



P R O F I L E O F
DONYELLE MICHAEL BLACK

Full Name	DONYELLE MICHAEL BLACK
Prisoner Number	194057
D.O.B.	October 19, 1971
Crime(s) Convicted Of	First Degree Felony Murder Armed Robbery
Date of Crime	Felony Firearm July 14, 1987
Conviction Date	September 20, 1988
Age at Time Crime was Committed	15-years-old
Age at Time Entered Prison	16-years-old

Brief description of offense and prisoner's role in it.

I do not know the particulars of the crime for which I was convicted of. I have always maintained my innocence. The Innocence Project is currently reviewing my file to determine whether they will assist me in proving my innocence.

What difficulties have you experienced as a juvenile living among adult prisoners?

I got into a lot of altercations with adult prisoners, due to the fact that I was young and inexperienced. I caught a lot of unnecessary major misconducts my first three years and I have spent a great deal of time in administrative segregation.

Have you been negatively affected by your experiences as a juvenile living among adult prisoners? Please explain.

As a juvenile it was difficult for me to adjust in an environment full of experienced adult convicts. I did not have any one to relate to and the experience I was going through. The adult prisoners had no regards for my youth. I had to maintain and carry myself as an adult even though I wasn't. The adult prisoners always seem to be in charge of everything. Whereas the juveniles had no voice. There were no special accommodations (i.e., housing, programs, or education). I was simply threw in with the adults to fend for myself.

How have you resolved these difficulties or dealt with them?

I sought counsel in my mentor.

How has a life of incarceration changed you?

Serving a life sentence has changed the way I view myself and life as a whole. I have learned to value myself as a person and I have also learned to value other people. I am more mature and responsible. I now know the difference between right and wrong. And the ramifications of being irresponsible.

Have you remained in continual contact with family or friends since becoming incarcerated?

Yes, I've done my best to try and keep contact with my family.

If you were granted a second chance and released, what would you do?

I would complete my degree in paralegal studies. I plan to work as an advocate for juvenile offenders, working in concert with mentor organizations and the community to try and help children make better decisions which will ultimately help them stay out of the prison system. I plan to become a responsible and productive citizen.

Accomplishments/Achievements since you've been incarcerated?

I earned my G.E.D.; Small Engine certificate; Custodial Maintenance certificate; Vocational Counseling/Job Skills certificate; I've earned 30 college credits towards a degree in paralegal studies; I've completed group counseling, Drug & Alcohol Awareness, and Cage the Rage. I've also maintained employment as a law library clerk and academic tutor.

Make any statement you'd like (100 words or less, please).

I grew up with no structure or guidance. As a result I was ill prepared to face the realities of life. I was irresponsible and reckless as a youth. I did not respect myself or others. I've made many bad decisions and mistakes as a child. I feel the mistakes I've made as a child, I shouldn't be punished the rest of my life for. I've spent the last 21 years trying to better myself, preparing myself for an opportunity to be a responsible and productive adult. If given a second chance I will become the person I was always meant to be.