

YOU HAVE THREE SAVED MESSAGES. FIRST MESSAGE

Hey, it's Ernie. I heard them again.

Okay, and hear me out -- I know you told me to forget about this cemetery stuff but it found me again. I was just minding my own business and it found me... So please don't hit delete on your machine. I'm at a payphone. I couldn't wait. Call me at home when you get this.

This is amazing. Okay.

We're keeping a record now, alright? I need you. For the record ... ON RECORD, okay ... because you know me, and you know I'm not...you know me. It's Tuesday, November 16, 1993. It's 8:27pm. I'm at the payphone at 6th and Waters Street Southwest. River calm, wind from the north coming in gentle -- Nope, no, getting lost in details again. Let me spin it from the top.

So I get off at Archives. Crisp, cool, good night to walk back down to the Wharf. Walking down, chewing my fruit striped gum. I know it loses it flavor it two seoncgs. taking it easy, listening to that new Tupac on the Discman, you know, "keepin' your head up" -- that gospel feeling, you know? "Keepin' your head up!" I'm walking past this red brick spot by the Capitol -- beautiful. Water feature. Really nice. And I'm feeling that vibe; I'm feeling ... transcendent, but connected, you know? And then right as they're coming in with the sample -- "Ooh, child, things are gonna get easier," you know, it cuts out. And for a moment I hear nothing, I think my CD just skipped or something and then something else fills my headphones, somebody else is singing.

It's classic like the sample but older ... way older. Bone deep you know the voice of someone who's passed through the veil. Like the wires of time get crossed. Or something.

Now I tried to walk away from it. I swear I did. I hit pause but the song kept playing. I pulled my headphones off but the song was in the air, like my own personal soundtrack. Whatever this thing is in wanted me to listen, it needed me to. So, I pull out my notebook and I try to get it all down on paper. It was like "ooooooooooooover Jordaaaaaaaaaan" ... no, I can't do that to you. I'm sorry. Listen, I wrote down the words I could catch: "over Jordan" ... "carry me to the campground" ... "river." That was over and over again. River. Riverrrrrrrrrrrr. Sorry. All the way home it kept ringing in my ear, though. River ... river ... river ...

And get this. I haven't even gotten to the crazy part. I came around the side of the building, maybe I could hear more, right? The place is called the Capitol Summerhouse. The SUMMERHOUSE -- you remember, I told you? Can't be a coincidence. Can't be.

This wasn't like when we met at the Shoreham, either. This time the voice was ... closer. That's the best I could describe it. Like, before they were whispering from across the room. Now they're standing right next to me.

It's connected.

I need you to be in this with me. I know we have our issues, but that night at the bar ... I thought ... I'm just sayin' I don't know what I would --

END OF MESSAGE.

SECOND MESSAGE

It's Ernie. They're here. In Southwest. They're coming to my home now.

Pick.  
Up.  
Your.  
Phone.

Guh, sorry.

Pick up if you're there. Pick up. Alright, just don't delete this. For the record, okay?

It's Saturday, November 20, 1993. It's 7:15pm. I'm at the payphone in Waterfront Park. Down from 4th and P. Near the houseboat. By the Titanic memorial. Standing with arms out like T. Dude kinda looks like Jesus on the cross, right?

Can you hear them? Gonna get as close as I can.

You got that, right?

It's gone... Just the regular ol' wind now.

I'm tired today. Just tired. I've been up these last few nights trying to piece together all the craziness since opening that letter. You've been telling me to stop messin with stuff but I can't. It finds me. Wherever I go, whatever I'm doing sooner or later it --

HEY! Hey -- get out of the water! It's not safe to be in there at night, I'll call the --  
Oh my God. HOLD ON. Hold on, I'm coming -- out --

HELP! Don't stand there, help --

END OF MESSAGE.

THIRD MESSAGE

Hey.

It's me. It's Ernie.  
Pick up the phone. Please.  
Come over?

For the record.

When I looked out on the river just now, I saw something that people tried to make me think I didn't see. But, I did.

For the record.

I saw ... I saw two people drowning out there tonight, okay.  
I saw two people fighting for their lives and no one jumped in to save them but me. And I was so mad. I was so mad about this world where no one notices.  
So, I kept swimming toward them. Moving my arms with rage when they got tired. But, the closer I got to them ... I swear, I SWEAR ... the further away they seemed. And when I turned around to call for help from the docks, I turned back to see that they were gone. Boom.

Please believe me when I say this: they didn't sink to the river bottom. I know because I could hear them, okay. They were ... they were gasping and pulling at each other with every gulp of air. It was overwhelming until it was suddenly gone.

I know the people who pulled me out think I'm crazy. But, I'm not crazy. They kept trying to tell me it was driftwood, but driftwood doesn't gasp.

Xavier, listen: it was a WHITE MAN and a BLACK WOMAN.

I think drowning would be the worst way to go. Your heart pounding outta your chest, swallowing water, disappearing into the dark... You know more than 1,500 people died when the titanic sank? I'm looking at that Titanic memorial. No idea why it's for the Titanic. Where is the boat? Or the women and children? It's just some guy ... You remember that story that Ms. Duncan would tell us in Sunday School? The one about Jesus in the garden? How Jesus was on his knees asking, praying, begging God for someone else to uhhh what was it? It was like he was asking for someone else to do it. To die. To uhhh... Take the cup! That's it, if the cup could be passed. I kinda feel like Jesus. Asking if this cup could be passed. That stupid letter. I should have left it alone. Seen it where it was and just left it. Unlike Jesus I wasn't chosen by God. I opened a box I can't close and now I got all this mess and it's just getting worse.

I found something floating in the water. I kept it. I don't know.  
It's in my pocket now.  
None of this makes sense ...

I need you to stay with me on this. Don't let me disappear into the dark.

I need you.  
It's so quiet.  
Too quiet.

END OF MESSAGES