# Chapter 9: 16

“Sixteen ain’t enough.” — André 3000

Sixteen ain’t enough. It never was.

Sixteen bars can’t hold this heat. Sixteen minutes in a session can’t build a real player. Sixteen games can’t define a season. Sixteen years of life can’t prepare you for what the world might take from you without warning.

Sixteen is too small. And I’ve lived too much to pretend it’s enough.

I came up in a system that taught me how to perform, not how to feel. I learned to execute without expression. To win without wonder. The court gave me a stage—but not a voice. And I took that deal for years. I played my part. I did what I was told. And it worked. Until it didn’t.

Until Max.

When Max relapsed for the last time, nothing else mattered. Not legacy. Not optics. Not pride. Just life. Just breath. Just whatever it would take to give him a chance. That’s what snapped it all into place. That’s when clarity stopped being a concept and became a way of life.

We lined up an Airbnb in Texas. The world had shut down. COVID was everywhere. But I didn’t care. We had a private jet on standby. I would’ve flown him across the country if it meant he might live. That’s how far I was willing to go.

So when I coach now—when I speak now—I speak from that place. From the fire. From the fracture. From the belief that if I could give Max that much for another chance, I can give these kids something better than just drills and data.

Max Potential wasn’t built for clicks. It was built to keep kids breathing. It was born in pain, not polish. It came from watching too many players fade into silence—gifted, smart, beautiful kids who never got the space to become because we were too busy scripting their steps.

That’s why I found CLA. Or maybe CLA found me. It didn’t change me—it named me. It gave language to the gut instincts I had carried for decades. It showed me that structure isn’t the enemy—but control might be.

The way I coach now? It’s not soft. It’s sacred. It’s designed. Every constraint. Every cue. Every session. I’m not just running practices—I’m building spaces for becoming.

And I know people still don’t get it. They think I’ve changed. They think I’m doing too much. They call it chaos. But it’s not chaos—it’s context. It’s clarity under construction.

I’m not here to win arguments anymore. I’m not here to be understood by those who refuse to see.

I’m here to catch the kid before the silence does.

I’m here to rebuild trust between kids and their own brilliance.

I’m here because Flipper didn’t hold his nose. So why should I hold my tongue?

I’m still spitting. Still speaking. Still building.

Even if it’s messy. Even if it’s unfinished. Even if the industry still thinks I’m wrong.

Because this? This is real.

Sixteen ain’t enough. But it’s a start.