

## Dear American Justice:

When I first encountered your Judicial System in the year of 1988, I was a 17 year old young and ignorant fool still trying to figure out who I was as a man. I was an unguided, immature, lost and troubled young soul who had no idea and/or clue as to what I was actually doing in the inner city streets of Newhaven, Connecticut. And despite the fact that I both knew and understood that selling drugs, carrying firearms and assaulting individuals was a violation of both our moral and criminal laws, as an uneducated problematic teenager who had no respect for self as well as others, I honestly didn't know and/or care to understand the severity and/or consequences of my actions and crimes. I honestly did not know and/or care to understand that I could easily receive a 25 year prison sentence for the felonies I was senselessly committing, and even though I both knew and understood the reality of prison from an outsiders perspective, I never thought and/or imagined that I would ultimately end up incarcerated. I honestly never thought and/or believed that I would end up becoming an inner city statistic, however on June 21, 1988 that is exactly what and who I became. Inmate number: 22090-069.

My first Experience with your prison system was a frightening one to say the least, and even though at that time there was only a limited amount of educational programs I could of and probably should of considered taking advantage of, my survival and well being as a man meant much more to me than a General Equivalency Diploma. My manhood and safety meant more to me than any available program afforded to me by your Department of in-corrections, and you may not understand or even care why as a young uneducated man I didn't take advantage of those opportunities, however at that particular time in my life you left me with only two options, fight or be victimized. You see the prison system you subjected me too was nothing more than an animal house designed to either

harden me and/or destroy me. And as an impressionable young man who was already fueled by the anger and rage I experienced through out my life, it hardened me to the point where my first altercation with a prisoner ended with him in the intensive care unit and me subsequently in the hole, (I stabbed him in the face with an ice pick you provided). And at no point during my incarceration did I begin my prison sentence with the intentions of assaulting other prisoners and/or "Correctional Officers", in fact I wanted desperately to change my life and/or become rehabilitated, however after observing young men being raped, assaulted, humiliated and broken by both prisoners and prison staff, I came to the conclusion that I would rather kill and/or be killed then end up becoming a victim of your tactics and peers. After observing a young man get burned to death by his own so called "brothers" over a few packs of cigarettes, I realized that if I wanted to survive in this world which you skillfully created, that I would literally have to go numb and become an animal myself. Fortunately at that time I neither killed anyone nor was seriously injured by anyone yet in understanding my condition and knowing what I was up against I assaulted several individuals, including staff and ended up turning a 5 year prison sentence into an 8 year prison term. I ultimately ended up spending approximately 23 months of that 8 year prison term on administrative segregation, and despite the fact that being isolated from the general population deterred me from hurting others, the physical as well as mental torture that was inflicted upon me by your prison staff drove me to a breaking point that haunts me to this day. The pain and mental anguish I was subjected too on a daily basis drove me to become angrier, hateful and cold. So cold in fact that once I was finally discharged from prison after having served a total of 6 ½ years, I picked up a gun within 11 days of finally being released and without hesitation, compassion and/or respect for human life, I senselessly fired a bullet into the mouth of an innocent person. I willingly inflicted pain on others so that in someway, shape or form they could feel and identify with the anger and unbearable pain that you inflicted upon my being. And in doing so and continually

living a reckless, destructive and irresponsible life, I ultimately graduated from your state run facilities into the Federal Bureau of Prisons. At times I wonder if the system you designed and subjected me too did indeed mold me into the animal I became because despite the fact that I was a "criminal" in every sense of the word, I was once an 18 year old troubled young man who needed nothing more than your help, protection and guidance. Unfortunately I did not find that help, protection and/or guidance behind your concrete prison walls and in falling victim to the abnormalities of prison life and succumbing to the senseless violence that plagued it's population, I became and am now what most consider to be a Career Offender, Ex-felon, Convict and Statistic. I am now what most Americans consider to be a menace to our so-called civilized society and even though I have taken full responsibility for my actions, past behavior and life, even though I have attempted and will continue to make amends for my past actions and crimes, I know and fully understand that regardless of what I say and/or do I will forever be stigmatized as such. I know and fully understand that the transformation I have made changes nothing what-so-ever and that despite the fact I have both matured and learned from the many poor decisions I have made throughout my life, in the eyes of many including your eyes, I will always be considered Inmate Number: 22090-069.

I thank you for the pain and unforgettable experiences American Justice. I thank you for creating a beast.

Respectfully,

Inmate 22090-069

Written and conceived by Billie Gomez