



God's Gift to Women: A Novel

By Michael Baisden

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A smooth talker. An even better listener. And handsome as heaven on earth. He is God's Gift to Women. Julian Payne gets into bed with millions of women every night. As an after-hours radio talk-show host, Julian captivates his female audience with his deep voice and sensitive spirit. Women can't get enough: They call in, begging for his advice about love, lust, commitment, and betrayal. Julian provides his listeners with the blunt male perspective, and he always has the right thing to say. But when it comes to his own romantic life, or lack thereof, he's at a loss for words. A widower and father to ten-year-old Samantha, Julian wants nothing more than to settle down again with the right woman. Just when he thinks he's found her in Dr. Terri Ross - smart, stunning, and with her own counseling practice - Julian is confronted by a ghost from the past: Olivia Brown, a woman with whom he had a one-night stand. Suddenly Julian finds himself in a situation with a woman who's determined to win him over . . . or make his life a living hell. Michael Baisden's hottest offering yet, God's Gift to Women is a compelling tale about the consequences of sex with a stranger.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Success did not come easy for this 37-year-old Chicago native. In 1993 he was driving trains for the Chicago Transit Authority and struggling to keep a small business from going under. In 1995 he released his first book, *Never Satisfied: How and Why Men Cheat*, a controversial book of short stories about unfaithful men and the women who support their irresponsible behavior. The large New York publishing companies rejected his work, saying it wasn't marketable - which basically meant, it wasn't good enough. Not willing to concede defeat, Michael decided to self-publish. He borrowed money from friends and family, charged his credit cards to the limit, and sold his automobile. Within eight months, he sold more than 50,000 books and was on *Essence* and *Emerge* magazines best sellers' lists. He toured with black expos, sorority conventions, and book fairs. He even signed books at the local nightclubs, and hair salons. "I was determined to make it" he says. "I would sell books at a funeral if they let me". Eventually, his popularity grew and so did the demand for his next book. This time, instead of writing another book on relationships, Michael took a gamble on a novel. "There was a void in African-American novels written by men", he explained. "I wanted to destroy the myth that men don't read". In July of 1997 he released his second book, *Men Cry in the Dark*. Once again, the book was a big success, selling 30,000 hard cover editions during the first six months. This time the national media paid attention. Michael has been a guest on several local and national radio programs, including the syndicated Tom Joyner Morning Show. His electrifying personality has earned repeated appearances on talk shows such as Ricki Lake, Sally Jesse, Maury Povich, and *The View*. He has also been a guest host for Tavis Smiley on *BET Tonight*. By the summer of 1997, demand for his appearances were overwhelming. Organizations, book clubs, and re

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Prologue: Consequences

I was fighting to stay conscious as the paramedics rushed me down the corridor of my office building. In the distance I could hear gunfire and horns blowing.

"You chose one hellava way to bring in the New Year, Mr. Payne," the paramedic said.

"Where's my daughter?" I asked while trying to sit up. "And where's Terri?"

"Please lie still. You'll only make the bleeding worse."

The radio station was on the twenty fifth floor. I didn't feel strong enough to make it to the ambulance -- let alone the hospital. The bullet had penetrated my left side and exited through my back. It burned like hell.

"Am I gonna die?"

They both paused, then looked at one another as if to seek the other's opinion. That terrified me. Once we boarded the elevator, they began broadcasting my vital signs into the radio. I didn't know the significance of the blood pressure and heart rate numbers, but judging by the urgency in their voices, I was in trouble.

"Where's my daughter? And where's Terri?" I asked again.

"Relax, Mr. Payne, your daughter is -- "

He stopped in mid-sentence as the elevator doors opened on the lobby level. Suddenly, a wave of photographers and reporters rushed towards me. I was blinded by a barrage of flashing lights. Although my vision was blurred, I could see the outline of several husky policemen clearing a path.

"Julian, can you tell us what happened?" a reporter yelled out.

"Who shot the security guard?" another shouted while shoving a microphone in my face.

"Fuckin' vultures!"

I tried to lift my hand to shield my bloody face but my arms were strapped down. The yelling was deafening -- like a continuous roar. The paramedics tried to move faster, but it was no use. The lobby was packed with policemen, reporters, and nosy fans who had come to watch. The atmosphere was festive, like a circus.

"Get out of the way, please!" the paramedics yelled. "This man is in critical condition! Move, move, move!"

The paramedics fought through the main doors, but once we made it outside we came to an abrupt stop. The crowd was even larger. People were jumping up on the hoods of their cars trying to get a better look. As the brisk night air blew across my bloody face, their loud voices suddenly faded -- replaced by sirens and the humming of the helicopter blades. I could feel the blood soaking through the bandages. It was obvious from the paramedic's expression that we were running out of time. The ambulance was only a few yards away but the crowd was out of control. When they continued to push, the cops pushed back -- violently. People were knocked to the pavement and trampled.

"I love you, Julian!" a woman screamed as she struggled to get off the ground.

"I'm your number one fan!" another woman shouted as she lifted her blouse, exposing her breasts.

Suddenly a woman lunged towards me and ripped the sleeve off my blood soaked shirt.

"Aarrgh!" I screamed.

"Now I'll always have a piece of you," she said. Her hazel eyes and deranged stare were all too familiar.

"Move back!" The cops yelled as they pulled her away. "Move back, dammit!"

The stretcher seemed to move towards the ambulance in slow motion. I was growing weaker. I fought hard to stay conscious -- to stay alive. I gazed up at the flashing lights from the squad cars as they danced across the dark sky and against the nearby glass buildings. It reminded me of the Fourth of July in Chicago.

I wish I had seen the fireworks on Lake Michigan this summer. I thought to myself. And I never did see the view from the top of Sears Tower. I wish I had gone to Sam's first basketball game when she was seven. I wish I could be with Terri when my baby is born. But most of all, I wish I had never met Olivia Brown. She was the reason I was bleeding to death in Houston, Texas on New Year's Eve.

How could she go this far? I wondered as they lifted me into the ambulance. And *why* did she choose me?

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Chapter One

Jasmine scented candles illuminated the studio -- creating a spiritual ambiance. I reclined in my chair as I

listened to the song "*Is it a Crime*" by Sade. The candles had become a ritual ever since I started at WTLK back in '89. The flickering light and smell of jasmine were relaxing and made me more introspective -- aromatherapy, they called it.

The faint candlelight also served as a camouflage for the dilapidated condition of the studio. The carpet was covered with decade old cigarette burns, the plaster was falling off the ceiling, and the exposed water pipe leaked into an old *Folgers* coffee can. "Sade, your song is right on time," I said as I glanced around the room. "This place *is* a crime."

Just before the song ended, I put on my headphones and adjusted the volume to the mic. The digital clock on the console read 11:55 PM. "Five more minutes and I'm outta this dump!" I said with contempt. My producer, Mitch, was in the control booth next door setting up the calls. I could see him through the large soundproof window. I switched on the intercom to get his attention.

"Well, Mitch, in a few minutes it'll all be over," I told him. "The final episode of *The Green Hornet* and Kato."

"Don't be so dramatic, Julian," he said in his usual smooth tone. "It's not the end of the world, just another phase in life."

"Listen to you, sounding all philosophical. That must be one of the benefits of old age."

"Who you callin' old?"

Mitch had smooth dark brown skin and short black hair with grey streaks. He looked very distinguished but he had recently turned fifty-five and was getting touchy about his age.

"Look, we can arm wrestle for your Viagra prescription later," I laughed. "Right now, let's get to work and try to wrap up the show on time."

There were five people on hold. Mitch printed their names in bold letters on a piece of paper and taped it to the window. That was our sophisticated communication system. "Five, four, three, two --," I heard Mitch count. Then he pointed at me to signal we were on the air.

"Welcome back to Love, Lust, and Lies on WTLK," I said in my deep radio voice. "We only have enough time for two calls, so let's go straight to the phones. Adam, you're on. What's your question or issue?"

"Hey, Julian! I just want to congratulate you on your new show," he said. "I hope you don't get big-headed and forget where you came from when you *blow up*."

"Negro, please! I've been struggling in this business for fifteen years. I've never been about money *or* fame," I told him. "I've never owned a new car, don't own a nice watch, I cut my own hair, and every night I go home to a ten-year-old girl who's goin' through puberty. Now, if that doesn't keep you grounded, nothing will. Thanks for calling." (Click)

Mitch was laughing his ass off because he knew I was telling the truth. I drove a beat up 1994 Toyota Camry, which I bought used in 1996. And my scratched up Gucci was ten years old. I laughed myself because when I looked down at it, it had stopped working -- again.

"Okay, Sharon. You're my last caller!" I said as I pushed the button to line two. "What's your question or issue?"

"My question is about love and commitment," she sounded depressed.

"We don't have much time, sweetheart, what's your point?"

"My point is, when you love someone you should stand by them no matter what, right?"

"I agree, if you truly love someone, nothing should come between you."

"Well, I thought my husband loved me, until --

She stopped in mid-sentence.

"Come on! It can't be *that* serious," I said jokingly trying to cheer her up. "What happened? Did you gain a little weight, lose your job, get a bad hair weave? What?"

"No, Julian, he left me because I was raped. The doctors said the damage was so severe I'll never be able to bear children," she said. Then she began to cry. "And after going through that hell, can you believe that no-good bastard had the nerve to tell me it was my fault that I got raped? How's that for love and commitment?"

I hit the mute button on my microphone and buried my head into my hands. When I looked up at Mitch, I knew he was thinking exactly what I was thinking. Why tonight -- of all nights? The clock on the console read, 11:56. We were almost out of time. But I was determined not to end my last show on a negative note.

"Are you all right Sharon?" I asked. "Do you want me to put you in touch with a therapist?"

"No, Julian, thank you. I'll be fine. It happened a long time ago." She quickly composed herself. "I'm just sick and tired of men using the word love at their convenience. The only thing they love is getting pus --

"Hold up," I cut her off, "I get the point! And you're right, love is a serious word -- men shouldn't say it if they don't mean it."

"Have *you* ever been in love, Julian?"

"Hold on a second, who's interviewing who?"

"Sorry, I didn't mean to offend you. But I was just wondering if there's ever been a woman worthy of your love."

I paused for a second as I reminisced on my wife, Carmen. Her picture was right in front of me, the one we took in Vegas on our honeymoon. I never spoke about her on the air since that day -- it was too painful. But I decided to open up. Maybe I was caught up in the moment, or by the vulnerability in Sharon's voice.

"Yes, I've been in love -- once," I told her.

"Are you still with her?"

"No, she's gone -- cancer took her."

"I guess we have something in common, Julian," she said, then she hesitated. "We're both alone."

Mitch was nodding in agreement. We both knew why. But I wasn't about to *go there* on the air.

"Like you said, it happened a long time ago," I told her. "You've got to let go of the pain in order to move on."

And speaking of moving on, it's time for me get out of here."

The phone lines were ringing off the hook, but there was no time left for calls. The management at WTLK was strict about ending segments on time, especially si...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tom Scott:

Book is to be different per grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important for all of us. The book God's Gift to Women: A Novel has been making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The guide God's Gift to Women: A Novel is not only giving you more new information but also to get your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship using the book God's Gift to Women: A Novel. You never truly feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

Maria Tate:

God's Gift to Women: A Novel can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to place every word into delight arrangement in writing God's Gift to Women: A Novel yet doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource info that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can drawn you into completely new stage of crucial contemplating.

Jacob Smith:

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