

# Whiz Kid

## CHAPTER 2



**Skrap was a smart student who got caught up in some dumb stuff. In his Senior year of High School, Skrap was charged with attempted murder and armed robbery.**

“Skrap, come on, you’re smart; you can help us do this.”

While Skrap was able to pull the grades, all he ever seemed to want was the Hood.

Growing up in South Minneapolis, Skrap lived the infamous double life. He brought kids to church every Sunday, but on Fridays, he would show up with bats and bottles at parties, ready to rumble.

Skrap would be figuring out how to get into Ivy League universities one week, then how to break into houses the next.

Now Skrap and his crew got the word that a local drug dealer had a \$100,000 locked in his car. That was a lot of pizza money. Together, they planned a scheme to break into the automobile. There were five of them in all, the youngest being only thirteen.

Clueless about what he was getting into, Skrap, as he was the oldest, was the designated driver. He also had the gun.

Another guy brought black gloves, hoodies and a duffle bag. Another had the code to crack the alarm at the drug dealer’s home; while the youngest would eventually have the task of ratting them all out.

But things went wrong; real wrong.

The money wasn’t in the trunk of the car as they’d heard but in the house. So they used the alarm code and broke in.

Skrap was surprised to find that the house wasn’t empty; the drug dealer and his daughter were home. Panicked, they started beating the man, almost to death, in front of his child.

If this wasn’t bad enough, the guy happened to be the brother of the County Attorney. It wasn’t supposed to happen like this. Breaking into a car escalated into armed robbery and assault.

It took about a week for the police to catch up with him. The youngest of the five had turned them in to the authorities. Skrap's arrest was drama, with a capital "D".

It happened at a High School football game under the bright, Friday night lights. The cops came right onto the field and hauled Skrap off.

Goodbye Ivy League; goodbye Scholarship. Hello three hots and a cot.

Over the next few months, Skrap was locked up in what he referred to as "kiddie jail", or a "juvie home". However, kiddie jail was no Chuck E. Cheese. Kids went crazy in those places, so that they wouldn't rot behind bars; and that took a lot of imagination.

Things as innocent as shoe strings weren't allowed because the kids could figure out how to either use them as weapons, or to hurt themselves. They would even head butt the concrete, trying to break their necks or smash their brains.

The seriousness of the mess Skrap had found himself in hit home when he was presented with the charges against him.

18 years in prison.

6, 556 days.

More time would be spent behind bars than Skrap had even lived.



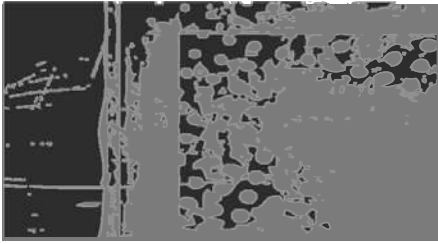
**"My parents took a second mortgage out on the home to get me a lawyer. I was crazy. It was crazy. All of my dreams and hopes at that time went away. At your first hearing, if you hear 18 years, that's the end of the road."**

Skrap's dad wanted to kill him. His son would be wearing an orange jump suit and shackles in a State Penitentiary, instead of a pinstripe suit and wingtips. His Mom kept on praying.

While his dreams evaporated in juvie jail, it was behind bars that Skrap started to take God seriously.

The guy in the cell next to him was a hard-core Muslim, named Jameelah. At night, Skrap and Jameelah would discuss their faiths by talking through the air vent. Jameelah would have his Koran, and Skrap his Bible.

Although he didn't have anyone behind bars to push him to study, Skrap took it upon himself to get to know God's Word.



**"I didn't have anyone but myself to figure things out. This really solidified my faith. I needed to take full ownership of faith."**

Once Skrap got into the Word, he started to grasp what he'd got himself into. He did not want to be that person any more.

His youth Pastor, a skinny farm boy from Iowa, never gave up on Skrap. He kept on visiting him, and even brought him Communion. But he never let Skrap off the hook; he never minced his words.

"You broke into a house and almost killed a man in front of his own child. You could have walked away."

God never let Skrap off the hook either, and put it on Skrap's heart to apologize to the man they had beaten and tried to rob.

As Skrap got into the Bible, the Bible started getting into Skrap. He started thinking, "I got to do something highly unusual. I got to apologize."

His lawyer thought he was insane as that would guarantee a Guilty verdict. Everyone counseled him against it.

Finally, after months of juvie jail, Skrap's court date arrived. His lawyer said, "I have great news! If you plead to lesser charges and don't say anything, you can get seven years."

Seven years didn't sound like a great deal to Skrap. Deal, or no deal?

God had told Skrap to apologize, and although the Judge had offered him a deal, all he could think about was that apology.

The drug dealer showed up in court with his face all wired together. He looked like a cross between a hippie and a vet hit by a piece of shrapnel from a CNN report. In short, he looked dreadful, and Skrap felt awful.

The victim railed into Skrap, wishing he would rot in hell because Skrap had ruined his life and traumatized his daughter.

Meanwhile, Skrap concentrated on the voice he heard inside, knowing it was his chance to apologize.

"I can't justify what I did; all I can say is that I'm sorry."

The apology had little effect on the victim. He didn't run up and hug Skrap, saying it was ok, like something from a Disney movie. But the apology did affect the Judge. The Judge turned to Skrap and said, "I'm not gonna lock you up. I'm gonna make your life hell. House arrest, fines, parole, any other violent crimes, do not pass go, go straight. If you walk the straight and narrow, things will be cool."

Skrap never looked back on the Hood life – he walked the straight and narrow, right to the doors of Bible college. The same one his parents had attended.

He continued to press himself to learn more about Christ – something that no one forced him to do, but Skrap alone, as Skrap’s youth pastor would say. He walked into it. He has a brain on his shoulders, and it’s his choice whether to do good or bad.

To this day, Skrap thanks his Muslim cell mate for his die-hard Christian faith. Yet Skrap knows that it’s up to him to study the Bible – it’s his choice.

## **SKRAP'S PASSAGE**

*“My life verse was written by David while feeling Saul.”*

*I love the LORD, for He heard my voice;  
He heard my cry for mercy.*

*Because He turned His ear to me,  
I will call on Him as long as I live.*

*The chords of death entangled me.  
The anguish of the grave came upon me;  
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.*

*Then I called on the Name of the LORD:  
“Oh LORD, save me!”*

*The LORD is gracious and righteous;  
Our God is full of compassion.*

*The LORD protects the simple hearted;  
When I was in great need, He saved me.*

*Be at rest once more, O my soul,  
For the LORD has been good to you.*

*Psalm 116: 1-7*

## **Avocaduh!**

Did you know that your brain is roughly the same size and texture of a large avocado? It weighs about 3 lbs and contains one hundred billion brain cells.

That’s a lot of guacamole. What you do with it is up to you.