
FELONY
PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE FIRST YEAR OUT

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"They gave me back my hands.
Everything after that was mine."

FELONY

Photographs from the First Year Out

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First edition.

PLATE 01

RELEASE DAY

Three years I planned what I would say walking out of there. Then the gate opened and there was nobody to say it to. Just a parking lot, and a paper bag with my mother's watch in it. I stood there long enough that the guy in the tower got bored of me.



PLATE 02

BUS STATION, 2 A.M.

Twenty-one hours to Bakersfield with one change in the middle of the night. I slept sitting straight up, because that is how I had slept for three years and my body did not know another way yet.



PLATE 03

WAITING

Somebody said they would come get me. They did not. I gave it forty minutes, which is thirty-five more than I would have given anybody before.



PLATE 04

FIRST APARTMENT

A door that locks from the inside. That was the whole selling point. I stood at that sink most mornings for about a month, just because I could stand wherever I wanted to stand.



PLATE 05

TUESDAY

You learn to love the boring parts. Nothing bad has ever happened to me in a laundromat.



PLATE 06

COFFEE, NO FOOD

Two hours, one cup, every morning that first winter. They let me sit there because I tipped like the table was rent. I was not lonely exactly. I was practicing being around people again.

FELICIA



PLATE 07

THREE IN THE MORNING

I do not sleep much. Never did inside either. Out here at least the noise is traffic instead of doors.



PLATE 08

NYLON STRINGS

Always this first. Whatever I am about to do to a room later, it starts here, with the thing they put in my hands when I was six years old. Everybody wants the story about prison. The real story is scales, four hours a day, since before I could read.



PLATE 09

THE NECK TELLS YOU

You can learn everything about a guitar from the neck. Straight, honest, or lying to you. Same as people. Difference is a guitar you can fix.



PLATE 10

TWENTY MINUTES OUT

Restring, tune, tape the finger, wait. The show is maybe twenty percent of the night. The rest of it is this.



PLATE 11

NINETY PEOPLE

Low ceiling, bad monitors, floor sticky enough to pull your boot off. Best room I have ever played. When it is that small you are not performing at anybody, you are just loud in a room with them.

FELICIA



PLATE 12

ELEVEN MINUTES

She told me the whole thing while I signed. Her band, her stepfather, all of it. Took eleven minutes. I have nowhere to be. Somebody stood there for me once and I have not forgotten what it cost them.

FELICIA



PLATE 13

PLAYED THROUGH IT

Everybody played through it. Nobody dies from wet. Then you walk off and the adrenaline quits on you all at once and you are just a cold person carrying a heavy thing.



PLATE 14

THE EMPTY HOUSE

Big rooms scare me worse than small ones. All that gold and nothing in it yet. You hit one chord and it comes back at you a second later like the building is answering.



PLATE 15

PAST THE FIRST TWENTY FEET

The lawn goes all the way up the hill and you cannot see a single face past the front rail. So you stop playing to people and start playing at the dark. It is not worse. It is just a different job.



PLATE 16

NOBODY EXPECTING ME

No curfew, no count, no check-in. Nobody expecting me anywhere at any hour. That took longer to get used to than the food did.



PLATE 17

BAKERSFIELD

My grandfather worked oil out here. Same heat, same road, same nothing. I like it. This town has never once pretended to be something it is not, and I have a lot of respect for that.

FELICIA



PLATE 18

WEATHER

Three years I did not stand in weather. Not once. Everybody expects me to have cried about something else. It was this.



PLATE 19

I AM NOT GOING TO EXPLAIN THIS ONE

He had it coming and I only did the windshield. Three years taught me exactly where the line is, and I will tell you honestly that knowing where it is has never once made me want to stay behind it.



PLATE 20

BREATHING, NOT AIMING

My uncle taught me when I was eleven. Said it is about breathing, not aiming. That turned out to be true of almost everything, including the part I do for a living.



PLATE 21

HE DOES NOT CARE WHAT I DID

Best conversation I have all week. No questions, no opinion, no article he read about me. Just a big animal deciding I am all right.



PLATE 22

FULL OUT

Fastest I have ever gone with nothing between me and the ground. I laughed the entire way, which I found out afterward is not what you are supposed to do.

FELICIA



PLATE 23

WHAT I WAS TRAINING FOR

Inside, I did pull-ups on a door frame for three years because there was nothing else to do with my arms. Turns out I was training for something. I just did not know it had a name yet.



PLATE 24

FOUR HOURS UP

Four hours up, ten minutes sitting here, four hours down.
Worth it. I could not tell you why and I have stopped trying to.



PLATE 25

BEFORE ANYBODY IS AWAKE

No engine, no amp, no people. I come out here when I can feel myself getting mean. It works about eighty percent of the time, which is a better average than anything else I have tried.



PLATE 26

E MINOR

Two fingers and it sounds sad, and nine-year-olds love sounding sad. He will quit inside a month. Or he will not, and in fifteen years he will tell somebody a woman with jailhouse ink on her arms sat down on a step and showed him.



PLATE 27

THE PART THEY COULD NOT TAKE

Everything I actually know how to do, I can do sitting on a log with no power and no audience. Six strings and two hands. That is the part they could not take, and believe me, they went looking.



COLOPHON

Twenty-seven plates, sequenced chronologically from the morning of her release. Text set in Noto Serif; display type in Noto Sans Display Condensed. Printed for CS SOBO GROUP LLC.

Felicia stands five feet eight. She was classically trained on a nylon-string acoustic from the age of six and was bound for conservatory at sixteen. At eighteen she threw one punch in a street fight and served three years. She was released on her twenty-first birthday.

She has never given an interview.