She screamed and screamed and screamed like she was being kidnapped. I thought the police were going to pull Nicole over. I was in shock; I didn't know what to do with myself. I looked at Sheba in horror and God only knows how Nicole didn't crash the car. Nicole turned to me and said what the hell? Sheba then wound up the window and serenely said it's the contractions. I thought please, please let us get there without her doing that again. Well within five minutes, the window came down and Sheba was screaming into the traffic again. Nicole was rubbing Sheba's thigh vigorously saying it's OK, we're nearly there. My head was hurting, I thought I don't think I can take this screaming thing, it was making me nervous. I wanted to help her but I didn't know what to do. This window, screaming, leg rubbing thing carried on and then Sheba turned to Nicole and shouted at the top of her voice STOP RUBBING MY F\*\*\*\*\* LEG! Well, I burst out laughing and couldn't stop. I laughed and laughed until my stomach was cramping up. We all started laughing which is just what we needed and we made it to St. George's without being stopped by the police.

Sheba was booked in, ushered into the birthing suite and then monitored. For some reason, she stopped the banshee screaming which was good because it was making me feel on edge.

# The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

Unfortunately, things went a little down hill because Sheba was assigned a very disgruntled midwife. She grabbed Sheba's hand to check her pulse. She roughly pushed her legs apart and then said come on, hurry up girl, you need to get it together and start pushing, some time today would be nice; chop-chop, we're not on holiday. Well Nicole and myself looked at each other like is this b\*\*\*\* joking? But no, she wasn't joking. She proceeded with her roughness and I could see that Sheba looked upset. I was really angry, I thought you can't treat a vulnerable pregnant woman like this, worse still it's my sister. I could feel my blood boiling and hot tears rising. Hot tears frighten me because they're not joyous or emotional; they're temper tears which make me see red. I heard a little peep out of her again so I said to disgruntled midwife, either I do this myself or get someone else because if you carry on, there's gonna be a rass-clart misunderstanding in here! She went away and came back with another midwife; only this woman had the most melodious Bajan accent and a calm way about her. She said OK, have we got a problem here ladies? I said this woman's acting like an arse and pointed to disgruntled midwife and the nice midwife said alright, let's see and she said to Sheba, let's get this baby out darling, when you get the urge to push, push with every ounce of strength you have and so said so done. Baby Shakera burst out on a wave of amniotic fluid and me and Nicole screamed. The nice midwife took charge, got baby Shakera crying, weighed her, cleaned her and handed her over to me... and a child is born!

I didn't get to go to my work Christmas party, but I got to see my niece enter this world. It was beautiful.

*August Mayfield*