



PROFILE OF
DANIEL F. JONES

Full Name	DANIEL F. JONES
Prisoner Number	253128
D.O.B.	December 6, 1979
Crime(s) Convicted Of	Felony Murder Felony Firearm
Date of Crime	January 14, 1996
Conviction Date	November 21, 1996
Age at Time Crime was Committed	16-years-old
Age at Time Entered Prison	17-years-old

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

One night, while hanging with a few guys I knew, the idea was thrown out there that we should rob someone. Me being younger than everyone else, I was all too anxious to participate. In my mind, this was my chance to prove myself to the others. I wanted to belong! I wanted to fit in and feel accepted! As we approached a random victim, one thing led to another, a gun went off, and a senseless crime was committed.

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

The difficulties I have experienced as a juvenile living among adult prisoners was very intimidating. When I first came to prison there was a lot of tension between adult prisoners and juvenile prisoners because adult prisoners placed blame on the younger generation for the current living conditions behind bars. We were told that due to our lack of discipline, our lack of direction, and our lack of unity, that we would allow ourselves to be subjected to any living conditions enforced upon us. The adults dealt with us with such disdain that it kept those of us who were looking for some sense of direction at a loss. Without the guidance from any adult figures made it much more difficult to find a sense of shelter while trapped in this storm.

How have your difficulties experienced as a juvenile living among adult prisoners negatively affected you?

The difficulties I have experienced as a juvenile living among adult prisoners has negatively affected me by numbing me to the pains that everyday people experience. As a juvenile, I was more inclined to think of only myself and of my own well being. Then, assimilating into a prison culture which cautions you to stay to yourself and to mind your own business, only heightened my sense of disregard for others.

How have you resolved these difficulties or dealt with them?

I have resolved these difficulties through extensive self-improvement studies that I still undergo even as I write this now. Through the knowledge of self that I have acquired thus far, I have come to the realization that I was reacting to situations from a pattern of thought and behavior that mirrored the same cycle of negative decision making that led me to prison in the first place. I was still trying to fit in and be accepted! Once recognized, I knew then that it was necessary to develop a new pattern of thought and behavior that challenged my old beliefs and brought me to new perspectives on dealing with people and being more thoughtful of their feelings. This new pattern of thought and behavior afforded me the space to see that it was not just "ME" affected by my actions. I now see that I can go much further in life when I make decisions with the people around me in mind.

How has a life of incarceration changed you?

Incarceration has changed me by enabling me to place more value on human life and those things that are often overlooked on a day-to-day basis. Being able to wake up every morning and move towards bettering myself is a blessing in and of itself. Prison has taught me patience; life has taught me not to waste time. Therefore, I choose to cherish the moments I am blessed with by striving to be a more just and understanding person.

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

Yes, I have remained in continual contact with my family and friends since becoming incarcerated. It is through my family and friends that I keep in mind the importance of surrounding myself with positive influences. It is my spiritual connection with my family that I have learned there are always others who are worse off than I. It is my family that taught me I should always be thankful for my health, and to count my blessings and accept my losses.

What would you do if granted a second chance and released?

Once I am granted a second chance and released I would like to get involved with, or develop, programs geared toward character development training for at-risk youth. The training programs would be facilitated through mentors who would aide the youth in understanding the importance of character, discipline, integrity, and the respect for authority. I believe that it is through such character development training that a new culture of community development can be established.

Accomplishments/Achievements since you've been incarcerated.

Since I've been incarcerated I have been involved with

institutional programs such as Cage Your Rage and Thinking for a Change. I have also been involved with a Cross-Cultural Communications course, a Financial Survival course, a Commercial Driver's License course, an Owning & Operating a Small Business course, a Custodial Maintenance Technology class, and I am currently in the process of completing a Culinary Arts/Hotel Management class. Also, I have been a member of prisoner-run organizations such as the National Lifers of America, Inc., and the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce. I have held various positions of employment as well, stemming from Recreational Clerk and Custodial Maintenance Worker, to Food Service Worker and New-Arrival Orientation Consultant. All of which have given me the social interactions needed for community growth.

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

History has proven that solutions are most often found within the problems themselves. Here is Wisdom: Extract the venom from a poisonous snake to create the serum. What has developed under the extreme pressures of prison living are some of the most artistic, intellectual, and passionate minds the world has ever known. If those behind bars are looked to as the cause of society's ills, could we not be looked to for the cure?