

## A P5 World Down Here

You dumb dog! You *damn, DAMN!* Dumb ass mutt from a hades poopy pot!

Bozo, that *is* your name, right? Do you hear me, or do you think I'm talking to Fred Flintstone on the cartoons now? Only you, *You, Bozo!* would get something out of a fat white guy in a stone age house. Like to see you carry some oversize ribs on your back and watch you tip and flip on your dumb doggy ass!

Bozo, let's try this again--I'm right here, and your ugly doggy breath, doggy growl, doggy doo personality—*crap you stink, idiot!*—is not making my day at all! It's not enough that your old as the hills, bean town terrier mutt persona, don't make you Denzel Washington's twin. You know I'd rather be on a date with him than you! Have you spent your entire life making your life as nasty and ugly as this place we call a neighborhood!

If you dare, if you even think Mr. Muttso of leaving your mark on the carpet again, you will lick it clean as I laugh my old lady bootie into the ground. Brown stuff for Bozo's entrée, washing it down with your yellow mello. Ain't that tas-tee, now Bozo!

All this time, Sir Bad Breath, I have a visitor here after she joined me for church and brunch, but do I have time to say Hel-lo?, How are you, want this or that—Bozo, you are legitimately canine clueless, you know that? And you know what, she is here and wants to know about our star from our hood, why Bozo you know is he only two doors down! Since you'd rather get on with your male mutt P.M.S or whatever happens to dogs with a homely dick at your age—fine by me, Bozo!

Alright, quite enough of that, so glad y'all here, young lady, and sorry for my pet's savory aroma—dumb ass, I heard you growl—and my thanks with all my born and bred in Baltimore heart for visiting me this entire Baltimore day!

Now I mean, this is *way* down here for you, and I'll just mention this once, just once: You don't exactly look like me, either! This block has been life and hell and back and very seldom heaven for all my eighty-three years. And this row house you've entered, this has been my very home since life as I know it began, now that's all my eighty-three years—all around here! My name's been on the deed with the Baltimore City clerk since my twenty-fifth birthday.

The Baltimore City birth certificate—oh, hell it's Baltimore City everything, everything, don't you forget that you dumb ass dog—the official paper on file says Beulah Letitia Grommerly. But around here, all up and down this part of York Road, they never had that figured out. All they heard was Miz B, Miz B, Miz B

Well, after a Baltimore City birth, and Baltimore City schools, and seven ridiculously long Baltimore City years cobbling together a Coppin State music education degree at night and numbing my Baltimore City brain at some Social Security day job, the Baltimore City schools wanted me back to teach.

Throughout those early years in class, calling me Miss Grommerly didn't stick with the kids. And having Mrs. Hargrove for a music teacher's married name crapped out, too—yeah, crap like you Bozo! All them early names, Miss Beulah, Mrs. Beulah—BOR-ING!

But Miz B? *That* is a name for a teacher, and a music teacher for that matter!

So, for forty years of owning this place, teaching this music, and around these streets, I am, and I have been Miz B and nothing else. You can tell there's not much of me to see, there never really has been. Eighty plus years, never over 100 pounds on any scale.

Forty years at the front of the class, and I can still name the less than handful of kids that were shorter than me. You could stack three of me on top of one another and the ball players could still dunk in my face, and they would if my beloved classroom yardstick Big Benny didn't leave them crusin' for a brusin'!

Let me tell you something, a four-foot-six life is not a tall life, but a Miz B life is quite a life. Bozo, you heard me: It *is* a life. Not was a life. Old fart dog needs two bottles of mouthwash a day and he's ready to sign over the deed to his backward paws' ass!

I know you're asking, darling, don't tell me you're not. Teacher's job, school pension, pretty much set for life in the wallet, with a husband and kids, yeah, yeah, the hubby taught long and hard in these schools, too, but one of his former students took his precious life at age 39 — so, what in the damn hell am I still doing down here in this damn P5 world of mine?

And don't restate the obvious, I clean *his* mess twice a day, so I don't need any more shit from you! This P5 world isn't the York Road of the Towson students, too smart or too proud for Coppin State or Morgan State, but way off the mark from Johns Hopkins' world. No damn kidding, P5 isn't the Hopkins campus, either, well aren't you smart now shut the heck up! I don't need you to tell me this isn't the tourists' Inner Harbor, or the Roland Park world with the towering cathedral that could fit five P5s inside.

But just look around, please do. Can you see and feel all the special all around you?

And did I tell you about my grandson—oh, my God forsaken, spoiled rotten Louis Lamont! Every toy in the toy store and they'll never be enough for that one. Ten going on eleven, the Double L already thinks he has the letters Ph.D. at the back of his name. Does he learn about anyone but his own damn self and his own damn brains, no, no, no! When he visits and sees boys his age in my world, now have you flipped, heck no, he wouldn't think of making a new friend!

And does my son, his father the Social Security Administration SES Supercrat-Bureaucrat care, what do you think? I told you, Bozo, I don't want your stinky ass opinion! The daughter-in-law is another SES Supercrat-Bureaucrat in the same agency, and you be fair about this, you know we're all just Washington's biggest suburb now and their Baltimore County home their gilded, gated oasis.

It works for them, hell no that won't work at all for Miz B I've was offered the spare bedroom at their place way, way up in Owings Mills years ago if I'd only sell the row house, believe me, both of them and Louis Lamont can all shove all that.

P5 is my life, young lady, and it's my world. And without P5--St. Pius V--as my church, and my lifelong church family, honestly why live? Even if we're way outnumbered by those other believers around here, my response is still the Miz B answer to my whining students for forty years: So what, who cares, big deal!

You still don't get it yet, do you? Beantown terrier gas-pissing dog, your Bozo opinion does not concern me either, never has, and never will. All most folks see on that lower York Road corner out there is a little house of God almost looking as if it can fall apart when somebody sneezed on its front door. There are no fresh-scrubbed faces like you'd see outside

the cathedral school, and no doubt that big dang church is fit for a king, or should I say a queen, since it is the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen.

A queen's palace is not P5, and it never will be. Ignore the hangers-on and the perpetual despair on the corner, and I know it's not easy, but come inside out of the hood, into our pews, and down into our basement social hall after the 12:00 P.M. Gospel Mass—that is my life!

But what am I doing? You didn't come here to hear me read my autobiography, and you're surely not in my lower York Road row house to see Bozo growl in your face.

There is a star among us, and you are going to hear about him from none other than little old, *old* me!