

Adolescence; Trauma; Delinquency; Self-Destructive.

I'm a good kid. I am, yo! And people don't realize it. I don't like to hurt nobody. I gotta play this game, that's how I figure it. I gotta be rough, like tough, you know what I mean. I can't show my real self like some others. I like, I like, I wanna get back all those childhood things, like I never had a childhood, and I'm gonna make up for all that, yo. I don't wanna treat nobody bad. And if I do, I'll just ask God for forgiveness. Ask God to forgive me for doin' stuff to that person. That's why I think I'm goin' to heaven.

These are the words of an 18-year-old ex-incarcerated youth with a history of psychiatric problems, suicide attempts, self-mutilation, and acting out. His parents died by the time he was one year old, his father from natural causes, his mother from a drug overdose. At eight years of age, he was sexually victimized while in foster care and, at the age of 12, witnessed a young man shot to death over foul play in a basketball game. As an adolescent, he has served time in the juvenile justice system for aggravated assault, harassment, and sexual assault. Reacting destructively to himself and others following two decades of traumatic events in his life, this young man still says he is a "good kid" and believes he is "going to heaven." (p.85)

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