

***Earl*:** "The Talk That Walks, huh?" A voice rumbled from beneath the mound of dirty laundry on the bunk beneath Proctor. "What's that mean anyway, Proctor?"

***Digby*:** A black arm as large as my thigh snaked out of the pile, snagged a pouch of tobacco from the floor, and withdrew under the covers.

***Proctor*:** "Roll me one too, Earl,"

***Digby*:** Proctor tossed another candy to me as the shifting round mound shook the frame of the bunks.

***Proctor*:** "Means the man has the plan, if you got the scratch to match. He got the talk that will get you to walk. No matter the crime, you won't do no time."

***Earl*:** "Man, Proctor, how 'bout Jay Slick's crime? The judge gave him a dime.

"Here," ***Digby*:** the wide arm reached a smoke to the upper bunk and disappeared again.

***Proctor*:** "Look here, Earl, Jay was looking at twenty-five to life. Talkington got him ten with halftime. The Slickman's gonna be out next year, already. See what I'm saying?"

***Digby*:** Proctor widened his eyes at me.

***Proctor*:** "The Talk That Walks."

***Digby*:** "What did Slick Jay do?" I asked, a virgin in the woods.

***Earl*:** "Jay Slick," Earl said.

***Proctor*:** "They say, Mister Jay, he shot some dude." Proctor lit his smoke, blowing a long stream through the bars. ***Digby*:** We both stared at the cloud curling around the hallway ceiling fixture.

***Earl*:** "In church," Earl grunted. "Lot of folks pretty sure about him doin' it."