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Supreme Mathematics

Prison changed him.

An inevitability.

You remember him. He was the man who caressed my back while talking to me about Asimov's *Three Laws of Robotics*, fractals, and the Human Genome Project. That's right, that's him, the man who got sent away for two years for computer intrusion.

The love of technology cost him his freedom.

Since he had no access to a digital life, he embraced the science of the Five Percent Nation – The Nation of Gods and Earths. It was the analog to his digital. The Supreme Alphabet and Supreme Mathematics, with their concepts of degrees and numerals is what attracted him.

One day, long after he`d been sent upstate, my phone rang. His beard was rough against the receiver, adding to the rawness of his voice. "The Fed, ain't no joke...no windows, no sun...TV, a recreation deck to occupy my time." I said nothing. His steady breathing took me back to a time when he made me breathless.

"I hate computers," he said.

"Why?" I asked. "Computers didn't hurt you, you hurt yourself," I said.

He hung up.

Sporadically, he would call like this, tell me about what was happening inside – mainly about his new science, and sometimes about his past. I was Clarisse Starling to his Dr. Lechter.

He told me how, when he was a teen, he was an arcade junkie, how he charged up a Commodore 64 to function like a supercomputer. "That was then, this is now," he would say.

What was now for him? "Knowledge, Wisdom, Understanding, Culture/Freedom, Power/Refinement, Equality, God, Build/Destroy, Born, Cipa – the science of Supreme Mathematics." He had become Science. That was his new name.

One day, according to him, he was talking Five Percenter knowledge with some of his boys when he used the word "amalgam." His boy went a little bombastic on him, asking, "How many nuhs know what that mean? That's that dumb ish." My man, not wanting to dumb himself down to spare others, decided to take a poll. Out of 10 cats, only one knew what amalgamation meant. "We did the math," he would later tell me. "Only five percent knew." Calculation was his new reality. "If it don't add up, it don't exist," he said over and over like a mantra.

Everything depended on calculation on the inside. You chose your fights carefully. "You have to know who to step to, to make you look good," he said.

Since he was a big man, he automatically earned a certain level of respect. The chess game, he said, was about beating out the right opponents at the right time in order to maintain cred.

Another measure of calculation he used was keeping his business private. "Never let them know what you care about. They could use it against you," he said. Of course this means no one ever really knew what he was doing time for. And somehow, he mastered his game of chess so well that no one was able to see that he was not a killer. Call it assimilation.

The rules of the game inside, he said, were, "You decide to be a predator, a diplomat, or you hide in the corners."

Now, what's the math on that?

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