

The Roots F/ Musiq "The Hard Way"

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It's a hot summer day in the year of 84'
Fresh out of summer school headed for the store
Watchin the O.G.'s standing out gettin rich
Slangin the fat brown bags of the good shit
Dope is out but I really ain't seen it though
Dope fiends smokin the shit by the corner store
Broke as fuck kinda bummy with nappy hair
But what can I say when a playa's on welfare
Life is hard and I'm only 13
Always on a prowl, always on a scheme
There wasn't nothin to do but have fun
Wait for the dark then creep to Emporium
Get the T.I., get the Guess shirts
Get the fresh couch break for the turf
Doin it boley never in fear
Gettin they punk ass for about a year
Until I got called, went to the hall
Writin on the wall, waitin for a hair call
Released to moms, what can I say
Off to Sears, the very next day
Now Sears is easier cuz it's in the area
Walk to the back of the rack then carried the
Shit back to the stolen car
Drive and park by the house is not too far
My gear was fat but still no money though
Talked to my homey then got fronted so
Stackin my shit, hustlin cash
Gotta get out, gave him his half
Hooked up with a friend oh we started boomin
Then we go to some O's then I went solo
Stackin my pay gettin it on
Got myself a beeper and a cellular phone
A donkey roll, a twenty-two
Jumped on my bike, headed for school
Locked up my shit, cuz the fools be gankin
A young nigga pimpin that Benjamin Franklin
So I walked the halls, wishin the Merrier
Hooked up with a freak by the cafeteria
Hair was long, pretty with butt
I told the freak I was about to cut
So call me at eight and don't be late

When I left the school there was a big mistake
So I jumped on my bike and headed for the set
With a pocketful of rocks ah man I regret
For not stayin in school, for just doin my work
Gettin chased by the Task now I feel like a jerk
So I'm on the run and I better run fast
Cuz if I don't they're gonna beat my ass
Hit a quick cut, run by the Ave.
Go to the Valley you know I gotta laugh
Jogged to the third floor runnin the dope spot
A playa too quick a young brotha can't get caught
Bitch want credit better go to the bank
Then my homey walked in with the straight-laced dank
Two young playas gettin high on the couch
In a spot, at a dope fiend's house
Two hours passed now it must be cool
Cuz I gotta make money fuck going back to school
Wrapped up for the crime now I gotta do time
But when I'm out I'll be back on the grind
All my homies kept flippin and the man kept trippin
But me JT, I'm a victim of the system
Shit got thick but what can I say
In the life of a player but that is the hard way

(second verse)

Now it's 92', as you can see
So I gotta get paid from the R-A-P
I was in the dope game now I'm in the rap game
But I gotta get paid so fuck the fame
I'm a tell ta, it goes somethin like this
By any means necessary I'm gettin my grits
Here's a little somethin by the man
He's always schemin up a plan
Always tryin to say which way is right
Always tryin to force us to the way of life
Of robbin, killin, straight dope dealin
Young niggas runnin around tryin to be villians
So they offer us minimum wage
Knowin damn well we're gonna get the 12 gauge
To go outside and pull a jack or a caper
Hopin that we make front page of the paper
Extra extra, black brotha dead
Shot in the head by a cop named Fred
When you read the paper, you know it's a damn lie
Talk about justifiable homicide
Then they say we no good at all
And if we are, for just raps and basketball
Niggas ain't shit, niggas all lazy
All they do is fuck go to jail and have babies
Shit, I'm not that nigga
I'm JT the one and only Bigga Figga

That's one of the reasons why I'm doin my own thang
Now I know you've heard the song, so mind your own
mane
And you'll be fine and you be cool
And all you young brothas, you better stay in school
Quit runnin around tryin to be the neighborhood jacker
Better go to recess and eat some cheese and crackers
Before you find yourself layin up on a tombstone
Gonna be there forever, cuz that is your home
No more TV and no more Nintendo
No more bikes and no more friends bro
You better wake up before it's too late
Before you find yourself standin out in heaven's gate
Cuz you tryin to get in but no my friend
Cuz ya die, or committed a sin
Tryin to peel a cap but ya got your cap peeled
Now your mother's outside wonderin why you got killed
Use better judgment in the game you play
In the life of a black man but that is the hard way

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