



# PEDAL PATROL

DANIJAH DANIJAH



RIVERTON  
LANDFILL

STOP

NO  
TRESPASSING

NSWMA



# PEDAL PATROL

DANIJAH DANIJAH

@writinggod

**A Studio Dan Story**

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# FOR POVERTY, THE GRAET MOTIVATOR

*Other stories by Danijah Danjiah*

*Orlando Jack*

*Moore Victory*

*Uku Backa Shuku*

# ONE

RIIINNGGGG!!!!

The final bell of the school year echoed through the school walls sounding the beginning of the summer holidays. Living in Riverton City summer was my favourite time of the year, the dump not only provided a place of excitement, but it became my bread and butter. I was nine years of age at the time and living with my mother; a single parent trying her best to provide for her two children my younger brother Sean “Tam Tam” Smith how was six years old and I. Tam Tam had a speech impediment that caused him to speak in gibberish, all he could say was “Bla Blu Bla Blu” and for some strange reason I was the only one who could understand what he was saying.

He was a very intelligent boy, always dressed in his big red sweater which was extremely bigger than him; the bottom of the sweater went down to his knees and the sleeves covered his hands. He found it one day while searching the dump for items and fell in love with it right away because it had a big T in the middle which he said meant “Tam Tam”. His speech impediment caused him to be very clingy and he followed me, his translator, everywhere. Not that I minded, especially on the dump, because he was very useful. Tam Tam always seemed to sniff out the valuable items in the dump, he was the greyhound of the dump and this summer was going to be no different.

I was upbeat as I made my way home. I took the opportunity to collect a few plastic bottles along the way to add to my collection pile in my yard for resale. At the mouth of my lane, I dashed to my gate with my bottles held closely to my chest. I opened the large zinc gate which was attached to the fence by a piece of board and a few bed springs; it opened with a slight screech. Tam Tam was sitting and waiting for me patiently.

“Bla Blu Bla Blu,” He jumped up while shouting.

He asked if it was the final day of school and I told him “yes” we then went straight to work. I gathered a few bottles of water and took a quick bath and then prepared a bath for Tam Tam. Mom was not coming home early tonight because she was doing overtime at Mr Lewis’ bar. Fridays were always a busy night at the bar and we needed the money. Therefore, Fridays meant that we had no home cooked dinner. We got ready and went to Ms. Penny’s Chicken and Chips Cook Shop to purchase our dinner. We made our way up the lane, passing our neighbours houses all filled with loud chatter. Badda G was stringing up his sound system for ‘Stay Good, his weekly party where

he played all the latest music and one only had to buy a beer to enjoy the festivities; tonight, was going to be no different.

We reached Ms Penny's and the smell of the chicken fat frying in the pots hit our nostrils. Tam Tam's dog, Scratchie, was sitting around with a pack of dogs all waiting for one of Ms Penny's customers to throw them a bone, so they could fight over it. Scratchie suffered from a severe case of ticks and was always scratching. Despite all the scratching, he was just another Jamaican mongrel, a master of survival and a quick learner. When Scratchie saw us he immediately jumped up knowing he was now in for a sure meal. At Penny's the crowd was large and extremely loud. To place an order, you had to shout at the top of your voice and hope that Blacka, the cashier, would hear and recognize your voice if not the wait would be forever. I stood on one of the chairs placed on the outside and shouted.

"Blacka! Two small chicken back and chips, one with pepper and one with extra ketchup!"

"Right away Lisa!" Blacka replied.

"Look like we getting through quick this evening," I told Tam Tam, who just shook his head to indicate yes.

We received our orders and headed back home. This time we took the opposite way around the community. We passed the Community Centre and heard noise that sounded like fighting but we could care less because we just wanted to get home, so we could begin eating our chicken and chips. While passing a few zinc fences Tam Tam asked if I did not hear someone calling my name.

"I don't hear anything." I replied, not wanting to be fooled by one of his tricks again.

We continued along and that was when I heard the slight voice calling.

“Lisa, Lisa!”

I listened keenly, I smiled as I recognized the voice, it was that of Brandon Lewis, my best friend and partner in crime. Brandon was also nine years old and a sport star who excelled in every sport he played. This caused him to be very popular. He loved football and his dream was to one day play for Jamaica at the World Cup like all the other great players. Brandon lived to play football he called it his God given ticket off the dump. It was a dream for all of us as we were taught from an early age to get off the dump by any means necessary, be it through education, talent. Whether it was good or bad we just needed to get out. But for me, our problems stemmed further than just getting out and that is a topic not many would listen a nine-year-old girl speak about.



# TWO

Brandon ran and jumped a few fences until he got to his gate, he opened it and smiled, and I smiled back. Tam Tam took a seat on the sidewalk and started eating his dinner.

“Brandon a finally summer and this one ago be a big one when it comes to making money for our pockets.” I said excitedly.

Brandon was equally excited and that was one of the reasons why I liked him, he was always dreaming about finding the next big thing on the dump.

“Think this a the summer we ago find the prize so me can build me mother a house.” Brandon said with a smile. He continued “Tell you the truth Lisa, this summer me just want to buy myself a pair of football boots for training come September.”

“How much the boots will cost?” I asked.

“5000 dollars.” He answered and asked, “Lisa you notice the large crowd at the Community Centre on your way?”

“Yes, I did!” I answered and asked, “What is the matter?”

“My mother at the meeting, it’s for the appointment of the new dump manager but me and you know him not staying long.” Brandon replied with a grin.

You see the dump was a difficult place to manage from the gathering of items to the fires which in recent years had become a serious problem with the government and the business sector demanding that the dump be fire free.

“That’s right, I give him three months.” I said with a laugh, “but Brandon it sound like fighting was in the meeting.”

We continued our conversation for about 30 minutes and then we said our good byes. While talking Tam Tam had finished eating his dinner and started eating some of mine, which I did not mind because I was only focused on tomorrow and the beginning of the treasure hunt without a map of the dump full of endless riches.

Saturday came, and Tam Tam and I got up very early and did our Saturday chores. Mom prepared breakfast and was off to work, which was going to be another long day. Just as she was about to leave the house she said.

“Stay away from the dump, stay in the yard.”

I was shocked! All we did was smile; she never had a problem with us going on the dump before but in my head what she said was never going to happen.

As soon as mom left our eye sight, Tam Tam and I got on our bicycles and rode around the community to the arranged meeting point, which was outside the Coconut Tree Pub, at the front of the community. Some minutes later Brandon also rode up on his bicycle. We greeted each other and began to make our way to the dump. The sun was out in all its glory and we could tell that we were getting near to the dump by the smell of things and the sight of the birds flying overhead. Upon reaching the dump we were greeted by the sight of workmen, out in their numbers, constructing a large fence separating the dump from the community.

“A the new manager idea, my mother tell me last night when she come home, that him a come with a lot of changes. Changes that ago affect the community and how we see and use the dump.” Brandon said.

I was hearing what Brandon was saying but the dump was too near and my blood started pumping.

“Let’s get searching!” I shouted.

We rode onto the dump and got off our bicycles and started to search for items of value. Tam Tam was in full hunt mode and had already found a few items that he placed into the wagon at the back of Brandon’s bicycle. A black van slowly pulled up at our feet and a tall, slim built man with a large ackee shaped nose with a whistle around his neck stepped out.

“YOU THREE ARE NOT WORKMEN!” He said firmly.

As I was about to answer, he blew his whistle, “I don’t need a response! Leave the dump! It’s now off limits to the public.”

He got back into the van and watched us as we got on our bikes and rode off the dump. Just as we made our way around the new fence, Brandon asked,

“What have we collected so far?”

I was behind him and I investigated the wagon to my disappointment.

“Only a few pieces of metal worth about 400 dollars,” I answered.

We rode back home with our faces filled with sadness. That’s when Tam Tam suggested we should go back in a few hours’ time and search again.

“That sounds like a plan Tam Tam.” I replied after translating for Brandon. We all agreed to try again in 3 hours’ time.

We rode to the scale man to sell the metal we collected on the dump. We pulled up at the big iron gate that had a large sign that read “METAL A BUY.”

“Iron Man! Iron Man! We have metal a sell!” Brandon shouted.

The gate opened and Iron Man; the man in charge of weighing the metal, emerged dressed in a dark blue overall that needed a serious washing. We rode onto the premises and he went around to the wagon and took out the metal pieces. He then placed them on his scale and took out 200 dollars and gave it to me.

“This?” I asked in disbelief.

“Likkle girl, take what you get and move off.” He said with a serious look on his face.

We rode out even more depressed than before and to make matters worse, we started to feel hungry. We decided to buy lunch with the money we made. The three of us rode to Bull’s Cook Shop and bought two hot dolla; meals that costed only 100 dollars each.

“Two curry back!” I shouted.

We sat and shared the lunches with three bag juices that Brandon bought while carefully planning the next mission to the dump. It was now 4pm, we somehow overstayed at the cook shop but it was now mission time.

# THREE

We jumped on our bikes and headed back to the dump. The fence was now almost complete, and the workers were still out in their numbers. We bided our time and as soon as we thought no one was looking, we made a dash for the dump. Tam Tam and Brandon started to search immediately, but 3 minutes into the search the black van drove up with the ackee nose man. He told the two soldiers in the van to grab a hold of us and they placed us and our bicycles in the van and took us to his waiting room.

“Now, what are your names?” He asked.

I decided not to answer and so did Brandon and Tam Tam.

“So, we are not answering, okay fine, someone will soon miss you and come looking,” He stated.

“ENJOY THE WAIT,” I said.

Before he could answer a gorgeous lady in a white coat walked into the room. She had on a badge that read Dr. Yolanda. He greeted her with a smile and she smiled back. This caused him to become distracted and, in that moment, we took the opportunity to make our exit. We ran to the door without them noticing. A boy, who looked about the same age as Brandon and I, looked excited and was about to speak. That was when I placed my finger on my lips indicating to him to be silent and he did just that with a smile.

We rode home empty handed.

“The new manager is a hard one Lisa,” Brandon said.

“Yea, but the bigger they are, the harder them fall, a just time,” I responded.

Tam Tam was blabbering all the way home, but in all that was said and done I was grateful for the boy that just smiled when I told him to keep quiet. My mother had warned us earlier not to go on the dump and if she found out we went and got detained, I would have surely been in for a beating.

“Today was disappointing enuh, we only made 200 dollar,” Brandon said.

“Tomorrow will be better Brandon,” I said, trying to cheer him up, but in my mind, I was determined to make it better.

“Easy say, hard to do,” Brandon replied.

Sunday morning was here, and we got up at 6am. The three of us began riding to the dump. The usually busy road was somehow clean like a whistle, only a few church goers made their way to church. Upon reaching the dump the sounds of angry voices filled the air as a large community protest was happening outside the office of the new manager. The media was interviewing a few residents with their usual cries for justice and for Major Fearon to leave if he does not change the new rules about the usage of the dump in regard to the public. We rode around the crowd and I told Brandon to hand me the pliers I asked him to bring to cut the fence. On the dump we began to find a few items of value but just as we became comfortable we heard the familiar sound of the whistle blowing and then the black van drove up. We tried to make a run for it but the soldiers were too quick and we got brought back to the same chairs as yesterday. This time though he tied our hands to the chairs with a large rope. Sitting like prisoners in the waiting room, Tam Tam began to cry at the top of his voice, but the soldiers paid him no mind and Major Fearon had rushed outside to speak with the media and the residents.

The elegant Dr. Yolanda entered the room.

“Why are you crying little one?” She asked in an accent that was not Jamaican.

Tam Tam immediately stopped crying and she continued, “Plus, you are all tied up what have you done?”

“Major Fearon want to speak to our parents about us gathering items from the dump, him say the dump isn’t a place for children,” I answered.

“What’s your name?” she asked.



“Lisa Bennett”, I answered.

“Well, Lisa I think he is right, plus you’re a little girl,” she said.

“Them say that all the time, but me a the dump champion,” I responded.

Just then a soldier came in and told Dr. Yolanda that Major Fearon wanted her to speak with the media about the changes to be made at the landfill on recycling.

As soon as she left we began trying to pull the rope from around our hands. The boy from yesterday entered the room, his eyes lit up once again and he ran over to us and started to help us pull the rope but after a few seconds of trying he stopped.

“I have an idea,” he said, in the same accent as Dr Yolanda.

He ran into the bathrooms and came back with a stick razor that he broke and used the blade to cut us out of the ropes. Tam Tam ran over to him and gave him a big hug to say thank you.

“What you name?” I asked.

“Ajamu Yolanda, I’m the son of Dr. Yolanda,” He answered and continued, “may I come with you on your trips to the landfill?”

Our mouths opened wide at his question. Brandon then explained to him what was happening with the new rules Major Fearon had put in place. Ajamu went inside his head for a few seconds.

“Let’s go on the landfill tonight. We can use the cover of night and not be seen”, Ajamu said.

“That sound like a better idea,” Brandon said.

We agreed to try Ajamu’s idea and use the darkness of the night to search the dump for items. We quickly said good bye and rode off. On

our way home, I could not help but think about the strangeness of Ajamu, a boy that seemed to have everything but was so interested in searching the dump.

# FOUR

When we arrived home the community was somewhat back to normal as Major Fearon had agreed to lighten some of the rules but only if the residents complied. The new rules stated that: no one was allowed on the dump at nights and the dump was off-limits for children. Rules we heard, but this did not change our minds on what we were going to do tonight. While eating dinner that Sunday afternoon my mind could not settle, all I could think about was Major Fearon and his rules stopping us from gathering items, so we could earn an extra dollar on the nothing we had. After dinner, Tam Tam and I went to bed to catch up on some sleep for what was going to be a long night.

I set my mother's phone to alarm at 8:00pm and we got up and went off to the dump. When we reached Brandon's lane, he was already waiting, so we did not bother to stop; he just joined the riding party. We reached Ajamu's house, based on his directions, but the house was in complete darkness.

"A wonder if a the right house this?" Brandon asked.

Just then we heard a strange whistle, then a next, and out of the shadows came Ajamu. He had on a large backpack and was smiling as usual. He got on his bicycle and we quietly rode off.

"I'm so excited" He said.

"Why are you so excited to go on the dump?" I asked.

"It holds a lot of stuff I can use to make inventions," Ajamu answered.

"INVENTIONS?" Brandon asked in awe.

"Yes, I'm a scientist, I began reading my mother's book from an early age and have now mastered it all from engineering to rocket science," Ajamu replied.

"REALLY?" I asked in disbelief.

Brandon and Ajamu fell behind talking. My mind was still on the fact that we only made 200 dollars in two days and tonight would have to be special. We took the long way around to the dump, riding along the banks of Sandy Gully.

"WOW!" Shouted Ajamu.

"SSSH!" I said.

"I'm sorry." he said and continued, "it's just the 1<sup>st</sup> time I'm making friends my age so interested in recycling like myself. We are in for it big time."

I cut the fence and we went on the dump, but we had no lights and it was difficult to see.

“Look like a the wrong time we come for a search,” Brandon said.

“No, I planned for this. When I was living in Africa I wanted to study nocturnal animals and I developed night vision goggles to see in the dark,” Ajamu said.

He went into his bag and took out 4 goggles and gave each of us one. I placed it over my eyes and I was amazed at Ajamu’s brilliance. It was as if someone had turned on the lights, I was seeing every crevices and corner of the dump.

“WOW, it’s just as I imagined. Do you know the kind of stuff I can make from all of this?”

“Bla Blu Bla Blu,” Tam Tam asked. Still in amazement I translated, “Things like what?”

He went into his pocket and took out a list and gave it to me, Brandon and Tam Tam. At the top of the list read “STEVIE” and it had items from old cell phone batteries to car tires, all items that could be found on the dump.

“That is going to be my latest invention, a robot,” Ajuma said.

I stood in awe, Ajamu was a real genius, Tam Tam and Brandon became super excited.

“Let’s build it,” Brandon said, as he grabbed the list from me.

All our attention now turned to finding the items to build “Stevie” and using the cover of the night, and the goggles, we searched the dump. All the soldiers on guard were now asleep. Not even Major Fearon could prevent that from happening. Soon it was 3am and we had

gathered all the items on the list. We packed the wagon and headed home to assemble “Stevie”.

# FIVE

At my house, Ajamu, Brandon and Tam Tam began to assemble the robot. I somehow fell asleep because of the long day and not sleeping during the afternoon. When I woke up it was early in the morning and the robot was assembled. Brandon was riding his bicycle which was mounted on a platform that stopped it from moving while its wheels had an electric cord attached to a small black box that was also connected to the robot on the ground.

“It’s not working, we need more speed from the bicycle,” Ajamu said.

“I’m trying but I’m really tired,” Brandon replied.

Brandon got off the bicycle and in one motion Tam Tam got on it and started to pedal. He had the wheels spinning faster than Brandon and soon the black box started to spark electricity.

“Yes! Tam Tam keep going,” Ajamu shouted.

Tam Tam began to ride standing which caused the black box to make loud popping sounds, with sparks of electricity flying everywhere. The robot on the ground began to shake.

“Tam Tam stop!” shouted Ajamu.

Tam Tam stopped immediately, the robot continued to shake but after a few minutes it eventually stopped. Ajamu had a look of disappointment on his face.

“What’s wrong Ajamu?” I asked.

Just as he was about to answer, the robot made a loud pinging sound. We all stared as its eyes, made from old cell phone cameras, opened and it stood up with its knees making a creaking sound like it needed oil. It opened its mouth and the sounds coming from it sounded like a radio being stationed.

“Hello, I’m Stevie, the environmentally friendly bot,” he said in a mechanical voice.

We were shocked beyond our wildest belief. Just then we heard a loud uproar coming from outside.

“FIRE, FIRE, THE DUMP ON FIRE!”



We looked to the direction of the dump and saw thick black smoke consuming the air. At that time, Mom was leaving for work and at the sight of her, Stevie fell flat to the ground without her seeing.

“Whole night noise a me head, but a least you in the yard and please stay here because the dump on fire so Lisa you know how that go. Later,” she said and went her way.

Stevie stood up again when mom left.

“I can sense that the smoke in the air is very toxic and bad for health,” Stevie said.

“He’s smart,” Brandon said.

“Yes, I programmed him like and that fire is dangerous for our health,” Ajamu replied.

“DANGER, DANGER! Landfill on Fire!” Stevie said.

“I’ve got to go,” Ajamu said.

“When will we see you again?” I asked.

“Tonight, same place, same time,” he replied.

“But the dump is on fire, it will take about 2 weeks to get under control,” I said.

“Stevie will see about that,” Ajamu said, as he got on his bicycle that now had Brandon’s wagon on it. Stevie jumped in and laid flat, looking like just garbage as he rode off.

Brandon went home, and Tam Tam and I went inside. We heard the sounds of the fire engines heading towards the dump. Tam Tam went straight to bed; he had a long night. I listened to the radio to hear updates on the dump fire. About an hour later, while listening, I heard

breaking news, “The fire that started this morning at the Riverton Landfill is out.”

“IMPOSSIBLE!” I said to myself.

I then heard the reporter interviewing Major Fearon and praising him on his quick actions but Major Fearon quickly stated that just like how the fire started and how it got put out is still a mystery to him.

“Ajamu did it,” I said.

That night we met Ajamu outside his house and I ran and hugged him.

“How did you do it?” I asked.

“I’ve no idea what Stevie did, but we will find out soon,” he said with a smile.

We quickly rode off to the dump. Upon reaching, we placed the night goggles on and could see that the dump was back to normal.

“Where is Stevie?” Brandon asked.

“He is here, help me look for him,” Ajamu said, pointing to his watch.

“Alright, Ajamu and Brandon you go look for Stevie and Tam Tam and I will look for items to sell,” I said and they all agreed.

Tam Tam was already looking through the dump for items as Brandon and Ajamu went the other direction looking for Stevie. I began to hear talking coming from a few metres away. I stopped my searching and looked and listened. It was a soldier talking to ‘Big Dog’ and ‘Nuh Laugh’ who were two noted trouble makers from the community. After a few seconds in their conversation ‘Nuh Laugh’ took out what looked like a coil of money and gave to the soldier. The soldier then allowed ‘Big Dog’ and ‘Nuh Laugh’ on to the dump and left the area. They quickly ran on the dump in the direction that Tam Tam was searching and in a mad rush they both started to pour a liquid on the

dump surrounding Tam Tam,. 'Nuh Laugh' then took out a lighter from his pocket.

“'Nuh Laugh' stop!” I shouted.

'Nuh Laugh' quickly lit the dump and began to walk towards me. The fire was too bright, and I had to take off the goggles to see. My eyes soon adjusted to the light of the fire and I could clearly see Nuh Laugh walking towards me with a gun in his hand.

I ran to a corner of the dump terrified but 'Nuh Laugh' had already seen me. I sat shaking in fear, not only for myself, but I could hear Tam Tam crying for help, surrounded by fire.

“Likkle gal, you a informa a ball out man name,” said 'Nuh Laugh' as he made his way closer.

He was now right in front of me with his gun pointing in my face. At the same time, out of the dump rose the tall figure of Stevie. 'Nuh Laugh' fired a shot at Stevie but it just ricocheted off his chest and went into the dump floor. With one thump to Nuh Laugh's face Stevie sent him to the floor, knocking him out cold.

Still shaken, I told Stevie that Tam Tam was in danger as he was trapped in the fire. Just then, we heard the cry of 'Big Dog' and the sound of a dog growling. Stevie ran in the direction, it was Scratchie, my dog, and he was holding on to the leg of 'Big Dog'. This allowed Stevie to also thump 'Big Dog' sending him to the floor. Stevie ran into the fire and took out Tam Tam, who did not look scared, just excited to be carried by Stevie. Brandon and Ajamu soon appeared asking what was happening and I explained. Both were in shock as Stevie came over with Tam Tam.

“You guys need to go, I will deal with the fire and the two troublemakers,” Stevie said.

“Yes, we have to go the soldiers will be here soon,” Ajuma said.

We jumped on our bikes and headed home with Scratchie behind us. On our way home, we spoke about the incident that just happened and how Stevie and Scratchie saved the day.

“You know, this is just the beginning of us protecting that landfill,” Ajamu said.

“With Stevie we are unstoppable, plus you can always build more inventions to help,” Brandon said, with a serious look on his face.

He was still upset about the incident that just happened.

“Sounds like a plan. So we are heroes now,” I said and continued, “Dump protectors.”

“Not just the dump but protectors of the whole Jamaican environment,” Ajamu said.

“WE NEED A NAME!” Brandon said.

“Bla Blu, Bla Blu, Bla Blu,” Tam Tam replied.

I translated what he said, “WE ARE THE PEDAL PATROL.”

## **ABOUT STUDIO DAN**

### ***PUBLICATION + EDUTAINMENT***

***Studio Dan is a Jamaican based production studio that specializes in the self-publishing of Authentic Jamaican/Afrocentric stories and live edutainment events and programs.***

***An idea of AWARD WINNING writer Danijah Danijah, that started as a hobby has now become our passion. Leading the Jamaican literary revolution with original content, focused on improving literacy, creativity and critical thinking in our youth. While inspiring the world with our story. ONE LOVE!***

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