4 Your Eyez Only

J. Cole

Yeah, for your eyes only (for your eyes)
For your eyes only, for your eyes only (for your eyes)
For your eyes onlyHey, niggas be dying on the daily
It seems my dreams faded for far too long, the consequences deadly
Can't visualize myself as nothing but a criminal
Control the block, serving up rocks and stay subliminal
'Cause young niggas is hardheaded, they letting off
Full of adrenaline, ignorant to what death can cause
Ain't no coming back, family dressed in black
Plus it's hot now, the cops outside, it's hard to flip a pack
And my daughter gotta eat
Her mama be stressing me like I ain't the one who put them Jays on her feet
Like I ain't out in the field like that
I might be low for the moment but I will bounce back
Despite the charges, back to the wall, I fight regardless
Screaming, "Fuck the law," my life is lawless
That's what you call it
Ain't got to be no psychic to see this is like the farthest thing from heaven
This is hell and I don't mean that hyperbolic
I try to find employment even if it's wiping toilets
But these felonies be making life the hardest
Resisting the temptation to run up and swipe a wallet
Or run up on your yard, snatch your daughter bike and pawn it
That's why I write this sonnet
If the pressure get too much for me to take and I break
Play this tape for my daughter and let her know my life is on it
(For your eyes) Let her know my life is on it
(For your eyes)
For your eyes onlyFor your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyes, do you understand me?
For your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyes, do you understand me?
For your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyes, do you understand me?
For your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyesYou probably grown now so this song'll hit you
If you're hearing this, unfortunately means that I'm no longer with you
In the physical, not even sure if I believe in God
But because you still alive

He got me praying that the spiritual is real
So I can be a part of you still, my pops was killed too
So I know how part of you feels
Maybe you hate me
Maybe you miss me, maybe you spite me
Life goes in cycles, maybe you'll date a nigga just like me
I hope not, I'm tired of dope spots
And fiends that smoke rocks
I've seen far too many niggas' hopes rot
I'm writing this because me and the devil had a dance
Now I see death around the corner, 'pologizing in advance
Don't know if I ever had a chance
At a glance, I'm a failure
Addicted to pushing paraphernalia
But Daddy had dreams once, my eyes had a gleam once
Innocence disappeared by the age of eight years
My Pops shot up, drug-related
Mama addicted
So Granny raised me in projects where thugs was hanging
Blood was staining the concrete
Older niggas I loved talked like they was above, maintaining a time sheet
That slow money, picked up the family business
By the age of thirteen, six years later was handed sentence
'Round the same time is when you came in this world
Me and your mama thinking, what the fuck we naming this girl?
I told her Nina, the prettiest name that I could think of
For the prettiest thing my eyes had ever seen, I was nineteen
Took me two felonies to see the trap
This crooked ass system set for me
And now I fear it's too late for me to ever be
The one that set examples that was never set for me
I'm living fast, but not fast enough
'Cause karma keeps on catching up to me
And if my past becomes the death of me
I hope you understandFor your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyes, do you understand me?
For your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyes, do you understand me?
For your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyes, do you understand me?
For your eyes, do you understand?
For your eyesIt's several ways I could've went out, too many to count
Was it the trigger happy crackers that the badges give clout
Was it the young niggas, blasting frustrated cause the cash running out
Niggas don't know how to act in a drought

See baby girl I realized, my definition of a real nigga was skewed
My views misshaped by new mixtapes
That confirmed the shit I learned in the streets was true
That real niggas don't speak when they beef with you
They just pull up on your street, let the heat achoo
And if a real nigga hungry he gon' eat your food
I was a fool, spent all my time ducking school, ducking cops
Ducking rules, hugging blocks that don't love you
I pray you find a nigga with goals and point of views
Much broader than the corner, if not it's gon' corner you
Into a box, where your son don't even know his pops
And the cyclical nature of doing time continues
My worst fear is one day that you come home from school and see your
Father face while hearing 'bout tragedy on news
I got the strangest feeling your Daddy gonna lose his life soon
And sadly if you're listening now it must mean it's true
But maybe there's a chance that it's not
And this album remains locked in a hard drive like valuable jewels
And I can teach you this in person like I'm teaching you to tie your own shoes
I love you and I hope to God I don't lose you
For your eyes onlyFor your eyes
For your eyes only
For your eyes
For your eyes only
For your eyes do you understand, for your eyesOne day your daddy called me, told me he had a funny feeling
What he'd been dealing with lately, he wasn't telling
I tried to pick his brains, still he wasn't revealing
But I could feel the sense of panic in his voice and it was chilling
He said "Jermaine, I knew you since we was children I never asked for nothing
When times was hard I never had discussions with you begging you to help me
I dealt with the repercussions of my actions
I know you tried to steer me 'way from that shit
But that shit was in my blood, you know my life
I know your Momma nigga, send my love
In case I never get a chance to speak again
I won't forget the weekends spent sleeping at your crib
That's the way I wished my family lived
But my granny crib was in the 'jects
I had to interject like, "Nigga what you talking 'bout? Fuck is you getting at?"
He said "Listen, I got no time to dive into descriptions
But I've been having premonitions, just call it visions from the other side
I got a feeling I won't see tomorrow, like the time I'm living on is borrowed
With that said the only thing I'm proud to say I was a father
Write my story down and if I pass go play it for my daughter when she ready
And so I'm leaving you this record for your eyes only, don't you ever scratch or disrespect it

This perspective is a real one, another lost Ville son
I dedicate these words to you and all the other children
Affected by the mass incarceration in this nation
That sent your pops to prison when he needed education
Sometimes I think this segregation would've done us better
Although I know that means I would never be brought into this world
'Cuz my daddy was so thrilled when he found him a
White girl to take back to Jonesborough with
'Lil Zach and Cole World barely one years old
Now it's thirty years later making sure the story's told
Girl your daddy was a real nigga, not 'cos he was cold
Not because he was the first to get some pussy twelve years old
Not because he used to come through in the Caddy on some vogues
Not because he went from bagging up them grams to serving O's
Nah your daddy was a real nigga, not 'cos he was hard
Not because he lived a life of crime and sat behind some bars
Not because he screamed fuck the law, although that was true
Your daddy was a real nigga 'cuz he loved you"
For your eyes only

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