

QUINTIN

March 24, 2010

I was always told that I wouldn't be anything, just like my dad. I always told myself I would not follow in his footsteps. Everybody says we look alike, and that I acted just like him growing up. To me the only thing we have in common is looks, that's it. My family is big and out of all of my family my sisters tell me I'm going to be something if I just leave the streets. When my sisters write me they tell me to take a look at my mail and who puts money into my account. I do, and I realize that's who is going to be there for me, not my homeboys or the people that I was around. I tell my sisters I'm going to get out and fix my mistakes. Being in jail makes me think about my brothers and sisters. I want to be the one they can come to with a problem. I want to fix their problems, but I can't if I'm in and out of jail. I want my brothers and sisters to look up to me for the good things not the bad. It would feel good to me to take care of my mom, to buy her a car or pay the rent. I want to be her first son to make it in the world and then help my younger ones to try to do the same. I would like that.

Being here I could say my motivation is my sisters and my girl. My inspiration is to be successful for them. If I want to be a failure I can live in the streets.

Living in the Roc is struggles because a lot of parents let their kids run wild and let them do whatever, until one of their kids comes up missing or dead. Then you hear them on the news saying how good their kid, he or she, was. Parents should be parents and stop trying to be their kids' friends before it's too late. I hate to turn on the TV and hear another youth got killed. Everybody wants to be something that they're not. They are too scared to back down from a challenge because of what the next person might say. To me life is full of challenges. I know I have to learn to walk away or find a better way to deal with them. If not then I'm going to find myself in a bad situation. I wonder how parents feel when they don't know what and where their child is, and next thing you know the child is dead in an alley in a puddle of blood. Is it ever going to end I wonder.

March 28, 2010

I like to write because it helps me to express my feelings. It is easier to write to get out stuff than to talk about it. Writing also takes my mind off the stressful things. It makes my time and day go by fast, and it stops me from thinking about what the judge is going to do or say when I get court again. I think about what's going on in the world on the outside. Sometimes I try to sleep all day but I can't. Doing the same thing everyday makes me want to be a locked in. I wish I could have a big plate of home cooked food, lie in a big bed, and chill with my friends again. I ask myself was it worth it. My favorite saying is everything happens for a reason. I just have to learn from my mistakes.

April 1, 2010

The judge said three and a half. The only people in the courtroom were my family and me. I looked back to see the tears in my sisters' eyes. It made me want to cry. Being locked in all I can think of is the tears that rolled down their faces. Tears began to roll down mine. I think about them, and about it being my first offense. I thought about the night I came here. I was with my girl. On my home from her house she gave me a kiss and said I love and call me when you get home. I was about to call her when police walked through the door and handcuffed me.

I'm ready to cop out to the three and a half, but I am still thinking. My sisters are stressed out. I tell them its okay. I pray at night that the judge gives me a county year or a one to three. I will see on April 20th. I hope I can get another chance and do better. I want to do better. Jail is like a dog being in cage because I feel like I am an animal. I'm told when to eat, sleep, and what to do. I just wish there was a better way. Now I just wait and see what the judge is going say.

April 15, 2010

Why do I write? I want to express my feelings. It is easier to write than to talk about feelings. I want to show that I am more intelligent than I show, and I want to let people know a little about me and my background. I write to talk about my everyday struggles. I write to let my words do the aggressive work instead of my hands. I write because my words won't get me into as much trouble as my actions did. I let my words do the fighting and pen do the writing. There's more that meets the eyes in me, you just have to find it. Writing is a good way to find it. This is why I write.

I want to write a letter to my sisters. I want to tell them I wish I could be home. Did I have to commit a crime? I want to know if they think I'm a bad person now or do they think of their big bro who made a mistake. We have been through good and bad times, and I think we'll make it as long as we have each other and stay strong. I want my sisters to know when I come home I have to change, for them and most of all for me. Sometimes I ask myself why isn't our father in our lives. This is a letter to all my sisters.

KHYRI

My name is Khyri Caldwell, and I live in Rochester, New York where a lot of black kids die either on the corner or in jail. When I say kids I mean the ages twenty-one and under dying because they made one mistake. See me I'm in jail because I made one mistake in my whole life. Now they are trying to give me five years. See they did not know I saw my brother die right in front of my face. This is real stressful because not only are they are trying to give me five years but also because my other brother is in prison doing seven years and my mother is taking care of his baby. My mom has me in jail, my brother in jail too, and she is taking care of his baby, and my big brother just died on July 22, 2009

Dear Brody,

Right now I'm facing five years without my Y.O., but with my Y.O. I'm looking at anything between five years probation or like I said five years upstate. I'm not really trying to go upstate because then I will be twenty-three and our little brother will be twenty-two and our niece will be eight years old. I can't really be away from our family for a long time. So in the meantime I pray everyday that God will give me a second chance so that I can change my life around and set a good example for our little brother and niece. I miss real food. I mean we're not eating fake food but it's not what I would choose to eat everyday, and some of the food is half cooked.

I am.

I was.

I'm going to be

eighty-six days in jail
Some days it is too hot in my cell.
I think about my family knowing I'm not going to see them for a minute. It makes me think I am in Hell.
I am just a kid trying to be a man.
Some people gangbang but they don't really understand.
I was just a young boy.
I tell myself everyday I need to go home and get some rest.
I look around my cell; all I see is a bed and desk.
I get lost in my dreams because I'm in jail
thinking about my family and why this reminds me of Hell.
I pray to God everyday that He will give me that second chance.
I'm trying not to die in jail.
It was me on the corner watching out for the 5.0, and
now I'm struggling in jail trying for Y.O.
We should all get together.
Now it is 2010, and there are more brothers in jail, more then ever.
It's pain, tears, and an empty soul, that's what's inside of me.
Why? Can I blame all this on the society?

Dear Louis Desha

This is your little homie. I just want to tell you
I was locked up for a minute in jail.
The judge was real nasty. He didn't even give bail.
I write all this down on paper.
Why, because I remember our first basketball game. It was the Celtics and the Lakers.
I remember you used to be No Limit. I used to be Cash Money
We used to make the paper chains. You used to be so funny.
It hurt me that we got into a fight before you passed.
The love between all six of us will always last.
Pain tells me to go kill that bastard.
The image in my head is of you dead in that casket.
It's crazy you didn't even get to see your own born baby.
We used to ride listen to max. We used to be so wavy.
I know you're in heaven talking to G.G.
Right now I'm in my cell by my door trying to watch some TV.
I' not going to front on you scrap, you deathly knew how to thumb.
But one thing you always tried to do is crumb.
I remember Kenya used to come to the pad.
It's crazy how people don't know us anymore, buzzing now that you're dead.
I'm going to pray for you homie. We had so much love for each other.

Who I'm praying for is that dude who got shot.
That dude is my brother

What I just said that's what's going on in the Roc.
Man! Every single day I'm trying to make it to the top.
I'd rather make it to the top than be on the block

because then either I'm back up in jail or my black ass will get shot.
I love my family too much to lose my life in the streets.
My mind was thinking negative like how I'm going to eat.
I'm stuck up in jail how am I going to sleep.
My brother Shy, love was fighting the best.
We fought a lot but at the end of the day we always got along.
It's crazy that I have to scream R.I.P Shy at the end of this song.
So for that I feel a little down for my brother,
knowing all six of us will still be with each other.
If I see the dude who killed my brother I know I have a choice.
I want to live.
When we all leave this world we have to have a brother meeting in heaven.

R.I.P. Shy

I love you Brody we all miss you buzzing.

Me in jail,
my first impression of losing my freedom
is like hearing people say you are not leaving jail
and I knew I would be here for more than a minute.
It made me feel like I would never see my family again.
And now I'm thinking about the first thing I'm going to do
when I get home.
I'm not going to do the same things I did before I came here.
NO! I'll change my ways for myself and for my family that loves me so very much.
I see my family's faces every time I sleep,
every time I sit in my cell for three hours.
I think about why did I put them in such a predicament like this.
What can I do to change?
I hate being in a cell for three hours and only getting one hour of rec.
The food taste like plastic, and the drinks taste like old apple juice.
In my cell, like the more I think about my family
the walls start to close in on me.
It seem like the more I think about time it goes a second slower.

R.I.P Shy

Yo! Brother jail so stressful, it's like being in here makes me feel like I am in a recreation center because I see a lot of people playing ball, spades, chess, checkers, and more. The stressful part is that I am in a cell nineteen hours a day, and I eat the same food everyday and sometimes the food is only half cooked. The deputy gives forty-five to fifty minutes out of an hour. Sometimes they take a half an hour away for not putting up our chairs or locking in late. Even more stressful is not seeing my family for a long time, and I don't know what's going on in court or how long I am facing. They talk about giving me five years, and if not seven to nine years upstate. That will kill me knowing I can't see my family for that long. I won't know what to do. I might get my G.E.D and take college courses. Five years is a long time to think about my future.

R.I.P. Shy

Seeing you, my brother, die on Remington and Boston made me feel like I won't make it to twenty-five. The reason why I say this is because seeing people die that used to be on the corner or go to jail before they hit twenty-five years old makes me feel like I'm going on the same path. It makes me feel like we have no future in Rochester at all.

Just Writing My Thoughts

When I'm in my cell I don't know what to do, either I'm too hyper or I'm too sleepy. I miss home so much. I'm starting to think about the time I could face, and it has me worried a lot. But like I said I can't do anything about it. All I can do is wait and believe in God because lately I have not been doing that and that's why I'm worried. Maybe if I have a little more faith I will make it through this in no time. All I can do is think about Shy, my case, friends, and most importantly my family. It's like if I do five years everybody is going to be grown, and I'm going to feel like I missed out on a lot. When I came in here J'lyne and Zynina were 17 and 2. When I get out J'lyne will be 21 and Zy will be six or seven years old. That's crazy.

And mom I know you don't want to talk about this but do you ever think like if Shy was still alive would stuff be different or the same. Me personally I think different cause if Shy was here I wouldn't have been on Remington. I would if been with him somewhere riding around. When I think of Shy I always see Shy smiling like when he's playing or listening to music. I think what will the world be like if I was dead, the same probably. Family and friends cry for a couple of days and go back to normal like they did Shy. The only ones still thinking about him is us cause we were all he had. Could you believe he died four days before my b-day? Imagine how I felt on my b-day. Mom, it hurt you more but to me like I never thought my brother would die. Like it's weird even until this day I'm one out of five. One of us is now dead.

Sometimes I think if I do five years one of my brothers is going to go before me. Mom, if that happen I'm going to go crazy, not like stabbing people, like crazy in the heard. I can't be as strong as Sidy. I love my brothers with all my heart and that will just drive my crazy. Just know we have to leave this world. I ask myself which one going to go next. I hope we all die of age.

Letter to Myself, Part One

Why?

Why do you lie?

Why do you look for trouble?

Why did your brother die?

Why did you have to hear that call saying your brother is in the hospital and he has been shot several times?

Why is Ms. Dale Davis trying to get your voice heard?

Why do some teachers want you to get kicked out of their classes and then pass you?

Why when white people walk down the street that's a group but when blacks or Hispanics walk down the street it's a gang?

Why does Ms. Dale Davis act like she knows what you're going through but she doesn't?

Why are these questions roaming through your head?

Why are you better at writing rhymes than an essay?

Why is school not your hobby?

Why do you feel like you're a man but your only eighteen years old?
Why are there people dying under the age of twenty-five? Why!
Can you ask yourself why?

Letter to Myself, Part Two
Answer!

Because sometimes if you tell the truth you'll still get in trouble.
Because sometimes trouble comes looking for me, so I look for it first.
All because some dude lost a fight and started shooting.
I personally don't know that answer. No mother, brothers, or sisters
should hear that their son or brother is dying.
Can you or anyone else that can stop that from happening?
I think she is letting us know that we have a gift no matter where we are at,
jail or prison, we have a gift to offer the world.
Easy money, less headaches.
Because we have always been judged by our skin color and that will never stop.
She doesn't know what we go through that's why she gives us paper
so we can write how we feel when we in are in our cells.
Because I need to know these answers before I go any further with my life.
Because with rhymes I can express my feelings or how I feel about someone. I can't do that in
an essay.
Because in school all you do is work, work, work while you see people you know on the corner
making fast money and coming to school with nice stuff and you think I can do that too.
See I was eleven years old when my dad kicked me out. I had nowhere to stay and I was
hungry. I needed some money to eat so I was forced to sell drugs. I got locked up ever since so
that's why I feel like I'm a man.
That goes back to the other question I answered. Kids get kicked out of their houses or don't
have what other kids have so they sell drugs or join a gang and that right there causes them
their lives in prison or life eternity.
Yes!

DERRELL

When I first read *The Diary of Anne Frank* I thought how is she like me. She is hiding from the
Germans. As I read on she was a lot like me. She was trapped and couldn't go anywhere where
until the war would be over. I can't go anywhere until I am released. Anne Frank writes about
how she feels about being cooped up in an attic for about two years. She taught me that no
matter how bad anything is you can't give up. You write. She tried her best not to be down and
miserable but to keep her head up until the day came when she would be free. Her life was cut
short. I want to live, and I want to grow and have people say that I'm a good person and did
good things for people.

December 20, 2009

Seems like years have passed between my six months incarcerated. So much has happened it is
just as if the whole world, besides my mom, has forgotten about me. But I am still surviving in
here and that's all that really matters.

Yes, I'm still alive. Don't ask me why or how but I am. In here there's a lot you have to worry about, extortion, someone harming you, or about just being you. Me, I learned you just have to keep to yourself because your friends turn into foes.

Yours, Derrell

December 23, 2009

It's been a couple of days since my last entry because I'm still not use to this diary thing. The last few days I've almost been into two fights just because of words and because of helping someone else! Commissary day was today and this is the time we get to order noodles, oatmeal, and snacks to eat. But this is also when a lot of extortion is going on mostly with the whites. To me that's crazy because the blacks only try to mess with the whites and not the other blacks. But I guess that would be weird if the whites extorted the blacks. And I forgot to mention that my mans went upstate yesterday. I have never seen him so scared in all his life as the moment they came to get him. To me jail isn't for everybody. Me, I just made some bad decisions to end up in here. Here you have a lot of time to think on how you want to make your life better.

Yours, Derrell

December 25, 2009

Today is Christmas and it doesn't feel like it because for Christmas you are supposed to be with your family. My gift to myself was that I at least got to see my mom today. It's my little brother's first Christmas and my mom told me that he was singing to the presents because his birthday was thirteen days before. I would give up my money, cars, and clothes just to be with my family again. At first I had to deal with it because I knew I was in jail. But after a while you wake up and notice that you are not with the ones you love, but you are with people just like you. You say what did I get myself into, how did I end up in here? This is my first time not being with my family for a long period of time and it hurts dearly. It like my heart has been shot, stabbed, and broken. It hurts me a lot to be in jail and always say I should not have done this. I should have done that. When I get out I'm going to change. The counselor always tells me change is hard, it's easy to say it but it's hard to do it. I have learned that family is the MOST important thing in a person's life.

Yours, Derrell

January 1, 1010

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Just a minute ago it was just 2009, and now it's 2010. I prayed to God and thanked Him for letting me live another year. It's a New Year and I have to think about my New Year's resolution. I thought to myself why think of one if I'm in jail. But my mom always told me to make the best of my situation. Even though I wasn't home getting wasted and high, this was a good day for me. It was funny because all the other inmates were hollering on the gate and kicking their doors. I heard the fireworks, but I couldn't see them because they were on the other side of me. It made me kind of happy to hear something on the out side.

Yours, Derrell

January 5, 2010

I'm starting to see a lot of my mans, and they are going upstate for their first offences. This makes me wonder am I going upstate for my first charge. I've been incarcerated for six months, and I'm still not sentenced. If the Lord answers my prayers I will change my lifestyle just to get a second chance at life and to be with my family again. When I get out can I change with all that temptation out in the world? That's the question I ask myself everyday.

Yours, Derrell

January 10, 2010

Today was just one of those days, one of those days when you just feel like breaking down and crying. I just stare at the wall thinking of how I can make the best of it. My mom and my little brother came today and I heard good news. My mom told me that I should be getting out soon. That made me real happy! Every time I see my little brother I just want to hug and kiss him and not let go. He's growing up fast and I'm not there to see him. But the thing that hurts me the most is that he knows me, but when he comes he act's like he doesn't. I mean I talk to him and he talks to me but I don't feel the bond. When I was home he used to cry when I left the house so I would go back in and take him to the store to make him feel better. I miss him so much. My other little brother is out there doing good. He was hustling at first, but now he has a legal job to help take care of my mom. It makes me proud to see him help take of the family like his big brother did.

Yours, Derrell

January 14, 2010

The deputies popped my cell at around 7 a.m. I got up and served breakfast trays. After everybody locked in, I wiped the tables, swept, mopped, and washed clothes. Then I washed my faced and brushed my teeth. Around 8:30-9:00 I go to my cell to get some sleep. At 10:00 everyone else comes out for rec until 11:00 when lunch trays come up. After that everyone else is locked in. I wipe tables, sweep again. At 1:00 everyone comes back out again until 2:00. At 2:30 the trustees lock in for shift change for the 3 to 11 shift. At 3:20 everyone comes out again. Around 4:00 dinner trays come up. Everyone locks in again until 7. The higher level you have the more privileges you have. Level 1's lock in at 8:00 and can only order \$5.00 worth of hygiene for commissary. Level 2's lock in at 8:30 and can order \$15.00 on commissary for food etc. Level 3's lock in at 9:00 and can order \$30.00 on commissary. Level 4's lock in at 9:30 and can order \$50.00 on commissary. Trustees get to stay out all day and can play the Playstation 2 and watch movies, but they also have to do all the cleaning and working.

Yours, Derrell

January 19, 2010

Who am I?

I don't know. I think am I black man that's supposed to make it out the ghetto. If I do, what shall I do, get a good job and help my family too? I'm in jail with a \$10,000 bail. I'm in a cell feels like I stuck in a shell. When I get out, should I stay in the house, or hit the block and run from the cops like a mouse? Why do that, to come back in? I like to smell the fresh air and feel the wind on my skin. So who am I? I ask myself again, I have dreams to become a successful black man. Success that's all I think about, to get out the hood and buy a house far out. To do that I need to change, to get a five year plan and become a proud black man.

Yours, Derrell

January 21, 2010

It's been a couple of Days since my last entry. Nothing much has been happening, just the same old, same old. I am starting to see a lot of people I know come to jail. Two of my mans came to jail. One of them has to do county time the other has to do a one to three upstate. He just signed his state ready all ready. It's kind of messed up to see my *niggas* like that. This week is exam week. I think I'm going to do all right on my tests, but the only thing is that I didn't get a chance to study.

February 2, 2010

Jail, this is crazy. When I'm in my cell why do I think? If only makes me more angrier so then I blink, come to reality and remember I'm stuck in a cell living in hell. Non-contacts visits, when I see my mom through a glass, can't touch, smell, or play with my younger brother. The system is really messed up. I see people get out and come right back in. If I get out real soon I have to change not because I want to because I have to. Change is the best thing for me for my coming child and family.

Yours, Derrell

February 3, 2010

Hear we go again. It seems like lately I've been depressed because I'm suppose to go home real soon if the grand jury doesn't pick up my case. If they do, I can get more time than my last copout. Should I take my anger out on everybody else or should I just cry my self to sleep? I'm a man and a man isn't supposed to cry. So I should just bleed my anger out through this pencil. All the other inmates say they're men, but they don't act like it. To me they act like children. I thought jail was supposed to make you wiser, but it makes these other inmates more ignorant. At night they yell out of their cells like animals. Is this why we get treated like animals? The inmates think they run the show, but we don't. We get told when to eat, talk, when to sleep. This is not for me.

Yours, Derrell

February 9, 2010

LOVE, it's a powerful word. Do I know what it means, I don't know for sure. I think it means to have strong feelings for someone that you care about. Was I in love, I don't know? I loved her, but she didn't love me. I gave her my heart and soul and she just abandoned me. I'm not mad, just sad. I really liked her, but she made me feel bad. Her son used to call me dad, so I treated him like he was mine. It made her glad. Now I'm in jail, on a log on a deserted island and I can't find my way back to them. I'm going to build a boat and sail back to them. I don't want her. I want him. He's like my son. I treat him like mine and his *abuela* asks me why. He's in my heart; it makes me want to cry.

Yours, Derrell

February 11, 2010

Quit that isn't me. I try my best. I hit the block to help my family. Now I'm in jail, and it gives me the chills. I tell myself in my head I need to chill to stop but I can't. I wait and see what is going

to happen in my future, what's best for me. I tried so hard to be a G, but I'm only being me. Quitting is not an option for me.

Yours, Derrell

February 13, 2010

The other day my lawyer came to see to talk about what are my options. Door #1 is take the year but still have the felony on my record. Door #2 is to get another year and to not have the felony on my record. Door #3 is to take five years of felony probation, but if I violate it I will have to do 1 to 3 years upstate. I have had a lot to think about these last few Days. My choice is door #1 because I can go home sometime next month and be free from all this madness. I'm going to have to stay on the right track because if I get another felony they aren't going to think twice about putting me back in jail and throwing away the key. What I'm I going to do to stay out of jail? I don't really how to do good, but the new me wants to be good as I can possibly be. This is what I have planned out when I'm free, finish school and get a job. Once I graduate I'm going to sign up for college to start working on a career, and then go up the mountain from there.

Yours, Derrell

February 15, 2010

Just another day that passes. I wish my court date would hurry up and pop up in the computer so I can get this heavy burden off of my shoulders and leave it off. In sixteen more days it's going to be my birthday. I'm going to be eighteen years old and this is not the place where I want to spend my birthday. If I'm still in here for it I'm going to have to deal with it. Now that I'm turning eighteen years old in the county jail, I have a lot that I want to do and change to not spend another birthday in here. I have to go to school.

Yours, Derrell

February 18, 2010

I'm starting to feel more and more stressed out as the days pass by. All I want to do is stay in my cell and read or sleep. I'm getting sick and tired of everything and everyone here. It's like you're a pirate looking for that lost treasure, but I'm in jail looking for that day that I get out and get back to my life, not my life as a gangster but my new life as a different and changed person. I'm starting to see a lot of people come and go in and out. I want to be one of those people who leaves and never thinks twice about coming back or looking back. What shall I do? What shall I say to a mother and brother that I left that and who seem so far away?

Yours, Derrell

February 25, 2010

Today was just like any other day in jail, same old, same old. Just six more days to my birthday
Yours, Derrell

March 2, 2010

I'm kind of happy, but at the same time kind of down. Tomorrow is my birthday. I'm supposed to be happy, but I'm not. Forget it I am just going to have to deal with it.

Yours, Derrell

March 3, 2010

Happy Birthday To Me!

Today is my birthday. I turn eighteen, the age where most people say that they are grown. I don't feel grown. I still like anything that any other kid likes, but I do feel more mature. And I found my inner self. I found that I'm a good kid- just my surroundings outside of these walls were causing me to make bad choices. But now that I'm in jail and have a lot of time to myself I found out that I can do and be anything I want and can go far. In here it doesn't feel like a birthday cause usually I would go to the movies and out to eat with my girl, smoke a blunt, drink and go to the club. But all I could do in here is just think about my life and what's going to happen to me in my future. So now that I'm eighteen I have something I want to do that I always wanted to do, go to Puerto Rico and Australia. I want to go to Puerto Rico because I like to speak Spanish and that's where my girl is from. I also want to go to Australia I don't know why I just want to for some reason. I didn't think I was going to make it to eighteen but I thank God I did.

Yours, Derrell

March 10, 2010

I'm supposed to leave next week, but I look in the computer for a court date and there's still isn't one. It's just making me madder because if I'm supposed to go. Why isn't there a court date? So all I'm going to do is pray that I go home real soon. That's all.

Yours, Derrell

March 18, 2010

When I first came to jail I thought I would have to fight the biggest guy in here just to get my respect up. But now that I'm here jail is nothing what I heard of or saw in movies. In jail it is not the best, but it's o.k. I didn't have to knock anybody out. All I had to do was be myself because there are kids my age and just like me in jail for something they wish the hadn't done. I was always taught that you learn only from your mistakes. From this experience in here I want to do what's right and stay out the streets because I found out that I have a smart mind. I always got good grades. My mom always told me to stay of the corners, but I kept going back. I was addicted to the money. Now that I'm in here I should have listened to her, but it's too late but then again its never too late.

Yours, Derrell

March 25, 2010

Why me I ask myself or is this life real? Then I just sit and look around and watch my surroundings. I look at my hand; it lets me know that it is. So since this life is real and I'm in jail I want to live life the right way. But I can't when there are so many things that stop and hold me back from doing good. You just do you. I'm doing me, and that's all I'm gone. Don't worry about anyone else but myself and my future. I have a lot of things that I want to do and places that I want to go.

Yours, Derrell

April 1, 2010

Today was April Fools day. If I was home, I would have gotten up extra early and played a trick on my little brother. Instead I played a trick on the Deputy today. Because I'm a trustee I told him I was quitting today. He said, "Yes!" I told him April Fools, and he laughed about it. I was supposed to leave this week so I told the other inmates I was leaving tomorrow. I'm really supposed to leave this week, that's what my lawyer told my mom, but nothing has happened yet. If I don't leave this week I'm going to be really mad because my freedom is very special too me. I've been inside these walls for two hundred forty-seven days, eight months to be exact and I'm tired of waiting. It seems the closer it gets to my freedom the longer the days and nights get. It's starting to feel a lot like summer. It was like 80 degrees today my favorite season. Hopefully tomorrow is going to be my last day in this Hellhole. All I can do is pray to God and hope for the best. If not I just am going to have to deal with it.

Yours, Derrell

April 8, 2010

As I think back over my life I find out how I got to this point, the point where I happen to be stuck because of my down falls. It all started when the person I called dad died. And he wasn't there anymore take care of us. That's when I started hustling to help take care of my mom and little brother. Then I started getting into the street life more, and then I ended up here in jail writing. I didn't think I was going to write, but once I started a lot of people told me that I was good. I used to write short stories in school just for fun and always got A's on them. In here I started writing about the up's and downs of my life. When I get out I'm going to write a book about something that I don't know yet to show people how good I really can be.

Yours, Derrell

April 14, 2010

I haven't written to you in awhile because I thought I would be gone by now. I just happened to see to see you on the floor today, so I started writing again. No, I'm not gone yet. It seems like every time I get my hopes up for going home, they come crashing down and burn like a plane. I read something in Anne Frank's diary that really caught my attention. She wrote, "A lot of people are fond of nature, and people in prisons and hospitals long for the day when they will be free to enjoy the beauties of nature, but so few are shut away and isolated from that which can be shared alike by rich and poor." I read that part at least five times because I know exactly how it feels. I haven't heard a bird sing, haven't felt the warm air on my face, and haven't smelled fresh air for eight and a half months. I don't even remember how it feels to be free anymore. I keep hearing my lawyer say, "I'm going to get you out." It never happens. It makes me want to cry. I ask myself, why me. This is why when I leave I wouldn't think about doing a crime ever again and have to go through something as painful as this. So when they call my last name and say that I have court, it's going to bring tears to my eyes not because I'm sad, but tears of joy because on that day I'm finally going to be free.

Yours, Derrell

April 20, 2010

Hopefully this will be my last entry to you. I have court today and I'm going to be going home finally. I'm so happy because I going to be free in a few more hours and don't know what I'm going to do first, just going to have to wait and see.

Yours, Derrell

JERMAINE

March 16, 2010

It all started when my boy Dub didn't want to go to the chicken. Then they wrote him up. It all happened when they took him back downtown. I felt like I just was lonely all day. I got in an argument with this boy name City. The argument was City and my mans fighting over somebody putting a battery in his back. They caught City wanting to fight. After they finished fighting I felt down and out about what happened. I just keep to myself that whole day.

March 17, 2010

Yea the day started off kind sad and boring, but I got through it. I went out side to play basketball and then watch a great movie flick. I went to sleep listening to the radio station 103.9 WDKX.

March 18, 2010

My day was going good until a deputy picked up my boy name Keem. I told him to hold his head high to the sky. Don't let them take your pride away from you. I told him I would see him when I did.

March 19, 2010

My day went very well today, but it didn't seem like it did because all that I was thinking about was my family and what I could be doing with them. I wish that I could go back. I want to change the day I messed up and the days I went through the hard struggles.

March 21, 2010

Sad Times

Today was a good day for me this week because my dad came to see me. I love him for coming, but while we talked all I was thought about was why he didn't get there sooner in my life. If he had would I have been in this problem? The reason I say that is because while I was growing up I had a dad that was in the same system that I am in now. He wasn't in my life while I was growing up. He ran out on my mom and her six kids. That right there hurt me so badly that when I was at school and my teacher asked me where your dad was I told her that he was out of town at the time. He didn't see me since I was five years old. I saw him when I was fifteen years old. I told him that it been ten years since I saw him. I asked him why he waited a long time to

come back into my brothers' and sisters' lives. In my mind I say I can't hold the sad things against him because I know that he is trying to make up for the time that he missed in our lives. I have to realize that now I have a dad in my life that wants to be there. One thing that I remember is when he left he told me that he loved me. Always. I was only five years old.

March 23, 2010

Hard Times

Today I was thinking about how my life would have been messed up if my grandma didn't come back and get us from going to a group home. It seemed like my life was out of control. I stopped going to school and I probably would have been in prison or somewhere. I just thank the Lord for letting a great person in my life be there.

March 29, 2010

There is this great, great person in my life that I love to death. The great person I'm talking about is my grandma. The reason that I love her is that she is the person that has been there my whole life when there wasn't anybody else there. She took me in when I was three years old because nobody wanted me or my brothers and sisters. She had to come all the way back up to the ROC to take care of us. She did it all for us, put food on the table and put clothes on our backs when there were hard times. I'm glad that she is still in my life today while I am in jail. Like my grandma always told me when you get locked up none of your friends are going to be there to help you out. I didn't want to listen to what she was saying. I found out the hard way. One day she told me that I was going to get caught by the police for standing on that corner. I didn't want to pay attention to her. I got caught up for a robbery on that corner. When she came to see me on V I she told me didn't I tell you that that bad was going to happen. I just broke down crying to her telling her how sorry I was for not paying attention to what she was saying. Since then I know that she is my best friend in the world and that she is both a mom and a dad.

TAMARA

March 16, 2010

Tuesday

My name is Tamara, and I am nineteen years old. Everyone calls me Tam Boogie because I love to dance! Put me in an open space, throw on some music and I'll throw on my dancing shoes! Well my dancing days have been put on hold since I've been locked up in Monroe Correctional Facility. I had been here since March 24, 2009, and I am still not sure when I am going home. From what they tell me, someone forgot to dot their "i's" and cross their "t's". If there is one thing I have learned being here, it's patience. Well one does wonder what brought me to jail. How did I go from being a dual major in education and history at Saint John Fisher College, class of 2012, working full time, and enjoying my life to county issued green jumpsuits, metal bunks, a job as a trustee with no pay and obviously no 401K plan, and being separated from my family? One word -> CHOICES! I am a strong believer that everything in life happens for a reason. The sole reason for this detour in my life was MYSELF! I did not think one bad decision would lead me behind bars, but it did. The worse part of being incarcerated is at times, your run into causes where those imprisoned aren't the only ones being punished. I feel like this each and everyday I roll out of bed, and think about my family at home. They don't deserve to have to go through this. I had no right to do this to them. It's the worse to think how all the expectations and high

hopes my parents had for me are down the drain. Everyone says it will be okay and I can pick up where I left off once I am released, but I am not so sure. No one can tell you how to think, feel, etc. until they have walked a mile in your shoes. I always wonder how will I honestly adjust to society once I am released. The old cliché "The more things change the more they stay the same," rings NO TRUTH in my mind. The exact thing I fear is change itself. I have never become comfortable in this space (and I don't recommend anyone do so) but I am stable. I stay inside of my own little world because that's where I feel safe and accepted. Being the youngest among my fellow inmates, I cannot relate to what they go through or gossip about amongst themselves. I really just want to go home. I've been here long enough. When will the madness be over?

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 17, 2010
Wednesday

Today I had a visit as I do every other Wednesday, sixty minutes of cosmetic smiles painted and repetitious blabbering. I hear "I hope you learned your lesson" at least ten times a visit. But the visit I had today was out of the ordinary. It only lasted ten, fifteen minutes. I couldn't pretend anymore. I couldn't pretend that I was happy and feeling encouraged and determined cause I am not and haven't been for days. According to my lawyer I should have been released on March 8, 2010 exactly nine days again. So I sit here idle. My body is moving around this facility in autopilot. The repetitious activities are simply amusing. Being locked is like being another universe. When you come to jail and stay too long, it's as though the world forgets you exist. You no longer have a name simply an inmate # and a bunk assignment. The life you left dissolves into nothingness. An addict is treated the same as an accountant. Your charge or your reasons for breaking the law mean nothing to these people. To those who run the facility, we are nothing more than mindless criminals. I was an Urban League Black Scholar, the first in my family to go to college, and I just made a mistake. What hurts the most is that each and everyone claims they understand but they don't. They can only offer their sympathy cause it is impossible for them to empathize with my struggle. Here I was looking forward to my release. I feel cheated. I saw my freedom approaching me with open, embracing arms and now its as though it was snatched away from my reach, bound and wrapped in chains

ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE

Obviously I am not strong because I feel my lively spirit crumbling as the days drag by. Each day comes with more and more anguish and disappointment. It's as if the words of a higher power kept me here, and I am not even allowed to ask why. I have numerous plans that were set in order for my arrival that I have to push back. Now I don't even know if I will be able to accomplish all the goals I set for myself. I have confidence in myself, but we all have doubts. We all harbor our own regrets, and mine was coming to jail. There is no way to sugarcoat the actual situation. At this point I do not even exist, and I will remain in that state until I find out when I am going home. I will try to take this time I find and get to know myself. I discovered I am lost either way and there is no trail to help me find my way. When my mind wonders I like to write in my journal or write poetry. I like to think of myself as a young woman of many words. Actions speak louder than words, but how will be able to prove that if I am not even able to leave this place. AHHHHH, I'm not even allowed to scream my frustrations. My freedom of speech can easily be denied and costumed by the words "disrespect" "insubordination" etc. I'm ready to return to the time I left behind. This universe has nothing for me.

Can I Move On?

I am a determined, yet scared
young woman.

I wonder if wanting to change is

enough to make me change?
I hear my doubts racing through
my mind.
I see myself defying all odds.
I want to exceed their
expectations.
I am a determined, yet scared
young woman.
I pretend that I am perfect, simply
without a flaw.
I feel the disappointment as I hide
it with a smile.
I touch their smiling faces wishing
me the best.
I cry because there are still
mistakes I am going to make.
I am a determined, yet scared
young woman.
I understand that when you fall
you have to get back up.
I say, "Life is what you make it."
I dream all my needs and wants
are fulfilled with no worries.
I try to reach for the sky knowing
it's the limit.
I hope I'm expecting enough from
myself in the end.
I am a determined, yet scared
young woman.

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 17, 2010
Wednesday (Later)

The people and personalities that surround me are beyond bearable. I would rather be in a room among my worse enemies, tied to a chair, vulnerable to attack. Some of the people who surround me have absolutely no regard for other people's personal space and feelings. Oh the humanity

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 19, 2010
Friday

When you're locked up, good news is the best thing you can get. My lawyer is working on getting me home by the end of the month or at the latest April. I am so ready to go. I can finally see some light at the end of the darkened tunnel. You lose faith and hope when you are left wondering what's going on. It's like going around in circles trying to find your way and you are the only one who doesn't know that you're going in circles! At this point I finally believe in faith and a higher power. I have been praying to Him constantly and asking for grace, mercy, and His guidance while I am in this place. He truly does answer prayers because I finally know that I will be going home soon ☺

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 20, 2010
Saturday

"Just for fun I'm going to tell you each person's first wish, when we are allowed to go outside again...while I should find it so blissful, I shouldn't know where to start." Friday 23 July 1943.

I sat today thinking of all that I plan to do once I am released. When I am granted the opportunity to do as I please, when I want to do it, I am going to be dumbfounded. So much is going to run through my mind I am going to be on overload. I feel just as Anne felt! Everyone around her had one or two specific things they particularly set in their minds to do. While they dwelled on these things, Anne was at a loss for words because she wanted to do so much. After being locked up so long, I know I cannot force myself to do one or two things. I am going to have so many opportunities before me, there couldn't possibly be someone who expects me to make a decision and stick to it. Could there? Nope there couldn't.

Today had unexpected surprises for me. I had my regularly scheduled Saturday visit but when I walked into the visiting room, I was shocked at who I saw. My best friend and my other friend surprised me. It was so unexpected because I was unaware that they were coming. I was happy and excited to see them though. I had missed the two of them a great deal. It was nice of the two of them to come. I laughed and smiled in a visit for the first time since I found out my bad news. It felt good to really open up and talk about topics other than jail and learning my lesson. I enjoyed hearing how much I was missed and all the fun things planned for when I finally come home. I didn't want the visit to end. Time truly does fly when you're having fun because it seemed as though the sixty allotted minutes blew by. I miss them oh so much

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 22, 2010
Monday

Today was not a good day. I just want to go home. There is no other way to say it. Please send me home!

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 23, 2010
Tuesday

I woke up today and suddenly had a wave of sadness hit me. It cloaked my body entirely, a blanket of sadness. Tomorrow marks my one year in jail. Still no news at to whether or not I am going home sooner or later. I can share more information on the passing of the health care bill and the number of calories in honey buns than I can about my outdate. Rather amusing that this time last year I was asking myself the same question: when am I going home. These feelings are unsuitable for my character. I never was a person to feel down and depressed. It's a first time for everything. Issue on top of issue. Due to my current situation my younger sister "mini me" has been acting out. She was never what could be defined as a bad kid. I miss her so much, If I didn't hurt anyone else, I do believe I hurt my little sister by coming here. I feel so badly that I have no way to reach out to her. A visit and a phone call is not enough. There are only so many

letters you can write and at this point, I don't want to go that route. I can only hope and pray that her judgment isn't impaired. It's sad that no one on the outside understands the truth: when you are doing time everyone close to you is doing it with you! My sister and I are normally thick as thieves so this is difficult to be away from her. She's the love of my life, and we have been ripped apart by my poor decisions. I sit in my bunk and look at all our pictures we have together and try to relive the memories. That doesn't always last long because I always end up crying. I just want the pain to be over, no more numbing or ignoring, I just want it to completely disappear.

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 24, 2010
Wednesday

ODE TO MY LITTLE SISTER "MINI ME"

Daija...

My sister, my baby, a sweet red rose,
"I'm so happy you're my sister,"
brought sweet music to my ears,
warmth to my heart,
a pit bull in a skirt, ready to attack
should trouble arise,
always my sidekick, partner in crime.
Her sneaky grin speaks one thousand words,
laughing and joking with me,
ready to take on the town on any day.
Her Wild Friday Night,
My Exhausted Saturday Morning,
purple compliments our beauty,
the royalty that the two of us possess.
I'm like a Nike boot, stomping out into the world,
combat ready, actions a must.
She's the colorful flip-flop,
fun, vibrant, colorful, ready for adventures in the sun.
My friend, my escape, the calm in my
crazy world,
the reason I always want to succeed,
a positive example for our youngest sister to follow,
blossoming into a beautiful sunflower
right before my eyes, she's constantly growing,
not my "baby" anymore?...yes she is,
my shoulder to cry on,
her listening ear,
the "Minnie" to my "Mickey" mouse "Shaggy" to my "Scooby,"
my little sister, THE BEAT TO MY HEART!

Love, your big sister
always and forever

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 24, 2010
Wednesday Continued

Today marks one year that I have been in jail. Sadly I am in the same position I was a year ago. Idle! Everyone is excited and anticipating my arrival home. However, we are all clueless as to when that day is going to come. It's frustrating, depressing, and infuriating all at one time, a melting pot of emotions. I sit back and wonder: would I have made the same decision that got me in here, if I knew my future outcome? Was what I did worth it? In here you have all the time you didn't take advantage of in the world to think. Boy my mind is on the go ALL THE TIME! At the end of this chapter, I know I learned a valuable lesson that I have no intentions of repeating. There is nothing more important than my freedom and all of the opportunities I had available to me. There is nothing so important that I would ever put myself in the position of having my family and friends to suffer unnecessarily. I won't be returning to jail. It's not apart of the plan or the backup plan.

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 25, 2010

My father came to visit me today. I have not seen him in three months because he resides in Texas. He relocated last July. I guess he did what was best for him. I still don't understand why he left, and I was still in jail. Maybe I am selfish, maybe not. I am a little jealous because I didn't want him to go and he did. Who is selfish now? Our relationship has not always been the best, and we are still working on it. It was nice to see him and have a visit to ourselves. We talked about my plans for when I am released, and how I plan to move on from this setback. Sky is the limit in my eyes. I have already re-registered for school at Monroe Community College, and I have hopes of one day returning to Saint John Fisher College. In addition I plan to go back to my church activities, and I have some job opportunities lined up as well. I really want to get back on the ball. However, instead of acknowledging what I have accomplished and taken steps toward, my daddy has other plans in mind for me. (He forgets that I am an adult and can make my own decisions). For the most part the visit went okay, a lot of my dad talking and me, smiling and listening. I do what I can to avoid confrontation because I know we are both stubborn and bull headed. One generation to the next. I want to make my dad happy, I truly do, but if making my own decisions and following my own path isn't apart of his happiness, we are back at square one and headed down two different paths completely. My dad has come up with this new idea that I want to relocate to Texas with him. It could be good to change up my scenery for a while, but not forever!

Signed: Tam Boogie

Things I want to do when I get released:
Take a bubble bath,
get my hair done,
spend time with my sisters,
take one good, long nap in my OWN bed,
go out to eat,
shopping,
go to the playground I think,
call everyone and tell them I'm home,
get a job,

go back to college,
move on!

March 26, 2010

Friday

Still no news! I am getting more and more angry and a bit more discouraged by the minute. My emotions are building and I don't want to lose hope, but it's getting harder to see the light at the end of the tunnel. It was there and now it's slipping away.

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 27, 2010

Saturday

I WANT TO GO HOME! I AM MISSING OUT ON EVERYTHING, BUT I CANNOT BLAME ANYONE BUT MY OWN SELF, LESSON LEARNED!

I CRIED TODAY! I WASN'T HAPPY AND I WASN'T SAD, I WAS EMPTY, ALL OUT OF EMOTIONS AND ALL OUT OF FEELINGS TO REALLY EXPRESS MYSELF. INSTEAD I LET THE TEARS FALL FROM MY FACE.

Signed: Tam Boogie

March 30, 2010

Tuesday?

"Fear Life Not Death..."

I saw this quote on a t-shirt a few years ago, and it has honestly stuck in my mind. At times I find myself randomly doodling it on my writing or saying it in conversation. I like the statement because it means something to me that it may not mean to someone else. I feel that death is something we cannot avoid cause we know it's going to come, we just don't know when. I wouldn't fear death because when it comes you cannot stop it. I feel you should fear life because although you make plans and have an idea of how your life would likely go, its good to keep an eraser around. Life comes and throws numerous curveballs and detours at you. What you may try to avoid, you may come in contact with eventually. If you don't like the way your life is going and you can't change it, everyday is a struggle for you that you come to dread. Sadly in some people's lives, things are going so badly, they would rather welcome death.

I personally like the statement because there is no way for me to pick and chose the when, where, why, and how of my death.

Signed: Tam Boogie

April 1, 2010

Happy April Fools

It has been days since I have written because I have not had the time. I have duties that I do within the facility and once they are done I am left with just enough time to eat, shower, and sleep. I enjoy doing my trustee duties because they keep me busy, make the time fly by, and they keep my mind off the nonsense around me. I still haven't heard any news about when I am going home. I feel like Anne Frank when she would wait to hear about the goings on outside of her hiding spot. She was anxious to hear about what was happening in the world and what was to become of herself and her family. I find it angering when people ask me "when are you going home?" They know I haven't heard any news, yet they choose to continue with their repetitious question and answer period. I try to keep a smile on my face and make it though the day. However, late at night, when the lights are out and everyone is sleeping, tears always creep into my eyes and sadness settles in my soul. I just want to go home.

Signed: Tam Boogie

April 3, 2010

Today was quite nice. I had a visit with my older brother and his girlfriend. I always anticipate his visits because my brother always makes me smile and he brings me joy. I know it hurts him to see me in this place. A few years ago we were in opposite seats in the visiting room. Who would have thought the tables would turn the way that they did? We always make the best of our visits because they are rare. He works full time and goes to school full time as well. I absolutely love and admire my brother and I'm not sure he knows it. Yeah, we are close because we are only seven years apart and we spent a large majority of our childhood attached at the hip. Wherever he would go, I would follow. As we got older, we went our separate ways. He moved up, and we seemed to grow further and further apart as time went on. The time I spent in here has actually helped us to better our bond with one another. He understands my situation and what I am going through better than anyone else. I haven't really told him how much I look up to him because we are not really a mushy pair, but I do intend to tell him. I am going to love and care for all the people in my life more deeply because I never know when they or I may be taken away.

Signed: Tam Boogie

April 4, 2010
Happy Easter!

Another Easter holiday spent behind bars. I know everyone close to me got up and put their Sunday best to go to church or out to eat. I can't keep track of everyone who told me "they missed me and they wished I was home." I make sure I call or send cards to a large majority of my family.

I MISS THEM.

Signed: Tam Boogie

LAVON

Who am I?
I am eighteen years old.
I go to Freddie Thomas.

The first time I heard the word jail
was when my mother told my dad was in jail for life.
This was when I was ten years old.

I'm a young Black man who is trying to make it in this world.
It's hard times out there.

Today's another day.
Still no court date.
I want to go home.
I am played like a toy.
Time and time again I tell myself it's the end now.
I just see myself turned upside down.
I want to fix my life, someday, maybe someday.

I look in the mirror and see just a black face.
Where are my eyes? Where is my nose, my mouth?
I try to scream and can't hear my self.

Who am I?
What can I do?
Why am I always coming back here?

January 20, 2010

Today's a world against all odds,
a world of ups and downs to make it in this life.
Life is a struggle to make a bundle.
I'm lonely in my cell at night.
All I can do is write.

Today is the January 20th.
I don't know how many days I been in here,
but all I know is that has been too many days.
I feel like an animal right now
being locked down all day.
This is not for a person.
Really this isn't for anyone.
I would never wish jail upon anyone.

Sometimes I sit in my cell and think
about what I could be doing during this time that I'm in here.
I really don't know what I would I be doing.
For all I know I would be dead right about now,
so I might be sitting here in jail for a reason.
People told me to slow down, and I keep moving as fast as I could.

So I ended up back here again.
Maybe this happened for a good reason.

Whatever I was doing, it could have been a lot worse than this.

My head hurts all day cause I think I think too much.

January 25, 2010

10:15 a.m.

Dear Diary

Today has not been a good day. I lost one of the most important people closest to me besides my family, a girl who was my one and only. I loved this girl to the fullest. I still do love her. I don't know why she would do something to me like that. This hurts so much I started to cry. She was not just a loved one to me she was best an only friend. I wish I could call her. She stopped writing me. What can I do now? We have been together for five years. Now it's all going to waste. It shouldn't be like this. It really shouldn't.

February 13, 2010

The cell,
the cell,
the cell is cold,
the cell is old.
When I'm in this cell I don't
know what to do,
maybe some push ups or read a
book.

The cell,
the cell is cold,
the cell is old.
A bathroom is near where I rest my head,
and there's a bed that's hard as lead
and barely fits my legs.

The cell,
the cell is cold,
the cell is old.
There's a window to look out and catch a
view,
but everybody that walks the streets
can't see me. No sound
but people banging on the walls
up and down.

The cell,
the cell is cold,
the cell is old.

It's this young man I've seen since I have been here at MCJ. He's smart, funny, and not a bad person. He's going up soon. I wish he could stay. Up state isn't a place for that young man. Just let him stay. Let God be with him.

That Young Man

We were outside playing.
Shots rang,
cop cars sang.
I can still smell the blood
in the air.
More people gathered around.
His young body lay on the
ground.
I looked at him, his eyes
still out.
Now I see me
because he was my friend.
He was my mans.

That day was the day
I will never forget.
I cry and shed tears every chance I get.

That day.

I thank this strong and loving woman. She is the best person to me and for me. She makes sure I am all right, if I do the wrong or the right. She keeps my head as high as a bird in the sky. She tells me the right. She always saying just stay strong. She's my mother

Thank you Mom I love you

I wish I could make my older brother happy. He's always upset with me. I love him more and more. To me he's my best friend, best big bro. Why can't I be like him? Sometimes I wish I could walk in his shoes or be him. I am sorry for the upsetting I give you bro.

March 11, 2010

Is being locked up disappearing?
Being locked up is disappearing.
It is birds flying with no sky,
a street with no cars.
I see my face and it fades away.
Being locked up is disappearing.
You can't see anyone and they can't
see you.
Friends and family miss you.
Being
locked up is more then disappearing.
It's more like being wiped out of
life, more like an upset of things
that care and love you.

To me it means I'm not disappearing.
It's more like people who are on
you mind disappearing because every
time you go to think about them,
soon after awhile those images
fade away.

March 12, 2010
11:00 p.m.

I'm sitting in this cell right now thinking about my life, about what comes next. Will I be going home soon or will I have to go upstate? I fear it a lot because I don't know what's going on with my case. I wish I could go home to my little brothers to show them that the life I lived is not the best life. It might have been fun, but at the end I had nothing. It's like a game. You start out good, and then you lose and have to start all over from the beginning. Well I feel as if I'm almost to the losing point. Am I going to push the start over button and start over or lose my self?

Life.
Life.
Do you have to fight?
Do you have to have a job?
Well this leads to
do you have to rob?
It's all life.
You will die someday.
But don't forget
you once had a life.
Life.
Hard times, you go through
the ups and downs.
Might even think the world is
upside down.
That's you and it's
life.

L ove
I nstant (meaning anything can happen)
F ear (Scared of what can happen)
E ffort (Need to work for things in life).

March 17, 2010
8:00 a.m.

I woke up to the to the sound of my cell being popped. It's now time for trays. Now it's time for another day in jail. This place is hell. I want to go home as soon as I can. I can't stand waking up a 7:00 in the morning, but I have if I want to eat. I will only come out my room two times today. I hate jail. I think about my mother everyday. Can't wait to see her. She is my everything, and I hurt. When is she right? Not here where I'm at I know that. She can be anywhere but here and I wouldn't care. I just want to be with her or at least see her.

After hearing what everyone wrote last week I went back to my cell and started to think. We are all the same in some way. We all are hurting, and we all hurt someone that we love. And that as long we write we all seem happier.

March 17, 2010

11:00 a.m.

I thought we were friends. But I guess we not. He was the only boy besides my real brothers I called bro. That's crazy. We would say we were going to ride and die together. But guess that was all a front for the streets. It's all good cause I'm a hold me down and not you ever again. As I sit here in jail I think about what we have been through since I met you and say THEM!!! You were my *nigga*. But as my mom say whatever happens come to the light.

I wish when I was a child I learned how to use my weakness better.
I wish I learned to see the world through my eyes
and not through music videos and the hot cars on the streets.

I wish I could have learned more about life before I started to have to really live it
because I see now that there's more to life.

I wish. I wish. I wish.

I wish that children whose parents are incarcerated
could be held by their daddies and mothers.

I wish when we had visits
we were allowed to kiss our families and hold hands.

I wish when I was growing up there were more things for me to do
so I wouldn't have been in the streets the way I was.
I think if my dad were around I never would have been doing the bad things in the town.
Maybe if I even stay around my older brother more
I would have been a better person than I am now.

March 18, 2010

1:20 p.m.

Today mom said she would come bail me out tomorrow. I can't wait. This is going to a chance. A change. This is the time to start a new game, meaning the change in the way I do things. Since I have been in jail I got this letter from a person I knew a long time ago. I once loved her and still got love for her. She said she found that I was put back in this bad place. She told me she always thought about me after we lost contact. She gave a new number and I called. Her voice was sweet and sour sounding as if she was happy and sad at the same time. We talked for fifteen minutes. The phone said sixty seconds left and for the first time in four years she told me she loved me. I felt a warm side cause now I know there is more than my family who cares about me.

March 25, 2010
2:00 p.m.

What do I think about the Roc (Rochester)? I think about Roc as being a funny and somewhat of a happy place. I say somewhat of a happy place cause you see people feeling sad. Does that mean they are not happy? What you see on the outside does not mean it's the same on the inside. People say they hate the Roc I pretty much like it. There are pretty women and lots of fun things to do. But don't get me wrong, you can be in the wrong place at the wrong time in the Roc. People do crazy things for no reason. I see people start trouble for nothing. You can walk around and you might be looking for trouble and before you find it, it will find you. Does anybody know what really goes on in the streets of the Roc? I don't think so. They should go and spend twenty-four hours in the streets of the Roc. They would see what us young black males go through three hundred sixty-five days a year, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a days, sixty minutes an hour, and sixty seconds a minute. Life is crazy in the Roc. It could be better. There should be more to life than dying.

April

Writing to me is not just writing.
Writing is more than words on a paper. It's life.
Writing is the way you tell it in black and white.
It's from your mind above and beyond.
You love and hate.
Writing is your faith in you.
People say are you feeling it,
but I say it's your mind
thinking from the back to the front and to the front to the back.
Now this is what writing means to me.

Why did I never write?
I never wrote before.
I really can tell you that I was scared and,
I didn't know what to write about.
I always thought if I wrote it was never going to sound right, so I never wrote.
But now I love writing.

April 29, 2010

What I want people to understand is that there's more to the world. People have lives, and I'm one of them who have a life to live. I'm a young man with a dream of becoming someone someday. People should also understand that people do make bad choices but that doesn't mean they are a bad person. I want people to see me as a "young man" who has a plan to make it. As of right now I don't know where I want to go, but just know that it's some place where I can show my face. Kiss to death, life to death R.I.P. to all of the people who have been put to rest! I want people to know that I am a very special person. I want to let people know that I'm no thug. I am just a young man looking for a hug and love. Peace!!!

Until next time!!! Never forget me!!! More to come soon to be!!!

I've been in jail now for four months, really feels like years. I miss my family. Sometimes I say I will do any thing to get out this place. Then I get scared because if I get out am I going to go

and do the same things I was doing before I came? HUH!!! I could, but I'm not. I want to give my life to God. I want to start over, make some moves and get to the top. I want to stop running from everything and face my fears. My biggest fear is leaving the life. So now I think what does it takes to live a life? Do I have to sell drugs? Do I have run from the cops? NO!!! I can make it no matter what. All it takes is to know who I am and when the time comes to put my mind to task and go for it. That's all!!!

Now go live a life and be happy.

The day that I came to jail there was snow on the ground. Now time has passed and trees are growing leaves, kids are growing faster than they can start talking. "Wait did you hear that!" Well guess what time just passed by you. Every second of the day I want to cry because I could be somewhere doing things with my family, I could be out having fun. But right now that's just the way it is. The clock never stops so right now I wait. The day will come. And sometime my time will be alone. Never should I waste my time again. Next time I will take my time in life and act like a man! This is real talk. "See, did you hear that." More time of your life is gone.