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70

Good.Cite from the text to support your assertions.

A Raisin in the Sun.
(by Lorraine Hansberry)

When it dawned their minds and ears that the insurance money for Mr Walter Sr was out, Lena, Walter and Beneatha saw themselves waving a goodbye to poverty. Walter wanted to start a business, Beneatha wanted to pursue her dream career as a doctor and Lena, their mother, wanted to buy her dream house. But as they were prioritising their problems against paltry \$10000, they woke up to harsh realities of life. They realised that they were very poor and that their multitude of problems were far from over. They realised that their ten thousand dollars was nothing as compared to circumstances at their disposal. The Youngers could not agree on how best the money should be used so the family crawls out of extremely poverty that haunted them for decades of years. The disagreement threatened to tear the Younger family apart as each member try to wrestle an opportunity to have his/her dream be funded by the insurance money. This essay seeks to explore how Walter Jr., Beneatha and Lena (their mother) wanted the insurance money be used to benefit the entire family.

How Walter wanted the insurance money to be used:

To start with, Walter was a family man, married to Ruth and had a child he loved dearly, Travis. Like any other black American of his time, Walter believed in an American dream, and at the centre of the dream was money. Having worked as a chauffeur for years did not only meant that he was not going to realise that dream , but also couldn't provide for his family adequately, let alone owning a house. The job was earning him nuts. That was the main reason why he now wanted to start a business.

Now the arrival of this insurance money in this family saw Walter's hopes for a better life where he will be a business owner , rekindled. His American dream was revived. He saw a business opportunity. He desperately wanted to use this insurance money to open a liquor shop so that he will be able to pull the whole family out of poverty. Walter saw this as the best idea to invest the insurance money. He saw himself out of poverty, driving very expensive cars and staying in a leafy suburb with his wife and his child Travis.

However, none of the family members supported the idea of opening a liquor store. By his own admission to Beneatha, Walter had this to say, 'No body in this house is ever going to understand me, ... not even my own mother.' (page 26) This was after he tried in vain to convince his mother, his wife Ruth and Beneatha to buy the liquor shop idea. Mama couldn't fall in because amongst other reasons owning a liquor shop would hugely compromise the family dignity.

To Walter himself the idea of owning a liquor shop was a great business opportunity that he couldn't dare to miss under any circumstances. Like earlier own indicated he needed the family support for the idea to adopt the idea then bankroll it simply because the money belonged to the whole family, not an individual. He begged his mother and wife and even Beneatha, his sister who also wanted to use the same insurance money as university fees, for support. He had this to say to Ruth, 'A man needs his woman to back him up', (page 39) but she remained adamant. Infact Ruth also wanted a bigger house. This is evident on page 34 when she said "I would rather be living in Buckingham Palace." She was only laying down her dreams bare, tired of living in a congested apartment. That implies that Walter was toiling alone with his liquor shop dream. Beneatha went on to tell Ruth that '...he (Walter) is really a neurotic' (page 49) suggesting that he was now losing his mind.

Walter sent the whole family's dreams to a thunderous crash when he impulsively planted part of money into the liquor business whose shareholding was going to be among himself and his two friends; Bobo and Willy. His friends were not acting in good faith. They swindled the money and soon Walter found himself with his tail between the legs when the family demanded answers and questioning the wisdom of investing money in the liquor business.

How mama wanted the insurance money to be used:

Their mother, Lena (mama) did not support Walter's idea because of two main reasons. Firstly, she wanted to use that insurance money to buy a house for the family that she and her late husband Mr Walter Sr longed for years. Secondly, she was coming from a very strong Christian background that selling liquor, in her eyes, wasn't holy and Godly enough that means it was an act against the scriptures. Besides, opening a liquor shop would heavily compromise the family dignity that she jealously held, valued and guarded for decades.

In her sixties Lena's dream has always been to own a house. This was a dream that she shared with her late husband Mr Walter Younger Sr. They have been staying in a congested one bedroom apartment where a toilet and a bathroom were shared between two families, for over three decades now. That wasn't life according to mama. Before the money came, Mama could be heard praying to God so that her dream of owning a house be realised. The idea of turning to God meant that she had done everything humanly possible to drag her family out of abject poverty without success. The family was growing, the apartment was getting smaller. The current Younger family was now too big for a one bedroom apartment that saw Travis sleeping on the couch, Walter and his wife converting a foyer into a bedroom. That was the origin Lena's desperation for another house. That insurance money was the only ray of hope that could see her realise her dream house, where everyone would own a bedroom, a big lounge and a garden at the back. As mama's desperation levels sour high, Beneatha's eyes were still on that insurance money.

How Beneatha wanted the insurance money to be used:

Just like any other African American of her age, Beneatha in her early twenties wanted to make hey whilst the sun still shines. She wanted to go to medical university and pursue a career at an early age. She wanted to be a medical doctor. She saw that as an opportunity to rescue the family out of poverty.

University fees were astronomically high that the family couldn't afford. Fortunately the insurance money came out at a time. She was about to abandon her dream career owing to financial crisis the family was going through. She saw a saviour in that money. She saw herself practising her profession in some parts of Africa, travelling the world.

Unfortunately there was Walter and Lena who both stood on her way, with their own dream-cards in hand. Walter wanted the Beneatha to be a nurse like most girls and told her that, "Ain't many girls many girls to decide to be a doctor?" (page 36) He further registered his disapproval of Beneatha's idea to train as a doctor on page 38 when he asked her, "Who the hell told you have to be a doctor?" However Beneatha was unmoved. She remained adamant.

Walter felt his liquor business dream was being threatened by Beneatha's career dream. Walter resorted to emotional abuse to make sure his sister gets the message. He told her to abandon the doctor dream and be married to her rich boyfriend and be a house wife. Beneatha's emotions ran high too

and told her adversary brother that, “Get over it! Listen, I’m going to be a doctor. I’m not worried about who I’m gonna marry yet – if ever I get married”, (page 50). She was dismissing Walter’s proposals.

Beneatha and Walter clashed more often over the insurance money because both were naturally entitled to it and they saw an opportunity that none of them was prepared to compromise. They have known poverty for too long so much that both Younger children desperately wanted to use this once-in-a-lifetime window of opportunity out. Their desperation brew hatred, and they became virtually rivals, each trying to sell his/her idea to their mother who naturally was head of the family, but the same mother had her dream totally different from her children.

In conclusion, it should not be interpreted as if Walter never wanted her sister to go to university to pursue her dream career, or his mother to buy a family a bigger house, but the truth is the family was too poor to bankroll all the three projects at ones. It was important for Beneatha to pursue her career as a doctor whilst she was still young, as much as it was important for Walter to start a business that would be the source of money for the whole family going into the future. Equally important was the mother’s dream of owning a bigger house in affluent suburbs where everyone would have enough space for themselves and no shared bathrooms or shared toilets. The real source of all these family upheavals and clashes was poverty. If the family had enough money, Walter could have started his business, Beneatha could have pursued her career at the same time Lena buying a house for the family.

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Bibliography

1. Hansberry, L. (1958), *A Raisin in the Sun*. London: Bloomsbury Publishers

