

[THE REFORMED TROUBLEMAKER]

"THE DEAN OF STUDENTS WAS ABOUT TO HAND ME MY TICKET OUT."

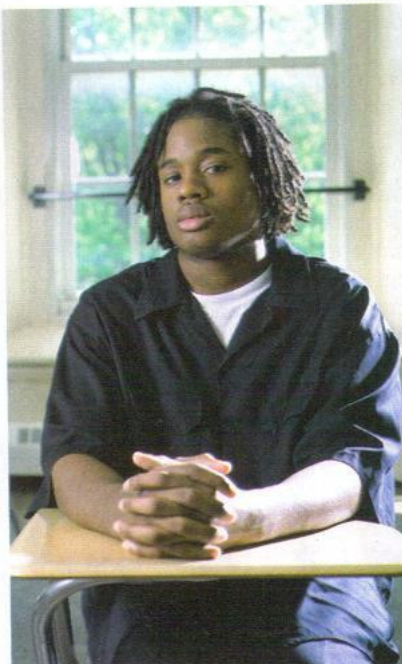
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When I was 16, my mom and dad told me that my birth father was not the man who had been raising me. I looked for and found my "real" father, but there wasn't a bond right away, and that was hard.

I started getting into a lot of fights. When someone would say something wrong to me—make fun of my walk or call me a name—it was like a switch going off. The dean of students was about to hand me my ticket out—to send me to an alternative program—when he sent me to the Peace Learning Center program instead. If I went through it, I could stay at Tech. At first I didn't listen to the lady who led it. I wanted to be like the other students who were not paying attention, but she wouldn't let me get away with that. She kept after me, and eventually I came to want to be there.

I talk to my birth father now, and I think things are getting better. But it was hard not really knowing who I was.

>What would surprise adults Teachers can do a lot to keep a school safe, but then there is life off campus and in a neighborhood. The pressures are real. **>What makes me angry** Seeing people drop out of school every single day.



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