

Dear Katie,

Thank you for the kind words. It's my hope that you were right about what you said. It's nice to know that even in such a hostile place, I still have the ability to be true to my soul no matter how unpopular it may be in here. It's truly beautiful that you were able to feel what I had to say. Only a person with a compassionate heart would receive my words in a way that wasn't clouded by preconceived opinions. I really appreciate you taking the time to read what I had to share. Thank you for having an open mind, and for the positive comment. I hope that you check the site and get this brief note, and can find it in your heart to reach out to me directly. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Subject: The Holiday

The last time that I was fortunate enough to be home for Christmas was in 2000. Since then you could say that I've been a spectator when it comes to holidays. To most that would sound like a bad thing; but in hindsight I realize that I've had the chance to see the benefits of literally being removed from the holiday scene. It has given me a greater appreciation for what many fail to see during this season. I watched the news on November 26th A.K.A. (BLACK FRIDAY), and I was truly saddened by what I saw. None of what I witnessed had to do with, or should ever be associated with the Spirit of Christmas. There were herds of people lined up outside of stores preparing to make a mad dash to purchase items that were marked up by retailers months ago in order to make it look to consumers that they are really getting a bargain when they see signs that display 50% off. Manners, courtesy, and respect for your fellow man are lost in the shuffle as people trample one another in the pursuit of material things. Coming from a person in my current position, I know that it may be hard for people to view me as a sounding board worth listening to when it comes to addressing the moral decline of society; but being on the inside looking out provides me with a vantage point that allows me to see things in a way that few in life will ever come to understand. The 30 foot wall that surrounds me doesn't obstruct my view of how commercialized Christmas, and every other major holiday celebrated in this country has become. Celebrating the birth of Christ has nothing to do with most of what's being done during this season. Sadly, Christ rarely crosses the minds of the many people who claim to love Christmas. Most are too focused on the next "Big Thing" that's being marketed during this time of year. Things like you and your love ones being bless with good health go unnoticed by many. There are a list of things that are often taken for granted by most people, but I won't address them. If you take a serious look at your life, I'm sure you'll see at least a little bit of what I mean. Instead of devoting our attention to what's real and has substance, we seem to continue opting out for the superficial things. For years at Christmas time I would go and spend time with my grandmother Essie Sago. Last year, a couple of

weeks before my birthday, my grandmother passed away. Due to Doc Policy, I wasn't allowed to attend her funeral. For a long time after her passing all I could think about was the lost moments, and wasted opportunities I had to spend time sitting at her feet soaking up the wisdom she had obtained during the 99 years that she was alive. Many of you have parents, and grandparents that you pay little or no attention to. Yet at Christmas you give them watered down expressions of love by spending 10 minutes to purchase something that they may not even want; when the best gift you could have given them was the gift of your time. Contrary to what many may believe, time is one of our most precious possessions. It's the one thing none of us know exactly how much we have. In spite of that truth, people share it with those they deem worthy. I often wonder what happened to words like grateful, thankful, humble, appreciative, gracious, merciful, patient, understanding, and forgiveness. The attributes associated with those words should be on constant display by those that have a genuine understanding of the true meaning of Christmas; not only during the holiday season, but all year long. At a time when our country should be saturated with love, people are fighting in stores over material things. To say that's sad would be grossly understated. I could touch on each of the major holidays that are celebrated in this country and show you how they have been perverted in one way or another, but I won't do that. I will simply say this, take the time during this holiday **season to really** connect with the people you love. Until my next post have a very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

God Bless! If you can feel me, please reach out.

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