

November 5th, 2020

Dear Calvin,

Sometimes I wondered if that day would come when I could tell you that I was free, but as time passed that day seemed to never come and every time I saw you life looked different to me. Do not think I forgot about our talks which usually detailed what Tupac called THUG life and the times that we spent together. And if you asked me where I would be at this point in time, I did not believe that I would be a treasure of bones six feet under the ground.

Hey youngin' I think about you since the day I was able to hold you in my hands and cradle you back in fourth in my arms. Trust me I was scared at age seventeen, lost and gone, but when I saw you, I knew that you were going to be nothing but a charm. Maybe you would be a football player like I aspired to be or an athlete of some kind to continue my legacy. However, education seemed to be the way for you, a necessity that unfortunately was not a part of my reality.

Therefore, do not be afraid of thinking you're going to disappoint me because sometimes I felt the same when you had to see me leave with chains on my hands and shackles on my feet. Defeated is what I felt to say the least. I was lost in solitude trying to forge a way out, but every time that door closed—click—it felt like someone hit me with a knockout. I was upset, angry...no better yet disillusioned with the progress I thought I made. All I wanted to be was great in your eyes, but I was afraid that would not be conveyed. They may see me as a monster, a criminal, or a fluke. Yet you know me better than anyone that those thoughts are not true.

I was put into a position where I was not only a slave to the street game and a slave to the prison, but what got the better of me was that I was a slave to my mental state. A fate that I did not sign up for. Son I am sorry that this letter comes to you at my demise and that I could not cradle and hold you one more time. I am sorry that I missed your high school graduation, that I

won't be in the stands when you get your college diploma, won't be able to look your beautiful wife in my eyes or hold my grandchildren who will continue the Calvin Bell legacy that you'll leave behind. But know that despite the circumstances, I am still here by your side and even though this letter is short, I thank you for writing it through my eyes.

Sincerely,

Big Calvin