

AT GOLGOTHA *With ALB*
by
Xzyzst

- XZ: In keeping with the new culture here on Death Row I want to acknowledge you as a true Prince of our people and openly display what an honor it is to be in your presence, New Generation rising, yeah?
- AB: New Generation rising for sure. Gone are the days of open contempt displayed amongst our people, real talk.
- XZ: As we "technically" hang here on the cross let the people be exposed to this historical moment; where did you grow up?
- AB: Well, after my ancestors were dragged to the shores of this country my family somehow migrated to Pittsburg, California.
- XZ: How old were you when you were arrested for the case that brought you to death row?
- AB: 18 years old.
- XZ: Wow! To date this may make you the youngest person on death row in California.
- AB: You may be right. I'm 24 now and have been here since 2007 and to my knowledge- yeah, damn, I just might be the youngest, huh?
- XZ: Ain't that something! Uhhh, so far has this place been anything like you've imagined or heard it was like when you were in the outter society?
- AB: Hell no! One cannot fully explain the death row experience all I can say is, it's the complete opposite of what one would've thought it to be. For instance, majority of the cases profiled in the media about death row are actually the minority, there are more individuals like myself being sent here.
- XZ: When you say individuals like yourself, what do you mean?
- AB: Basically, I mean the new generation of politically conscious individuals who've become enlightened after their incarceration, at how they've been bagged and tagged before they knew it from trumped up charges

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and a long list of enhancements and special circumstance... the Bay Area is one the most radical spots in the United States, just being interested in the area I am from and studying its history I've learned a lot. But even more than this I say individuals like myself, meaning youngsters who haven't had the chance to experience any real part of life before theirs was taken from them and also referring to the lack of unity up here- it's just sad, man, I can't believe it.

XZ: That's a common theme for the new generation that rolled up here in massive waves from, like, 1995 to now, feel me? So what adjustments are you making to not become connected to the shameful disconnected state of conditions?

AB: Being I came from a community that at the least taught me how I should lead myself, I strive not to be a product of this environment like so many others here. Once again, our new generation is a the minority here and we're refusing to embrace the disappointing direction of the majority, and, real talk, we want this mentality to catch on here so that this environment can begin to become a product of us. Seriously, I ain't never been nowhere like this in all of my life.

XZ: So, did you get a fair trial?

AB: LOL. I knew this question was comin'. Hell no, it's impossible to get a fair trial for a plethora of reasons. But one of the first major reason I noticed was how 9 times out of 10 the jurors were in a hurry to get back to their lives, like it was a payback detail instead of their duty as a citizen.

XZ: Hold up, did you just say you wasn't the only one that didn't want to be there?

AB: But trip how this works, though. The jurors were like why is this taking so long, he was arrested by the police so he must be guilty of something. It's like why even show these people any evidence when they've been conditioned to vote "guilty" before the case even starts, especially when the victim is a cop.

XZ: Somebody needs to write a book on the whole jury selection process, which is a great segue into my next question. Knowing a little bit if your story do you plan to write a book? If so, when can we expect it?

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- AB: I'll say I've thought about it but I can't give you a date because, seriously, I want to write about unity and a positive story, but so far this hasn't been my experience. Compared with some of the other people who've been here for 20, 30 years I just got here and there's a lot I still need to learn about writing and all of that, but like I said it'll all come.
- XZ: I'm now showing you some photos of my two teen age children. As you look at these pictures I want you to imagine yourself speaking to a middle school kid, what would be the one thing you would lace this youngster with to help prevent them from ending up in prison or on death row?
- AB: I'd let 'em know this is the closest thing to slavery re-vamped as it gets. Don't ever become a slave to no one because slavery demands a life long commitment; you will live and die a slave to others if you fail to lead yourself.
- XZ: Didn't expect that answer, fo'real, fo'real. One of the routine questions we ask comes from the African Proverb "It takes a village to raise a child." With this in mind name one thing you did not get from your village that you wanted as a kid? Mind you, I'm talking about your village outside of your immediate family.
- AB: In my case the answer would be football, from the time I was 6 until I got my chance at 15 years old.
- XZ: I mean, wasn't football, along with all the other sports, afforded to youth in the inner-cities, how did you get missed?
- AB: Well, when I did go out for football, the so-called coach would show up an hour and a half late to every practice and some of the older homies had to take his place until he showed up high on drugs Man, it was an addict runnin' shit. Oh, and one coach when I was 15 said he had to cut me because he had to pick other kids with more experience, since they'd been playing since they were 8 years old. All he could tell me was I had the weight and good hands and feet but that I was inexperienced at the game, so I got cut because I'd never played. You see, this is what they don't tell people about those community programs, that they're set up to build winning football teams to show success in the community. So some kids don't

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make the cut because the focus isn't actually on building up the youth in the inner-city but about winning games. After that I was like "whatever", you feel me? Now the only memory I have of my childhood desire to play football, is this nasty chewing tobacco the coach was always spittin' out as he sat back doing nothing, while the more experienced kids ran the drills. It ain't the village, homie, it's the people running the village that failed our youth; winning plus winning equals funding.

XZ: I noticed when we told you this Write or Die project was based on positive youth development your face lit up, what's up with that?

AB: When I was younger I would've liked for someone to have taken the initiative with me and now that I'm here and get to take part in being a part of the solution I stand ready, our generation is on deck now so it's on. When I was coming up there wasn't anything positive comin' out of prison, just the same ol' propaganda designed to herd people back into prison so I never made a prison, positive connection, so you can count me in on stuff like this.

XZ: You're a blessing for that one. It's a trip because all we see in the media is self-hatred and destruction they hardly ever show our generation's true love of our own, as if we all just don't want to do nothing but smash each other.

AB: That's why they call it T.V., cable, and satellite "programming", because its inducing nature conditions people, its viewers, to believe we all can't stand each other and as a result set up subcultures who beef each other off the face of the planet, that's how they see us, man.

XZ: Let's go deeper, yeah? We get questions from our online community at sites like DRI and one visitor asked how do people on death row deal with the loss of a loved one or friend, you're welcome to pass on this if you want to.

AB: It's a trip how that works because I found myself giving others on the outside methods to embrace the vicissitudes of life and it became therapeutic for me in dealing with my own experiences of loss, especially when that person was loved by so many. So for me consoling others and encouraging them to embrace

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the discomfort and make the necessary adjustments to continue on in life, became the very advice I needed myself; taking one's own advice is not easy, man. But that's how I've dealt with loss.

XZ: As you know last year my father was murdered in the doorway of a market in the hood and as a result I avoided addressing the issue, but now sitting here vibing with you and knowing how my father would want me to face reality head up, it compels me to express the difficulties I had in experiencing every human emotion all at once over his death. However, you are right, because I had to be strong for my family on the outside, helping them to cope, and then going out to the yard to socialize, get some fresh air, and take in the celebrative energy and comments from all of y'all really helped in my recovery. Young Whacc told me that "when you stop thinking of it as a loss of a father in this life and begin to receive it as as gaining a known ancestor in the next realm of existence, the inevitable becomes easier to embrace," that was valuable.

AB: My mom just passed over last month and my focus was also on how my family were doing- wait, Whacc said that!?

XZ: Yep. Sharp ass youngsta; he don't say much but when he do it's valuable. So, what do you think about Papco and Write or Die so far?

AB: Yeah, man, I didn't think it was going to be like this, the intent and social dynamic is cool. But back to the question about losing loved ones, that was a loaded one but I think we both handled it better than we thought we would.

XZ: About a week ago I heard you speaking on George Jackson, where were you going with all that?

(both laughing out loud)

AB: Boy, now you going to get us in trouble, LOL; you already know I love reading his work. The thing to me about George Jackson is his position, he wasn't enthralled by the benefits he would reap for laying his life on the line for the much needed change that era needed. He already knew our generation would be born and appreciate his sacrifice and, real talk, I believe that he was writing directly to us. Here

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is a man writing to us in 2011 from the 1970's as if we were family, at least that's how I see it.

XZ: Personally, I was too mesmerized by the actions of his younger brother Johnathan to focus on all of that, ol' boy was a rider, huh?

(both laughing out loud)

AB: I'm telling you we're already up under the jail, don't get me started, man! To say the least, at bare minimum, what greater love can one brother display for his brother. It's like out of all of them Johnathan saw what the end of those court proceedings were going to be and decided the outcome was his to change. For me Johnathan epitomizes the intellectual capacity of our new generation because we're moving forward in spite of others claiming control, either we win big or die putting the world on notice that some of us ain't with the bullshit. This is where I can relate to George's book titled "Soledad Brothers."

XZ: Permission to encourage you?

AB: Permission granted.

XZ: More of our new generation is on the way here as we speak, they will make observations exactly like we did when we first touched down. Remain the difference, encourage them not to wait for the death squad to come before they start getting serious about fighting their cases, don't look at each other all cockeyed, look to each other with eyes of confidence. Remain the solid example that you already are, divide and conquer must remain a weak and ineffective primitive tactic when used against the new generation, you are the new leadership on death row. And all those continuing to hang on the left must get left as you move forward with all those set on doing this right. Now I end this cipher as it was done at Golgotha: Lord remember me when you come into your Kingdom...

AB: Today you will be with me in paradise.