

## Living in America

By JD Shingles

On Saturday, I was going to purchase a 10 lb. bag of rice from BJ's for the Haitian Food Drive. But, a strange thing happened while I was there.

I placed a bag of rice into my shopping cart and briskly walked towards the checkout. Feeling peaceful and happy, I caught myself humming one of James Brown's tunes, "I Feel Good". You know, the song that goes something like this:

*"Whoa-oo-oo! I feel good, duh nuh nuh nuh nuh nuh  
I knew that I would, now  
I feel good, I knew that I would,  
now so good, so good, I got you ,dooh doo doo dooh."*

Suddenly, I felt warm. I could not pinpoint it, but I was elated. Yes! This warm sensation came over me because I was helping the less fortunate.

My mind reverted to the song –

*"Whoa! I feel nice,  
like sugar and spice,  
I feel nice, like sugar and spice,  
so nice, so nice,  
I got you, yeah."*

Then my warmth began to take on a deep chill. My body froze. I quickly turned my head from side-to-side. Curiously, I surveyed my surroundings looking for somebody; anybody. I stared intently at the lifeless bag of rice in my shopping cart.

“Ok. JD, it’s a bag of rice; rice can’t make you stop dead in your tracks.”

Then, from out of nowhere, a funky voice began to speak to me.

“Do you really feel good?” said the Voice. I clutched my cart’s handrail tighter as perspiration began to trickle down my arms and brows. “Do you really feel good?” the Voice repeated. My eyes, once again, scanned my surroundings, but no one was in sight.

The Voice and I were in a dog fight. The Voice chuckled as it leaned forward and whispered in my ear, “Yes. You can do better?” Hastily, I wheeled my shopping cart around and went back to pick up a second bag of rice.

Now I was back in line, just two shopping carts away from the cashier. The Voice returned. It spoke softly, “JD, you live in America; help me out, you live in America; eye to eye, station to station, hand to hand, across the nation. I broke out in a feverish sweat. Oh, no! “What’s going on, here”? The purpose for my trip to BJ’s was to purchase a bag of rice to donate to the Food Drive. The Voice reminded me that I live in America. And, for centuries America has been the world’s ambassador.

I went back to the aisle and got a third bag of rice. “This is it! I do not care what the Voice says.”

I dashed to checkout as the Godfather of Soul lyrics continued to play in my head.

After checking out, James’ voice vanished.

As strange as this may seem, the hardest working man in show business challenged me to fulfil a hunger’s harvest.

I live in America.