



Scripts.com

# Life of a King

By Jake Goldberg

Want to play again?  
Give you a chance to get  
those cigarettes back.  
I'm scared, man.  
Don't got too many  
friends on the outside.  
Not anymore.  
Just keep your eye  
on the end game.  
Everything will fall into place.  
I'm going to miss you, chess man.  
Listen to me, Eugene.  
Every day you out there,  
you out there for me  
and every other brother in here  
who's never going  
to be out there again.  
I made this for you.  
Take care of the king.  
Everything else follows.  
You good?  
Yeah.  
Jamal, I appreciate  
you for this, my brother.  
Hey, man, I...  
I owe you one.  
Well, since your memory  
serves you so well,  
think you can help me  
find some work?  
Honest work?  
Yeah.  
I think I can do something.  
There's the  
halfway house, my brother.  
Pull over there.  
Hey, you need a car?  
Actually, I'm friends with Jamal.  
I'm here about a job.  
Right. Right. Yeah.  
Well, we got some spots  
in the night shift.  
What kind of late hours you keep?  
I keep whatever hours

you need me to keep.  
That's a good answer.  
That's a good answer.  
All right, fill that out.  
Great.  
When could you start?  
Whenever is clever.  
A lot of guys who come in  
here looking for work,  
head cases.  
Ex-cons at best.  
When did you get out?  
Sorry.  
Hello, Eugene.  
Trini?  
Is that you, baby?  
My goodness, Trini.  
Y-You want your usual,  
extra chocolate?  
No, I can't.  
I have class.  
What are you studying?  
Pre-law.  
My daughter's going to be a lawyer.  
Listen, Trini, I know  
it's been a long time, but...  
I'm-I'm sorry, I just...  
I don't have time  
for this right now.  
But I wanted to come  
tell you in person.  
Marco's locked up.  
He's been in juvenile detention  
for almost a year now.  
Selling drugs.  
I really have to go now.  
Wait, wait, Trini, please.  
I really have to go, Eugene.  
I'm sorry.  
Take care.  
Some things change...  
other things  
stay the same damn way.  
I'll be damned.

What's up, buddy?  
Been too long, man.  
Yes, sir.  
I'm out.  
You got a place to stay?  
Halfway house.  
I can hook you up with a car.  
Remember Andre?  
Dre?  
He's got a Crown Vic just sitting there.  
Word?  
Beat up.  
On its last legs.  
So, no brother really wants  
to take that off his hands.  
Watch this.  
I can grab it for you.  
It'll do you some good.  
I appreciate it. Yes, sir.  
Thank you, my brother.  
What I really need is a job,  
though.  
Money is just...  
cash is tight, man.  
Seems like nobody wants  
to hire an ex-con.  
Parole board didn't set you up?  
There's a waiting list.  
Maybe a couple of weeks at least.  
Look, man, I do maintenance  
over at the Maud Alton school.  
I can try and put a good word in for you.  
Is that right?  
Yeah. It's not so bad  
if you don't mind  
hanging around the kids all day.  
Psh.  
I hung around a lot worse.  
Can't make any promises now.  
Hey, you know me. It's all good.  
Okay.  
What about Perry?  
He still hang around?  
Oh, yeah.

After you went in, he  
became the man around here.  
Word? - Yeah, he's got his hands  
in some of everything, man.  
Good for him.  
What?  
I'm glad you came home, Eugene.  
I ain't got nowhere else to go.  
Ma'am, I'm going  
to cut to the chase.  
I'm a real hard worker.  
I'm disciplined. Keep to myself.  
Well, I, I haven't even given you  
a job description yet.  
Well, whatever it is,  
I'll get it done.  
You know, we've been losing  
our funding left and right.  
So, the pay wouldn't be very good.  
I understand.  
How long have you known Billy?  
Since I was 14.  
Well, he speaks highly of you.  
Like I said,  
the-the pay won't be good  
and the kids, well  
they are a handful.  
Well, I'm real good with children.  
I got two beautiful kids of my own.  
I know how to handle  
them pretty good.  
Well, when would you  
be able to start?  
Yesterday.  
Well, well, well.  
My brother, my brother.  
Perry.  
Look at you.  
Look at you.  
Just living the good life.  
Hey.  
So, you're out now.  
I'm out.  
Look, I just wanted to say, okay...

Perry, let's let the past  
stay in the past, all right?  
You're not even going to give me a  
chance to say what I was going to say?  
If you need anything,  
anything, okay?  
A job,  
a lady,  
I want you to give me a call,  
all right?  
The way I'm living now,  
what I got now,  
I owe you that.  
Here's my number.  
Don't be afraid to use it.  
Hey, boys, you're looking  
at a living legend.  
One of the last true soldiers.  
I used to run behind him.  
They don't get it.  
They ain't like us, Gene.  
They don't appreciate.  
Hey, I want you to call me,  
all right?  
Let's go.  
What's going on here?  
What is this?  
Why you looking at me?  
Why are you even in detention, Cliff?  
Why do you even bother showing  
up here if you don't give a damn  
about anything, least of all,  
your future at Maud Alton?  
You're tripping, Ms. Gadshaw.  
Why do you think  
I'm up in here, huh?  
These my best customers.  
I want you both in Princi...  
Shh.  
Whoops.  
Yeah.  
Bye-bye.  
Hey, did I tell you I saw Katrina?  
My baby's going to be a lawyer.

Oh, yeah?  
Trini?  
Yes, sir.  
Man.  
She was always bright, that one.  
Got that right.  
How about Marco?  
Excuse me.  
Now, what exactly happened in here?  
What are you talking  
about, Ms. King?  
I mean, where did Ms. Gadbow go?  
She won't be here for  
the rest of the day.  
Does that mean we get to be out  
for the rest of the day, too?  
No, that doesn't, T.  
Now I'm going to find  
a replacement monitor.  
Each of you will act responsibly  
while I do so.  
Is that clear?  
Ms. King.  
Have a good day, now.  
Everything all right?  
No, actually.  
Ms. Gadbow,  
the detention monitor...  
Mr. Brown, would you mind  
doing me a quick favor?  
It'll only take a minute.  
Now, if there are  
any problems in here.  
Mr. Brown will report  
them directly to me.  
I'm not joking.  
Thank you so much.  
I'll be back with a monitor soon.  
It's fine.  
Hey, y'all supposed  
to be out of your seats?  
Hey, man, we just getting up so you can  
clean the gum off the bottom of our chairs.  
I got to go to the bathroom.

Not until Ms. King gets back.  
She'll be back in a minute.  
Come on. Please?  
What's your name, son?  
I'm Percy Hall.  
Yo, sit down, Peanut.  
Peanut?  
Is that what they call you?  
What you want, girl?  
What you want?  
Hey. Hey, all right.  
That's enough, now.  
Come on, y'all.  
Have a seat.  
Sit down.  
You let me go to the bathroom, I  
can make them sit and stay down.  
No deal.  
Man.  
Hey, I'm not going to tell  
y'all again, sit down.  
Yo, relax, man.  
Man, we ain't got to listen to no  
janitor. You ain't no teacher.  
Have a seat, son, right now.  
Or what?  
You some kind of tough guy?  
You want to find out?  
Huh?  
What is he doing?  
Sit down.  
What you nodding  
your head for, Peanut?  
All right.  
Trini.  
How do you know where I live?  
I looked you up.  
Just because I went to jail  
don't mean I can't read.  
"Doesn't" mean you can't read.  
Hey, Trini, Trini.  
It's "Katrina".  
Sorry.  
Katrina.



I got a job at your old school.  
I know I made mistakes  
in the past, a lot of mistakes.  
I'm just trying to make  
things right, that's all.  
I'm just trying to make things  
right with you, Katrina.  
You're my girl.  
Trini.  
You're my gir...  
Trini.  
I just want to make  
things right for us.  
Ms. King.  
Mr. Brown.  
Thanks again for the other day.  
I was...  
I was really impressed.  
You're welcome.  
Well, I'm off to a meeting.  
Keep up the good work.  
Oh...  
about the other day.  
When is Ms. Gadshaw coming back?  
She's not.  
Oh, well, what are you going  
to do about detention?  
What you doing in these parts?  
I missed my bus, was late.  
I don't plan on making it a habit.  
Maybe you should.  
I'm here.  
Name's Michelle, right?  
I'm T.  
I know who you are.  
All right, let's go.  
Everybody have a seat.  
Aw.  
Look who it is.  
You here to clean the blackboards?  
For those of you who don't remember  
me, my name is Eugene Brown.  
Does that mean  
we can call you "Genie?"

That'd be the last thing  
you ever call me.  
Ooh.  
What's that?  
This here is a chess board.  
Anybody know how to play chess?  
Hey, yo.  
You think you're pretty smart, huh?  
Why don't you come up here  
and play me a game, then.  
You're corny, man.  
I ain't playing no games with you.  
What's your name, son?  
Clifton.  
And I ain't your son.  
Fair enough, Clifton.  
Big bad Clifton.  
Well, okay, if you ain't got  
the guts to play me, Clifton,  
does anybody else?  
Anyone?  
Yo.  
I'll play this.  
You like cards?  
Fine.  
We'll play cards.  
Here's the deal.  
If you win...  
the whole class gets to do whatever  
they want for the rest of detention.  
What?  
But if I win, you learn a new game.  
You hustling me?  
Hustle? You're the one that  
wanted to play cards, homie.  
You right.  
Go ahead and play  
this clown, Peanut.  
You'll never get beat.  
You know the game...  
find the red ace?  
Huh?  
My name is Peter Paul.  
I come from Montreal.

Came to play 'em all.  
I've broken hipsters and  
slicksters, elbows, and a-holes.  
Your name is Peter what?  
Go ahead and pick the one you like.  
Nah-ah-ah.  
Bet you're dead, Jack.  
Man, I see it.  
I see it.  
Don't you worry about me seeing it.  
See, here's what happened to you.  
You thought you knew the  
truth, but it wasn't there.  
And it never will be until  
you learn where to look.  
He's messing with you, Peanut.  
Man, I can catch it.  
I-I-I was just  
screwing around, man.  
Let me get one more shot.  
One more shot?  
Yeah.  
My name is Peter Paul.  
I come from Montreal.  
I came to play 'em all.  
Ah-ah-ah.  
Make sure you see it.  
This is a king.  
This is your life.  
One mistake and it  
can be taken away.  
Wha.  
Look, man.  
Yo, this is going  
to be the meeting spot.  
All you got to do is go in there,  
grab the stuff, and be out.  
You get the money yet?  
No, man, I ain't seen  
my uncle in two weeks.  
What the hell we going to do, Cliff?  
I don't...  
Look, man, if I can't  
get the money...

Forget it, man.  
We're just going to lift it.  
My cousin gave it to me.  
That's fly, right?  
You know I don't  
roll like that, Cliff.  
Well, how do you roll?  
You don't see what a good  
opportunity this is?  
Huh?  
You ain't got no job,  
you ain't got no money,  
you ain't got no opportunity,  
your mom's half gone...  
Shut up about my mom, man.  
Yo, that's the truth, T, and you know it.  
Look, man, we pull this job off  
and we ain't got to worry  
about nothing no more.  
Nothing.  
Now, you think about that.  
Now, everyone on the board is here  
for one reason and one reason only.  
To protect the king.  
That is right.  
To protect the king.  
Now, he is old and has  
survived many battles.  
So he can only move  
one spot at a time.  
So, who's got his back  
if he can only move one spot?  
The queen.  
Now, she is smarter faster,  
and stronger than her king.  
The knight is the horse.  
Now, he can move two spots forward  
and one spot to the side.  
The trusty bishop  
is his diagonal attack.  
The rook, he patrols  
the entire board.  
He can move as many  
spaces as he wants,

as long as it's in the same  
direction he was moving.  
Oh yes, the pawns.  
They are the front line.  
They will be casualties.  
This crap's boring. man.  
Kids game.  
What you reading?  
Let me put it to you this way,  
a way you'll understand.  
Think about it like this.  
Who's your supplier?  
Hey, you tripping.  
Hey, I know you ain't growing  
that weed you're selling  
and so does everybody else in  
here you're trying to sell it to.  
So, who's your guy?  
Huh?  
Your ace in the hole.  
Trying to protect your king.  
I like that.  
Okay.  
All right.  
Well, then let's  
call this king, "Perry".  
King Perry it is.  
Now, King Perry has an army  
and you're a part of it.  
But the problem is,  
you think you're out there  
doing the king's business,  
all you're really doing  
is sacrificing yourself.  
Like the pawn you truly are.  
It ain't like that, B.  
It's exactly like that, partner.  
Now, if you want to keep making the  
same mistakes for a king who could  
care less about your ass, out  
there is the board to do it on.  
But if you want to learn how  
to make the right maneuvers,  
this is where you do it.

Right here on this board.  
So, what do you want,  
what do you want to do?  
You want to learn how to play?  
Played out, man.  
I'll play.  
Me, too.  
There it is.  
Very nice.  
Man, Peanut, that  
ain't the right move.  
Use the horse, it moves in and out.  
Right there.  
No, man, right...  
What, are you blind, man?  
Tahime, why don't you  
play your own game?  
Man, I'm just watching.  
How did you see that attack?  
What you mean "see?"  
It's obvious.  
Peanut's just stupid.  
Hey. Mr. Brown.  
Hey, what you doing?  
Going to get a ride, man.  
Don't ride with that fool.  
I'd rather walk.  
Let's go.  
It's right up here.  
Oh, man.  
That's T's mama.  
You all live here?  
Yeah. T eats  
at my place every night.  
His mama don't cook.  
She's real messed up, man.  
Yeah.  
Thanks for the ride, Mr. Brown.  
Anytime, son.  
Take care of yourself.  
No, no, Marco.  
Marco, please.  
Please, man.  
Have a seat.

Come on, man.  
Please.  
Thank you.  
Thank you, son.  
Did you get any of my letters?  
I've been out  
for a couple weeks now.  
I've been teaching these kids chess  
down in the old neighborhood.  
I got this one kid  
that reminds me of you.  
Who the hell do you think you are?  
You never taught me nothing.  
You're the last person that  
has a right to be talking.  
Okay. Okay.  
Guard.  
No, Marco.  
Marco, wait.  
No, Marco, wait.  
No, wait, son. Don't be  
like that. Son.  
Please.  
Everybody, look up here.  
You see this?  
There's an open tournament in  
Virginia in a couple of months.  
We're not ready for no tournament.  
That might be true  
and that might not be.  
But one thing's for sure is  
you're never going to find out  
if you don't give it a try.  
If anybody wants to road trip,  
there will be a sign up sheet.  
I ain't trying to be white, man.  
Fine, white goes first.  
White goes first.  
See, that shows you  
how stupid this game is.  
Hell yeah, black always got to go first.  
Amen.  
T, you could be  
one hell of a player.

But your problem and everyone  
else in this room's problem  
is you don't  
give a damn about rules.  
Especially you.  
What's the word?  
You got my money?  
I know it's not as much as usual...  
You damn straight it's not as much.  
Sales are down.  
Sales are down?  
What, you an economist now, negro?  
You know Eugene Brown?  
Yeah.  
Yeah, I know Eugene Brown.  
He's my man.  
Well, your man  
is stealing your business.  
'Cause I'm just saying.  
And he runs detention  
over at Maud Alton now.  
He telling the kids not  
to buy from me anymore.  
Hold up.  
Eugene Brown runs detention?  
That's hilarious.  
Man, get the hell out of here.  
Hey.  
You better start turning  
over more product.  
Or I'm not even going to  
think about coming up  
with that big job I've  
been telling you about.  
Understand me?  
Go.  
Darius.  
Who do you know over at Maud Alton  
that can do Uncle Perry  
a little favor?  
Hold on. Hold on.  
Next time...  
I'm going to get two pieces.  
Shut the door up.



Get out.  
What the hell?  
Tahime, baby.  
Wait a minute. Wait a minute.  
Wait. Wait.  
Damon's just my friend.  
I'm going to make some dinner.  
I got some spaghetti.  
Oh, baby.  
I don't want to be here.  
Barging in like that.  
What's wrong with you?  
You don't talk to him.  
Get out!  
What's wrong with you?  
Don't go. Where are you going?

**Come back at 9:**

Got to go to school in the morning.  
In here, you're either teaching  
lessons or you're learning them.  
You must think before you move.  
Hey, Peanut.  
What are you doing?  
What did I just say?  
Think before you make  
your next move.  
And you didn't.  
Y'all got to start  
paying attention, man.  
In here and in life.  
'Cause out in the streets,  
it's not checkmate.  
It's incarceration.  
It's wheelchair.  
Man, I can't take  
much more of this.  
Peanut, get up, bro.  
I got you.  
You want to start over?  
I got him beat.  
No.  
Go.  
This is all I need.

Check.

Checkmate.

Hey.

Where did you learn how to do that?

Told you, it's just

a simple stupid game, man.

Got something I want to talk

to you about, all right, man?

What's up?

Can't tell nobody, all right?

I won't.

I'm serious.

I won't.

Me and Cliff we got some

real things going on.

Real easy money.

And I want you in on it with me.

What you want me to do?

Try it.

Just in case, you know?

All I got to do is roll?

Yeah, man.

You trust me?

I trust you.

I want you in on this with me.

For real.

All right.

My man.

Okay, so, that-that's...

I got it put away this time.

It's a whole body throw.

Nothing, 'cause you

about to airball it.

Oh, I did it. I'm a beast.

Uh-oh.

Oh, man.

I'm a beast. I told you.

You're right on the ball.

Ms. King, you said

you wanted to see me?

Oh, yes, I-I-I did. Come on in.

Have a seat.

Okay.

This isn't easy for me.

Who gave you this?  
Someone dropped it in my  
mailbox yesterday afternoon.  
Listen, I'm not the same  
man I was back then.  
You lied to me, Mr. Brown.  
I have to let you go.  
You should see these kids, man.  
They're learning.  
I'm against the wall here, though,  
and I don't have a choice.  
I'm sorry.  
Chess is no different than life.  
These suburban kids, they  
know they get good grades,  
they go off to college.  
They know they're going to own  
their own business someday.  
They envision the end game.  
But poor kids  
don't think like that.  
Mr. Brown, I...  
I wasn't taught like that.  
I didn't... I didn't  
see the end game  
and it cost me, man.  
It cost me big.  
I know.  
I am still here for you  
and the chess program.  
Just not in the school.  
Not anymore.  
Hey, Mr. Brown.  
Get back to class, Peanut.  
You mad at me?  
No.  
But chess club is cancelled.  
What? Why?  
Politics.  
Politics?  
Man, that's an excuse.  
What about fighting  
our way out of a corner?  
What was I thinking, man?

Chess.

I don't think you guys  
want to buy in.

Take all that money.

I'm going to raise you again.

All right, put some  
more money down.

Oh. that's not bad.

Give me my three already.

No.

Oh, snap.

Mean Gene Brown.

The one with the frown.

So, what's up, man?

Guess I just had to  
see this place again.

Word on the street  
is you lost your job.

Look, it's hard out  
there for an ex-con.

And the system's not even set up  
to support going straight.

That's just the world, baby,  
trying to keep another  
beautiful black man down.

That's all right, though, because  
I'm going to help you out.

I owe you at least that.

Why are you looking at  
me like that, Mean Gene?

Huh?

All right.

All right.

There you go.

Oh, oh, you don't have  
to do nothing for this.

It's on the house.

You just don't get it, brother.

I'm one of the pillars  
in this community now.

Look, I help these folks out.

The way that the government don't  
have the time or the means to.

I'm going to help you out

a little bit, too.  
Come on, baby.  
Come on home.  
It's always good  
chatting with you, Perry.  
See you soon, Gene.  
See you real soon.  
Hey, yo.  
Anybody want to come to the park  
and play some chess with me?  
Hey, janitor, that was detention.  
We had to be there.  
You don't even work here no more.  
Hey, T, you want  
to waste your potential, too?  
Huh?  
Come on, man.  
Yo, Peanut.  
Let's go get a game at the park, man.  
Come on.  
No, man.  
I don't like the politics.  
Oh, it's like that?  
Nicely done.  
What's up with Tahime?  
Why is he so attached to Clifton?  
Well, you know, Clifton was always  
the biggest kid in the class.  
It's been like that  
since we was babies.  
And T, man, he's just as scared  
to be on the streets as me,  
but he's not going to say nothing.  
You're a good man, Peanut.  
And this is for you.  
It's official.  
You're president of the chess club.  
Chess club?  
It's just you and me.  
We don't even have a homeroom, man.  
Everybody has that.  
Well, it is what it is.  
It's beautiful.  
It's where it's all

going to happen.  
What's going to happen?  
A bonfire?  
You got to have  
a little vision, Peanut.  
Sure, it needs some work.  
But when I look at this place,  
I see a mansion of possibilities.  
Hello?  
Katrina, it's your father.  
I can't talk right now.  
Oh, I understand.  
Maybe later.  
Is everything all right?  
Oh no, yeah, everything's fine.  
I just...  
you know, I want...  
I wanted to tell you  
that I was...  
I'm thinking about opening up  
a community chess house.  
There's some pretty good  
little players at that school.  
A chess house? How are you going  
to be able to afford that?  
Well, I've been...  
I've been  
looking around a little bit.  
A lot of these houses  
have been foreclosed on.  
I can probably rent one  
for next to nothing.  
You know, Billy  
lent me some money already.  
Katrina, I know things aren't  
exactly right between us.  
But maybe they can be  
for those kids.  
Since when do you care  
so much about kids, Eugene?  
Since I lost you.  
To refresh, ladies, pawns  
can move two spots  
Or one...

How goes it, gentlemen?  
Nice place you got here, chess man.  
Did it come with asbestos?  
Hey, if you're not  
here to help, Clifton,  
you're more than welcome to leave.  
Oh, that's cool,  
we just came for Peanut.  
Peanut?  
Peanut is...  
He ain't going nowhere.  
He's working.  
Working for who?  
For you?  
Peanut, he paying you?  
Come on, Cliff.  
No, you got W2s?  
I mean, was there  
an interview process?  
Let me see your resume.  
Please. Come on.  
Yo, if he don't want to go,  
man, just let him stay.  
No, he's coming.  
Let's go.  
I just told you he stays.  
Now, if you want to throw  
your life away, so be it.  
But he's with me.  
What's up, son?  
Hey, hey, hey. It's cool, it's cool.  
You don't want this. You don't want it.  
It's cool.  
Please.  
I'm here for you, son.  
Hear me?  
Flash your lights.  
Think they're still...  
All right.  
Now, T, you come with me.  
Peanut, stay with the car.  
Alone?  
Alone?  
Little PB don't want to stay alone?

All right, T,  
you stay with the car.  
Peanut, you bring  
your simple self with me.  
Yo, Cliff, I don't think  
that's such a good...  
Shut up.  
Stay focused, man, all right?  
Let's go. Peanut.  
You have to envision the end game.  
Anytime you find yourself behind,  
your mind got you there.  
When we get up there you  
know I do the talking, right?  
Don't trip.  
I got you.  
Yo, what's up?  
What y'all got?  
No.  
This is the king.  
The king is your life.  
One mistake...  
I-I don't got the cash, bro.  
And it can be taken.  
Get up, man.  
Get up.  
Peanut, man.  
There's that thinking.  
Ooh.  
I can see if you're  
cheating me from over here.  
Big Chair Chess Club.  
You stay right there.  
I'm on my way.  
Tahime.  
Hey.  
What's up?  
What's going on, man?  
Where's Peanut?  
Oh, man.  
What did you do?  
Huh?  
Hey, hey.  
What did you do, man?



What's going on?  
Talk to me.  
Talk to me, man.  
What's going on?  
I got you.  
I got you, son.  
Girls left the door unlocked.  
Hi.  
Tahime.  
How are you doing?  
I'm going to miss him, too.  
He was always really sweet.  
I don't know about all that.  
Ooh.  
Yo, T.  
Yo. let's ride. man.  
We're going down to Spiders.  
I'm good.  
Look, man, I miss  
the little guy, too.  
But that's how life is  
on these streets, man.  
I'm going to make  
the run myself this time.  
I hope we can put this behind us.  
For your sake.  
What's up, Michelle?  
Stop.  
Are you okay?  
A young man is dead because of me.  
I should have never let him go.  
It's not true and you know it.  
You know what?  
For the first time in my life,  
I am actually very proud of you.  
You started something here.  
They don't listen, Trini.  
They don't listen.  
I didn't.  
Your brother doesn't.  
They see that easy money as the  
only way out, and you know what?  
Sometimes I don't blame them  
for thinking that way.

So you're just going to give up?  
They think I'm nuts, okay?  
Trini, they think I'm looney.  
And you know what?  
I'm starting to believe them.  
I'm starting to believe them.  
You ain't nuts.  
Clifton, he's nuts.  
But you...  
You're all right.  
Where did you get this?  
Peanut had that in his hand  
before the police came.  
Let's clean this place up, man.  
Yeah.  
This is a key.  
See that?  
This is how it works.  
Any questions?  
Man, what the hell you  
doing waking me up, man?  
Don't you walk away from me.  
I ain't your mama.  
Oh, you want to fight.  
You want to...  
Hey.  
What's wrong?  
Tahime, talk to me.  
I'm going to kill  
my mom's boyfriend.  
What?  
I'm going to get a gun  
and I'm going to shoot him.  
I don't care what happens to me.  
I don't care.  
But he ain't going  
to touch nobody no more,  
not me, not her not nobody.  
I swear on God he ain't  
going to touch nobody.  
What do you think  
that's going to prove?  
I was locked up for 17 years...  
in prison.

I just got out.  
I spent almost  
two decades in the joint.  
I blamed everything  
on everybody else but me.  
I was just touching the pieces,  
moving them whenever I could  
without thought.  
That's why none of y'all  
can get nothing over on me.  
Because I've done all the dumb  
stuff that y'all have done twice.  
Some of it three times.  
What did you do?  
Whatever I wanted to do.  
I stole.  
I even ran a crew.  
And they gave you  
17 years for that?  
No.  
I got my 17 years  
for armed robbery.  
I robbed a bank.  
Cops came and we all scattered.  
And I took the fall.  
And then I learned.  
What did you learn?  
I learned the board.  
Your move.  
Good.  
Checkmate.  
Even better.  
Thank you.  
This chess house, it's...  
it's amazing.  
You know, eight years I've  
been at Maud Alton and...  
I've just been trying to make do  
with what little money they give us.  
We're all doing the best we can,  
most of us high ups,  
teachers, parents, kids.  
In all my years I have seen very  
few people make a real difference.

These kids...  
they need you.  
And your life before...  
and who you have become now...  
you inspire me, Mr. Brown.  
You really do.  
It's really coming together.  
This Tahime Sanders is a beast.  
I talked to Marco last week.  
Really?  
He's coming home early.  
Wow.  
Wow, that's good news.  
Can I drive you to pick him up?  
I don't know.  
Oh, no, no.  
Trini, you got to...  
you got to do this for me.  
It would mean a lot to me.  
I got to be there for him  
when he gets out.  
Show him how much I changed.  
Please.  
Sunday.  
That's what I'm talking about.  
That's nice.  
He in a better place now, anyways.  
Yeah.  
You all right?  
You know you got a ticket  
out of this place, Tahime.  
You could be a special  
player, a real pro.  
Just need the discipline.  
Check this out.  
This could be you.  
Maurice Ashley did it.  
Who's to say you couldn't be next?  
Maurice who?  
Ah.  
Maurice Ashley from Harlem  
was the first  
African-American grandmaster.  
So, what? You're telling me

your brother's a grandmaster?  
Who's to say  
there could only be one?  
Why ain't you one?  
If I had your natural  
talent, I would be.  
Come on, man.  
I ain't about to be  
embarrassing myself  
in some white man's competition.  
You going to think that  
way your entire life?  
Every time you get an opportunity,  
you're going to run away  
just because you're scared?  
I ain't scared.  
T, you have a real talent.  
And that'll take you further  
than any money, race, class  
any day of the week.  
You could play  
with these kids, man.  
And if I can't?  
It ain't about whether  
you can or you can't,  
it's about whether  
you will or you won't.  
Believe that.  
Where the hell you been, Tahime?  
I was out...  
with Mr. Brown.  
I want you to do  
something for me, okay?  
I want you to sign  
this consent form  
so I can play in a chess tournament.  
Chess tournament?  
What the hell you talking about?  
I told you, I've been  
getting real good at chess.  
Give me a damn break, Tahime.  
You out there playing  
some dumb ass game  
while the rest of us sitting

in here trying to survive.  
It ain't a dumb game.  
Is it a job?  
You getting paid?  
Because if you ain't getting paid,  
I don't want to hear  
nothing about it.  
Silly.  
If I'm good...  
Boy, you ain't good at nothing  
but being a pain in my ass.  
Get-get out my face.  
Go on.  
Go on.  
Get out of my face.  
How the hell you think you can afford  
to be in somebody chess contest?  
You think they let fools  
like you in for free?  
Mr. Brown said he'd pay.  
Oh. hell no. he ain't.  
And you ain't going to be  
in no chess contest, either.  
No chess contest.  
Mr. Brown.  
Come on.  
Mr. Brown, I presume.  
Yes, sir.  
Jerry Simpson,  
assistant coordinator.  
It's a pleasure to have you here.  
It's a pleasure to be here, sir.  
What are...  
What are all the computers for?  
That's how we play chess here.  
It's the way of the future.  
I trust you've used them?  
Yes, sir.  
Computers.  
All right, I want you to concentrate  
and picture your end game.  
What's with the computers?  
A modern way of playing.  
Man, that's bull.

I want to play street style.  
You are going to play on a  
computer and behave, you hear me?  
Now, listen.  
No trash talking, no cursing.  
Just play your game.  
No trash talking, no cursing?  
That is my game.  
They're ready to start.  
You need to register.  
Right. Right.  
Give me your consent forms.  
Good. Good. Good.  
Hello.  
I'm Eugene Brown.  
Registering my kids.  
And the eighth?  
Here's the thing...  
Actually, I left it in  
the car, my registration.  
Is there any possible way you think  
I could have enough time to go...  
If you're quick.  
Thank you so much.  
All right, sir.  
You're all set.  
Great.  
Eugene Brown.  
I'm Roy Woodbury, host a  
talk program over at KCAM.

**KCAM:**

Right. Yeah.  
Yeah, I just wanted to come  
by and tell you I heard about  
what you're doing over there  
at that house. It's good stuff.  
I got an assistant who  
lives over that way.  
Oh, yeah?  
- Yeah.  
Is he one of your students?  
Yeah. Yeah.  
Tahime Sanders.

Is he any good?  
Exceptional.  
Well, I just wanted  
to wish you good luck.  
Oh, hey, sorry, I'm distracted.  
I haven't had jitters  
like this in years.  
Come on, man, that's the fun part.  
Relax. Relax.  
Think.  
Checkmate.  
Checkmate.  
Yes!  
Yes!  
All right.  
We have a problem.  
After reviewing some  
of your students' forms,  
it's fairly obvious that  
one of them was forged.  
Now, Linda over at registration  
alerted me to the fact that  
initially you didn't have  
some of these forms signed,  
so I took a look at them,  
and if you look,  
this one clearly was not  
signed by an adult.  
Now, you forged a consent form,  
and failed to submit any of the  
students' birth certificates.  
Can I talk to you for...  
I'm comfortable talking right here.  
Some of these kids  
don't have birth certificates.  
Everybody's got  
a birth certificate.  
Not where we come from.  
Then it's done.  
I'm sorry, but rules are rules.  
Alan wins.  
No.  
Wait.  
Eugene, that was



an absolute travesty.

A crime.

Wait.

Well, there's nothing we  
can do about it right now.

That's not necessarily true.

Why don't you and Tahime come  
on the air tomorrow morning?

State your case.

Get the word out to the community.

For those of you just tuning in,  
we are joined in studio

by Tahime Sanders

and his coach, Eugene Brown,

who were robbed

of a chess championship

this past weekend

at a local tournament.

Now, tell us,

Tahime, what happened?

Shed some light on this most  
egregious theft of a championship.

It wasn't theft.

Come again?

It was not theft.

The rules were the rules  
and we didn't obey them.

Mr. Brown,

I-I was there.

It is the job of Tahime  
and every, every person  
playing the game, black or white,  
to beat them at their own game.

Their own rules.

We didn't do that.

Mr. B, we won.

We can't change the rules, Tahime.

We have to learn  
to win within them.

That's what this is about.

But isn't creating a champion  
what this is all about?

No, sir.

No, it's not.

It's about learning  
how to play the game.  
It's about changing minds.  
And, in turn, learning about life.  
The championship  
isn't the end game.  
The championship is a byproduct.  
All right, then.  
There you have it.  
We'll be back in a minute,  
plus weather and traffic.  
What the hell is wrong  
with you, brother?  
You come down here  
just to sell your guy out?  
On the air.  
I was making a point.  
Yeah, well, you did that.  
Tahime.  
It's Mr. Brown, Tahime.  
What are you knocking for?  
Tahime ain't here.  
You're who?  
Eugene Brown, ma'am. I'm  
sorry to bother you.  
But your son comes  
to my chess house.  
Not anymore he don't.  
Please, Ms. San...  
Listen, you go on and  
hustle somebody else's kid.  
Selling my baby all them lies,  
he's going to be a chess champion.  
And he going to go  
to school for chess.  
You stay the hell away,  
you hear me?  
It ain't like that, Ms. San...  
I said, stay the hell away.  
Ms. Sanders.  
Ms. Sanders.  
Your son is the real deal.  
You need to come and see him play.  
Hear me?

I wasn't there for my kids  
and I regret it every day.  
Your son needs you.  
He needs you.  
Hey. Mr. B.  
What you doing up here  
at the Taj Mahal?  
Y'all seen Tahime?  
Yeah, he was with Clifton.  
They were around some other dudes  
in a car I've never seen before.  
He said he had a job  
or something about a...  
the rec center.  
Rec center, huh?  
I think.  
All right.  
Hey, y'all come by  
the chess house tomorrow.  
We're having a mini tournament.  
All right, Mr. B.  
Right.  
Tahime!  
Hey, hey, hey, y'all seen Tahime?  
No.  
I ain't seen him.  
You sure?  
Tahime who?  
Sanders.  
Come on, Tahime.  
Come on, baby.  
Come on, young king.  
Come on.  
Hey.  
I think Tahime is in  
some real trouble.  
It's amazing because you're so good  
at caring about other people's kids  
and completely incapable  
of caring about your own.  
Marco.  
Oh, hey, man.  
It's good to have you home.  
Marco.

Hey.  
Hey.  
Tahime.  
Where you been, man?  
Huh?  
You in trouble, son?  
For what?  
Don't "for what" me. I saw you get  
arrested outside the rec center.  
Man, I ain't get arrested.  
That was Cliff and some other guys.  
I thought you was with them.  
I was.  
I was in the car but...  
Once I found out  
what they was doing,  
I just thought before I moved.  
I'm glad you made  
the right decision.  
I guess.  
You know, everybody else  
says you're a phony.  
I know you're not.  
It's a bit much, son.  
Some of these players  
are rated 2,400 and up.  
But it's in the district  
and I want to play.  
For me and...  
Peanut.  
Well, come on in here and  
help me move these boxes.  
Yeah.  
Yo, it's Clifton.  
Clifton.  
Surprise!  
What's all this?  
What?  
You forgot your own birthday?  
How'd you know that?  
Ms. King and I spent a couple  
hours digging around city hall.  
No more disqualifications.  
This time we're going to beat

them at their own rules.  
Come on, T.  
Make a wish.  
Really?  
This place?  
Yeah, this place.  
All right.  
I'm going to go run some errands.  
I'll be back.  
Thank you, Katrina.  
First off, don't be mad at Trini.  
She wanted no part of this.  
I'm sorry I pissed away  
the best years of my life.  
And they weren't the best years  
because I was a young man,  
they were the best years because  
I hadn't ruined your trust yet.  
Man.  
I don't even know you.  
I'm-I'm trying to change that.  
I need you, son.  
I love you, Marco.  
I always will.  
No matter what.  
Hi, Ms. Reavis.  
Principal King said I can  
make an announcement?  
Attention. attention.  
I would like to announce  
our very own Tahime Sanders  
will be participating  
in the Eastern Champion...  
Open Chess Tournament  
this upcoming Sunday.  
Everyone is encouraged to come on  
down and watch him kick some...  
watch him dominate the competition.  
Oh, yeah.  
My man.  
I got somebody I want you to meet.  
Family.  
You good?  
I'm good.

You look good.  
This the boy you told me about?  
Yes, sir.  
This here is the chess man.  
Taught me everything I know  
right here in these walls.  
So, Tahime.  
You good, I hear.  
Real good.  
Unstudied, undisciplined.  
Talking to him?  
Big tournament, huh?  
You ready?  
As I'll ever be.  
Son, these cats are quick,  
you got to be quicker.  
And because of what you look  
like, all eyes will be on you.  
So you got to think tough.  
Huh?  
Now, this kid...  
J. Thomas Gaines...  
I wish I had a shot at him.  
I got me a list of his  
last 300 matches.  
Got it sent to me  
by a chess magazine,  
felt bad that I was all locked up.  
Free subscription for life.  
If you face off with this Gaines,  
he's got one particular move  
that leaves him vulnerable,  
almost without fail.  
Amazing how nobody found it before.  
But then again,  
nobody's got as much time  
on their hands as I do.  
So, listen carefully.  
You know he will relentlessly  
pound you with his queen.  
I know.  
Know what?  
Look, I appreciate all this.  
I really do.

I just...  
This is something  
I have to by myself.  
Respect.  
Anything else, then?  
You ever getting out of here?  
Only my mind gets out...  
every time I open up that board...  
every time I open up a bible.  
And it will be out when you are  
playing in that tournament.  
Tahime Sanders checking in.  
Okay.  
Put him in this section.  
Yup.  
Good luck, son.  
You recognize that face?  
J. Thomas Gaines, huh?  
The one and only.  
Hey, Tahime.  
Concentrate here.  
Women weaken legs.  
It's chess.  
What do I need my legs for?  
Concentrate here.  
Good afternoon. everyone.  
And welcome to the  
Washington, D.C. Chess Open.  
As is customary, please  
shake your opponent's hand.  
Very good.  
Now, start your clocks.  
Yes.  
You know you could've had him  
on the tenth move, right?  
Relax, chess man.  
I'm just getting warmed up.  
This guy is good.  
Mm.  
Can Tahime beat this guy?  
Well, he's been one of  
the best players  
in the country since he was 15.  
Anybody can be beat.

Even Gaines.  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
our two undefeated players.  
J. Thomas Gaines  
and Tahime Sanders.  
will engage in an  
Armageddon tiebreaker  
to determine  
our chess open champion.  
Gentlemen. good luck.  
Check.  
Hey.  
That's my baby.  
My baby.  
Thank you.  
You done good.  
Mr. Brown? My name is Danielle  
Norton with Urban League.  
Yes, ma'am.  
This Tahime, has he made any  
college plans yet?  
Because I'd like to help.  
I'll be in touch.  
Hey, that's the first time  
I've been scared all year.  
You ain't got to try and make me  
feel better. You know that, right?  
Trust me.  
I wouldn't do that.  
Ever.  
Hey, can I grab you for a  
quick photo over here?  
Mr. Brown.  
Ready, guys?  
Got to touch the king first.  
Dad.  
Glad you could make it.  
Yeah, well, you know.  
Thought I'd just check it out.  
I'm happy to see you, son.  
Let me show you around.  
All right.  
Boards.  
Next champions.



Back here we have the kitchen.