

## MESSAGE TO THE STREETS

Normally, I use my early mornings to spend some quality time with God, reading the word, meditating, and seeking His guidance. However, this morning I woke up with banging on my mind. See, I was a long time member of the Five Deuce Hoovers in Tennessee. A hood I was loyal to until I woke up, figuratively, and realized that it was no longer in my heart. And as I heard a young brother who has recently walked away from the Vice Lords so eloquently put it: "If it's not in my heart and I stay, I'm not a member any more, I'm a SLAVE!" I don't know about you, but I refuse to be a slave.

Anyway, banging was on my mind this morning because Tennessee has turned into a war zone. On the streets and in the prisons, Crips, Bloods, Gangster Disciples, and Vice Lords are either beefing with each other or beefing with their own kind. For what, I can only imagine. But based on what I know from experience, it's probably something that could be avoided. And for everybody's sake, if it *could* be avoided, it *SHOULD* be avoided!

I remember when I was still on the hood and serving time at Whiteville Correctional Facility. I had a partner out of the 'Ville who I was getting a lil money with. He used to be GD, and I had stood with him when some of them had approached him about it. We became tight after that. Well, there was this Blood out of Los Angeles he was breaking bread with. He would always tell me that the brother wasn't on that tripping thang and he liked the way I held it down. But I had been programmed. I was a Crip. He was a Blood. End of discussion.

So months went by and then one day I was out on the rec yard drinking when this dude walked up and said something like, "Toon, what's cracking homie? I'm Money from Athens Park." He held out his hand and if memory serves me right I just passed him the liquor bottle. Why? I don't know. I guess I just respected the way he came to me. *Like a man!* Some of my homeboys saw him approach and came to see what was going on. I told them it was "big homie stuff" and sent them away.

Money and I stood there drinking and talking for awhile. The more we talked the more I realized how similar our situations were. He missed his family just like I missed mine. I had my regrets and he had his. He didn't want to see any of his homeboys die under his watch and neither did I. We got real. Now I'd be a lie if I told you this one conversation sparked a friendship, because it didn't. But it created a level of respect that allowed us to live around one another without seeking to harm one another.

A few months later I ended up getting transferred to West High Penitentiary. Word came to me that an O.G. Blood was asking about me so I went to see him. To my surprise it was Money's lil brother \*\*\*\*. Money had told him about our dealings and he just wanted to show love. He hit me with a "care package," let me use his "horn" to call my family, and even put me on the phone with *his wife*.

Shortly thereafter I met Leroy, L-Dawg, Piru, who is to this day my brother and friend. Our relationship has transcended gang affiliation and inspired the poem at the end of this

message. Since then I have never allowed someone's affiliation to become a barrier to true friendship. I've formed real bonds with brothers who represent gangs and organizations throughout this state and beyond. And since each of them are so similar in their ORIGINAL causes, we cannot continue to let things as insignificant and temporary as colors, money, or some bitter soul who happened to end up with some rank separate us. We don't even have to like one another. But if we just respect one another the unnecessary violence will cease.

In closing, I have a seventeen-year-old niece. She told me that in the last twelve months twenty (20) people have been killed whom she either knew personally or went to school with. Sadly this is the testimony of many of our children. When will we take responsibility for what is going on and do something to change it? O.G.s and Chiefs, Big Homies and Big Brothers, I'm talking to you! Because if you don't, who will?

Sincerely,

Christopher "Big Toon" Williams

Galatians 5:14-15 (ESV)

14) For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

15) But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

## THE HOMIE

As a man the Homie stood. He showed me the brother side of the hood although he stood on the other side of the hood. That Blood on the other side is your *BLOOD*, Cuz. Remember the cause! Unification. Tied together by the struggle to uplift the communities we ride or die for with no hesitation. Homie motivated me to look deeper, and as a result I discovered my roots in the soil found on the bottom of my sneakers. We walked side by side, stride for stride. Plotted on reenergizing the revolution. Debates so heated outsiders expected a collision. They couldn't quite understand that passion for our race was the only issue being represented in this constitution. We shared a fifty-fifty hustle, and two-man round tables. Every dime and every thought sought for the purpose of making sure that our people were able. Homie introduced to the God within. I brought Homie back into a state of understanding. Together we stood, back to back, total respect commanded. Due to this I can now envision an end to all the murderous gang wars. Because, thanks to the Homie, I was reminded of the cause that we bang for.