

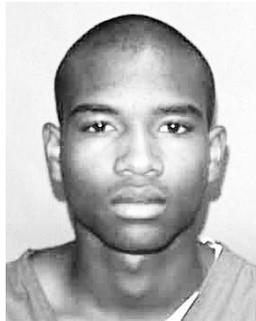
P.S. Never Give Up Hope

Chapter 1

#J41587

Jonathan E. Hartley

Free Lil Eddie



***“Yeah I was pretty popular,
but that ain’t doing nothing for me now.”***

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57 year old Sarah Hotham was delivering pizzas on December 4, 2009, just like any other work day, except this would be her last. She was responding to a delivery call to an abandoned apartment in Jacksonville, Florida, in a Murray Hill neighborhood when she met her fate. The last thing she saw was the barrel of a gun and on the other side of it was convicted killer, Jonathan Hartley, affectionately known as "Lil Eddie". Eddie and his friends decided to rob a pizza delivery driver of pizza and cash. The call to place the order was made from Yvonne Hartley's cell phone, Eddie's mother. That call was tracked hours later and led to his arrest. His co-defendant provided him with the gun prior to going home for curfew and they agreed that whatever money was taken would be shared amongst each other. This same gun was used in a successful robbery the previous day, which netted them some pizza and 14 dollars in cash. Once Ms. Hotham arrived, she was shot dead in the chest and no money was stolen. When Eddie got home, he immediately knew he had just made the biggest mistake of his life; a life that would soon be cut short at the tender of age of 15. He cried and couldn't sleep at all that night, so he prayed... for the victim, for protection, and for forgiveness. He then prayed that it would all go away, but he knew it wouldn't. Every time he heard sirens, he was nervous. Two days later, while walking to the store with his co-defendant, he was arrested. His co-defendant was carrying a firearm in his waistband, which is believed to be the gun that fired the fatal shot to Ms. Hotham. Since that day, he has been incarcerated and will be for a term of natural life, unless he is granted an appeal. Eddie was sentenced to life in prison for the lesser charge of second degree murder, 15 years for attempted armed robbery, and 20 years for armed robbery, with all sentences to be served concurrently.

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All of these charges are punishable to life in prison. He decided to plead guilty, with hopes that his clean juvenile record would aid him in receiving a lesser sentence.

Upon pleading guilty, Eddie apologized to the victim's family and even the State Attorney, Angela Corey. Sam Garrison, the prosecutor in his case said, "I genuinely like this young man... and it absolutely breaks my heart to see him sitting there." Mr. Garrison requested a 50 year sentence. He also stated that Eddie needed to serve as an example for why senseless violence needs to stop. However, The Honorable Judge Charles Arnold didn't think 50 years was enough and moved forward with the life sentence. During sentencing, Judge Arnold said, "I don't know what it is, but there is a segment of our community generally between the ages of 14 and 25 that just wants to run around and be gangsters." Arnold also hoped that every high school in Duval County would post the *Times Union* report of the article. While working as a case manager at William M. Raines High School, I did just that. When the students would enter my office, they'd say "I know him" or "That's my dawg."

Some students wore shirts bearing his picture that read *Free Lil Eddie*, and even created a Facebook page in support of his release. They hoped he would get a second chance and oftentimes remarked that they couldn't believe he would do such a thing because he was a sweet person. Many of them knew him from their middle school years and the neighborhood they stemmed from. Their overwhelming reactions to the article inspired me to write him. It took a while to receive a response, and I later learned he had to put much thought into it:

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Sorry it took so long had to do a lot of thinking.....

Mrs. Renata Hannans

About Prison

Prison as you already know is not a good place man it really aint a place for nobody in the world so I'm gone tell you a little bit about it. We live in small rooms with 1 roommate its two beds/bunk beds a toilet and two big lockers, so its literally no space to walk around in and also you have to sit in the same room and watch somebody use the bathroom but that's just the beginning. If you are less fortunate and your family and friends can't send you money then you eat the state food which is 3 meals a day and they real small and don't taste good its basically the same food we all eat at home with no seasoning and of course it aint McDonalds or nothing also you gotta wake up early and stay up all day from 4:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. that's when you get to sit on your bed after 5:00 p.m. and that's also when you get your last meal you also have to shave your face clean you can't wear the clothes you want and the clothes you wear somebody else wore before you also you got bull junk jobs like cleaning up all day, pickin up trash at a dump and stuff like that the school straight with trades and they try to get you a GED but that's the little bad things.

This is things that inmates do to each other, if you can't fight and you don't have heart don't come to prison because when you first come you gone get TOH (test of heart) basically stuff get real you gotta do a lot of fighting and you may get poked wit a homemade shank or hit in the head with a combination lock numerous times but you gotta make it through it cause if you don't you gone be a

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jizzle that's when you basically gave up, you couldn't handle it you got scared and punked up so now all the money that your people send you somebody else takes it and leaves you with nothing. They give away their food and stuff and get slapped around for no reason.

It's also very stressful in here you only get to see your family on weekends and being from Jacksonville it's a 3 hour drive so I only see mines once a month and that mail aint no joke boy. When you don't get mail you start to feel like nobody loves you and don't care for you and all type of stuff so that's a hint. I need a lot of support write me (Jonathan Hartley J41587).

Man this aint a place you wanna come you might think you hard man listen to your momma or madukes cus she gone be hurt the most! You gone be missin your family and friends and missin out on so much you got your chance now you free don't make a mistake like me and be gone for a longtime yall just chill out there. Use me as an example I know yall probably not listening but that's basically what's going on. I say this again don't come to prison please it's not the place to be trust me. Once again don't come to prison and thank you Mrs. Hannans for giving me the opportunity to help others I deeply appreciate it.

P.S.

Listen to every word I said it will help you in the long run.

Yours Truly

Jonathan E. Hartley