



YUMMY

The Last Days of a Southside Shorty

by G. NERI • illustrated by RANDY DUBURKE

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To J.F., for pulling me from the slush pile with this one and seeing it *all* the way through. And of course, for Maggie and Zola, who keep me sane.—G.N.

To my two wonderful sons, Sakai and Matthias, and my equally wonderful and lovely wife, Olivia. Special thanks to Christy Hale and Laura Reder—R.D.

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Illustrations copyright © 2010 by Randy DuBurke

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Robert "Yummy" Sandifer was a real person. He was born in 1983 and lived in the Roseland area of Chicago. At just eleven years old, Yummy became a poster child for youth gang violence in America after a series of tragic events led to his appearance on the cover of *TIME* magazine in September 1994. The essence of Yummy's story presented in this book has been re-created based on public records, media reports, and personal accounts. A certain amount of fictionalization was necessary to fill in gaps, condense events, and represent what Yummy might have been feeling. Roger, the narrator of this story, was invented to guide us, a means of trying to make sense of the madness that hit Roseland in the summer of 1994. I invite you, like Roger, to sort through all the opinions that poured in from the community, media, and politicians, and discover your own truth about Yummy.

—G.N.

CHICAGO, MY HOMETOWN.

WE CALL IT CHI-TOWN.

WHERE BULLS RULE THE CITY ...



AND AL CAPONE WAS A REAL GANGSTER WHO LIVED AND DIED HERE.



MY GRANDMA SAYS THAT JUST A FEW BLOCKS AWAY FROM MY HOUSE MUDDY WATERS INVENTED CHICAGO BLUES.

IT'S ALSO THE PLACE WHERE OPRAH BECAME ONE OF THE RICHEST AND MOST FAMOUS PEOPLE ON TV.

CHI-TOWN HAS THE TALLEST BUILDING IN AMERICA.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AND THE BUSIEST AIRPORT TOO.

THERE'S ALSO A BIG SCHOOL SOUTH OF MY NEIGHBORHOOD. THEY SAY SOME GREAT PEOPLE WENT THERE. THEY EVEN WON SOME BIG PRIZES.

BUT IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD, LIFE AIN'T SO SWEET.



I KNEW THIS KID
NAMED YUMMY. . . .



HIS REAL NAME WAS
ROBERT, BUT THE KIDS
IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
CALLED HIM YUMMY
ON ACCOUNT OF HE
LIKED COOKIES AND
SWEETS SO MUCH.



HE WAS MY AGE, 11 YEARS
OLD. HE WAS JUST A LITTLE
GUY, WHAT WE CALL A
SHORTY, 4 FEET TALL AND
MAYBE 60 POUNDS HEAVY.



BUT SOMETIMES
HE SURE DIDN'T
ACT LIKE IT.

YUMMY BELONGED TO A GANG CALLED THE BLACK DISCIPLES. AND ANYONE WHO WAS A RIVAL ON ONE OF THEIR STREETS, WAS GONNA HEAR FROM THE BLACK DISCIPLES.



THEY RAN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

EVEN KIDS JUST PLAYIN' IN THE STREETS,



MINDING THEIR OWN BUSINESS,



COULD GET CAUGHT UP IN GANG BUSINESS.





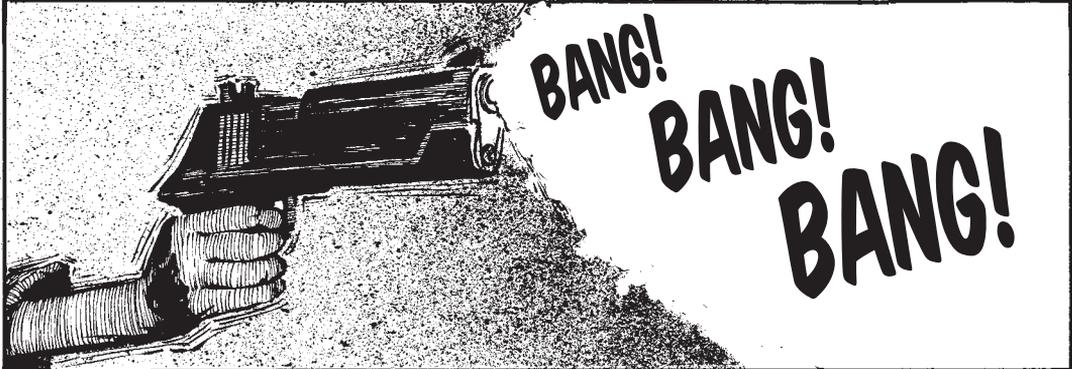
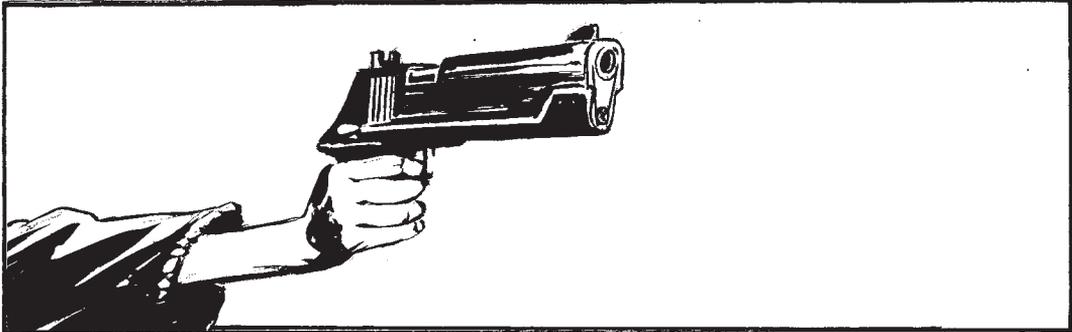
FOR A SHORTY LIKE YUMMY, BLASTIN' A DISCIPLES' ENEMY WOULD MAKE HIM LOOK REAL GOOD TO THE HIGHER UPS IN HIS GANG.

IF YOU WANNA ADVANCE, YOU GONNA HAVE TO PROVE YOURSELF.

SO THAT'S WHAT YUMMY TRIED TO DO. ...



THEY GONNA MAKE ME REGENT FOR THIS!



BANG!
BANG!
BANG!