

### "The very first time"

I was so young I almost forgot how old I was I had to be at least 11 years old. I was in the 7th grade, I still remember the smell of Juvenile Hall, it was a smell so new to me. I knew if I didn't pass this very simple test my career would be over before it every started. I was stripped all the way down for a cavity check, the worst feeling you can ever experience. You have grown men looking at you, they don't let the female staff do it. They made us all get sprayed like we were so wild animals with rabies or something then you are pushed in a shower. I was dressed in some rags that made me feel like I was a slave, and the food. the food is so nasty. I used to trade all my food for the fruits and the lil snacks. This is the first time that you are taken from your family, it hurt so bad you want to cry, but you better NOT because that is a sign of weakness, even at that young age there are some crazy things that goes on inside these walls It's was a real live jungle in there, plus if you gang banging. you go fight alot, go to the hole get and go right back for fighting. You learn how to protect yourself. There were no rules in here. So can you imagine alot of young men living together that don't know each other coming from so many different backgrounds. The majority was Blacks and Mexicans, there were very few white kids in there. I always wondered why even at that young age. It was scary, but I could not show it you can NEVER show it because the first time you do you are DONE!!! There are many laws and rules that we follow on this side of world, it's laws that we must follow there are consequences for breaking them. I know you already know the #1 Law, which is you can not SNITCH, I don't care what it may be you can not do that. Even when we were young we all knew that, but sometime people would break it. Once you are know to be a snitch, you are at the bottom of the barrel anything can and most likely happen to you, I can not go into the full details but it's not a pretty site. You really don't do a lot of time on your first one, unless you did something that an adult would get alot of time for such as murder or something serious like that. I went for 'G-Riding', riding around in a stolen vehicle. I was young, I did about 30 days, it felt like for ever. It's an experience that would start me on a long road of being locked up. I wish I had somebody like me to talk to me back then, I would have turned out different. But, I'm a true believer that everything happens for a reason, so maybe it was meant for me to go through all I have been through, and continue to go throuh. The one thing that sticks out the most is when my moms came and picked me up from that place, I was so happy, but little did I know I would be back there in matter of months and this time I would be doing some time...

### "Back in Juvie"

This time I was in for being a minor with a gun. You might ask what is a minor doing with a gun? I'll tell you why when you grow up in the environment I was forced to due to my parent choice of living, I have to suffer. I was raised in South Central Los Angeles, were every body is either a gangbanger or knows some one who is. It's not something you are forced in, you do have a choice, well there are those rare occasions when a boy or a girl are forced but I have not personally seen. It's really like the wild-wild west. You need a gun to protect your self from all type of dangers, not just gang stuff, I remember there was a old man driving around trying to snatch up lil kids, do know why he never got

a chance to snatch none of us up, because he ran across the wrong lil boy who shoot him in the face. That's why you never hear about lil kids getting snatched up in the neighbor hood. I'm not glorifying it Im just telling you how it was, and why you had to carry a gun, it was like carrying your I.D. card I don't want to make any more excuses but it was just the way of life at that time in my life. I had to spend about 6 months in Juvie this time and it was a lot different than the first time. I had to stay in a different part of the jail due to the crime I had committed. It's almost like a second home to some. I knew a lot of people, it like we grow up in that place. I know learned hoe to conditioned my body, mind and soul. We had to go to school every day, just like kid on the streets, we had a choice of going to church and working out was mandatory for those who want to stay in tip top shape. Plus you got bigger and that was always a plus. I didn't know at that time but my leadership qualities that I learned in elementary school would help me get through this ruff faze in my young life. When you have any kind of position on this side of the world, it will always be someone who will try you, so you must stay on alert at all times even when you sleep. Now there is alot more fighting going on because we all know each other from the street and everybody trying to make a name for themselves. It was nothing but lil gangbangers in this place. Any thing could start a fight with your so-called enemies it could be just the way you looked at them or they could have called home and got some bad news, it was a crazy life you never knew when it would jump off. Then you also had to worry about the racial riots, yeah we had them and to keep it truthful the staff always provked it, by doing something special for one race and not doing the same exact thing for the other. I learned all this at a young age, now that I'm older I still remember the lil thing they used to do. I was one of the lucky ones, I had what you called "JUICE" what that really mean is I had it good with the staff, I could get away with a lil more stuff than the other kids, They had a separate living quarter for us kids that was in leadership roles, we were the ones who did all the feeding and cleaning and some times the discipline, yeah they had kids trying to keep other kids in line, but it worked to a small extent, only when you are dealing with your kind, I will say that much, but I did learn a valuable lesson at this young age. It was to always, I mean always stay alert. You could never know when something is going to happen it just happens. After doing that hard time you would think a kid would learn his lesson, but no not me I had to go through this a couple more time until I graduated to a different level, "CAMP", now that where the big boys go, so they tell you...