

I DON'T WANT TO THROW MY LIFE AWAY

"A Day At Stateville"

by

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Spec Manuscript

Change is inevitable. When a person is fed up with living a destructive lifestyle it causes the individual to snap back into reality. For Star, being part of a gang called Marx God has shown Star that the Marx God were the oppressors all along.

Will Star withdraw from Marx God or will Star continue to get involved and walk down an unfavorable path?

Star is wrongfully convicted for murder. Star turns to Marx God for support.

Does Star's own people think Star is soft?

Unfortunately, Star is sent to prison in which Star landed in Stateville Correctional Center with a life sentence. Star's cellmate, Shalom, becomes Star's mentor.

Is Star learning anything from this experience?

Star's girlfriend and also the mother of Star's child has become a drug addict and a streetwalker since Star's been gone. Harmony, Star's daughter, is in the hands of her grandmother. When Harmony's grandmother dies, nine year old Harmony is brought into the hands of child services.

Is all of this a wake up call for Star? Has life behind bars forced Star to change his life?

Star wins his appeal and walks out of prison a free man with a plan. However, temptation waits for Star on the outside.

Will Star repeat the same cycle or will Star save his family and speak to the youth to let this new generation know that an outstanding future awaits them down the road?

For those who don't want to throw life away, open your eyes and experience "A DAY AT STATEVILLE." In the end of it all, you will see that there is a better life than prison over the horizon.

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STAR PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN. HE PUNCHES HIS FIST INTO THE PALM OF HIS HAND.

LITTLE SOLDIER

I'm a go talk to the universe and let them
know you need a minute, but we gone need
that up out you.

LITTLE SOLDIER WALKS AWAY.

FADE OUT.

SCENE B

FADE IN:

INT. DAY ROOM - DAY

ISRAEL SITS AT A TABLE ALONE. HE LISTENS TO THE GROUP OF GUYS THAT SIT ON TOP OF A DAY ROOM TABLE ACROSS FROM HIM. THEY'RE ALL LAUGHING. HENN DOG WALKS UP ON THEM. THE GROUP STOP'S THEIR LAUGH.

HENN DOG

(sarcastic) Blink Blink, what up God?

BLINK BLINK AND HENN DOG GAVE EACH OTHER A HALF OF HAND SLAP.

BLINK BLINK

Laying low. How about yourself?

HENN DOG

You tell me. You say one of my dogs stole from one of your's.

DRAGO

Henn Dog, stop playing! Blink Blink sent me a line last night when we was on lock down! A bag of tacacco and some hooch was in the bag!

BLINK BLINK

(signals) Fall back, Drago, I got this.

HENN DOG

(serious) Yeah, ya man's trippin' hard, Fam.

DRAGO

(touches his waist) What!

BLINK BLINK

(blurts) I felt the line stop, Henn Dog. I hollered 'who was in that bag?' We already know Fooly got god's merch. Y'all deal with him cause if we do, it's gone be some serious repercussions!

BLINK BLINK AND HIS MARX GODS EYE HENN DOG WITH FIRE IN THEIR EYES.

HENN DOG

(chuckles) What's up with Star? (walks away)

Homie back there crying or something?

HENN DOG WALKS AWAY WITH A SMIRK. ISRAEL SHAKES HIS HEAD. HE GETS UP AND WALKS AWAY.

DRAGO

I'm a stab that fool, as soon as the moon bust!

LITTLE SOLDIER WALKS UP ON THE COMMOTION.

LITTLE SOLDIER

I just hollered at Star. I told him he can't
be sitting there crying like a broad. He's suppose
to be our universe. How that make us look (laughs)?

HENN DOG, FOOLY AND THE REST OF THE BLUE DOGS APPROACH.
BLINK BLINK AND THE MARX GODS STAND GUARD.

FOOLY

Who accusing Fooly a stealing?

FADE OUT.

SCENE C

FADE IN:
INT. CELL - DAY

STAR SITS ON HIS BUNK STARING INTO SPACE. ISRAEL HUMBLY WALKS IN THE CELL.

ISRAEL

Man, Star, you good?

ISRAEL TAKES A SEAT NEXT TO STAR.

STAR

I'm good, Israel. I don't know where to go from here, but what I do know is I got to fight. The jury found me guilty of something I know nothing about. All they heard was I was on trial for murder and that's all it took for a guilty verdict.

ISRAEL

I know your're in a situation and probably don't want to hear this, Bro., but pray.

STAR PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN IN DEFEAT. HE ROCKS HIMSELF BACK AND FORTH.

STAR

I can't give up, man. (pause) I talked to my mom. She just cried the whole phone call. I'm not gonna lie, Israel, that broke my heart into a million pieces.

ISRAEL

I know it did.

STAR

My daughter's at home with her grandmother, but she's 75 years old. My daughters only 9. What if

something happens to her grandmother tomorrow?

Where will that leave my daughter?

ISRAEL

What's good with your daughter's mother?

STAR

(chuckles) Man, her mother can't even take care of 'herself'. She's out there on drugs and she started prostituting. I guess when I got locked up, she found it hard to deal with and hooked up with some dude that turned her out. Her grandmother has custody of my daughter now.

ISRAEL

(shakes his head) Man, I'm sorry to hear that.

STAR

I 'gotta' win this appeal. My family needs me. I'm all they got. I wasn't even thinking about this before I got myself caught up messing with Marx God. I was being selfish. I never realized who would suffer knowing everybody was depending on me.

STAR PUTS HIS HEAD BACK DOWN.

ISRAEL

Man, Star, you got to leave them Marx God cats alone an focus on your case. Them dudes are going to have you in Seg. ... somewhere under investigation or with a boat-load of more time. I don't know how much time the judge is going to give you, but whatever it is doesn't matter. Don't focus on that. When you leave this county jail and get to Stateville, focus on changing your life.

LITTLE SOLDIER RUNS IN THE CELL.

LITTLE SOLDIER

Star! The Moons about to bust. The Union needs your collaboration! (shoots Israel a murderous stare)

STAR IS RELUCTANT.

ISRAEL STARES AT STAR. HE WONDERS WHAT CHOICE STAR WILL MAKE.

STAR RUNS OUT THE CELL WITH LITTLE SOLDIER, TO COLLABORATE.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. / EXT. BUS - DAY

STAR STARES OUT OF THE WINDOW IN DEEP THOUGHT. HE'S CHAINED TO TUNCHEE.
STAR WEARS CHAINS AND SHACKLES. A FEW GUYS BESIDE HIM ARE LOUD AND
OBNOXIOUS.

TUNCHEE

(blurts) man, guys talked all that stuff
about the county! Them fools was soft as puppies!

MAGIC

I think I went to court with you. I remember you sent
the bullpen up.

TUNCHEE

It probably was me! I'm Tunchee! Everybody know
me! What you is, Dog?

MAGIC

I'm a Marx God. They call me Magic.

TUNCHEE

(mugs) Yeaah.

MAGIC

(blurts) I can't wait to get to the Ville. I got
like nine-hundred on the books, I'm straight.
When I go to the store, I'm a max out.

TUNCHEE

(mugs) I hope you do 'cause I'm a need something
out you.

MAGIC

(nods his head) I got you.

TUNCHEE TURNS TO STAR.

TUNCHEE

(mugs) What's good, Dog? You ain't said nothing the whole ride. It's all good, Dog, she gone be there when you get home. (laughs)

MAGIC

(giggles) What they call you, God?

STAR LOOKS TO MAGIC WITH AN ICY STARE.

STAR

They call me Star.

STAR LOOKS AWAY.

MAGIC'S EYES GET BIG.

MAGIC

'On the God's thoughts'! (hyped up) You shining, Star? You my universe! Salute Marx God!

EVERYBODY ON BOARD QUIETS DOWN. THEY TUNE IN.

TUNCHEE LAY BACK IN HIS SEAT WITH A MUG.

MAGIC

I heard they found you guilty for that body.

How much time they give you?

STAR LOOKS TO MAGIC. HE LETS OUT A MYSTERIOUS CHUCKLE.

STAR

Life.

STAR LOOKS AT MAGIC FOR A MOMENT. MAGIC APPEARS TO LOOK UNEASY ABOUT STARS NEWS.

STAR LOOKS AWAY.

FADE OUT.

SCENE B

FADE IN:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

SHALOM SITS ON HIS BUNK READING THE BIBLE.

AN OFFICER BRINGS STAR TO THE CELL.

STAR MOVES IN WITH HIS PROPERTY.

SHALOM LOOKS UP TO STAR. HE GETS UP TO GREET HIS NEW CELLY.

STAR LOOKS AROUND THE CELL. HE SEES ALL THE ELECTRONICS SHALOM HAS.

SHALOM

(hand out) Shalom, my brother.

STAR

(pays no attention) Peace.

STAR MOVES HIS STUFF AROUND.

SHALOM

I'm not saying, 'shalom!' My name is Shalom.

STAR LOOKS UP TO SHALOM.

SHALOM HAS HIS HAND OUT FOR A SHAKE.

STAR

(shakes Shalom's hand) I'm Star.

THE TWO BREAK THEIR HAND SHAKE.

SHALOM

'Now,' I'm going to say ... shalom.

STAR

Likewise.

SHALOM

(smirks) Likewise? Are you a Hebrew-Israelite?

STAR

Naw, man. I'm just another number with a four
letter word sentence.

SHALOM

(rubs his chin) Life, huh? Let me ask you

something ... What do you believe in?

FOR A SECOND, STAR IS STUCK .

STAR

I don't know.

SHALOM

Well, when you find some kind of balance, then you will find out who you are. When you do that, then we can talk because I can't talk to somebody who doesn't even know themselves.

SHALOM LEAVES STAR STUCK. HE SITS BACK ON HIS BUNK. HE GETS BACK INTO HIS BIBLE.

SOMEBODY WALKS UP ON THE CELL WITH A BAG OF GOODIES.

PRINCE

(blurts) What up, Marx God?

STAR URNS AROUND.

STAR

(hesitant) What's up, man!

PRINCE

Damn, Homie. I'm just trying to introduce myself.

Come closer, I don't want everybody in my

business. (looks over Stars shoulder)

SHALOM LOOKS UP, THEN BACK AT HIS BIBLE.

STAR STEPS UP.

PRINCE

The wise been waiting on you to come. Word in the cellhouse is that you shine around the the universe ... What they call you?

STAR

(dry voice) They call me Star.

PRINCE

All-powerful. I'm Prince. I brought you a little care-package until you get right. (holds up the bag). I got you some soap, some noodles, chips and -- (gets cut off)

STAR

That's All-powerful conscience. But I'm good. I brought some stuff with me.

PRINCE

(raised brow) You sure?

STAR

Yeah, man. I'm alright.

PRINCE

Well, I'm the fire burning around this cellhouse. If I need reason, I'm a come holla at you for illumination.

PRINCE URNS TO LEAVE.

STAR

Aye, Prince.

PRINCE URNS BACK AROUND.

STAR

I'm on a favorable path. I'm falling out the sky.

PRINCE

(twisted look) What!

STAR

I'm on a journey. I'm out.

PRINCE STARES AT STAR FOR A MOMENT.

PRINCE

(nods) I'm a let the Gods know.

PRINCE WALKS AWAY WITH AN UNHAPPY LOOK.

STAR GOES BACK TO UNPACKING.

SHALOM LOOKS UP WITH A SMILE.

SHALOM

Aye, youngster.

STAR LOOKS UP.

SHALOM

That's the best thing you could have ever done.

STAR

I'm trying to get back to my family, Shalom.

I owe it to them to change my life.

SHALOM

That's right. You just remember one thing, Star ...

Hopefully one day you will understand yourself. If

not, you wont be able to be helped.

AN OFFICER WALKS UP WITH DINNER TRAYS.

SHALOM GETS UP TO GRAB THE TRAYS.

SHALOM

Aye, Neil!

SHALOM GRABS THE TRAYS. HE GIVES ONE TO STAR.

OFFICER

What's up, Shalom?

SHALOM

Why you passing out trays? What ... we on lockdown?

OFFICER

Yeah, level-one lockdown. Staff assault.

THE OFFICER HURRIES AWAY.
SHALOM EATS HIS TRAY.

SHALOM

Damn! You know what, man, These guys act like they want to be here!

STAR

How long you think this lock-down will last?

SHALOM

Last time we went on lock-down for a staff assault, we was down for 'six months'!

STAR LOOKS SHOCKED.

STAR

(angry) Six months? I ain't even been to commissary yet. I ain't got no food or hygiene products!

STAR OPENS HIS TRAY AND TAKES A LOOK.

STAR

(shocked) What's this?

SHALOM

Soy meat and beans.

STAR

Man, what am I supposed to do with this. I wouldn't even feed this to my dog!

SHALOM LETS OUT A SIGH.

SHALOM

(shakes his head) Welcome to Stateville.

FADE OUT.

SCENE C

FADE IN:
INT. CELL - DAY

SHALOM AND STAR GET THEMSELVES TOGETHER.

STAR

Man, that two months killed me. I don't ever
wanna stay on lock-down that long again.

SHALOM

(laughs) You lucky it was only two months.
It's usually six or better. (shakes his head)
You ain't felt that wrath yet.

STAR

An I ain't trying to. I got things to do. I
got to get in the law library and educate
myself on the law. I appreciate all the help
on the legal work and how you been hitting me
too. Shalom, I owe you, man.

SHALOM

(waves Star off) Come on, youngster. You don't owe me
nothing. When I give, I don't look for nothing in
return. I'm a get my blessing. The only thing I want to
see you do is stay focused and know that these
organizations are no longer an arm for justice. It's
only deculturization and politics.

SOMEBODY WALKS UP TO THE CELL WEARING A TWISTED LOOK.

JACK

(blurts) Aye, God!

SHALOM AND STAR STOP WHAT THEY'RE DOING. THEY LOOK AT JACK.

JACK

(points to Star) Step up, Sir. (blurts) Let me holla at you!

STAR

I'm listening.

JACK

(angry) Aye, man ... Dig this here! I'm Jack! I'm the universe of the 7 Heavens ... The Gods need to know what you gone do because you around here misleading the constellation!

STAR

(stunned) Who did I mislead?

JACK

(angry) On the bus ride down here, you told the rising star, Magic, you was aligned! Then an element came an' hollered at you before we went on lock-down, an' you told him you fell out the sky! You a fallen star?

STAR

I'm on a journey.

JACK

(angry) Well, see ... That's gonna be a problem! You're our universe in the 9th Heaven. You're already in the light! And you telling Prince to come talk to you for illumination. You're playing a dirty game, God!

STAR

Seems like your fire burning through this cellhouse is misleading you 'cause I didn't tell him nothing like that! This is a perfect example as to why I'm entering a new dimension! Your fire needs to be put out!

JACK

(angry) So, you're a falling star?

STAR

I'm on a favorable path.

JACK

(angry) That's not what I asked you, God! Are you a falling star or are you shining?

STAR

(agitated) Look here, 'Jack.'

STAR APPROACHES JACK.

STAR

(agitated) If ever one day we see each other rise, that will be beautiful. If not, then a favorable path was never laid.

JACK NODS HIS HEAD NOT TOO HAPPY.
HE WALKS AWAY.

FADE OUT.

SCENE D

FADE IN:

INT. LAW LIBRARY -DAY

A LINE FILES IN THE LIBRARY.

MS. SMITH COLLECTS IDS.

MS. SMITH

(speaks to Star) Don't forget your seat number!

I don't want to have to write you up for being
stupid!

STAR WALKS TO HIS SEAT. HE TAKES A SEAT LOOKING AROUND.

JUMPMAN TAKES A SEAT NEXT TO STAR.

A FEW INMATE LAW CLERKS WALK ON THE FLOOR TO ASSIST.

STAR

(signals for a clerk) Excuse me.

LAW CLERK APPROACHES.

PROMISE

What's up, God?

STAR PAUSES FOR A SECOND. HE LOOKS AT PROMISE LIKE HE'S LOST.

PROMISE

(agitated) What's up, man? What you need?

STAR

I'm trying to find something on identification.

My case is kind of crazy. I had a ...

PROMISE WALKS OFF ON STAR.

STAR WEARS A DUMBFOUNDED EXPRESSION.

JUMPMAN SHAKES HIS HEAD. HE TURNS TO TALK TO STAR.

JUMPMAN

Man, these cats in this law library don't
want to help nobody, man.

STAR LOOKS AT JUMPMAN.

STAR

So what are they in here for? How am I supposed to work on my case if I don't know where to look?

JUMPMAN

You just gotta keep reading every time you come over here and keep going over your transcripts.

STAR

I don't have my transcripts. They haven't even appointed me a lawyer yet.

PROMISE WALKS BACK UP. HE DROPS A BOOK ON STAR'S DESK.

PROMISE

Look in the 'Descriptive Words' and you gone find what you're looking for.

PROMISE MOVES TO LEAVE.

STAR

Hold up!

PROMISE URNS BACK AROUND.

STAR OPENS THE BOOK. HE SCRATCHES HIS HEAD.

PROMISE

What's up, man. I'm busy!

STAR

What do I look for. Show me how to use this.

PROMISE PICKES UP THE BOOK.

PROMISE

(attitude) Look, man, look under 'Identification' and see what pertains to you.

PROMISE DROPS THE BOOK BACK DOWN.

STAR LOOKS AT THE BOOK.

PROMISE

Aye, man. What you is? What you on the 'new'
or something? You look familiar.

STAR

They call me Star.

PROMISE

(relaxes) Awe, you a Marx God? I didn't know that.
They call me Promise.

STAR

That's powerful, but I'm impartial.

PROMISE TWISTS UP HIS FACE.

PROMISE

(angry) I don't know what's up with you guys
thinking you can come down here impartial. That
ain't how this works. You should find what you
looking for in that book, though.

PROMISE HURRIES AWAY.

JUMPMAN

Yeah, Star, man, it's crazy you can't even get
no help in this library, man.

STAR

(angry) I don't understand. They're inmates just like
us. If our own oppress us, then how will we even
overthrow the injustice that keeps us bonded in chains?

JUMPMAN

Just keep doing what you're doing, man. Don't be
like most of these cats that just give up.

STAR

I see why people give up. They have no win.
We're being oppressed by our own. They're doing
the job for the courts.

JUMPMAN

(nods his head) Yeah, I know. Aye, (holds out
a fist) I'm Jumpman.

STAR

(gives dap) It's all love. I'm Star.

A COUNSELOR WALKS IN. SHE STOPS TO TALK TO MS. SMITH.

STAR

Who is that lady right there, Jumpman?

JUMPMAN

That's our counselor, Ms. Nelson. All she do
is spin people.

STAR GETS UP. HE WALKS UP TO THE COUNSELOR.

MS. SMITH

(blurts) What is this? Freedom day or something?

Who told you to get out of your seat?

MS. SMITH AND THE COUNSELOR STARE AT STAR.

STAR

I'm sorry, mam, all this is kind of new to me.

MS. SMITH

You're going to be new to Seg. if you don't sit
back down!

STAR

Do you mind if I have a word with the counselor
real quick?

MS. SMITH

(looks to Ms. Nelson) Nelson, do you want
to speak to him?

MS. NELSON

(bothered) What do you want?

STAR

I'm not trying to inconvenience ...

MS. NELSON

(bothered) You are!

STAR

(pause) Do you respect someone who is trying
to change their life?

MS. NELSON

Of course.

STAR

Well, is there any way I can get a job or get
into a program around here?

MS. NELSON

How long did you say you've been here?

STAR

Two months.

MS. SMITH AND MS. NELSON LAUGH IN STAR'S FACE.

MS. NELSON

(serious) You'll have to be here 'five years'
before you're even considered.

STAR

But what if I'm trying to further my education.

MS. NELSON

(blurts) You should have thought about that before you came to prison. Now go sit down.

STAR

(losing patience) Well, can you at least take my name?

MS. NELSON

(agitated) What's your name? Maybe Ms. Smith will put you in the law library.

MS. SMITH

(contrary) I don't know him. (shakes her head)
I already got my guys!

STAR

Come on, Ms. Smith. Just give me a chance.

FADE OUT:

ACT THREE

SCENE A

FADE IN:
INT. CELL - NIGHT

STAR AND SHALOM CHAT.

STAR

My attorney sold me out, man. I had an alibi witness that was going to testify on my behalf, but my lawyer dismissed him and didn't tell me he sent my witness home.

AN OFFICER WALKS UP WITH MAIL IN HIS HAND.

OFFICER

Riley!

STAR

What's up?

OFFICER

Mail!

STAR GETS UP AND GRABS HIS MAIL.
THE OFFICER WALKS AWAY.
STAR LOOKS AT THE ENVELOPE.

STAR

This the baby moms right here.

SHALOM

(blurts) See. You dissing her and she still love your dirty pampers. (laughs).

STAR OPENS THE LETTER.

STAR

Man, I don't get down with her like that. She lies way too much for me.

SHALOM

Yeah ... Whatever, youngster. You can't
fool me. I know you still love her.

STAR READS THE LETTER. HE HUNCHES OVER IN DISARRAY.
THE LETTER FELL OUT OF HIS HAND.

SHALOM

(worried) What happened, youngster?

STAR LOOKS UP AT SHALOM.

STAR

(off balance) Her grandmother died!

FADE OUT.

SCENE B

FADE IN:
EXT. YARD - DAY

3 INMATES HUDDLE UP ON THE YARD.
STAR IS OFF TO THE SIDE CURLING SOME DUMB-BELLS.

PROMISE

(talks to the Gods) Come on, Rambo, man. We
don't allow Marx Gods to come down here impartial.

RAMBO

We can't force God to shine. That's his choice.
If he wants to fall out the sky, let him fall. If
we can't except that God trying to walk a favorable
path, then we never cared from the beginning, nor
do we care about any other God who shares the same
essence. Marx God is supposed to be away into the
light! Not a form of oppression!

FADE OUT.

SCENE C

FADE IN:

INT. LAW LIBRARY - DAY

THE LAW CLERKS GET READY FOR A LINE.

STAR WALKS IN LOOKING AROUND. IT'S HIS FIRST DAY AT WORK.

HE FINDS A TABLE TO GET HIMSELF PREPARED TO START.

PROMISE IS OFF TO THE SIDE WITH POUND.

MS. SMITH IS OFF TO THE SIDE SETTING UP.

PROMISE

(hating) Check this fool out, Pound. This cat ain't been down here 90 days an' already got a job. Who he working with. ... And he a Marx God, but don't want to be on the roster.

POUND

Don't worry about it. If we find out he work for them people, we gone kill him.

STAR WALKS UP TO PROMISE AND POUND.

STAR

What's up, fellas? (moves to give Promise a pound) I'm Star.

PROMISE GIVES STAR A HALF A POUND.

PROMISE

(nonchalant) I know who you is.

PROMISE WALKS OFF WITH AN ATTITUDE.

STAR SHAKES HIS HEAD. HE LOOKS TO POUND.

STAR

What they call you, man?

POUND

(nonchalant) Pound.

STAR

I'm Star.

POUND GIVES STAR A HALF OF POUND.

STAR

So what I gotta do? (looking around) Who's gonna show me how to pull the books.

POUND

(walks away) You'll be a'ight.

POUND WALKS AWAY.

STAR LOOKS CONFUSED.

MS. SMITH

Aye, guys! Lines coming in!

A LINE FILES IN.

MS. SMITH COLLECTS IDs AND GIVES OUT SEAT NUMBERS.

EVERYONE TAKES A SEAT.

PEOPLE RAISE THEIR HAND.

STAR APPROACHES MAGIC WHO HAS HIS HAND UP.

MAGIC

(slaps hands with Star) Respect, man.

STAR

What's going on with you, man. You been alright?

MAGIC

Yeah, somewhat. Me and my celly been getting into it, but I'm good.

STAR

What y'all be getting into it for?

MAGIC

My celly really ain't got nothing, and I be trying to help him out, but it's only so much I can do. I can't keep carrying the both of us.

STAR

Who's your celly.

MAGIC LOOKS TOWARDS TUNCHEE.

MAGIC

That Blue Dog dude, Tunchee, we came down
here with.

STAR LOOKS TOWARDS TUNCHEE.

MAGIC

I heard you fell out the sky. You ain't Marx
God no more?

STAR

I'm on a favorable path, brother.

MAGIC

I don't blame you. I respect you for that. I
should have done the same thing when I came to
Stateville. Marx God ain't right.

STAR

It ain't too late. You draw your own fate.

MAGIC

Yeah, I hear you man. (reaches in his pocket)

I got a letter from my momma. She said she knows you.

MAGIC PULLS OUT THE LETTER.

STAR

Who's your mom?

MAGIC HANDS STAR THE LETTER.

STAR TAKES THE LETTER.. HE READS THE LETTER.

STAR

Get outta here! Sharon's your mother? That's family! (still reads letter) She says look out for you and she'll write me soon.

PROMISE WALKS UP. HE TAPS STAR ON HIS SHOULDER.

PROMISE

(mad) Aye, man! You in here doing your own thing?

STAR

Naw, man. I'm helping somebody.

PROMISE WALKS AWAY WITH AN ATTITUDE.

STAR GIVES MAGIC BACK THE LETTER.

STAR

Before you leave, we gone dialouge. A'ight?

Let me get on this job before these inmates get me fired.

MAGIC

(smiles) It's cool. I see you move fast. You already got a job, huh?

STAR

(walks away) I gotta get my life back.

MAGIC

I feel you.

STAR IS HELPING SOMEBODY.

TUNCHEE MOVES HIS SEAT OVER TO TALK TO HIS GUYS.

TUNCHEE

(blurts) Aye, Knockout! 'On Blue Dog!' I'm about to get down on my celly! He over there talking behind my back!

KNOCKOUT

(hyped up) What you wanna do? Let's send it up!

BIG DOG

Y'all got some pieces on y'all?

TUNCHEE

(blurts) Stop playing with me, Big Dog. I keep something that will put a fool 'down'!

TUNCHEE SHOWS OFF A KNIFE.

KNOCKOUT

What's up then?

KNOCKOUT SHOWS OFF A KNIFE.

TUNCHEE MOVES SWIFTLY OUT OF HIS SEAT.

KNOCKOUT AND BIG DOG FOLLOW HIM.

MS. SMITH SEES THEM.

MS. SMITH

(Blurts) Aye! Sit back down!

EVERYONE IN THE LIBRARY LOOKS UP.

TUNCHEE JUMPS ON MAGIC. HE BEGINS STABBING MAGIC TO THE FLOOR.

MAGIC SCREAMS.

KNOCKOUT AND BIG DOG JUMP IN.

MS. SMITH

(screams) Stop fighting! Stop!

MS. SMITH HITS THE PANIC BUTTON.

SOUND: BUZZER SOUNDS OFF.

PROMISE RUNS UP TO HELP MAGIC.

KNOCKOUT AND BLUE DOG STAB PROMISE TO THE GROUND.

STAR STANDS ASIDE. HE WATCHES TUNCHEE STAB MAGIC TO DEATH.

MAGIC

(screams) Help! Star! Help me!

AN ENTOURAGE OF OFFICERS RUN IN SPRAYING MACE.

OFFICERS

Everyone on the floor! Now!

TUNCHEE, KNOCKOUT AND BIG DOG BACK UP.
EVERYONE FALLS TO THE FLOOR.
MAGIC ISN'T MOVING.
PROMISE SCREAMS OUT IN PAIN.

FADE OUT.

SCENE D

FADE IN:
INT. CELL - NIGHT

STAR PACES THE CELL.
SHALOM WATCHES STAR LOSE HIS MIND.

SHALOM

Stop beating yourself up, youngster. It's either you've changed your life, or you're still a part of the beast. You're in or you're out!

STAR

(sad) I just stood by and watched them kill that boy! His mother is like a sister to me! How am I gonna explain that I watched some cats kill her son and could have helped, but did nothing?

SHALOM

If someone spits on your lawn, what do you do? Spit on him and shoot him in the face, or try to have a productive conversation to come up with a rational solution?

STAR SHAKES HIS HEAD.

SHALOM

Sorry for the loss, youngster. But if you would have reacted, where would that have left you?

If you would have got involved and someone on the otherside would have lost their life. If not the principle, they would have looked at it as 'in for a penny, in for a pound.' Remember your daughter's out there in the custody of DCFS because of the death of

her grandmother. She needs you, youngster.

What's more important to you, your daughter and

your need to change, or another murder charge?

Those guys got what they had coming. They probably

had a chance to make it out. Now they're never going home.

A GALLERY WORKER APPROACHES THE CELL WITH A PHONE.

GALLERY WORKER

On this phone! Y'all better hurry up 'cause we

supposed to be on lockdown for that move that happened

earlier.

STAR TAKES THE PHONE.

THE GALLERY WORKER WALKS AWAY.

STAR DIALS SOME NUMBERS. HE PRESSES THE PHONE TO HIS EAR.

STAR'S MOTHER ACCEPTS THE CALL.

STAR

Hey, Mom. (pause)

I'm still waiting for them to appoint me a lawyer.

I don't trust these appellate defenders, though.

They work for the State. (pause)

You don't think you can try to come up with some money and hire me an attorney. I got some good issues and I don't want this appellate defender to mess up my appeal. (pause)

Yeah, I understand. (pause)

Have you been to see Harmony ...

down at that Child Services place. (pause)

Just keep trying, Mom, and I'm on my end working on my appeal. (pause)

I love you too.

STAR HANGS UP THE PHONE.
HE TRIES TO HAND IT TO SHALOM.

SHALOM

Come on, youngster! You know my mother been dead for over 20 years. She was the only family I had. My brothers and sisters left me for dead, and I never knew my father.

STAR PUTS THE PHONE DOWN.

SHALOM

So what was your mom talking about? She doing okay?

STAR

Yeah, she's alright. I'm trying to get her to get me a lawyer, but her job laid her off ... talking about the budget. The State doesn't have any money. She can't even send me nothing for my commissary ... I'm messed up.

SHALOM

You'll be alright, young buck ... Just pray.

STAR

You know what? My friend Israel told me the same thing in the County.

FADE OUT.

ACT FOUR

SCENE A

FADE IN:
INT. CELL - NIGHT

SHALOM IS FAST ASLEEP IN HIS BUNK.
STAR LAY IN HIS BUNK WIDE AWAKE. HE'S IN DEEP THOUGHT.
STAR GETS UP. HE SITS UP ON HIS BUNK STILL IN THOUGHT.
HE KNEELS DOWN AND BOWS HIS HEAD ON HIS BUNK.
STAR BEGINS TO PRAY.

FADE OUT.

SCENE B

FADE IN:
INT. CELL -NIGHT

AN OFFICER WALKS BY DOING HIS COUNT.
AN INMATE RUNS UP TO THE BARS.
THE INMATE'S CELLMATE LOOKS CREEPY.

INMATE

(panicking) 'C.O.!!'

THE OFFICER STOPS.

OFFICER

(agitated) What do you want? I'm trying to count!

INMATE

(scared) Please, get me out this cell! My cellie 's
a predator. He's trying to do something to me!

OFFICER

(blurts) Well, you better fight or give in!

THE OFFICER WALKS OFF.

FADE OUT.

SCENE C

"12 MONTHS LATER"

FADE IN:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

STAR AND SHALOM WORK OUT IN THE CELL.
AN OFFICER WALKS UP WITH A PACKAGE IN HIS HAND.
STAR AND SHALOM STOP THEIR WORKOUT.

OFFICER

Riley! Mail!

STAR TAKES HIS PACKAGE.
THE OFFICER WALKS OFF.
STAR READS THE LETTERHEAD:

STAR

Office of the State Appellate Defender
First Judicial District.

SHALOM

(blurts) Go ahead an' open it, youngster.

It's time to get the party started.

STAR OPENS THE PACKAGE. HE TAKES OUT WHAT'S INSIDE.
STAR READS THE LETTER ATTACHED OUT LOUD.

STAR

Enclosed, find a copy of the brief that has
been filed on your behalf ... (angry)
'Come on, man'! How this dude gone file something
for me without giving me a call to see if I'm cool
with this?

SHALOM

That's how they play, man. These people don't care.
They dirty.

STAR

Man, I've been writing this dude and everything ...

He don't respond to any of my letters!

SHALOM

Well, he's not gonna create a paper trail on himself

when he knows he's at fault.

STAR

(shakes his head) I don't believe this, man!

SHALOM

Look, young buck, you got all your transcripts

from your trial. You know what you need to do.

It's a fight.

FADE OUT.

SCENE D

"8 MONTHS LATER"

FADE IN:

INT. LAW LIBRARY - DAY

STAR SITS AT A TABLE STARING OFF INTO SPACE.

REAL WALKS UP TO STAR.

REAL

What's on your mind, Star? You look like you in
the clouds.

STAR AND REAL SLAP HANDS.

STAR

What's up, Real. It ain't nothing. Just thinking
about this slime-ball Appellate Defender I got.

REAL

What's up with him?

STAR

Man, this dude never responds to any of my letters
and I never talk to this dude. He filed a brief on
my behalf and the State responded 3 months ago. Now
I'm waiting on a decision. (shakes his head) I don't
know, man. It ain't looking too good.

REAL

What kind of issues is he raising.

STAR

That's the problem. He's not raising issues. He's
only raising one issue ... 'Reasonable doubt.' You
an' I both know that's too much of a high standard to
meet. Everything he's arguing was for the jury to

decide and is favorable to the State. He's
basically throwing the case.

REAL

Well, you already know, first appeals always get
denied. Your best bet is a post-conviction or a Habeas
Corpus ... You just gotta keep fighting.

REAL GIVES STAR A POUND.

REAL WALKS OFF.

STAR LOSES HIMSELF BACK INTO HIS THOUGHTS.

MS. SMITH WALKS IN.

MS. SMITH

Hey, Riley! Attorney call!

STAR LOOKS AT MS. SMITH SHOCKED.

MS. SMITH

Come on, get up! I don't have all day!

STAR GETS UP.

FADE OUT.

ACT FIVE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. PHONE ROOM - DAY

AN OFFICER WALKS STAR INTO THE PHONE ROOM.

STAR SITS BY THE PHONE.

THE OFFICER PICKS UP THE PHONE. HE PRESSES IT TO HIS EAR.

OFFICER

Attorney call for Charles Riley. (pause)

THE OFFICER HANDS STAR THE PHONE.

STAR TAKES THE PHONE.

THE OFFICER WALKS OUT.

STAR PRESSES THE PHONE TO HIS EAR.

STAR

(agitated) Hello ...

STAR LISTENS TO HIS ATTORNEY.

AFTER A MOMENT, STAR'S FACE LIGHTS UP LIKE HE WON THE LOTTERY.

STAR

Thank you, Mr. McCoy! Thank you!

FADE OUT.

STAR

I'm not leaving my family again, Shalom. They locked me up when I was 25. Now I'm 35 years old. I'm going out there to talk to our youth. No more gangs, no more violence. Our youth is our future and they need to know the people of the previous generation care about their upbringing. They need to know gangs that govern our streets is none other than the beast and if they grow to participate in gang and gun violence, then where would our future doctors, lawyers, politicians, mathematicians, scientist, astronauts, or even astrologers come from! What ever happened to D.A.R.E. to keep our kids off drugs?

SHALOM NODS HIS HEAD WITH A SMILE.

SHALOM

(smiles) Yeah, you my youngest boy.

STAR STARTS TO PLAY WRESTLE WITH SHALOM.

STAR

Man, shut up!

STAR AND SHALOM STOP HORSE PLAYING.

STAR

(happy) Man, Shalom. When I get out, one of my goals is to help you see light again.

SHALOM

(waves off Star) Don't worry about me, youngster. I got my blessing when they took me off deathrow in '96 and gave me Life. I just want to live, youngster. Live to help more people like you. (pause) You just

make sure you do what you do. Don't look back
for nobody, you hear?

STAR

I hear you, Shalom.

SHALOM STANDS UP. HE HOLDS A HAND OUT FOR STAR TO SHAKE.

SHALOM

(sad) Shalom.

STAR AND SHALOM CLASP HANDS.

SHALOM HOLDS ON TO STAR'S HAND. HE LOOKS STAR IN THE EYE.

SHALOM

Not my name, 'Shālom.' I'm saying ... Shalom.

SHALOM AND STAR EMBRACE IN A HUG.

FADE OUT.

ACT SIX

SCENE A

"9 MONTHS LATER"

FADE IN:

EXT. STATEVILLE - DAY

STAR WALKS OUT OF STATEVILLE. HE CARRIES SOME PROPERTY.

STAR IS FILLED WITH ALOT OF EMOTION.

HE STOPS AND DROPS TO HIS KNEES.

STAR LOOKS TO THE SKY. HE LIFTS HIS HANDS TO THE AIR.

STAR

(cries) Thank You, Lord! Thank You, God! Please,
forgive me! I don't want to throw my life away!

2 GUYS WALK UP ON STAR.

TROUBLE

(laughs) Come on, God! I know you ain't getting
religious on me!

STAR SEES TROUBLE AND WICKED.

WICKED

What's wrong with you, God? You look real crazy
out here on your knees! The whole neighborhood
is waiting for you to come home and you out here
on your knees crying like a 'Sucka'!

STAR

Wicked ... Trouble? What y'all doing here?

WICKED AND TROUBLE LOOK AT EACH OTHER. THEY: LOOK BACK AT STAR.

TROUBLE

Word on the street is you was getting out today.
We came to pick you up, God. (blurts) Everybody's
waiting on you. We having a block-party.

STAR

You all ... (signals) All of you in this room ...
are the next generation ... 'Our future'! Without
you ... There is no world! No mind! No soul in our
communities! (pause) For those of you who
don't take heed to my words ... Let me give you a walk
through prison! A Day ... At Stateville ...

FADE OUT.
THE END.