

'THE CHOICE'.

(Based on 'One down, One up' by John Coltrane).

Have you ever had a moment when you can't decide? You know you have to make a decision, but you don't know which. Feel some sympathy for me, because I'm in that situation now. It's not like I haven't had to make tough decisions before. Which partner? Which job? This is different. It's about life and death. My life to be honest.

I really don't know where to start. How could I be so stupid? I just took a few drugs, illicit, I know; everyone does it. My parents' generation drink a lot, so what's the difference? None of them were given the awful choice I have to make.

You probably think I'm alone, don't you? I wish. If I was alone, I could lie my way out of this, blaming someone else. But I'm not. There's a man with a gun sitting just behind me, tapping it on his hand in impatience. And you know what, it just isn't my fault. I'm an ordinary guy, at least as ordinary as someone with my crazy hairstyle can be. What am I saying? I'm such a fool. This is no time for jokes.

'Have you made your mind up yet?'

'I'm just thinking. It's so tough.' The wheels in my head grind round and round, not the wheels of a bus this time. They're the wheels of a car, my car.

'You've got exactly two minutes.'

'Please, I'm getting there. This is crazy!'

'You have the number thirty-three in front of you. You can either go one up or one down. It's your choice. Just like you made the choice for my son. Most people I know wouldn't give you a second chance. I'm too soft. It's nearer one-and-a-half minutes now. Make the wrong choice and you're dead. This is about justice.'

Yes, I've got a choice to make. I didn't ask to be given that choice. I was driving really well, just normally, before those two stupid young lads ran in front of my car, one going one way and the other going the other. Okay, so I'd taken something. I mean, who hasn't? Which way was I to turn the wheel? How was I to know? Yes, I went left and I killed him, the son of the local drugs baron, the man sitting behind me now. I didn't want to kill his son, I swear.

He looks over my shoulder. Click!

'Fifty-fifty. Exactly the same choice you had before. Make the wrong one, and I'll shoot you dead. Same odds, same decision. Anyway, the time is up. Which number have you chosen? 32 or 34? You've gone one up. 34, the number on my front door. Thought you were being clever, did you? You're a fool! You're getting exactly what you deserve.'

I hear the click of the gun. The next thing I hear is the sound of a shattering window.

‘You are a very lucky young man. Not like my son.’