

## I WANT TO BE CLASSIFIED...

AN OLD DESCENDANTS SONG SPOKE OF WANTING TO BE CLASSIFIED, WANTING TO BE STEREOTYPED, WANTING TO BE A NUMBER, AND NOW I AM! I'M CLASSIFIED TO A MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON, I'M STEREOTYPICAL WHITE TRASH AND I'M KNOWN AS INMATE 28930, I HIT THE TRIFECTA BUT IT WASN'T EASY.

WHEN MY MOTHER WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL SHE GOT KNOCKED UP BY A GUY WHO DIDN'T STICK AROUND OR MARRY HER SO I DON'T BEAR HIS NAME, JUST HIS SHAME AND SCARS OF REJECTION. MOMS DID MARRY, HE DEALT DOPE BUT HE WAS MY DAD AND HIS WHOLE FAMILY WERE OUTLAWS.

AT 4 OR 5 A DRUNK DRIVER RAN AN RED LIGHT AND T-BONED MY DADS CAR, HE WAS NEVER RIGHT AGAIN AND NO LONGER IN MY LIFE. THERE WAS ANOTHER STEP-DAD FOR A MINUTE, WE KNEW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE PISS POOR AND EAT GOVERNMENT CUPPES. KIDS KNOW WHEN OTHER KIDS ARE POOR, IT SHOWS AND MAKES YOU AN EASY TARGET, HOWEVER I STOOD UP FOR MYSELF, I WAS GOOD AT SPORTS, BMX, AND DESPITE BEING ACCEPTED ON SOME LEVELS I FELT I'D NEVER BE LIKE THE REST OF THE KIDS, NOR DID I FEEL I NEEDED TO BE.

MOMS REMARRIED WHEN I WAS 8, AT FIRST THIS GUY WAS COOL, A VIETNAM VET WITH GUNS, A 4X4 TRUCK AND A WILD SIDE. THIS TURNED TO DRUNKS, BINGES, ABUSE AND TWO TRIPS TO THE HOSPITAL. I LIED TO COVER FOR HIM THE FIRST TIME, OUT OF FEAR, AND I STARTED DRINKING. I TOOK A GOOD BEATING RIGHT AFTER I TURNED 12 AND CHRISTMAS WITH THE FAMILY WHICH CAUSED ME TO RUN AWAY FOR GOOD AS THE ASSAULTS WERE GETTING WORSE.

LIVING WITH MY GRANDFOLKS WAS MUCH BETTER, I DID THIS ALMOST EVERY SUMMER OR WHENEVER THINGS GOT TOO HARD FOR MY MOM. THERE I HAD STRUCTURE, GOOD MEALS, NEW SHOES AND THE SAME FRIENDS SINCE THEY DIDN'T MOVE AROUND LIKE WE DID. STILL, I DRANK AND EVEN GOT IN TROUBLE FOR TAKING A CAR. HERE WE WERE, A BUNCH OF JR. HIGH KIDS CRASHING HIGH SCHOOL PARTIES IN A CAR, SOME SWITCH DROPPED A DIME AND EVENTUALLY WE GOT CAUGHT.

MOM GOT A DIVORCE AND MOVED INTO TOWN WITH MY SISTERS SO I MOVED IN WITH THEM. SHORTLY AFTER I STARTED SMOKING WEED AND HER COP BOYFRIEND MOVED IN WITH US. HE WASN'T NEARLY AS BIG AS MY STEP-DAD AND I

HAD GROWN A BIT, THROWN IN MY BUDDING PUNK ROCK ATTITUDE, WHEN HE DECIDED TO HIT ME I HIT BACK. ALREADY ON PROBATION I ENDED UP IN THE FOSTER SYSTEM, BOUNCING AROUND SOME MORE.

THIS WAS THE '80'S, A MOHAWK STOOD OUT, SO DID LEATHER AND STUDD, I RODE A SKATEBOARD AND MY GRADES WENT TO HELL. THERE SEEMED TO BE A CULT OF KIDS LIKE ME IN EVERY TOWN, KIDS WHO CHOSE THE STREETS, LIKED TO DRINK, FIGHT, GO SEE BANDS PLAY, CHASE HOT CHICKS AND GET INTO TROUBLE. THEY SERVED AS MY FAMILY, WE HATED THE WORLD AND HAVING TO PLAY THE HAND DEALT TO US WHILE LOVING THE FREEDOM TO DO AND SAY WHATEVER WAS ON OUR MINDS BECAUSE WE DIDNT CARE IF PEOPLE LIKED US OR NOT. MOST PEOPLE HATED US AS WE DIDNT FIT IN, WE WERE OUTCASTS, MISFITS!

AT 15 I WAS RELEASED FROM PROBATION AND FOSTER HOMES, I RENTED A GARAGE AND GOT A JOB BANGING NAILS. MY BOSS GOT INDICTED AND WENT ON THE RUN, I LOST MY JOB, A FIGHT AT THE APARTMENT COMPLEX AND I LOST MY GARAGE, I WENT TO THE STREETS, I COULD ALWAYS GO HOME, MY MOM NEVER REJECTED ME AND MY GRANDFOLKS DOOR WAS ALWAYS OPEN, I CHOSE THE STREETS, THE CHAOS AND ACCRO, THE CLUBS WHERE BANDS PLAYED, HOMELESS KIDS, DRUGS, THEFTS AND ALL THAT STUFF YOU HEAR ABOUT, THATS WHAT I CHOSE.

WE TRAVELED ALL OVER CALIFORNIA, DID AS WE PLEASED, LIFE WAS ALWAYS EXCITING AND EACH DAY WAS AN ADVENTURE! THIS WAS OUR SUBCULTURE, YOUNG WHITE KIDS WHO FORMED A FAMILY, PUNKS, SKINS, SKATERS AND OTHERS, TATTOOS, DRINKING AND CHASING GIRLS. I HAD QUIT DRUGS, SHAVED OFF MY MOHAWK, EVEN TRIED TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL. THAT DIDNT WORK OUT TOO WELL FOR ME, I WASNT CUT OUT FOR SCHOOL SO I TRIED JOB CORP, WHO INSISTED THAT I WENT TO SCHOOL SO I DROPPED OUT OF THAT.

EVEN THOUGH I WASNT USING DOPE I WAS STILL ADDICTED TO THE STREETS, TO THAT SUBCULTURE, THE MUSIC, THE STING OF A TATTOO NEEDLE, THE THRILL OF A FIGHT, A LACK OF AUTHORITY OR RACING A STOLEN CAR. I CAME TO RENO TO SEE SOME FRIENDS I'D MET WHILE IN JOB CORP. I WAS DOING GOOD, GOT A JOB AND HAD AN APARTMENT.

IN A SHORT TIME I WAS WRAPPED UP IN A MURDER

CASE. DESPITE BEING A JUVENILE I WAS IN AN ADULT COURT FACING LIFE BEHIND BARS. MY ONLY WAY OUT WAS TO TURN STATES WITNESS AND TESTIFY AGAINST MY FRIENDS, I DIDNT SEE THAT AS AN OPTION AND ROLLED THE DICE IN FRONT OF A SO CALLED JURY OF MY PEERS.

I THEN REALIZED I WAS THAT STATISTIC, HEARING HOW I WAS FROM A BROKEN HOME, A DROPOUT AND DRINKING EVERYDAY, NONE OF THIS EVER MATTERED BEFORE CAUSE IT WAS JUST MY LIFE. AND NOW ITS LEA TO A LIFETIME BEHIND BARS. 25 YEARS LATER I LOOK BACK ON THIS WITH MANY REGRETS AND ASK MYSELF ABOUT WHAT IF'S, YET I'M STILL HERE AND THE WORLD I ONCE KNEW HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY.

I CAN GET OUT OF HERE IN 7 YEARS, OR I COULD DO LIFE, ITS STILL UP IN THE AIR. I ALSO HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE FACT THAT I AM THAT CLASSIC CASE OF A STATISTICAL NIGHTMARE, I AM CLASSIFIED, STEREOTYPED AND I'M SIMPLY A NUMBER, JUST LIKE I WAS GROWING UP! ITS NO FUN BECAUSE PEOPLE DONT SEEM TO LOOK PAST THAT, AT LEAST NOT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THE SYSTEM.

CONSTANTLY THEY BRING UP A BROKEN HOME IN MY PAST, THE ABUSE, THE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL AND GETTING INTO TROUBLE AT A YOUNG AGE. YET NO ONE CARES, NO ONE WANTS TO HELP, THEY JUST WANT TO SAY, 'SEE THIS ONE HERE WAS BORN TO LOSE, HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE!' THEN THINK ITS FUNNY CAUSE ITS NOT THEM? WAS I A BAD SEED OR WERE THERE OTHER FACTORS IN PLAY? DO PEOPLE REALLY BELIEVE WERE STATISTICS?

WHATEVER THE CASE MAY BE, I'M A NUMBER TO SOME WHO CHOOSE TO ONLY SEE ME AS SUCH. WHILE TO MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY I AM THE LOVING, HAPPY, FUNNY, SMART, ARTISTIC AND LEVEL HEADED MAN THAT I AM, NOT THE NUMBER THEY MADE ME...

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