



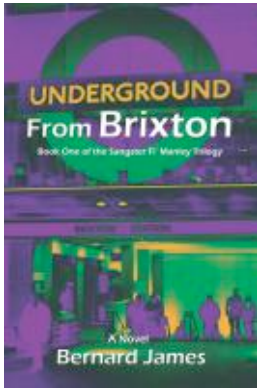
# UNDERGROUND From Brixton

Book One of the Sangster Fi' Manley Trilogy

BRIXTON STATION

A Novel

Bernard James



*Underground from Brixton* is the first installment in the Sangster Fi' Manley series, a sexy narrative of danger, discovery and enlightenment that follows Marcella Jeanette Scott as she sets out on her quest to solve the mystery of her father's identity, but ends up stumbling onto secrets surrounding the untimely tragedy of her mother's death instead.

# Underground from Brixton

Order the complete book from

**[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/6167.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood  
or online bookstore.**

**Your Free excerpt appears below. Enjoy!**

# **UNDERGROUND FROM BRIXTON**

Underground from Brixton. Copyright © 2011 by Bernard James

ISBN: 978-0-9840466-1-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011943250

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published in the United States by Buffalo Soldier Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Books offered through Buffalo Soldier Press may be purchased for business, educational or sales promotional use. For additional information please visit us on the web at <http://www.bspress.org> and follow the marketing link for further instructions.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and events are either product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

Buffalo Soldier Press.  
2011

First Edition

## CHAPTER 1

*Mayfair, Central London*  
*Monday, 08th August (Present Day)*

**Marcella** kept her eyes glued on the conference room door, anxious that maybe someone had in fact been paying attention when she tried to slip off unnoticed from her post. They'd already moved beyond the half hour mark, certainly increasing the chance that a detailed review of the hotel's phone records would alert someone in Accounting to the fact that a substantial overseas call had indeed been placed from that room. They all did it from time to time – an unspoken, but understood benefit available to the regular staff; but she seriously doubted that anyone dared talk for more than a few minutes at a time. Other than the one located in the main office, it was the only other phone in the building not routed through a trunk line by the hotel's central computer – and therefore not subjected to a daily enumeration of charges due for every second of every call. But she'd been on the line for forty minutes and frustratingly, was getting nowhere with the unyielding bureaucrat. Officially, it was her day off, but it would have been quite simple really, for anyone to discover that she and Gemma had exchanged shifts; her colleague having been obliged to attend a cousin's wedding in Kingsmarkham. Marcella now regretted it, because she was doing her friend a favor at the expense of not convening with her regular study group. Final exams would be administered in one week's time and if she didn't flub them and could successfully pull off the Thesis that was due later that Fall, she would *finally* obtain her MSc Certificate from Kings College London – which at the moment, seemed like a slow road to eternity as she sat there enduring the deliberations of someone who clearly was in no particular hurry. She was trying so hard to keep her frustration in check, but the other woman's lack of cooperation had nearly exhausted what little patience she had left.

“Couldn't you at least check with someone in your department?”

“Miss, as I’ve already explained to you, there’s no one in this office that goes by that name.”

“And three months ago? You’re absolutely certain no one named *Ms. Fraser* was working there then?”

“I’ve only started within the last month...”

“Which is exactly the point I’ve been trying to make...”

“...so I could not say for certain who you did, or did not speak with during that time.”

“But is it too much trouble for you to simply ask?”

“Again, as I’ve already explained, that’s really not necessary as an updated directory of all current staff...” Marcella stifled a scream as the woman launched into another scripted excuse for the dreadful level of service she was bound and determined to provide. The woman named *Fraser* was not a figment of Marcella’s imagination. She’d spoken with her on two separate occasions; the first time back in April, when she called with questions about her Mother’s birth certificate; then again in June, after she’d worked up the courage to inquire about her own. Suddenly, she swung her head towards the door, startled by unfamiliar voices that grew louder on advancing steps. But just as she was about to break the connection, the sound began to fade and finally drifted away as the pair moved farther down the hall. Precious seconds ticked by and still, the woman wasn’t making any sense. The quick-burning fuse on Marcella’s temper had run its course. She finally lost it.

“Mi naa give a djam bout dat!” she barked impatiently, her final vestiges of self control melting in irritation. “Is foolishness yu talk. Mi naa waan fi document additional form – naa hear *rhattid* procedural steps dem.” She paused and swallowed hard. Took a deep breath, then swallowed again, shocked as much by the Patois-infused ferocity of her anger, as by her regrettable inability to keep it in check. Silence reigned for a few awkward seconds before either woman said anything further. Then, somewhat calmer but not entirely back under control, Marcella continued in a sharply enunciated tone. “I spoke with a representative who identified herself as *Ms. Fraser*. I submitted a Genealogical Request form via email and was further assured that my birth records were on file.” Waiting to make sure that Marcella was finished, the woman on the other end of the line took a moment to collect herself

before smoothly and patiently completing the recitation of her lines. Her voice was steady and still courteous; albeit with just a hint of newfound caution that managed to soften her overall delivery. Under no circumstances was it permissible for department staff to become belligerent with customers, but her inflection and delivery were undoubtedly affected – the result of a new awareness that she was not speaking to some posh, naive Londoner - spoiled and overdramatically fretting from her South Kensington Flat. “Then tell me *please*” Marcella asked when the woman had finished, “Why it is that I cannot rely on you to make a painfully *simple* inquiry with someone else in your office about Ms. Fraser? Surely there must be some record of our conversation, or a file that was being prepared on my behalf. I’ll be in Kingston this December and I spoke with Ms. Fraser about stopping in personally to pick up the materials she was to have prepared.” She had no idea how she would manage it, but Marcella wanted dearly to travel home in time for Christmas. So for the past few months she’d started making tentative plans – which not surprisingly included a stop at the Registrar General’s office at Twickenham Park in St. Catherine. Marcella’s outburst and the mention of her pending travel plans had a considerable loosening effect on the government worker - *a Ms. Dickerson this time* - who was smart enough to realize that remaining inside her box of standard department protocol would likely be wholly inadequate under the circumstances. So she stepped up her efforts to be more cooperative, albeit sounding discomfited and less sure-footed than she’d been before - the familiarity of her script less reassuring in the face of Marcella’s implied threat. *I will be in Kingston this December...would you like me to come find you, so we can discuss this in person?*

“Ms. Scott, I’m so sorry for all the difficulties you’ve recently endured and it’s apparent that your background and preparation on this matter is much more extensive than I first realized. I’m not aware of a Ms. Fraser who previously worked in this office, but I *will* speak with my supervisor this afternoon to see what information, if any, can be obtained for you. Please understand that for reasons of confidentiality, it’s debatable that I will be able to tell you much if anything at all. But

rest assured I will certainly try my best.” *Finally. Was that really so difficult?*

“Thank you” said Marcella sincerely. “I would *really* appreciate that.”

“As for the matter of your missing records – let me first say, that without submitting a specific request for information to our archives department, I can only speak to what I see in our online database.”

“And what does that show you, exactly?”

“Two things: First, we have no record of a Birth Registration for Marcella Jeanette Scott for the year Nineteen Hundred and Seventy Eight.”

“*But that’s impossible*”, Marcella whispered to herself, her annoyance giving way to an increasingly helpless state of confusion. “And...so. What...what else does the computer say?”

“That the research initiated as a result of the Genealogical Request form you submitted through our website came back empty.”

“Empty?” Marcella asked. “What does that mean?”

“Essentially, that no Genealogical links were established using the information you provided.” Marcella was struck mute – not with anger or frustration, but by a terrible cloud of miscomprehension; that and an accompanying sense of dread that something was seriously amiss.

“No links...” she mumbled softly.

“What this tells us”, Ms. Dickerson explained, “is that none of the information you provided to our department could be verified as a vital event.” Ms. Dickerson waited for Marcella to respond, but continued sympathetically when she didn’t. “The letter you mentioned...the one that arrived in July? That’s why you received it. It’s auto-generated when a flag in our system is set – an indication that the research we conducted on your behalf came back empty. We employ a rigorous method of analysis and validation to trace all Genealogical requests to their source. So either the details you specified on the forms were inaccurate...” And this last bit, she spoke softly and with a trace of apology, “...or they do not exist.” Marcella’s mind raced through the data she’d provided and the import of what Ms. Dickerson was saying – Her Mother’s full name, date and place of birth; her Grandmother’s full name, date and place of birth – while the lines on the form requesting

Paternal information remained glaringly empty. *Djam*, it wasn't much but it was the only thing she had. How could this be possible? Mum didn't have a copy, but was emphatic that both their registrations (Marcella's and her Mother's) had been filed in Spanish Town – the location of the Registrar General before it moved its offices and archives to Twickenham Park – not to mention the verbal confirmation she'd already received from Ms. Fraser...who it seemed had now gone missing and inexplicably had left no indication that she had ever worked there in the first place. *What the hell was going on?*

"Ms. Scott?" the clerk asked tentatively.

"I'm sorry...yes?"

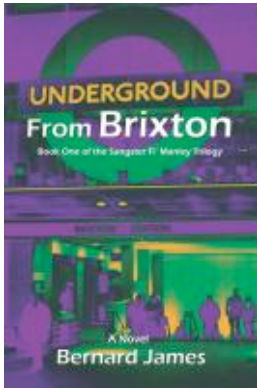
"Well...is there anything else that I can do for you?" Consulting her watch, Marcella felt ill with the realization that she'd been away and on the phone for nearly fifty minutes. Her scheduled lunch break was twenty minutes away – clearly she'd be skipping that. She had so many questions she wanted to ask and she suffered from the irrational fear that if she let Ms. Dickerson go now, she too would disappear, never to be heard from again. But let her go she must. And where Marcella went from there was anybody's guess.

"I suppose not", she admitted reluctantly. "But if I have any further questions..."

"As you might expect, each call is routed to the next available representative...but when you call, just ask for Pat", she instructed soothingly in light of their earlier debate about Ms. Fraser. Marcella thanked her for her assistance, apologized for her earlier outburst and then after double-checking the department's numbers and hours of operation, finally hung up the phone. For a minute she just sat there in the darkness of the shuttered conference room, puzzled over this latest turn of events, dismayed that what had begun as *her little project* had blossomed into something more closely resembling an obsession – which for the moment, had run into a serious dead end. After going public with her plans, her decision to search for her father's identity had been met with several different reactions and opinions - influenced primarily by the degree to which the other person understood, or could identify with Marcella's situation. Her grandmother pretended not to be concerned, but Marcella understood at once that something intense was

going on behind Mum's watchful, laser beam gaze. But to her credit, during the entire period that followed – which for the most part, coincided with the approximate amount of time she'd been in the UK, the old woman had never once questioned her about what she was doing. Sure, she'd answer questions if any were asked, but Marcella would have to initiate them and even then, Mum claimed (or pretended – Marcella was still trying to figure out which description was more accurate) not to have much to go on where the possible identity of her father was concerned. Nadine Scott was a strong, proud woman, but any discussion of Marcella's father necessarily involved the topic of her mother, Theresa; and after more than twenty five years Mum had yet to fully come to grips with senselessness of her beautiful child's death. *Was many boys dem*, Mum had explained. But when pressed, her daughter confessed that she could not be certain who had fathered the child. She hadn't been abused – or so she'd claimed, but Theresa had worked as a domestic in both Kingston and along the North Coast, at the various resorts in and around Ocho Rios and in both locales, there had been lots of men: Tourists and Students...Diplomats and Politicians...not to mention the Rude Bwoys...with thick bundles of Greenbacks and false promises whispered sweetly in an unsuspecting country girl's ears. Over the years, Marcella had cycled through the endless list of possibilities, wondering what it must have been like for a poor, naïve girl from the St. Mary bush to find herself alone and afraid – a new life growing inside her, with no resources or viable opportunities that could sustain either one of them. Had she lived, what explanations could her mother have provided, she wondered for the thousandth time. Certainly the suspects could have been filtered down, with exact names and locations of who did *what* for *how long* and exactly *when*... But even then the task would have been daunting...which qualified what she was attempting now as something next to impossible. No, not just impossible...an impossibility compounded by missing records and the disappearance of Ms. Fraser from the Registrar General's office! Clearly an error had been made with the computer records...and Pat would certainly find out what happened to Ms. Fraser. Frustrating...*and very strange*, she thought as she sighed and pushed away from the table. She stood up and walked to

the door, feeling tired and despondent. One week away from her exams, she was unprepared, facing a stressful period of work and desperate study. Her mind drifting, she went back to the person who had fathered her. Was he married and hiding an indiscretion? Or had he been young and not prepared to face up to the consequences of his actions? *This is crazy...it's like someone doesn't want me to find you*, she thought dejectedly as she carefully turned the handle and peeked outside before slipping back into the hall. But Marcella had no idea just how crazy her life was about to become, nor could she appreciate the cause and effect of the secrets and personal entanglements that would ensnare her as they boomeranged back to their source – not to mention the depths to which some would go to keep that knowledge buried. But she was about to find out...and soon, for barely a week would pass before the first attempt was made on her life.



*Underground from Brixton* is the first installment in the Sangster Fi' Manley series, a sexy narrative of danger, discovery and enlightenment that follows Marcella Jeanette Scott as she sets out on her quest to solve the mystery of her father's identity, but ends up stumbling onto secrets surrounding the untimely tragedy of her mother's death instead.

# Underground from Brixton

Order the complete book from

**[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/6167.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood  
or online bookstore.**