

alfonzo kahlil
alfonzokahlil@gmail.com

1994: clinton files

PRISONER 1: black, any gender, loses faith
PRISONER 2: black, any gender, gains faith.

A New York Prison Cell. 1994. PRISONER 1 & PRISONER 2 are in their cell. PRISONER 2 is praying on their prayer mat. PRISONER 1 is in their bed reading. Eventually they stop to stare at the ceiling.

PRISONER 1

You ever looked into the future?

PRISONER 2

The future belongs to God.

PRISONER 1

Or the Warden.

PRISONER 2

The Warden is not God. Not my God at least.

PRISONER 1

Godlike.

PRISONER 2

A God provides. The Warden restricts.

PRISONER 1

Shit, I wish God would provide some Charmin. This toilet paper is tearing my ass up!

PRISONER 2

Go ask your God then.

PRISONER 1

Sure thing.

Prisoner 1 gets up and goes to the bars

Hey! HEY!!!! I NEED TO WIPE MY ASS. Y'ALL GOT SOMETHING OTHER THAN SANDPAPER IN THIS BITCH?

(BEAT)

O.S PRISONER 3

SHUT THE FUCK UP.

PRISONER 1

God said nah.

PRISONER 2

So it seems.

PRISONER 1

Yeah. You wanna play monopoly?

PRISONER 2

Why? So I could go to jail twice?

PRISONER 1

Aight stop with the social commentary. It makes me sad.

PRISONER 2

It's your life.

PRISONER 1

Sure it is. How long you gonna be? Don't your knees hurt?

PRISONER 2

As long as it takes.

PRISONER 1

For what?

PRISONER 2

For a miracle.

PRISONER 1

Oh. You believe in those?

PRISONER 2

...

PRISONER 1

I said you believe in those?

PRISONER 2

You don't?

PRISONER 1

I'll believe it when I see one.

PRISONER 2

Hmm.

PRISONER 1

What?

PRISONER 2

Nothing.

PRISONER 1

I'm tired of the stoic bullshit. I know you got something to say.

PRISONER 2

I do. I'm saying it to my God.

PRISONER 1

Aight, ask them why He made you so pussy.

PRISONER 2

PRISONER 2 looks at PRISONER 1 for the first time.

We have a problem?

PRISONER 1

Answer my question. Where do you see yourself in 15 years? I don't even know where I see myself tomorrow.

PRISONER 2

You'll be here pestering me like me always.

PRISONER 1

Now you can see the future?

PRISONER 2

All I know is yesterday and the will to make it to today.

PRISONER 1

What does that mean?

PRISONER 2

Just don't think about it.

PRISONER 1

Easy for you to say! I can't sleep without thinking. I can't eat without thinking. I can't think without thinking! I can't even touch myself without thinking. Sometimes, I think I can stop, and then, I think I can't. It's like the key is stuck, and the engine is stalling. I'm stalling! In prison there's NOTHING to do but THINK. There's nobody to talk to... I read the same book THREE TIMES. And it always ends the same. Everyday, the same! Every night, the same! The days are beginning to blur! I haven't seen my mama in years. My sister! My family... I wish I could smoke at least, but that's what got me here in the first place. Fuck Bill Clinton! Fuck the Crime Bill! Fuck the warden! 15 years minimum sentencing? Just for possessing? I never hurt nobody. I wasn't even selling! I WAS TRYING TO SELF SOOTHE. GODDAMMIT.

O.S PRISONER 3

SHUT THE FUCK UP!!!!

PRISONER 2 gets up and crosses to PRISONER 1

PRISONER 2

Hey. HEY. Look at me. Look at me! Focus on me. Breathe. That's it. In. And out. Again. In. Out. Slowly. You're not alone.

PRISONER 1

Are you real?

PRISONER 2

I'm real.

PRISONER 1

Are you sure?

PRISONER 2

Yes.

PRISONER 1

Don't fuck with me.

PRISONER 2

I'm not fucking with you. I'm real right now.

PRISONER 1

I'm not like you. I need more than now.

PRISONER 2

I can't afford to think about a future that doesn't belong to me. Now is all I got.

PRISONER 1

But tomorrow? Where will you be tomorrow?

PRISONER 2

Here with you.

PRISONER 1

And then what?

PRISONER 2

And then we'll see.

PRISONER 1

Get offa me.

PRISONER 2

What the fuck do you want?

PRISONER 1

I want you to be there.

PRISONER 2

I am.

PRISONER 1

I want you to be *here*.

PRISONER 2

I can't be anywhere else but *here*.

PRISONER 1

No you're not! You're somewhere else!

PRISONER 2

What are you talkin' about?!

PRISONER 1

Where do you go when you close your eyes? When you pray?

PRISONER 2

I'm here. I'm always here.

PRISONER 1

I don't want to be here.

PRISONER 2

Me neither.

PRISONER 1

It gets lonely without you.

The Prison Alarm sounds

PRISONER 2

Shit.

PRISONER 1

It gets lonely *with* you.

PRISONER 2

They're about to search us. We gotta get against the wall.

PRISONER 1

This isn't my first rodeo.

PRISONER 2

Then act like it.

O.S PRISONER 3

I TOLD YOU I AIN'T GOT SHIT!

PRISONER 1
They're close.

PRISONER 2 begins rolling up their prayer mat.

PRISONER 2
No shit.

PRISONER 1
Huh.

PRISONER 2
What are you doing? Get ready!

PRISONER 1 pulls out a makeshift shank

PRISONER 1
I've been ready. For a long time now.

PRISONER 2
Why the fuck do you have that???

PRISONER 1
Unlike you, I don't see a future for myself.

PRISONER 2
You're going to kill yourself?

PRISONER 1
I'm going to *free* myself. You think God intended this? There is no God. And if there is an afterlife, it'll be a better Hell than the one we're in now.

PRISONER 2
STOP!

PRISONER 1 puts the shank to their neck.

PRISONER 1
Aht. Stay right there. This could get messy.

PRISONER 2
I'll call for the guard!

PRISONER 1
Good. I wanted them to take me out.

PRISONER 2

Don't do this!

PRISONER 1

This cell isn't my home! It belongs to the State! Just like me, just like you! 15 years of this shit? Fuck that!

PRISONER 2

NO. In 15 years, we're walking out together! Don't you get it? That's where I see myself! With you!

PRISONER 1

Nice try.

PRISONER 2

We're in this together! I can't do this without you!

O.S PRISONER 3

PIECE OF PIG SHIT! I'LL KILL YOU.

PRISONER 2

Down to my soul I believe in the divine! I believe in MIRACLES! I believe every pilgrim can be a prophet! I believe God is LIBERATION! Everytime I close my eyes, I see us FREE! I still pray after the flood! I still pray after the livestock looks at me with flies in their mouths! With vacant looks in their eyes! I pray for strength to make it day to day! I believe we can make it to 2024! I BELIEVE THERE IS A FUTURE! Please! Stay with me! Don't leave me here alone! I NEED YOU!

PRISONER 1

You'll play monopoly with me?

PRISONER 2

I'll play monopoly with you everyday for 15 years! 16 years! 20 years! 25! Til God, the true God, calls us home!

fin