

Jailbird

Written by

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Characters:

Paul. African American man, early to mid 30s.

Shalomi Smith. African American Jewish man, Early 20s-30's.

Setting:

Jail holding cell.

Time:

Present-day.

Jail cell early evening. In the cell, there is a toilet. A phone. A bench. And nothing else. Paul stands in the holding cell. He is practicing his defense for the judge.

Paul

Your honor, I was just in the wrong spot at the wrong time, and I assure you... I assure you that I had nothing to do with the crime that had taken place.

Your honor. I feel. I mean I know that the people who saw me are mistaken and it's not me that they saw. I was not in that exact place and time the event occurred, and with the help of my lawyer, which will be me, I can prove it. Your honor, I stand here before you an innocent man. And I know what you're thinking... it might be a mistake in defending myself since I am 0 for 3 in that department, but I should've won those cases, if I had a little more time. Your honor this time, I will prove without a shadow of a doubt that I am innocent. I will prove it was not me who threw a punch at that cop... Your honor, have you noticed the racial profile of all the witnesses? There were three black, two asian, and one white, right?. It's a mix demographic wouldn't you say? But did you notice the three blacks were light-skinned? They could easily pass the brown paper bag test? They were Dominicans, your honor... What I'm trying to say is the Dominicans, the two Asians and definitely, the white witnesses would like nothing more than to see someone who looks like me behind bars and...

(The unlocking of the jail cell can be heard....and Enters Shalomi Smith, A small Black-Jewish man. Dressed in casual business wear. He whimpers like a child.)

Paul

And um...

(Shalomi whimpers intensify when the jail cell doors are locked behind him.)

Your honor um...(To Shalomi)Excuse me, can you please keep it down I'm trying to work on something here...and it's not going well. So I would appreciate some quiet.

(Shalomi goes to the phone. Dial a number. Paul goes back to his diatribe.)

Paul

Like I was saying your honor...they would like nothing more than to see me behind those steel curtains. Since the beginning of America, the systems created have been unfair to men who look like me...

(Shalomi hangs up the phone and starts to cry...)

Um... Um, the systems created have always been against someone of my complexion. The...the um...even though we helped build this country. I took that DNA test and found out my great great grandfather was a slave that worked with other slaves to build the foundation of the White House. My great-great-grandfather literally built the foundation for democracy. I think I deserve a little break here...

(Shalomi's cries intensify)

(To Shalomi)Hey man, what's wrong with you?.

(Pause)

Hey man, what is going on?

(Pause)

Hey man, I am trying to talk to you... Are you OK? Are you deaf?

(Paul gets up and walks over to where Shalomi is standing and speaks right in front of him.)

Hey man?

Shalomi

Hey.

Paul

Are you deaf?

Shalomi

No.

Paul

Well, I was trying to get your attention from over there, I saw you were crying and shit like a baby and wanted to do the right thing and see if you were OK... But you didn't answer me, so I had to come over here.

Shalomi

I'm Sorry.

Paul

Well, I felt a little insulted, I mean I'm in this shit-hole too, and I'm here by myself trying to practice my case, and then you come in, and I don't know what to make of you cause you were crying and shit.

(Shalomi begins to pray. Quietly.)

It's like, you are here by yourself and then all of a sudden they just throw motherfuckers in here that you've never met before and now your instant roommates, I usually hate roommates that I *do* choose, imagine being around ones you don't. I mean you don't look like you ever killed anybody, but you never know. This place seems to attract the crazies. So what brings you here? Lots of unpaid parking tickets?

(Pause)

Hello?

I mean I'm standing right here you can't be this rude, can you? I mean your parents didn't raise you this way, did they? This is just common decency to have conversations with each other, we are in this together.

(Shalomi stops praying)

What's your name?

Shalomi
(Timidly)

Shalomi.

Paul

Shalomi?

Shalomi

Yes.

Paul

Interesting. I ain't met no Shalomi before. Is that like "shalom" or something?

Shalomi

I guess...

Paul

Where does that name come from? Cause it sure as hell doesn't sound normal.

Shalomi

It's Jewish.

Paul

Jewish?

Shalomi

Yes. Jewish.

Paul

Why the fuck would your parents name you a Jewish name. Unless you're divorced from your parents and you renamed yourself... I've heard some people do that, mainly celebrities do that when they find out their parents have been stealing their money and shit, and then they change their names. Is that what happened to you. You one of those celebrity name changing people?

Shalomi

No. I am Jewish. My family is Jewish.

Paul

Get the fuck out of here! Are you adopted?

Shalomi

No.

Paul

Wait... What are you trying to tell me here? That your parents, your black mother and black father are both Jewish and had your black Jewish ass?

Shalomi

Yes. I guess.

Paul

What you mean you “guess”?

Shalomi

I mean I wouldn't characterize it like that.

Paul

Well, then how would you characterize it like?

Shalomi

My mother and father both converted to Judaism and then gave birth to my sister and me.

Paul

Isn't that what I said?

Shalomi

Well...

Paul

Well, ain't this some shit. I ain't met no Black Jew before. God damn! Well Shalomi, what put you into this place.

Shalomi

I was in an accident.

Paul

What kinda accident. Oh, wait, let me guess...you were sleeping with your best friend's sister and her husband found out, and then he pulled a gun on you and you said “No motherfucker is going punk me!” and you pulled out your gun and then “bam!” you shot, he shot, but your shot was better, and you were the only one left standing. So they put you in here.... huh, is it? I'm good at telling what others have been through, it's kinda like a gift you could say...

Shalomi

Well, that definitely is not why I'm here.

Paul

OK. OK. I got it. You were driving home and found out someone had stolen all your money out of your bank account and you went to the bank and said. "I want my money back!". They all ignored you, and you said it again, but louder "I WANT MY MONEY BACK YOU MOTHERFUCKERS!" and then some lady says "here" and she hands you a paper bag, and you say "I don't mean like that" but she says "go ahead and take it please just don't harm anybody!" and you take it and leave and then the po-po show up and you're running with this bag of money, you hop in your whip but the car won't start, 'cause you don't keep up the maintenance... and bam the cops are knocking at your window...

Shalomi

No, that didn't happen!

Paul

Alright, well I guess you are a hard one to read... So, what did you do?

Shalomi

I hit a woman in the crosswalk.

(Pause)

After I had a few cocktails.

Paul

Oh. Oh. I can see that. I was going to guess that next... You had a few cocktails. Why *cocktails*? What kind of word is that for an alcoholic drink? Sound like a woman made that up...

Shalomi

I don't know!

Paul

Oh, am I bothering you? I'm just trying to get to know someone in this awful place.

Shalomi

OK, So why are you here then? Huh?

Paul

What?

Shalomi

How did you end up in this place?

Paul

No. No. No. let's not change the subject. I asked you first... So you hit a woman with your car while you were drunk...

Shalomi

I was not drunk! I just had a couple of cocktails. I definitely was NOT drunk.

Paul

OK. You had a couple of "cocktails"... And bam! You hit a woman. Was she a white woman?

Shalomi

Why does it matter what color she was?

Paul

It all matters when it comes to the "law."

(Pause)

So was she white?

Shalomi

Yes, but that shouldn't matter.

Paul

But it does... Was she pretty?

Shalomi

Come on. Now that doesn't matter!

Paul

You need to take everything into account. Everything matters... Was she pretty?

Shalomi

Yes. Yes. She was relatively attractive.

Paul

Was she by herself?

Shalomi

No.

Paul

Really? Was she with a man friend?

Shalomi

No...

Paul

Was she with her girlfriend?

Shalomi

No...

Paul

Well, who the hell was she with?

Shalomi

She was with her dog.

(Pause)

Paul

Say what now?

Shalomi

She was with her dog. She was coming out of a Starbucks and just walked in front of me without looking. I barely had time to stop....

(Pause)

Paul

You hit her... and you hit her dog?

Shalomi
(Sheepishly)

Yes. Her dog was in a stroller, so it helped the impact some but...

(Paul looks at Shalomi like he just committed the most
gruesome crime.)

Paul.

OH, MY GOD! You hit a WHITE woman? And her dog? While you were drunk?

Shalomi

I WAS NOT DRUNK!

Paul

OH MY GOD!... You are going to fry.

Shalomi

What?

Paul

When you are in the pen you're gonna have to prepare your asshole with lube...

Shalomi

What?

Paul

What I did I would just carry around a big old tube of lube because that raw shit is not fun. When my boy first got in the joint, he would yell out, "I have aids!" That worked for a few instances, but when those boys found out, he was lying, oh my goodness, the next time was hell on earth, those boys tore his asshole up so bad that he was in the hospital for a week.

Shalomi

What in the world are you talking about???

Paul

I'm talking about how to prepare your asshole for when a fella or the fella's take your manhood away, cause you are going away for a long time.

Shalomi

What?

Paul

When you get to prison, and the big boys insert their penis into your virgin asshole. Well, I'm assuming that you are a virgin to anal sex. I shouldn't do that, I shouldn't assume you haven't had anal sex before. My bad. I do that sometimes "assume" it's a bad characteristic of mine... But have you?

Shalomi

NO! I have never had anal sex before... It's an abomination. Two men have sex is just... an abomination!

Paul

Damn. You really have hate towards anal sex... I get it. But I'm sorry to let you know but that's exactly what's going to happen to you, especially the way you look. I don't think you can avoid it.

Shalomi

I have no idea what you're talking about...

Paul

I'm talking about the fact that you hit a white woman and her dog with your car after you had "a few cocktails."

Shalomi

Well, it was an accident, and I did only had a *few* cocktails. I was not drunk at all.

Paul

Did you take a breathalyzer?

Shalomi

The officers asked me to, and I replied with their request.

Paul

Tsk tsk tsk.

Shalomi

What?

Paul

They found you over the limit, didn't they?

Shalomi

So they say, but that thing had to be wrong. I only had 2 drinks, my alcohol level should've been anywhere near...

Paul

It doesn't fucking matter! You know you're black right?

Shalomi

Yes, I realize that. But that has nothing to do with it...

Paul

It's has everything! You are black, and you hit a white woman and her dog while drunk.

Shalomi

For the last time... I was not drunk, and she and the dog were not seriously hurt.

Paul

It doesn't matter...

(Pause)

You know they want us all gone eventually? I've been here many times, so I know what I'm talking about...

Shalomi

You are something else. Paranoid.

Paul

Do you think it's a mistake that the breathalyzer showed you were over the limit? Do you believe that?

Shalomi

It was just a malfunction of their equipment.

Paul

Ha! There was no malfunction. It is on purpose. They need and want you locked up. For one, they have quotas and get bonuses for that shit! Now, it doesn't matter whether you are Black, Asian, Indian whatever, they get bonuses for just locking any motherfucker up...but they get police street cred and gifts from their white counterparts if they lock up people of color and not any old color, I'm talking about blacks and latinos specifically. They do not want us on this planet. I'm telling you, and I'm as serious as a heart attack. These motherfuckers want us gone in some capacity, either they want us in prison, dead, or just working *for* them.

Shalomi

But wealthy black people are making an impact on the world like Oprah or Will Smith. They have a few billion between them, and there are others.

Paul

Will Smith! Did you just say, Will Smith?

Shalomi

And Oprah...

Paul

Will Smith? Will fucking Smith...

Shalomi

And Oprah...
(Paul Loses it)

Paul

What The Fuck! Why did you Say, Will Smith? Of all people, why Will Smith????

Shalomi

I mean we are talking about black and white people and making it in America...

Paul

But why Will Smith?

Shalomi

He is one of our great Americans...

Paul

What The fuck! Why him?

Shalomi

Because...

Paul

Will Smith is a two-bit hoe. A well-paid prostitute. He will suck a dick for a million-plus.

Shalomi

I don't think that's accurate.

Paul

He is the worse person..., the worse person. He makes these god awful movies and songs, and then he goes and makes these self-help videos that blames people for not making as much money as he has. Motherfuckin Will fucking Smith...

Shalomi

I mean it's not that serious.

Paul

That motherfucker...

(Paul starts to run around the jail cell screaming.)

This fucking capitalist system and all these celebrities make money off of it, then blaming the individual people for our miserable lives and not being where we want to be. But they never mention the system created. They are all assholes! Oh, My, God, Will fucking Smith! Shit fucking shit... That motherfucker....that motherfucker owes me money...he owes me money! He has caused me a lot of pain...he has caused my family a lot of pain. My mother couldn't afford those Fresh Prince of Bel-Air paisley shirts and Michael Jordan sneakers he used to wear on his TV show. I asked and asked... I begged, and I graveled...but she just couldn't afford them, and I hated *her* for it. (Pause) Now looking back I blame that motherfucker Will Smith for selling his ass and making "us" pay for it. He made me cause my mother a lot of pain.

(Pause)

I'm sorry mother... I'm sorry, but Will Smith made me do it. Will Smith made me do it! I would not have wanted that expensive ass shit if Will Smith didn't make me want to be cool like him.

(Paul takes deep breaths.)

Shalomi

Are you OK?

Paul

I'm OK... Just the sound of his name sets me off sometimes. You know what it is? It's the system we are in that sets me off sometimes. I feel like people who look like us are the butt of a long-running joke and everyone is running around laughing at us...and we are just disappearing.

(Pause)

(Paul sings) "Imagine smoking weed in the street without cops harassin' Imagine going to court with no trial. Lifestyle cruising blue behind my waters// No welfare supporters, more conscious of the way we raise our daughters// Days are shorter, nights are colder//Feeling like life is over, these snakes strike like a cobra//The world's hot my son got not// Evidently, it's elementary, they want us all gone eventually.

(Pause)

You know NAS, right?

Shalomi

Yes. I have heard of NAS. I may not own any of his records, but I have enjoyed his songs.

Paul

Then you know what he's talking about.

Shalomi

I guess I do, but I'm not sure he's all that accurate about the facts of the matter...

Paul

Really?

Shalomi

Yes. Do you think a particular population wants to get rid of another community, so they can somehow dominate the planet with their own type of people?

Paul

I couldn't have said it any better myself. It looks like that to me...

Shalomi

I think you are delusional.

Paul

I am not delusional... I can't wait for you to get in that prison cell and witness it yourself, you are going to see some stuff you won't believe, you're going to meet brothers who are innocent and have been in prison for decades. A brother I know well named Benjamin was recently let go...he spent 25 years in prison because a dirty cop framed him. You can go and look it up, the police were found guilty of a cover-up. There is proof that a particular population wants to destroy another population for their own individual gain. They do not want us around. Whether it is killing us, putting us in jail, or NOT letting us advance into the society they feel like they have created... then we lose hope and become addicted to drugs and alcohol, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera...

(Pause.)

You know they have done this all over the world in different periods of time, you got the Spanish enslaved the Natives which we now know them as Mexican's, you got the Nazi's tried like hell to get rid of the Jews, You got the Hutus massacred the Tutsis in Rwanda, You got the Europeans getting rid of the Native Americans, even now you have Yemans being eliminated from this planet by the Saudi's. Hell, the Jews would love to get the Palestinian people out of Israel. What a mess... They call this an advanced civilization, but, are we? Have we ever been civilized?

Shalomi

OK. OK. If you are so bright and know all this debatable info, then why do you keep ending up in here? Knowing good and well they want you to be in here? Wouldn't you do everything in your power to avoid this situation? Cause I know I would.

Paul

But so here you are... And they will do everything in their power, and they have a lot, to keep you in here as long as possible. You need to listen to me Shalomi.

Shalomi

But you haven't answered my question. Why do you keep ending up here???

(Pause)

Paul

Cause...because I don't feel comfortable out there.

(Pause)

I tried to be a good law-abiding citizen. I'm telling you ... I tried. I worked in restaurants all over this damn city to go to college and major in business. Do you know how expensive college is?

Shalomi

You don't have to go to college to be wealthy. I mean you could just start your own business...

Paul

Come on, man...they would never take me seriously without some basic degree... My boy went to a University and graduated with honors while taking care of his sick mama...when he got out, it took him a good 6 to 7 months to even find a job. He said when he was on that job, he couldn't get anywhere. He showed up early, greeted everyone with a smile, looked the part, he worked hard and did everything with enthusiasm. But then he would see these white boys getting promoted, who came in late, took extra long breaks and acted like assholes to anyone below them... He confronted his boss one day, and the boss told him, 'Don't worry, your time will come. Just put in the work.' Well to me it seems like some people get to put in a lot less work than others. And I'm not about that life... I'm not kissing ass while others get to do what they want, and still get ahead of me.

(Pause)

What slavery tribe are you from, Shalomi?

Shalomi
What?

Paul
What's your last name?

Shalomi
Oh, Smith.

Paul
Shalomi Smith.

Shalomi
Yup.

Paul
I don't know any slavery tribe members named "Smith"... Wait, I used to know a black girl at my school with the last name of Smith, who was rumored to be Jewish, but I didn't believe it. Wait. What was her first name...it started with a "P"... Pauline or something... Pricilla?

Shalomi
Percina?

(Pause)

Paul
Shit! Yeah, that's it! Percina. Percina Smith...

Shalomi
My sister.

Paul
What?!?!? Percina Smith is your sister?

Shalomi
Yes...

(Pause)

Paul

From Ridnour high school?

Shalomi

Yes.

Paul

Damn! So that means you went to Ridnour too?

Shalomi

Yeah. And you went as well?

Paul

Hey. Why do you say it like that? Huh. You don't believe I went to Ridnour.

Shalomi

No, it's just that...

Paul

Because it's one of those upper-class schools and 95 percent white?

(Pause)

Shalomi

Well...

Paul

Well, I did go to that fucking school... I was born and raised in that area.

Shalomi

But how did you end up...well...

Paul

In jail...you mean like you?

Shalomi

This is my first time, and it was just an accident.

Paul

Well, my first time was an accident too.

Shalomi

Come on...

Paul

What the fuck are you insinuating? Huh? I went to jail on purpose? That it wasn't an accident?!?

Shalomi

I'm sorry you just don't seem like the type that went to Ridnour.

Paul

Are you kidding? There were other brothers there just like me, but you probably didn't see them that often cause we were basement kids.

Shalomi

"Basement kids"?

Paul

Yeah, apparently, we couldn't keep up with the wealthy and privileged kids 'academically' so they taught our classes in the basement.

Shalomi

The black kids?

Paul

There were a few rebellious white kids but somehow, after those white kids graduated, they ended up in college while the black kids ended up working for the city.

Shalomi

This can't be... I mean me and my sister were black and didn't take classes in the basement.

Paul

You and your sister were like African immigrants. The whites looked at you different cause you weren't *our* type of "Black", they thought you were exotic, with the whole Jewish thing.

(Pause)

I must say...your sister was fiiiine as fuck!

Shalomi

Stop.

Paul

And I don't mean the finest black woman, she was the finest woman I'd ever seen walk-through Ridnour doors.

Shalomi

Come on...

Paul

I had the biggest crush on her... Damn! I didn't know she was a Jewbie.

(Pause)

Did you ever hear about the time she had her period at the school dance while she was wearing all white?

Shalomi

Yes... Why in the world are you bringing that up?

Paul

I saw her crying in the corner of the gymnasium. And I wanted to say something to her, something that would comfort her but no words would form from my lips...

Shalomi

No words? You??

Paul

I know, right? I always could talk to anyone. But not your sister, she was the only one that muted me... I would have even changed to be Jewish to be with her...

Shalomi

Join the club. So many guys pined for her... She would bring these white guys home, my father was hard on them, not because they were white, but because they weren't Jewish.

Paul

Whatever happened to her? She like married with seven kids?

Shalomi

Nope. She never married, and no kids. Personally, I feel she fell into her looks trap, with everyone telling her how good-looking she was and that she should be in the movies... She tried to be an actress for a long time, even moving to Hollywood... There she just became another beautiful woman out of many.

Paul

Where is she now?

Shalomi

She became a nurse. And lives in San Diego.

Paul

Why did she stay all the way out there? When she stopped acting she should have come back here...with me...

Shalomi

Calm down. She is better off out there anyways.

Paul

Why?

Shalomi

Because she chose to be a person our family disagrees with.

Paul

What? A nurse? I know it's not a doctor but...

Shalomi

It's not that...

Paul

What the hell...did she become a terrorist? Is she working for ISIS now? Is she?

Shalomi

It's worse...

(Pause)

She's a lesbian.

Paul

Are you serious...

Shalomi

Yes. We couldn't believe it. After all that teaching, my mother and father gave her about how wrong it is to *choose* that lifestyle.

Paul

I meant are you "serious" that y'all think being a lesbian is that big of a deal...

Shalomi

Well, to our family it is. I'm not sure how your family raised you, but mine raised me to not *choose* a lifestyle that goes against God.

Paul

I'm sure that being gay is not a choice as you keep saying.

Shalomi

Yes, it is! She chose the devils work!

Paul

Damn Shalomi. I don't know what info your family fed you when you were a child, but you sure ate it up. Sometimes I'm glad my parents weren't involved in my life because I can see the world as it is... Gay men and women have had it so bad from people like

yourself... Why would they choose to be gay century after century? It's not like your religion, like you said, your father chose to be Jewish. You were not born that way...

Shalomi

She dated men when she was in school. MEN! And then she *chose* to be with a woman.

Paul

You need to cool it with anti-gay stuff, just let me remind you where you are going and what's going to happen to you...

(Shalomi is quiet.)

Shalomi

I don't even know why she has her period if she is born a lesbian. What would she need it for, if you are born to be with another woman? Huh? Can you answer me that? Why do you need a way to procreate? If all you're going to do is rub vaginas together for the rest of your lives?!?!?

Paul

Um, I think we have just jumped on the crazy train...

Shalomi

I am not crazy! I am thinking logically.

Paul

OK...

Shalomi

Don't mess with me when it comes to my religious beliefs. Nothing is more powerful and more important than the almighty. And I would do anything for him, and I mean anything. And being gay is not part of God's plan...

Paul

But to abandon your own flesh and blood? Isn't she more important than any belief system?

Shalomi

No! She is not...

Paul

Ok...

(Long pause)

So Palestine...

(Pause)

What a mess. Right? Let me get this straight the Palestinian people have been on that land for how long? For centuries? Well, I thought they just got there the way the news media talks about them like they were invading your land.

Shalomi

My land?

Paul

Yeah your land, the Jew-land.

Shalomi

I have nothing to do with Israel. My family just converted to Judaism.

Paul

So you are a Jew, but you have nothing to do with those Jews in Israel?

Shalomi

Yeah. The first Jews known to man were in Ethiopia.

Paul

Really? Do you mean "Africa" Ethiopia?

Shalomi

Yes.

Paul

This is all confusing, so how did the jews get to Israel? And why are they always fighting with the Palestine people who I just found out have always lived there.

Shalomi

Well, they didn't always live there...

Paul

OK. But the real Jews are in Africa?

Shalomi

I wouldn't say the real jews. There were black Jews that lived in Africa, and from what I'm told they were the first Jews that existed on the planet.

Paul

I guess that makes sense, but you have nothing to do with Jews In Israel?

Shalomi

We follow the same religious beliefs.

Paul

OK. So, but, do you identify or get along with the white Jews in America?

Shalomi

Yeah. It's the same as if a Christian is different ethnicities, but you follow the same basic rules and regulations, you both go to church, but in my case, I go to Temple.

Paul

But here in America, the black church and white church are separate. It's known as the most segregated time on the planet... Sunday at noon.

Shalomi

Yeah, I heard that one.

Paul

So, is there a separate Temple for blacks and white Jews?

Shalomi

No. There are not that many black jews here in America, I go to the Temple with all the other Jews. We don't see color in Judaism...

Paul

Really?

Shalomi

Yes.

Paul

Come on...

Shalomi

Yes.

Paul

Come on... No problems? Do they treat you with all the respect as the white Jews? Because, I've rarely heard much about black jews in my life, so they must be keeping y'all under wraps. Like a little secret. Are they fair in all their business practices? Cause, I know they do business with one another.

Shalomi

Come on, you must be kidding. Jews will do business with anyone.

Paul

Nope. I see them all the time talking about business together. Have you ever been to a Knicks game? I'm telling you they have season tickets, just so they can meet and talk about business.

Shalomi

That is ridiculous!

Paul

Well, you mustn't be in the Jewish loop if you are a New York Jew and have never been to a Knicks game. Cause those white Jews sure do like looking at those black boys putting that ball in that hoop. It's their TV. The rest of us have to watch it on TV at home. My friend tried to do business with a Jewish man once, but he didn't see eye to eye with him, I mean The man wanted my negro friend to work for him, and that's how it had to be...he couldn't be on the same level as him. The Jew had to be the boss

Shalomi

Are you being anti-Semitic right now? Right to my face?!?!

Paul

Whoa, take it easy... I'm just telling you what I heard and what I see. I just think that in general Jews don't take black people seriously. They don't work with us, but they love to have us work for them, or if we create something, they want to make money off of it. Let's face, they don't respect us enough to take direction from us...

(Pause)

Shalomi

Maybe you don't make a good leader. Perhaps that is the problem. Perhaps the way you are living is all wrong. Have you thought about that?

(Pause. For the first time Paul is completely quiet)

Nothing to say?

(Pause)

My family has lived well. We worked hard and made a good name for ourselves as black Jews. I think you should stop making excuses for yourself, and try to make something out of yourself for you and your family...you self-sabotaging motherfucker!!! I'm tired of hearing the complaints of black people around me all the time blaming this and blaming that. Sometimes I feel bad and want to help, but you all look at me like I'm some type of Jew alien. So we have a network of people who work together to create something that makes a financial gain. So what! We are using the system to our advantage. We didn't create the game, but we sure do play it well! And Jews were the ones who used to live in the hoods and played basketball. We used to be the Moses Malones, Patrick Ewing 's, and the Michael Jordan's. But when they had enough money by working "TOGETHER," they got out of that physical labor nonsense, and then the blacks took over. Now y'all need to get out of that physical nonsense and own something! You need to own everything! Maybe if you focused on religious beliefs and followed the rule of business, even if that means selling out to the "man"...then so fucking what! You have a family to feed, clothe, and house... Then you have to do what you have to do!

(Pause)

(Paul does a slow clap.)

Paul

Nice little speech. You know damn good and well it's not as easy as you're making it out to be...but keep telling yourself that. Cause we all know y'all already own everything...

Shalomi

I'm done talking to you. When am I going to see this damn judge?

Paul

Well, Mr., I have it all together... I thought you would be bailed out by now. I saw you on the phone... No one is coming to your aid. Your mother? Your father?

Shalomi

They've both passed away.

Paul

I'm sorry. Then who did you try to contact?

Shalomi

My Rabbi.

Paul

That seems reasonable.

Shalomi

But, no one answered.

Paul

Interesting...

Shalomi

What do you mean by that? "Interesting,"?

Paul

Will a Rabbi bail you out? Or avoiding your call?

Shalomi

That is ridiculous. Why wouldn't he bail me out?

Paul

Well, I have never heard that done before. A religious figure bailing out anyone. You'd think they would care with all that "Love thy neighbor" talk they be doing, but I have never seen it happen.

Shalomi

Never?

Paul

Nope. Never.

(There is silence. Shalomi thinks about what Paul has presented)

It could be a few days before you see a judge considering the crime you've committed. And it's close to the holidays...

Shalomi

A FEW DAYS!!!

Paul

You shouldn't have hit a white woman and her dog while cocktailing...

(Pause)

I have a suggestion. How about your sister?

Shalomi

What?

Paul

How about you suck up your pride and homophobia and give your sister a call?

Shalomi

I couldn't...

Paul

Then it's going to be you and me for the next few days. God knows who else they're going to eventually throw in here. Many people like to murder folks around the holidays. I guess it's the stress of it all...

(Shalomi looks over at the phone. Contemplates. Then goes over to the phone and dials.)

Shalomi
(On Phone)

Yes, it's me, I just had a little accident, but I'm completely innocent.

(Pause)

Yes.

(Pause)

Yes. I'm sorry to bother you after all this time of not speaking.

(Pause).

Oh? A lawyer? Wow. You got married?

(Pause)

Oh, I'm sorry about that.

(Pause)

OK. OK. Thank you so much. I am sorry. OK. Thank you....

(He hangs up)

Paul

OK. Wow. That seemed to go well...

Shalomi

Yeah. Her (Pause) wife is a lawyer. They are bailing me out. Wow... She's married?

Paul

Yeah. They can do that nowadays. I don't know where you've been.

(Pause)

See that wasn't so hard, was it? Family can be useful sometimes...

Shalomi.

Yeah, I guess they can.

(Pause)

So what about you?

Paul

What about me?

Shalomi

Is anyone bailing you out?

Paul

Wow, it's kind of you to think about me, Shalomi...

Shalomi

I'm sorry...

Paul

I'm on parole, so I get no bail...

(Pause.)

(Moments later a guard yells offstage)

Guard

"Shalomi Smith you've made bail."

There is a moment between Paul and Shalomi...

They say nothing. Shalomi leaves.(Light will fade on Shalomi)

Paul

Thank god he is gone. He's one of the craziest roommates I've ever had.

(To imaginary judge)

You know what your honor... I'm guilty. I did it. Those Dominicans were right. I threw that punch and knocked out that cop flat on his back. Just put me away, because I'm not sure I want to be back out there with the general population... cause they are crazy!

Blackout