Common: [00:00] [Laughter heard in the background] This following podcast contains language that may not be appropriate for all listeners. Discretion is advised. This is Common, stay up to *Ear Hustle*. Peace.

[Beatboxing, soft buzzing synth underneath. Stops abruptly at 00:15. Then, ambient outdoor sounds—breeze, birds, light chatter—behind a saxophone. Lasts until 00:50.]

Rahsaan “New York” Thomas: [00:50] So how long you been playing the sax?

Terry Kitchen: [00:53] Right now? About two months. About two months. But before, I actually played when I was 14 years old, I was the lead saxophonist for the school that I was attending at the time.

New York: [01:05] So what happened between 14 and now? You didn’t play sax during that whole time?

Terry: [01:08] Actually, I was, you know, in some of the prisons down South that didn’t have a music program. Level four prisons: Tehachapi, High Desert. So I didn’t get to practice music.

New York: [01:20] So you were in jail since you were 14?

Terry: [01:21] Yes.
**New York:** [01:24] Wow. How many years is that since you played the sax?

**Terry:** [01:28] 18. You know, I can’t get out right now, but I’m slowly remembering, feeling the keys. When I have the saxophone in my hand and I’m blowing it, I’m creating music, I don’t know how to really explain it, but it makes me feel comfortable. I can just let go.

[Saxophone resumes, then fades out on an extended note. Theme music starts.]

**New York:** [02:03] You are now tuned in to *Ear Hustle*, from PRX's Radiotopia. I am Rahsaan “New York” Thomas, a resident of San Quentin State Prison in California serving a life sentence.

**Nigel Poor:** [02:15] And I’m Nigel Poor. I’ve been working with the guys at San Quentin for about eight years now.

**New York:** [02:20] And together, we’re gonna take you inside…

**Nigel:** [02:22] …and back outside. And this time, to a very surprising place. [Theme music continues] On this episode, we have a very special treat. We’re putting the music center stage, and we saved you a front row seat.

**New York:** [02:41] Today is all about the musicians of San Quentin and their songs, from the yard to the tier and beyond.

**Nigel:** [02:47] And at the end of the episode, you’re gonna hear about a super groovy *Ear Hustle* opportunity.

**New York:** [02:52] That’s designed for those that are musically inclined. [Nigel laughs, theme music ends.]

[Smooth, snappy R&B starts, fades underneath Nigel.]

**Nigel:** [03:20] So music is an important part of everything we do at *Ear Hustle*.

**New York:** [03:23] Absolutely.

**Nigel:** [03:24] Basically, the sounds of San Quentin are always a character in our stories, and that comes from the music made down here in the media lab.

**New York:** [03:31] There’s sound collages we make from recordings we take from all over the prison.

**Nigel:** [03:35] And from time to time, we even play full songs performed inside.
New York: [03:38] And today, we’re not holding back.

Nigel: [03:40] Oh no, we are not.

New York: [03:41] You’re gonna hear songs from start to finish, and the stories behind them.

Nigel: [03:44] So let’s start with the basics. I see a fair amount of instruments at San Quentin, like guitars, saxophones and stuff like that. And I assume you can order them but honestly, I don’t really know.

New York: [03:56] So you can get access to all kinds of musical equipment in two different ways. First, you can join a music program. They have piano classes, there’s a choir, there’s live bands, they have drums, guitar…

Nigel: [04:05] [Overlapping] That’s nice, there’s a lot of options.

New York: [04:07] A lot of options. But as far as what we can personally own, it’s limited,

Nigel: [04:11] So where do you actually get the instruments?

New York: [04:13] We purchase them. We order ‘em. The same package companies that sell us the food and the mp3 players and the hygiene, in the back they have a guitar, a ukulele, and a harmonica for sale.

Nigel: [04:24] Okay, alright, that makes sense, ‘cause I’ve heard all of those instruments in here. [Harmonica solo starts, fades underneath Nigel.] So guys can order instruments and have them in their cells. Or, if you’re part of a music program, you can get access to more stuff, like that saxophone we heard at the top of the show.

New York: [04:45] But if you can’t afford an instrument and you’re not part of the music program, you can always put it down like they did in the boogie down Bronx back in the days.

[Intense beatboxing starts, fades underneath Nigel and New York.]

Nigel: [04:59] This is Matthew Brown III.

New York: [05:02] But we call him Redbone. [Beatboxing comes back up to full volume.] My boy Redbone is a mouth music maestro.

Matthew “Redbone” Brown III: [05:24] [Stops beatboxing] And then see, I got a… [Resumes beatboxing] Garbage…

New York: [05:30] I mean he is loud, he be turnt up, you hear him all over the prison.
Nigel: [05:35] I do! I heard him when he was recording down here. People next door were like, “What?!”

New York: [05:40] My auntie in Queens heard him, Nige. [Both laugh]

Nigel: [05:42] Lucky her.

Redbone: [05:44] I got a nice little arsenal up in there man, you know what I mean? I got a little arsenal up in there, you know?

Nigel: [05:51] So Redbone uses music to tell stories about his past.

New York: [05:55] Music is most definitely a memory activator, and for Redbone, one of the things he misses is his bike.

Nigel: [06:01] This is his song “Two Wheels.”

Redbone: [06:05] [Beatboxing between phrases]

Two wheels
Two rolling wheels
That’s how you feel
Redbone chill
Got an idea
Cadillac grills
You know the deal
Two rolling wheels

My young riders, OG sliders
Popping their collar
Dripping like water
I thought I told y’all
Bicycle soldier
There is no other
Redbone lover

Two wheels
Two rolling wheels
Two wheels
Two rolling wheels

I can do the same thing rolling on two wheels
Two feet, ten toes, smashing up hills
I don’t really care, and who cares how you feel?
Redbone chilling baby, you know the deal
I carry loads
From a bike to a couch
Boxes and backpacks
Reputation got clout
You know my name
Build a bike from a frame
Nothing to lose, everything to gain

Two wheels
Two rolling wheels
Two wheels
Two rolling wheels

I can do the same thing rolling on two wheels
Two feet, ten toes, smashing up hills
I don’t really care, and who cares how you feel?
Redbone chilling baby, you know the deal

You know the deal
Ladies know the deal
You know the deal
Redbone chilling baby, you know the deal

[Cheering and fanfare in the studio. Redbone laughs.] That’s like one of my favorite songs, man, ‘cause I did actually everything. I would ghost ride a bike with one hand, I’d be riding on one bike, and I’d have another bike with the frame and the tires tied to my backpack. I’d carry heavy loads: tools, food, clothes, supplies, just riding around the streets of Riverside, just doing my thing on two wheels.

**Nigel:** [08:30] Man, I cannot get enough of him. Every time I hear him, I smile. He just makes me really happy.

**New York:** [08:35] And he’s not kidding about his love for his bike. He told us before he was incarcerated, he’d be riding around his hometown helping people in the streets that he knew.

**Redbone:** [08:44] I was riding around at night ‘cause I was doing my night thing, riding around, my boy Tennessee, a friend of mine who slept on the streets, he was sleeping on the ground. I was like, “Man, what you doing out here on the ground?” Five blocks ago, I seen a couch, just sitting out there, just something somebody put out there. I took the cushions out, shook it around a little bit, slammed it around, took the cuckoo bugs out of it. I stood it straight up, I found the center of gravity, I picked it up and threw it over my shoulder and dropped it on the beach cruiser and just smashed out. I brought it to him, told Tennessee, “Get up!” I slammed the couch on the ground, “Get up! I’ll be
back to bring you the cushions.” He was like, “Man, Hercules! Hercules! Are you serious?” That was the first couch. The second couch…

[Redbone fades out. Beatboxing, muffled speech, buzzy synth, Transition sounds. Then, a simple drumbeat.]

**Nigel:** [09:35] New York, when was the last time you rode a bike?

**New York:** [09:39] Ah Nige, it’s been decades. Sadly, there are no wheels, no rolling wheels at San Quentin.

**Nigel:** [09:46] Mm-mm. So, no bikes here at San Quentin. No curbs to hop, no corner stores to zip by, and no trash treasures to be found.

**New York:** [09:55] Yeah, we lose a lot when we come to prison. The list is long. And one of those things is our jobs. [Music stops]

**Nigel:** [10:00] And there are a lot of guys here at San Quentin who had established music careers on the outside.

**New York:** [10:05] Oh yeah, it’s quite a few.

**Nigel:** [10:06] Like Jeff Atkins, who was in that group…


**Nigel:** [10:10] Yep, that’s right. And he was in the first episode of season four.

**New York:** [10:13] There’s also the guy that wrote for The ChiLites.

**Nigel:** [10:14] Yep, I’ve heard of him.

**New York:** [10:16] Then there’s my boy Rated R from Tupac’s group Thug Life. But you know, there’s one resident here of particular significance to *Ear Hustle*.

**Nigel:** [10:24] Yes.


**Both:** [10:30] David Jassy. [Spooky synths start]

**Nigel:** [10:37] Jassy is a big part of our sound design team, and his music is in most of our episodes.
New York: [10:42] He got beats. [Music swells, trap beat kicks in, vocal samples are thrown into the mix.]

Nigel: [10:55] Jassy’s a busy guy. He’s in college, he’s in different groups, and he’s also a part of the San Quentin music program.

New York: [11:01] And one of the things he loves doing is collaborating with the young guys here at San Quentin. We call ‘em YOPs.

Nigel: [11:08] Again, everything in prison is an acronym, and YOP stands for Youth Offender Program.

New York: [11:15] Basically, if you’re under the age of 23 and you’re convicted of a serious crime in California, you are considered a youth offender.

Nigel: [11:22] If you are eligible for the program, it gives youth offenders a chance to come to a lower-level yard like San Quentin.

New York: [11:28] Instead of starting your time at a maximum security prison like a level four.

Nigel: [11:32] A few years back, a lot of YOPs came to San Quentin. And here, there’s a lot of groups and educational programming.


David Jassy: [11:43] A lot of these guys didn’t go to the programs. They went to certain groups, but they felt like they didn’t really belong there, because a lot of the guys in those programs were, you know, 40, 50, 60 years old, so they kind of felt outside. And I felt like, how can I contribute to the community in San Quentin? I felt like I really know the power of storytelling through music can reach younger demographics in a way that a regular group can’t do.

Nigel: [12:11] So Jassy decided to connect with the YOPs and offer them support through music.

New York: [12:16] And it all began on a tier in west block.

Jassy: [12:19] In the beginning, you know, we were basically just meeting by my cell. I had my keyboard and guys were outside my cell and we just started writing, and wrote some of the songs.

Nigel: [12:32] Sometime after, Jassy brought these sessions down to the media lab, where he’s been recording through the San Quentin music program right next door.
New York: [12:40] Right next door. We hear him all the time, “zippi da same a zippa boop bop beep…” [Nigel laughs]

Nigel: [12:46] Okay, we get the point! They are sometimes loud.


Nigel: [12:50] We’re gonna hear a song Jassy made with a YOP who goes by the name Dinero G. But first, let’s get the backstory.

Jassy: [12:58] Dinero G, who’s featured on this song, was 19 when he came to San Quentin. And he just told me the story about how his grandfather was in prison while his mom was pregnant with him, and she was only 13 years old. So we just started talking about the whole thing and how crazy that was, and so basically he’s talking about the generational trauma that happened, and how now he kinda wants to stop that cycle.

[Song starts: choral, wordless vocals, piano, a whooshing synth]

Dinero G: [13:28]

Mother on her knees and she pray, pray
For a better life for me, me
She got kicked out, I was on the way
She was only 13
And her father in prison
Who gon’ help when we hungry?
So my father quit school
Just to grind for the money

9 to 5, they work all the time
So I’d spend my days with my grandmother
Couple years later, now she ain’t alive
Couldn’t say goodbye, couldn’t say I love her
After that, see my friend die
I was 14, couldn’t believe my eyes
So every day I didn’t wanna live
I didn’t want no help, I didn’t wanna give

All I saw was sin
That’s all I ever got
Why shed a tear when I talked to God?
Do he hear me talk? Do he hear me when I pray?
Know I got better days, but ‘til then it ain’t the same
Do he hear me talk? Do he hear me when I pray?

Jassy:
It will never, never be the same, no
It will never, never be the same, no

Dinero G:

At 13, I caught my first case
Ever since then, it ain't been the same
Family say I changed, that I act different
All I felt was hate, so I never listened

Was brainwashed by the streets
The devil had me blind
I couldn’t see, I couldn’t think

My principal used to pick up me
And put me out of line, say I couldn’t eat
He treated me like I did something
Then told me I would be nothing

So many hard times, so many bad decisions
I know the fault is mine, but lord I ain’t a menace
So many hard times, so many bad decisions
I know the fault is mine, but lord I ain’t a menace

Jassy:

It will never, never be the same, no
It will never, never be the same, no

[Piano plays the song out, fades under New York and Nigel]

New York: [16:04] Nige, what he’s talking about in that song is deep. I mean he’s talking about having incarcerated family members, being raised by a single teenage mom, getting into crime at a young age.

Nigel: [16:15] Unfortunately, those situations are things that I’ve heard from tons of guys in here.

New York: [16:20] Yeah, I’m sure you have, ‘cause a lot of what’s in that song, that’s my story too.

[Silence, then a humming male voice.]

Nigel: [16:30] We’re gonna take a break here.
New York: [16:33] We’ll be back shortly with more music from San Quentin.

[Sax, finger snaps, and hip-hop beat kick in behind hums. Then, sound of running. Distant voice counts out “one, two,” and drums start, faintly.]

Nigel: [17:03] New York. When I walk into San Quentin, I always pass the chapel, and I have to tell you, I hear all different kinds of music coming out of that place, not just church music.

New York: [17:12] Yep, they got a choir up there and there’s a piano class.


New York: [17:17] And you know my Mexican compadres up there getting ready for Spanish Catholic services.

Nigel: [17:19] Yep, every week, a group of guys comes up and plays there. They have guitars, accordions, and…


New York: [17:50] And we had a ball.

Nigel: [17:51] Oh, I bet you did.

[Music comes back up]

Mexican Nationals Band: [17:52]

Hasta de aceptarás Cristo
Yo no podia ser feliz
Pues, a vi en el pecado
En triste…

New York: [18:07] One of the band members is a guy named Muratalla Sanchez.


New York: [18:13] And Jerry is nice on the guitar.

[ Ambient chatter, distant accordion.]
Muratalla “Jerry” Sanchez: [18:15] I have been playing guitar like when I was 12. I am 61, so you can deduct it. [Laughs] Almost 40 or 50 years.

New York: [18:26] We weren’t totally familiar with all the different styles of Mexican music, but Jerry was nice enough to break it down for us.

[Guitar]

Jerry: [18:35] This is ranchero. [Pauses, starts playing again.] This is corrido.

New York: [18:43] Do you have any original music that you wrote? Do you create your own?

Jerry: [18:47] Yes I do. I only wrote one song, and they call… esta canción se llama “Querido Amigo, Jésus Te Ama,” y es una cumbia.

Querido amigo, Jésus te ama…

[Song continues; transition music.]

White Eagle: [20:12] My spiritual name is Kwihnaï Tosabitʉ, which means White Eagle. That’s in my Comanche language.

New York: [20:18] White Eagle’s been incarcerated since the 1970s, but when he first came to prison, he didn’t have that name.

White Eagle: [20:25] Being that I grew up as an Air Force brat, I didn’t grow up with my culture. I knew grandma and grandpa were Indians, and I knew I was Indian, but I looked like a white kid. Come to prison, 18, 19 year old kid, I said, “Man, what am I gonna do with my life?”

New York: [20:40] So what White Eagle did is what a lot of us do when we come to prison: he grew up.

Nigel: [20:45] During that time, a chance encounter with music led him to see his place in the world in a very different way.

White Eagle: [20:53] I was sitting in west block in 1982 and my brother said, “Hey, you want some music to listen to?” And he had an 8-track of Carlos Nakai, probably the most famous Native American flute player there is. And he started playing and it just… I felt connected. Like a voice told me, “You’re home. You’re home.”

Nigel: [21:15] Since then, White Eagle has become a part of the Native American community here.
New York: [20:20] We’ve mentioned it in the past, but the first sweat lodge in American prison started right here at San Quentin, and White Eagle was here for that.

Nigel: [21:28] Today, you can see him coming from ceremony, wearing regalia and sacred beads.

New York: [21:33] He even carved himself a flute of his very own, and it’s all laced out

White Eagle: [21:38] These are two mountain eagle feathers. These are my tribal colors, the Comanche colors. Orange for the Creator, the green is for the Earth, the black ones are for the spirit. So just holding things like this, I’ll play this and connect it back to my ancestors, because they say we carry our DNA within us. No matter how far off track we got, we can always have that chance to come back on the track. [Ambient breeze sounds] We’re now out here in the natural elements, Creator and Mother Earth.


White Eagle [22:18] I’ll give this song in a good way. [Flute song starts]

[Transition music]

Nigel: [23:30] You know we heard from Jassy earlier, but there’s another big contributor to Ear Hustle. Part of our sound design team, Antwan Williams.

New York: [23:38] Antwan’s been working on Ear Hustle from the very beginning, and one of the things he does is sound collages like this. [Buzzing synth, crackling sounds, sound of metallic object being hammered, chopped up chatter.]

Nigel: [23:58] Antwan makes those composites from sounds he records in the prison. He also does music for our stories, and when he’s not working for Ear Hustle, he’s working on all sorts of projects.

New York: [24:08] Like collaborating with other musicians at San Quentin.

Nigel: [24:11] Which brings us to a song created by Antwan and Eric Abercrombie, but listeners might know him as Maserati E.

New York: [24:18] We talked to them about their song “Float Away.”

Anwtwan: [24:20] So “Float Away” is a song about being in a place or a space where you have no control over anything and you wanna be somewhere else, you wanna do something better.
Eric “Maserati E” Abercrombie: [24:32] Being incarcerated—not even being incarcerated, like bro said, just situations where you wanna get the hell up out of there. Mentally, physically, whatever it may be. Just wanna float away.

[Piano starts]

Antwan Williams & Maserati E: [24:48]

Can I float away?
See you living in a day and age
Where the heart and mind, they separate
Love will devastate you
How much can I take?
All I gotta say is can I float away?
Can I float away?

I look at life and all I got from it
Failures with some accomplishments
Growth after being buried
It’s nothing short of astonishing
Struggles I gotta buy with ‘em
People say we’re related
It’s probably because I come from a place where people don’t make it

But I got a feeling I might be one in a million
But I think it’s groundbreaking
No power tools for the drilling
I’m that crack in your ceiling
I’mma let the light in
Why live like someone else when it’s our own skin we die in?
Never lost my fight, I’m just changing where I’m fighting
And to get to the arena, it takes being open minded

Freedom, I’mma find it
And put my name on it
I know that I’m the key but I’mma break the chains on ‘em, yeah
So the cycle can end
Then I’mma donate my heart to be recycled again, yeah
It’s crazy, I found life in the pen
Without having life in the pen

See, you gotta know the places I been
To understand the headspace that I’m in
‘Cause this cage I’m in is manmade and it’s made for men
With space for every shade of skin
Where does grace begin for those overcame by sin?
Or lost souls never taken in?
See I can’t pretend to be okay with the state we in
Will the pressures ever make amends?
I highly doubt it

‘Cause we’re living in a day and age
Where the heart and mind will separate
Love will devastate you
How much can I take?
All I gotta say is can I float away?
Can I float away?

**New York:** [28:27] Newsflash!

**Nigel:** [28:29] In just a few months, Antwan and Maserati E are gonna be floating away themselves. They’re going home.

**New York:** [28:35] Yes. Go make that music on the outside.

[Transition music]

**Nigel:** [28:42] Now, while they might be leaving, many guys aren’t. And that means most of their music isn’t heard except inside.

**New York:** [28:49] But every once in a while, the music escapes.

**Nigel:** [28:56] This year, *Ear Hustle* had a very special opportunity to bring the voices of San Quentin to quite an unlikely venue.

[Low audience chatter, “Here he come, here he come,” “It’s about to start,” “No flash.” A harmonica solo begins.]

**Nigel:** [29:14] Recently, we collaborated with the folks at New York City’s Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**New York:** [29:18] The Met.

**Nigel:** [29:21] So this was the first time we did a collaboration like this. The Met commissioned a new work called “Songs from the Spirit” from New York City Ballet member Silas Farley. And Silas was looking for new music to choreograph to, so they reached out to *Ear Hustle* about collaborating, and we invited them to come out to San Quentin and explain the project in person. We had about 30 guys come into the media lab, do you remember this New York?

Nigel: [29:45] …and present their work. And out of that, they picked nine musicians to work with.

New York: [28:49] Nine good ones. [Live audio]

Calvin Johnson: [29:53]

I was blinded by the light
I was drawn out by the Christ
He said, “Give me your life and I’ll give it back”
She was blinded by the light
She was drawn drawn out by the Christ
She said, “Give me your life and I’ll give it back”
He was blinded…

Nigel: [30:14] We recorded all of the music inside, but by the night of the first performance, some of the musicians inside had been released from San Quentin, and they were able to come to the Met for the premiere.


Calvin Johnson: [30:35] Did you just see that? Did you just experience that?

Nigel: [30:39] Cal was one of the guys with us, and I have to say, he was super excited to be there.

Calvin Johnson: [30:42] Crazy awesome, bro! We just like made history. Come on, that was like an artifact right there. That’s crazy. I can’t believe that it’s happening. I can’t believe that I got out right in time to partake. And I can’t believe that my parole officer, when we only got a 50 mile radius, allowed me to travel almost 3,000 miles away. I can’t believe that I hopped on a plane for the first time. I can’t believe that I left California. God is good. Man. That’s how I feel. [Chuckles]

Michael Adams: [31:16] Amazing grace, how sweet the sound… [Continues under Nigel]

Nigel: [31:31] New York, it was amazing to be in a museum like the Met, and to hear the music from inside San Quentin, and watch Silas move through the space. It was beautiful and unexpected and it almost made me cry.


Nigel: [31:48] Yeah. I actually did cry. I had major boohoos in my eyes.
New York: [31:50] I knew it. [Both laugh.]

Michael Adams: [31:55] …how sweet the sound.

[Momentary silence. Then, guitar.]

Nigel: [32:04] One of the musicians we worked with was Charlie Spencer.


Nigel: [32:09] Yeah. And though we really wanted to take him to New York, he couldn’t go.


Nigel: [32:18] Which was great, and of course we’re really proud of him, but he couldn’t take time off of work.


Nigel: [32:24] But we wanted to play a song of his that was in the performance.

New York: [32:27] Here’s Charlie with his take on Eric Benet’s “Lamentation.”

Charlie Spencer: [32:44]

I saw my brother
He did me wrong
Had a gun up to my face
My money’s gone
I said, “Please don’t be that way
I’m just trying to make it through the day”
He said, “You better not come ‘round me
Before too long”

Love is crying
Love is dying
Love is crying low

I saw my sister
She did me wrong
I had a smile upon my face
But hers was so cold
I said, “Sister, please don’t go
I'm just trying to say hello”
She said, “You better not come ‘round me
Before too long”

Love is crying
Love is dying
Love is crying low

Love is crying
Love is dying
Love is crying low

Can’t you hear the cries from heaven up above?
Looking down upon this world of dying love
Hurry up and don’t delay
Before your chance to save the world is gone away

I ask my father, “Lord, what’s wrong?”
Through his tears I heard him say that I will be strong
‘Cause the world I’m trying to save
Doesn’t turn me away
But they better come ‘round my way before too long

Love is dying
Love is crying
Love is crying low

Love is crying
Love is dying
Love is crying low

[Applause, cheers.]

Nigel: [35:33] At the end of the night, Silas and his troupe danced to a song that David Jassy produced for our friend Maverick.

New York: [35:38] And I’m sure listeners remember Maverick from our boom boom episode.

[Sweeping trap beat]

Maverick: [35:43]

I love without rain
I trust in the rhymes…
**Nigel:** [35:47] Hundreds of people were gathered in a big circle around this beautiful fountain.

**New York:** [35:50] It sounds amazing.

**Nigel:** [35:51] Oh it was gorgeous. And it was so cool to watch those dancers and just know that the music was echoing throughout the museum.

[Applause, cheers.]

**Nigel:** [36:15] Alright New York, I kinda hate to say this ‘cause it’s such a cliché, but it really does seem like music brings people together. What do you think?

**New York:** [36:22] Yeah, it’s definitely true. At San Quentin we have these concerts on the yard, and it brings everybody out.

**Nigel:** [36:27] Yeah.

**New York:** [36:28] You’ll hear guys of different races playing together—rock, soul, R&B, jazz.

**Nigel:** [36:33] And everyone is so happy when there’s music out in the yard. I mean, I notice it whenever it happens. The vibe just completely changes.

**New York:** [36:39] Yeah they’re literally bobbing their heads, dancing in their seats, it’s just a magical moment. It’s like a party on the yard.

**Nigel:** [36:46] And while that’s happening inside, I love the way the music is connecting outside of San Quentin. Through the podcast, through collaborations with organizations like the Met and artists like Silas Farley, and it’s another way that guys in here are getting heard.

**New York:** [36:56] And their work is respected. I mean, they made the Met, Nige. [Nigel laughs] The freakin’ Met.

**Nigel:** [37:03] That’s right. And luckily, the whole event was filmed, so if you wanna watch the video and see the performance, we’ll have a link up on our website. [Rock instrumental: drum fill, guitar chord, sudden stop.] And now we’re gonna play a song from San Quentin’s very own rock band Continuum.

**New York:** [37:17] They’re a part of the San Quentin music program. They practice every week, and we recorded them up in the chapel.

**Nigel:** [37:25] This is their song “Lucky Guy,” written by bandleader Darryl Farris.

[Rock instrumental takes off.]
Continuum: [37:35]

I'm all growed up
When I see your face, I'm warm inside
Go to my happy place
Baby girl, what you gonna do?

Oh so cute
I'm 'bout to lose my mind
Take my hand
Come on and spend some time
Baby girl, make my dreams come true

I say I can't wait another minute
I can't take unless you're giving
You keep me talking all through the night
Oh baby girl, this is what you sound like:
Whoa whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa
Whoa whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa

You look so good
I often wish I could…
You look so good
I often wish I could…
Don't say a word, don't know why
Just look at me
I'm a lucky guy

[Instrumental continues under New York]

New York: [39:32] Thanks to all the guys who shared their music with us: Terry Kitchen, Redbone, David Jassy and Dinero G…

Nigel: [39:39] Jerry and all the Mexican nationals up in the chapel…

New York: [39:42] And shoutout to Jaime Acosta and Dwight Krizman who helped with the recording up there.

Nigel: [39:45] And thank you, White Eagle, playing that song for us out in the yard.

New York: [39:50] Yeah, that was nice.

New York: [39:54] To Charlie Spencer and to all the guys that were featured at the Met: congratulations, fellas.

Nigel: [34:00] And to everyone involved with the Met collaboration, Silas Farley and his dance troupe, Lee Mortomer, and Aaron Flaherty. Check out a list of all the musicians included in this episode on our website earhustlesq.com.

New York: [40:14] And you can hear a few of the songs that was featured in this episode.

Nigel: [40:18] Oh, you’re gonna want to do that.


Nigel: [40:20] [laughs] And we got Pat Mesiti-Miller here who’s got something to say.

Pat Mesiti-Miller: [40:25] Hey, I wanna send a special shoutout to everybody inside San Quentin making music that we couldn’t fit in the episode. We appreciate you.

Nigel: [40:31] Yes.


Continuum: [40:34]

Whoa whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa whoa
Whoa whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa whoa, whoa whoa

[Instrumental continues]

New York: [40:50] And much, much gratitude to Raphaele Casale for all the great work she does with the San Quentin music program. Keep the music playing, Rafi.

Nigel: [40:59] Go Rafi!

Continuum: [41:02]

Don’t say a word
I don’t know why
Just look at me
I’m a lucky guy

[Bass riff, applause]
And remember, dear listeners, we told you about a musical collaboration opportunity with *Ear Hustle* at the top of the show. Get ready for the details.

[End theme starts]

**Nigel:** [41:28] This, as you know, is our theme song. It was produced by Swedish phenom David Jassy, and over the years, it’s gone through a few versions, from the original one that was created by Antwan Williams.

**New York:** [41:38] And now we want you to make a version of your own.

**Nigel:** [41:40] Oh yes.

**New York:** [41:41] Remix! We’re asking you listeners to take a crack at a remix, a rendition, a redux of our theme. Give it a twist and make it yours.

**Nigel:** [42:00] Go to our website [earhustlesq.com](http://earhustlesq.com) and download elements of our theme song to make a version of your own. Then send it to us, and you might just hear it played on a future episode.

**New York:** [42:11] I can’t wait to hear what you guys come up with.

**Nigel:** [42:14] Me too. I would love to hear it on a harp.

[Plunky synth music]

**New York:** [42:20] *Ear Hustle*’s produced on the inside by myself, Rahsaan “New York” Thomas, Nigel Poor, John “Yahya” Johnson, and special thanks to Pat Mesiti-Miller for recording the music and producing this episode.

**Nigel:** [42:34] Our sound design team on the inside is Antwan Williams, David Jassy, and Rashid Zinnemann. Our outside stories are produced by Earlonne Woods and Bruce Wallace.

**New York:** [42:44] Erin Wade is our digital producer, Curtis Fox is our senior producer, and Julie Shapiro is our executive producer for Radiotopia.

**Nigel:** [42:51] We wanna thank Warden Ron Davis, and as you know, every episode has to be approved by this guy here.

**Lt. Sam Robinson:** [42:58] You know, I went back and forth about this episode, because I know there’s a genre you guys missed. There’s no country music in this episode, and it wasn’t very long ago that I had a group of NASCAR folks that I met up with, and they knew that I was from San Quentin, they’re like, “Dude, *Ear Hustle*!” And so for those people who were in the country genre, I gotta move forward, we gotta move
beyond this thing, I will say that (begrudgingly) I am Lieutenant Sam Robinson at San Quentin State Prison, the public information officer who approves this episode.

[Harmonica]

**New York:** [43:37] This podcast was made possible with support from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, working to redesign the justice system by building power and opportunity for communities impacted by incarceration.

**Nigel:** [43:50] We’re gonna have some of the songs featured on this episode up on our website, so be sure to check it out at earhustlesq.com, and be sure to follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @EarHustleSQ.

**New York:** [44:02] *Ear Hustle*’s a proud member of Radiotopia from PRX, a collection of the best podcasts around. Hear more at radiotopia.fm. I’m Rahsaan “New York” Thomas.

**Nigel:** [44:12] And I’m Nigel Poor. Thanks for listening.

[Harmonica finishes.]

**Redbone:** [44:19] [A cappella]

> Oh, my two wheels  
> And Chuck Taylors  
> Oh, my two wheels  
> And Chuck Taylors

[Beatboxes]

> I grabbed the mic and rapped into a trance  
> Everybody hit the floor and did the two wheel dance

**END OF EPISODE.**