

## **“The Box is Born”**

Things changed at Carter G. Woodson Middle School the last month of the previous year when Mr. Wills, the principal, suspended Deion for getting in 2 fights on the same day. The first fight happened in class with Manny over whom had the most tardies. The second fight occurred on the way to the office from fighting with Manny when Bennie said Deion got beat up. Considering Deion had been punished for fighting several times before, his punishment came swiftly and with little discussion.

### **First Day of Suspension**

Deion woke up early not because he wanted to but because he was used to it. If he had his way, he would have slept in to at least noon. Instead of sleeping soundly he found himself laying on his back staring at the air. He instinctively picked up his phone to text someone only to stop himself not wanting to get one of his friends caught up. He messed around on Twitter, watched the highlights of Rhonda Rousey knocking out some girl in 34 seconds and looked around on Instagram. He turned on the television and watched a little Judge Judy until he had no choice but to acknowledge that he would rather be at school. Before long he showered, put on his clothes, and arrived at the school with about 20 minutes left in the day. He jumped the back fence near the field when he saw Robbie walking a lap with a couple of 7th grade girls.

“Deion, in the house!” he yelled walking up to them with his hands held above his head.

Robbie broke away from the girls and walked toward Deion. “Fool, what are you doing here? I thought you were suspended?”

“I am but I knew you guys would be bored here without me.”

The two of them walked a lap together right past Coach Hanes who instantly called the office.

### **Second Day of Suspension**

“Look at what they serve you for lunch.” Deion said holding up a plastic bag with two cheeseburgers inside of it. “You can’t tell me you do not feel sick eating this. This cheese looks like mustard and the mustard looks like cheese.” Everyone laughed and it only encouraged Deion to continue. “This morning I had three fluffy pieces of French toast, some delicious bacon and some eggs.”

A few more kids made their way to the table where Deion performed but they were too late. Ms. Margaret, the noon duty, reached the table before them and escorted him off the campus.

### **Last Day of Suspension**

Deion only got to score 4 points before Mr. Wills arrived to personally walk him off campus. Realizing no one supervised him at home, Mr. Wills decided at that moment to stop sending kids home for a mini vacation. He worked side by side with 2 janitors to clean out the old band room and began the policy of assigning nothing but in school suspensions. He moved two of his strictest staff members into the class to supervise the kids and it instantly became a place students did not want to be. Room 207 is where boredom met eternity. Kids who got in trouble paid the price by sitting silently in a room designed to be miserable. It was solitary confinement for middle school where students only interacted with worksheets and the only people to talk to were ladies who were only loved by their family. Room 207 took away the forum for foolishness; bullies had no target, class clowns had no circus, comedians had no audience.

### **First Month of the New Year**

The idea of getting sent to room 207, which students nicknamed “The Box”, kept some students in check for a while but kids are going to be kids and kids are going to do what they are going to do. There are lots of stories to be told but I don’t want to bore you talking about kids being tardy or occasionally talking smack to somebody. I’m going to get straight to the good stuff. The stuff where there were talks of expulsion. The stuff where tears were shed. The stuff where beefs were started...or finished. There are many to choose from and different directions to go. All of the students who came to “The Box” had a story. Some of the stories will sound familiar, maybe even one you have told yourself. Then again, some of them could not have happened to you because they are too crazy.