

# I know ...

by Hannibal Tabu

There's no telling how long Deborah sat staring at the screen, reading and re-reading those same eight words. As far as blog posts go, this was terribly short -- more like one of those microbursts people posted on sites like Twitter or Jaiku. But here it was, Friday afternoon with Deborah checking MySpace for interesting bulletins or messages before she made some weekend plans, finding a blog from Fred posted that same morning with two simple sentences.

*I know. I've known for a long time.*

The "mood" indicator was set to "betrayed" and the blog's title was "You don't know me." "Friends" by Jody Watley featuring Rakim was listed as the music this blog was written to.

Deborah sat back in her Aeron chair, worry settling in on her like a blanket draped over a sleeping child.

*It might be nothing, she rationalized. It probably doesn't even have anything to do with me.* Fred ran with some sketchy characters, like that ersatz Nation of Islam pretender Khalid. No telling who or what inspired this succinct, cryptic declaration.

Fred's blog was well known amongst his keyed-in associates for its in-depth confessionals, being specific about events if not about names, often providing descriptive pseudonyms to indicate who the people really were or at least what he thought of them. It wasn't hard for most of their friends to figure out that Deborah was "Angel" based on the story about that day at Reggae Fest alone.

But this ... this was unusual. Fred's shortest blogs still always required you to scroll down at least once, even on big monitors. Even his text messages always overran the 160-character

requirement, coming into her Blackberry in fractured installments.

Biting her lip, she glanced at her inbox. Nothing from Fred, just the normal chatter from national and some FYIs from Strategic Marketing that she could just as easily delete as file. The computer's clock dutifully told her it was 3:16 PM. If she followed her normal Friday night routine, that meant ending up at The Magic Carpet on Crenshaw, Deborah would surely see him there, pool cue in hand, nodding his dreadlocked head to whatever was bumping from the jukebox. *Could he really know about that?* she asked herself, imagining his normal one-armed embrace suddenly as stilted as when he saw Lakeshia in the dusty paths near the food court of the African Marketplace.

The sudden vibration of her Blackberry took her by surprise, and she audibly "eeped" when it started moving across the surface of her desk calendar. She reached over for it and blanched when she saw Fred's number, the smartphone's insistence to be answered or silenced.

*F###, could he have found out?* she wondered, considering the dilemma. *I thought ... sh## ...*

She sucked in a deep breath, her modest breasts rising in her white Donna Karan blouse and pressed the key to take the call.

Breathlessly, she said, "Hello?"

