

have, it's like I'm circling in a traffic pattern, just circling. I don't got shit to say to anyone, and nobody got shit to say to me.

EVAN. You find someplace to stay... Chris?

CHRIS. Yeah. Reverend Duckett lets me sleep in the rectory. I do some chores. It's all right for now. Quiet. Trying to find my feet.

EVAN. It's gonna be that way for a while.

CHRIS. Yeah, I'm figuring that out quickly!

EVAN. What about work?

CHRIS. Looking.

EVAN. Did you follow up with the leads I gave you?

CHRIS. Yeah, went down there, filled out a few applications, but they ain't offering nothing real, I'm talking bullshit, you know... seven, eight dollars an hour.

EVAN. Gotta begin somewhere.

CHRIS. I guess. And I keep hitting up against that box. That damn question's a barbed wire fence, can't go over it, can't get around it.

EVAN. I know, I know. But, whatcha doing to keep your head?

CHRIS. Going to prayer meetings. Doing it one day at a time. Reverend Duckett has been real cool to me.

EVAN. Good. Good. What about that prison program? How many credits you short?

CHRIS. Eight. But first...I gotta throw a little money in my pocket. Get things on track, you know. Then, psh, I can think about finishing up my bachelor's.

EVAN. I'm really glad to hear that.

CHRIS. That was the plan, you know, before the shit went down.

EVAN. You seem a little on edge today.

CHRIS. Yeah, well. Some days are like that. I get real mad at myself.

*A moment. Chris, suddenly, introspective.*

EVAN. You okay? You need some air or something?

CHRIS. Nah. I...I ran into Jason. Wasn't expecting it.

EVAN. What was that like?

CHRIS. Weird...weird. He looked different.

EVAN. Yeah?

CHRIS. He had tats on his face. Big fucking tats. He looked ridiculous. I had to deal with that bullshit inside. You know, Aryan Brotherhood. But, Jason...that shit surprised me. He looked old, like a man. Like his dad useta, before he died. It kinda freaked me out.

EVAN. I bet.

CHRIS. (*Escalating emotions.*) I dunno. A couple minutes, and your whole life changes, that's it. It's gone. Every day I think about what if I hadn't... You know... I run it and run it, a tape over and over again. What if. What if. What if. All night. In my head. I can't turn it off. Reverend Duckett said, "Lean on God for forgiveness. Lean on God to find your way through the terrible storm." I'm leaning into the wind, I'm fuckin' leaning... And.

*A moment.*

And then there's Jason. Crossing Penn, you know, and I'm just chilling, looking in the window of Sneaker Villa, not thinking about anything. He sees me. I see him. Neither of us could...um, move for a second. We...it was...I've been thinking about what I would do in that moment. How I would react, what I would say. I mean...fuck it. What we did was unforgivable...

EVAN. So, what?

CHRIS. Next thing I know I'm walking fast toward him, I don't know what I'm gonna do. But the emotions are right there in my chest. A fist pressing right there. Pressing. And I keep walking. And I'm expecting him to walk away, do something, but he just stands there like he's been waiting on me all these years. And...we come face to face. Like right there. I can smell his breath, that's how close we are. I can see the fucking veins in his eyes. And my fists clench. My fingernails dig into the palms of my hands and then it just happens...weird... We're hugging, Hugging. I don't know why. And for the first time in eight years, I feel like I could go.

*Tears are close, but they don't come.*

*A loud blast of a late '90s/2000 hit like Santana's "Smooth."\**  
*The past rips through 2008.*

\* See special note on songs on page 97.