



But It Was True

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Original Thought

“Couldn’t believe it, but it was true...” that should be the slogan for my life. It’s both positive and negative. So knowing this I stand firm in the center of my cipher cause I know who and what I am.

Catastroph

When Black bent the corner of the store all I could think was “I can’t believe this.” But, that’s my dog, my brother, my cousin. So, I bent the corner right behind him. When he had said “Cat, are you ready?” I thought, “nigga, you ain’t gonna do this for real so what difference does it make..!?” Then he bent, then I bent. There was a stock boy pullin in the bread for the day in the entrance to the store; by the time he looked up we were in his face. Ski masked up, pistols pointing, whispering for him “not to make a sound.” He knew what it was and kept quiet. Black said “Where’s the manager?” the white boy pointed, real slow. Or it seemed slow. Everything seems slow when you’re doin dirt. At least until its over. The manager was about 28 and half hungover.

I could smell it. I said, “We don’t want your money, just Piggles. Who else is here?” I guess he figured he was still gonna get paid regardless cause he said, “the people in the bakery.” I said “how many.” The fat, white, and half-drunk manager with Stan on his shirt said “four.” Black pointed, I took off, he took Stan. I took the stock boy to the bakery and scared them senseless. I guess I couldn’t blame them since I am 6’0 feet, 235 with a ski mask and 9mm in my hand. I stuck them in the cooler and told them to “chill out.” Ha. We been in the store about 2 minutes. I couldn’t believe it.

Black told Stan to “take his time and get it right the first time because he only had one chance to get it right or else he’d shoot his pinky toe off.” He had to smile behind the mask cause he knew two things: one was that he knew he wasn’t gonna shoot Stan, he’d done nothing to him. He also knew Stand didn’t know that.

Stand got it wrong the first time and pissed on his self at the same time. Black said “Damn man!! What the fuck is wrong with you..!?!?” as if he didn’t know. “Open the fuckin safe and it’s your lucky day, I won’t shoot off your pinky toe if you get it right, now stop stallin.” Stan got it right.

The safe was big but full of register money: About ten registers with 200\$ a piece, in denominations from 20 on down, two boxes of quarters with 500\$ in them a piece, 1,000\$ in ones and 2,500 mixed up in 20s, 10s and 5s, which made it look like a lot more than what it actually was. It didn’t matter though, we were gonna switch it out wherever we could, pay some bills and give most of it away anyway. “Sack it all up Stan, and hurry up.” Stan couldn’t believe it.

Black hit the door first since he had the money. I backed out, even though I knew they wouldn’t come out the cooler. I turnt and ran after Black. I caught up, gabbed on of the bags off his shoulder cause that much money in quarters and 1s, 5s, nickels and dimes is

heavy. We made it to my Honda hatchback, lifted the open hatch all the way up, chucked the bags inside and hopped in. I'm a speed demon so Black drove, it wasn't even 5am yet so there was nobody on the streets on this early Sunday morning. We had only been in the store 15 minutes. Since neither of us could steal a car, we had used mine, cause Black's brother, Tony, had ran off and disappeared again; this time he had been gone for four days without bringing Black's Nissan back. I'm tellin Black "we gotta cut him short." See me and Black are like brothers. More so than him and his real brothers. But believe it or not a semi-quiet nigga with killer potential can be compassionate too. Anyway, we got back to the house a little after 5. We were finished countin and dividing the money, high-five'n, huggin and laughin' before 6am. The paper said the people in the cooler weren't found until a little after 7. I was in my bed. About 6:45 reviewing the craziness of my morning. My first robbery. What I was gonna do with the \$3,250 I had just came up on. Even though I already knew. Pay some bills off. I was trippin on the unreality of the situation, but like I said, I couldn't believe it....

Black

When I first took Cat for a walk around the block I was kinda nervous about askin him to help me with my plan. But, then again, I knew he'd help cause that's my dog, and that's how we brothers roll. No, weren't not real brothers, but most people think so, the way we act. My plan came from watchin my knucklehead partners. See, I grew up watchin all my cousins, brothers, and partners sell dope and rob people; but that was never my thang. You see, in the bottom, down there in Miami they do it all, it was just never my thang. I had never really thought about doin crime until my wife tried to fuck my credit up. I guess I should have paid attention when I noticed

that all her mother paid was the phone bill and gambled up \$500 a week. Trina tried to be just like her mama. I mean she was makin good money she just wanted me to pay all the bills while she gambled hers away. It was pretty easy for a while, since after we moved to Tamp and finally bought a house right about the corner from a small casino. Needless to say, it didn't take long for all her or should I say our creditors to start callin. That's why when Cat called and told me he was getting out of the military and he was gonna help his partner Mike run his vending business, I jumped at the chance to have Cat livin with us to help me keep my sanity and my house.

But armed robbery, well, I had to feel him out to see if he was ready for that. I mean, I knew he'd swing for me cause when we were in the military and stationed together in Miami, this nigga got mad cause I fucked his girl, yeah right, she's your girl then why is she suckin my dick on a regular basis? So, anyway, he sees me in the NCO club and decides to hit me with a beer bottle, but before he could get within swingin range, Cat put something on his ass that Tyson would be proud of. Then the hater's partner wants to try and help, so naturally I have to act a donkey now. I'm only 5'9, 180, but I'm also a two time golden gloves winner, born and rained in the Porkin Bear Projects and Card City. Basically, drilt him. But anyway, we conversated, I told him what I was thinking and I know he couldn't believe it, but the money sounded too good. See, my partner works at a Pigglies and know the layout, it was supposed to have \$175 thousand in the safe but we weren't prepared for the gate on the inside of the big safe. That's why we were in there so long. So next time, we'll take a dent puller just in case. That's what really attracted me. With my half, I could get straight, take care of my daughters, even if it was through visitation rights. I mean, I care for Trina, I just can't see destroying myself for her. So, I figured we'd do this one lick and live happily ever after. Cat figured he'd pay off his bills and start his own business since he and Mike had fallen out. He wants a house and all his other toys before he meets Mrs. Cat. Plus, he

wants to make sure his Mama and brothers are straight. So it was a no-brainer for him, especially since he grew up pretty much like I did all his partners were doing the same thing, mine were just on a Georgia style.

It was a trip, here we are in tech school in the Air Force and they stick me in the room with this country-cool-Georgia boy who thinks he's playa # 1. Now I have to admit, he pulled much hoes. Until we both got stationed in Miami together, then I had to help him revamp his style to Florida hoes. I have to give it to him, the man was phenomenal when it came to getting something out of hoes. On top of that, he had a nose for women without kids. Anyway, we did it, got away with it. Not trying to justify it, but, the biggest crooks, the insurance company will pay for it. Now, I'll pay some bills and ball a little and look out for my Mama and daughters. Trina? Nothing. If I only realized then what I realize now. She's about to move back with mama and daddy anyway. That episode was almost over. Couldn't believe it...

Catastroph

The next few months was a trip, cause now that I look back on them you would never have known what we were doing. Shit, if you knew us you probably wouldn't have even believed it. We looked like college kids or regular working cats. The only difference was that we sleep until 11:30am and didn't go to sleep until about 6am. You see, we were constantly in the clubs or out of town trying to hook this or that up to make a little extra money. Basically buy low and sell high type of thing. Plus, the females we were dealing with, the way we put it down instead of comin out the pocket we had them comin out the pocket-book.

Payin the bills, tryin to maintain and get a little ahead. Black and I felt like this, if she wasn't gonna be wifey, then she wasn't worth half. Meaning, half my money, half my bed, half my car, half my kis (which since I haven't met wifey yet, thank self, I haven't had any.) I feel like this, 33% of my time goes to my partners and family, 33% goes to the lady or the ladies I'm dealing with at the time and 34% of my time is mine. Now, if there's a woman (not a female, hoe or broad) that I like then she'll get her 33% plus most of my 34%, giving her most of my time. Anyway, I haven't met Mrs. Cat yet.

But anyway, the next couple of months went by basically the same, by daw we'd be out hustlin up what we could until about 6pm or so, then until about 11 or 12 we get with some female and try to hustle up some more, then we'd be in the clubs trying to find some more females to kick it with for the rest of the night. You see, one thing we knew was that conversation is a motherfucker and as long as you got the right conversation for anybody, you can get whatever you want from them: otherwise you gets nothin. Black and I both had worked fro most of our relatively short lives and we're basically tired of the rat race. So, we decided to try and get way ahead then basically chill and do the "right thing." I once read that "behind every great fortune there was a crime." But what it didn't say was that there was also a price you had to pay for that crime. We were doing our thing and every once in a while when we found the right spot, mostley while we were out of town, we'd hit a lick, pay some bills, (since we never did get a dent puller) and plot and plan what we were gonna do when we had our heads above water. Namely, start our own production business and eventually our own club. I've got some partners up in DC I had met through my cousin up there who have their own production company doin parties and makin some nice money doin it. So, we decided to take a trip up there and kick it with them and learn the business. the day we left we both had to service a couple of females before we left so we could come up on some extra travelin money. First it was Sara my lil snow bunny; then Angela, my big

girl (even though I like them slim, if they pay like they weight, then it's all good); then there was Takisha my get-naked for money girl. Takisha was like "when are you comin back?!" I said "I'll only be gone a week or so, then we can get started." You see, most cats feel like strippers are the hardest females to catch, but the thing is, as long as you're chuckin money at them and lookin at thir bodies oohin and ahhin, you're a trick and they'll treat you like a trick, otherwise, they respect you or wonder why you're not drunk over thir body and try to make you drunk over their body. As long as you realize you give them the power they have by the way you act or fall for them, then you can dist it out to them. Like if you're in bed with a female and she wants to ration out the pussy, cool. You just ration out the dick or make it known that you don't have to be there. Now, don't get me wrong, if she just doesn't want to, then that's different, but if she's playin games, she ai'nt worth a quarter noway. But as soon as you make it know that you're fucked up over her, you've fucked up. The only one who should know that you're fucked up should be wifey and that's cause you trust her completely. So until then, do your thang baby. Now and Takisha came to an agreement, it went sorta like this. "But I want to spend more time with you," "Why?" "Because you're funny, cool, cute, tryin to have something, you're not soft but you're not a knucklehead and... you make me cum." I said, "Well, I'll put it like this – if you had a man who was helpin you out with your bills wouldn't you spend more time with him?" "Yeah, so if I help you out with your bills.." "...then you'll get most of my time cause I'd rather spend it with you anyway." Smile. "Well, the dude that's drivin me up to Orlando has been getting on my nerves cause he's tryin to holla and I don't like him like that, so what I'm gonna do, is drop him and you can drive me, plus I'll pay you \$50 more than I pay him." "What do I look like a chauffeur.?" "No baby. Listen, I was payin him \$250 a night, so I'll pay you \$300, now how does that sound." "It sounds like I have a new job; so does this job come with any benefits?" "Well, I'll get the gas and food and all the car and dick maintenance." "Now, you know I'll have to buy some new gear if I'm gonna be playin the part of your money

manager.” “True, true,” she said. I said, “so, how much money do you make?” “Oh, about \$800/night, plus you know I work at Kinkos for some extra change and it looks good to my mama. Definitely can’t tell her about my night job.” “Cool, at least I know you won’t be starving.” “Cat, I really am starting to care for you baby and even if I had to starve a little, I might..” “slow down Takisha, like I said, when we get back we can get started.”

Anyway, we left that afternoon headed for DC. Somewhere along the way we decide to make a pit stop in Atlanta and hook up with some of Black’s partners from Miami. Now, I’ve met these cats, but I didn’t know them. But they was cool cats, and basically, had parts of the ATL on lock as far as the pharmacy trade was concerned, but they were very undercover, which was cool, just not us. You see, a couple of months before we started playing Robin Hood, we tried the drug trade. But the thing was neither of us wanted to stand on anybody’s corner, so we had three people working for us. Black’s brother, Tony, one of Black’s freaky friends – young brother, a 15 year-old named Git, and this pregnant broad Black met that wanted to be down. Anyway, they knew a little more than we did, since we had never got down like that. Believe me, in this game anytime somebody can get over they will, and they did. Me, I wanted to do something to all of them when the money started coming up short. But, what can you do to a 15 year-old and a pregnant broad. And Tony, I really wanted to fuck him up, then we found out he was using the shit he’s supposed to be sellin, but that’s Black’s brother so I let it all go. I know it sounds soft, but, that’s how I knew that game wasn’t for me or us, cause Black was looking just as stupid as I was.

Anyway, when we get there we checked in to a hotel and make a few calls and decide to go to Club 112 and hook up with Black’s homies tomorrow. On the way we stop and get gas. Just so happened when we get off the exit, the gas station is in a Piggies parking lot. I couldn’t believe it...

Black

Up in the ATL we decided to go to Club 112, on the way we stopped to get gas and a ridin 40; just to have something to sip on. When we pulled in we both saw the Piggliies. I could tell cause Cat took in a deep breath. I knew exactly what he was thinking cause I couldn't believe it either. Now we figured we'd probably do something but not so soon. Cat said "What do you think?" "Shit it's up to you," I said. "We'll check back after we leave the club," he said. So, knew not to drink too much. When we hit the club off the rip, I know what it is cause the parking lot is packed, the VIP parking is packed and there's a line down the side of the building. We step straight to the bounce, I pull him and ask him how much. "\$30," he says. I pull out a 50. "Cool," he says. We go in to the moans and groans of the people in the rat race. We don't realize what time it is til the DJ calls last call for alcohol. All night we had been doing the pick 2 routine, where either one of us will pick 2 then the one we want and we both step, holla and pull the 2 females. Even if one's not our type, one of us will pull her anyways cause you never turn down a potential paymaster. So when the DJ made the call we checked our watches and realized that if we were gonna do it, now was the time since we were late. So, we shot back to the hotel with a pocket full of numbers and promises. Now, usually, we ride through a few times checkin the scene. Tonight the shit seemed too easy cause as we drove past we could see the door open. So we agreed, fuck ridin through; stop and pop. Which was our first mistake. But hindsight is 20/20. Anyway, we park on the side and run in catchin the manager tryin to holla at this butter pecan Rican. His expression went from mack daddy to straight looking stupid. Cat started laughin. I guess he was thinking what I was thinking, can't be a pimp with Piggliies Porky the Pig on your shirt and a pistol in your face. He knew what it was. Cat took the manager

and I took the cutie. “How many people in the store?” I said. “Six,” she barely got it out. “Don’t be scared, all we want is Piggles money.” “Oh, that’s cook, I’m still gonna get paid,” she rationalized. “Exactly,” I helped her rationalize. The people in the bakery couldn’t believe it.

Catastroph
After I got the Mack Daddy to open the small safes and fill the duffel bags up, I thought, let’s see if they’ve got the gate on their big safe. “Let’s go Mack Daddy.” “Why do you keep calling me that?” I thought he was gonna cry. As we got to the big safe, I thought I saw something red move over by the front door. So I turned pistol pointing, but there was nothing red even there. I must be trippin. My second mistake. “Mack Daddy, open the safe and hurry up.” Forty-five seconds later, I was looking at more money than I had ever seen in one place. I found out later that it was \$150 grand. That’s right, grocery stores are makin a killin, cause I know there was about 25 grand in those small safes. Anyway, by the time Mack Daddy emptied the safe, and by the time we hit the car about 10 minutes had inched by. I just knew we were about to be set for life, especially with our business plans. Yes..!!! I couldn’t believe it.

Catastroph
As we got to the car, I told Black that I thought I saw a car at the entrance of the parking lot. “Hold up, I’ll go look.” Black came back a few seconds later, “ain’t nothing there now bra, let’s go.” “Cool.” Right after we come out the parking lot a car pulls out of the parking lot across the street and get behind us. Before we can jump back on the highway, we get caught by a

light. When it finally turns green, the car is lit up with blue lights. We both know what it is. Black hits the gas. The chase begins. I couldn't believe it...

B LACK

Damn, Cat told me he'd seen a car at the entrance to the parking lot. All we had to do was run into the woods behind the store with the money and report the car stolen. Oh well, it's a trip cause all I can hear is silence. I know there are sirens blarin, but I can't hear them and from the look on Cat's face, he can't either. So, to make a short chase shorter, we swerve, we dipped and we almost hit a tree; but instead of we ran into a ditch. Cat almost goes out the windshield, but luckily he braced himself on the dash. But me, I hit the steering wheel with my chest and all the air in the world seems to disappear. I hear Cat saying "get out, get out..!!" But, I can't move, let alone breathe. Then all of a sudden it seems like the world goes from slow mo to fast forward, when my chest opens up and me and the world can breathe again. I hear "FREEZE.! FREEZE Motherfucker..!" in a Southern drawl that let me know the next thing that I would hear if I didn't "freeze" would be "slow singing and flower bringing." Redneck and his partner yanks me out of the car and gives me three punches in the back, after I'm handcuffed for fuckin up their Sunday morning coffee and doughnut break. I hear, "Hey stop!" in a voice that sounds familiar. I turn my head and think "Damn" cause I know we're fucked now cause I see Cat's handcuffed and theres some more cops puttin him in a police car. I knew that if he would have gotten away, I would have at least have had a chance of comin out half way decent. They snatch me up and throw me in another police car. I look over at Cat, he's looking at me and we both shake our head. We couldn't believe it...

Catastroph

They transport us to the Roswell courthouse outside of Atlanta and put us in the holding tank in separate cells. I can hear the cops laughin and high-five'n and talking shit. All of a sudden all laughter stops. Five minutes later or so, there's a face in the little window of the door: you see they've advanced in certain places from bars to big steel doors with small windows. I guess they got tired of people throwin piss and shit at them through the bars. Yeah, when people are faced with spending the rest of their life in prison for doing something stupid or when their just plain drunk, people do outlandish shit. Anyway, when I see a white dude's face in the window, I know something is fixin to go down. He opens the door and asks, "So what's your name." I say, "Who are you?" "What's your name?" "Are you a lawyer?" He says "How many robberies is this money from?" I say, "All I know is if you can't answer my questions, then I can't answer yours." Now he's hot cause he turns beet red. "Well motherfucker, you'll answer my questions when they give you 20 years" and slams the door. I can hear him talking to Black through an air vent in the next cell. Black says basically the same thing. I hear him slam his cell door. The white dude, who I later find out was a detective, tells the other officers to transport us to "901 Rice street" which is the "Fulton County Jail." I couldn't believe it...

BLACK

About 15 minutes after the bullshit questioning, the officers open my cell door, handcuff me, take me back outside and put me in a police car. All I can think about is how I'm gonna get me and Cat out of this situation we're in. my mind is going in a thousand different directions in once. How's Cat holding up? What's my mama going to think? What's gonna happen to my daughters? How am I gonna come up on a lawyer,

not a public pretender, cause I know Trina's gonna say "I ain't got nothin to do with that." Our relationship ain't worth a quarter now anyway. Anyway, they bring Cat out handcuffed, I can tell by the look on his face, he's holding up pretty good. We get lucky cause they put us in the same car and we get a brother that wants to bump the radio. So he can't really hear what we're saying. As soon as we get movin, I say "What's up bra?" Cat says "Shit. I guess we kinda fucked up." "As long as we get a bond my nigga, we should be alright. How'd you get caught?" "Bra, I'm gonna be honest, my nigga, you know I grew up in Georgia, and I know these bitches will shoot your ass in the back, buddy said freeze twice, I knew the next freeze would have been followed by some slow singing and flower bringin." "It's all good Cat, as long as we keep our mouths shut, we should be alright." "I hope so, unless our mama's kill us when we get out on bond." I ask him "What did they ask you?" "The same thing they asked you. I could hear buddy asking you questions through the vent, but I didn't want them to catch us talking through it. I told him the same shit you told him, that I wanted to know who he was, and I know you wasn't gonna tell him shit, so I know, you know, I wasn't gonna tell him shit." "Well, I got us into this, so I'm gonna get us out of this." "WE got us into this, so I know we'll get out of this." We were silent for a couple of minutes, thinking out our own thoughts, when all of a sudden we see this big castle looking building. 901 Rice Street. I couldn't believe it.

Six Years Later

Catastroph

Life is a crazy thing. It gives you so many choices, so many different twists and turns. Sometimes life gives you two fucked up choices to choose from so you end up making a fucked choice. What you have to realize is that the choice you made before that, is what put you in the predicament to decide between two fucked up choices. Now, don't get me wrong, fate plays a part in life up to a point. Then you decide shit for yourself. Believe me, it starts when you're very young, you make choices about simple shit at first. How many cookies to eat, which may or may not give you a stomach ache. "Mama told me not to stick this key in this socket, but, fuck it I'm gonna do it anyway." Bzzzzzzz, Waaaaaah. Damn, that was stupid or should I say ignorant. Stupid is when you know something is wrong but you do it anyway: ignorant is when you don't know. They say ignorance is bliss, but all the fucked up shit that happens to ignorant people, I'd rather know and make my choices through knowledge, wisdom and understanding. It's been six years, well, tomorrow will make six years since Black and I went and did some stupid shit. I call it stupid shit cause we didn't have to do it. Plain and simple.

Rogers State Prison. Not correctional institute because they don't try and help or correct you in any kind of way. Wayne Gardner saw to that when he took out all the trade programs and other extra curricular stuff that supposed to help you "get your mind right." The only thing that he left was hard time and a lot of animosity. I've met so many brothers that after being in the system 5, 6, 7 years, they realize that they made some bad choices, but the system drags them so bad that they develop a I'm-gonna-get-even attitude. But the only thing that does, is keep these people working, because as soon as they do let you go and you say "fuck it" and do some

stupid shit again, believe me you're coming back. It's a trip cause most cats I've met come to prison and just lay down, meaning they just accept the time they've given or the time they copped out to. Now don't get me wrong, sometimes when you know you're fucked up it's better to plea out than take it to trial and get Life and change. Believe me, Georgia is still a slave state, they will give it to you, but when most cats get here all they wanna do is play cards and dominoes, rap, fight, gang bang, jack off, watch TV, or just straight up vegetate. Instead of going to the law library and fight their case or the library period for that matter, and learning something. Believe me, I know cause when we first got locked that's pretty much all I did. Now don't get me wrong, I've never been too stupid. One of the first things I did was send for some stuff from the law library and find out all I could find out about armed robbery, four counts of kidnapping, and possession of a firearm while in the commission of a felony. Whoa, sounds sinister doesn't it? Really, it's not as bad as it sounds, at least not when you compare it to some of the other shit these niggas do in here or what the United States has done over the years, and believe me, Rogers isn't the hardest camp in Georgia, but believe me, niggas is getting raped, turned out, shanked, set up, burnt, beaten with locks, all types of shit. Now, I know a lot of you would say, well they're crooks, they deserve it, but what you have to realize is by you thinking like this and they know you think like this, when the crooks get out, they're not gonna have any mercy on anybody. (NOTE: I say they because I'm not a career crook, I've just done something society feels is wrong.) You're probably thinking "they never had any mercy in the first place." Wrong. Because most crooks aren't as evil as you think they are, but if you put them or through ignorance they put themselves in a fucked up position, they're gonna make fucked up decisions.

Now take me and Black for example, even though we weren't well off, we wasn't starvin' either. We just figured we'd try and get a little ahead since everybody else was getting ahead in some way. Now, I realize that they got ahead through hard work and

takin their time, but also knowing when to move fast and take advantage of an opportunity when it comes along. I also realized that a lot of opportunities are made to happen through you. By you knowing about something and bringing it forth into existence through will power and determination. Which is one of the reasons why before we got sentenced I studied all I could on how to beat our case. Even thought moms and pops (mostly mama) had gotten me this wanna-be pimp of a lawyer and Black's people had come up on a Hawaiian dude with a long ponytail. Now, the pimp ends up being a powder head and the Hawaiian just plain wasn't shit. So, we fired them both after the Hawaiian didn't show up to see Black three times when he said he was coming for a visit and after the pimp showed up to our bond hearing gooked up and got us a \$103,000 bond. Then we went through a sting of overworked public "pretenders," one of which did pretend to try and get us a bond reduction, but instead got our bond increased to \$143,000. <<< **TALK ABOUT HOW TONY SHITTED ON US** >>> After that we fired them and mama and daddy came through again and I ended up this time with a white boy with a receding hairline, a ponytail and a Lexus truck. Now I'm thinkin, he must be makin some loot cause he's ridin good so he must know what he's doin but what he knew how to do was shit on people.

By the time we finally went to court and actually saw the judget, we had been locked up 15 months, been through 2 paid lawyers, 4 public pretenders, 12 court appearances of which we didn't see anybody even though the county jail gets paid extra for transporting you from point A to B and back to A, and 4 fights. Yes, four fights which Black sent this dude to the hospital with his eye knocked loose, I sent a dud to the infirmary with knots on his head after I tried to put his head through a steel table cause he stole some of my partner's commissary, my partner swung, I swung, drilt him. I got to hookin with this other wanna-be preacher cause he was trying to force Jesus down my throat by tellin me I was just too pussy to stand up for Jesus. I tried to beat his wanna-be Christian ass straight to heaven. Now, don't get me wrong, I

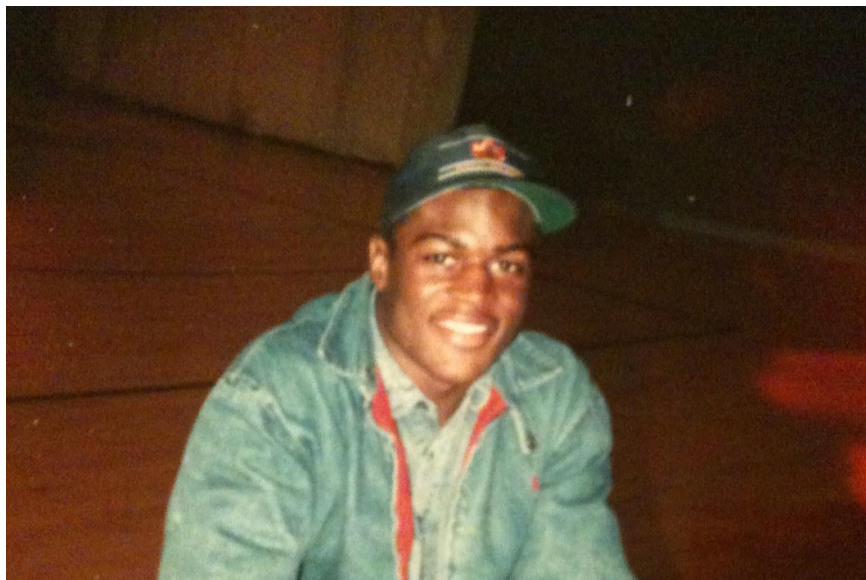
believe Jesus was a righteous man, but I also believe that what's taught nowadays has been watered down and distorted. Anyway, Rice Street is a county jail that's tougher than most prisons cause you've got everybody in the ATL wanna represent the dirty-ness of the South, plus, they wanna represent what projects they're from. So, they've got beef. Then you got cats like us from out of town, but still can blend in anywhere, that's one thing the military teaches you to do is blend in or camouflage yourself until you're in a position to destroy, plus ATL and Miami has this longstanding animosity since a lot of younger Miami dogs tried to take over the ATL drug trade. Lots of beef. Anyway, we survived with a lot of memories, I learned a lot about jail period, but was thorough enough not to receive any scars. The other fight didn't last long seeing as how this nigga owed Black a tray and didn't wanna pay. I guess he thought he could call Black a fuck-nigga and not get knocked the fuck out. Now don't get wrong, cause Atlanta does have some true cats who can work a nigga ass over with that Alto Shuffle shit. You see the Shuffle, it looks like dancing and most people are mesmerized until a nigga starts dancing on their ass, by then, it's too late. But the thing is, a lot of niggas claim to know it and maybe even know a few moves, but if they don't know what they're doin, a good street fighter will beat they're ass every time. Plus, real cats recognize real cats. So, even though when we first got there, they put Black on the 5th floor and me on the 6th, it was still all good cause niggas recognized off the rip. Now, don't get me wrong, you're always gonna have niggas who think your false claimin and wanna try to get a rep off your, but if you are real, then they're fucked up anyway. So, for the first 15 months we just sat. Now I know you're probably wonderin, well, why idn't they bond out, well it happened like this. Pops didn't want to bond me out and then the first time I go to court I go to prison. Now I can understand that, but hell, in the 15 months it took us to see a judge, I would have paid him back way before then, plus bonded Black out cause his peeps felt the same way, even though we told them we weren't going to court anytime soon, but what did we know, we were locked up, they couldn't believe what we said. Right. Shit

we knew what we were talking about cause we were in the system. Anyway, to make a long story kinda short, on Decmeber 22, 1997, our lawyers negotiated a plea of 15 years. Yeah, that was the plea bargain, but they was gonna give us life and 85 years if we went to trial and lost; which we probably would have. <<< **TALK ABOUT THE CHARGES AND WHAT WAS DONE ABOUT THEM AS FAR AS THE BOND AND DEAD DOCKET** >>> Shit, the public pretender could have gotten us 10 in the beginning but who's gonna cop out to 10 right after you get locked up, nobody. And they say ignorance is bliss, huh, let me know. But in every sentencing there are certain guidelines they have to go by, I mean, everybody, the judge, the court reporter, the bailiffs, especially your lawyer, so that if they fuck up, which they always do, you can beat it. Cause it's basically set up to where you can't win, but if they fuck up, you do. So, I finally went down the road on June 22, 1998. Went through Jackson ..., then on to Rogers State Prison. <<< **TALK ABOUT JACKSON** >>> At Rogers I met a god by the name of RaSelf Shallah. When he enlightened me to that fact, as well as a lot of others. I couldn't believe it...

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Six years, I couldn't believe it. When Cat sent me a copy of his Habeas Corpus, I couldn't believe that either, it was put together very well. It also enlightened me on a few things. They, the establishment, had fucked up. You see, since I got to Autry State Prison, I had been trying to figure out a way for us to get out of this mess. The thing is, I had been going about it all wrong, instead of fighting back, I had been begging for forgiveness. Now, don't get me wrong, I realized that we had done some major wrong against society, but 15 years worth?!?! I don't think so. I bet none of the people in that store could even recall my name or even half of what happened. Plus, no disrespect to most

of my fellow Christian inmates, but, all they want to do is sit back and wait on Jesus to bail them out.



About the Author

Elliott "Buddah" Gray Jr

I was born on Ft Gordon in Georgia. My father had been drafted into the Vietnam war and after his deployments my father and mother got married moved to Augusta, GA (Ft Gordon) where I was born. I grew up a military brat but lived in only one city so I guess I was lucky. I joined the U.S. Air Force a few months out of High School and became a Combat Medic for the next 8 years.