

# RUDY'S S T O R Y

I'm Rudy and I'm 35 years old. Presently I'm employed with the California Youth Authority's Gang Violence Reduction Project as a gang consultant. I'm gonna tell you about my life.

At the age of 8 years old I was put in a foster home because I was classified as an incorrigible child. From there I graduated into a boy's home in Azusa, California. Then I started to get into serious problems. I wanted to come home but I guess I was still incorrigible. My father and mother couldn't handle me. I tried to come home and finally I moved back with my parents in the East Los Angeles area off Atlantic and Whittier boulevards. From there I met other kids my age. By then I was already 12 or 13 years old. I met some guys from a gang called the King Kobras. I got into the King Kobras because I thought that was the thing to do.

From there we moved to Whittier and Soto which was in the White Fence area. White Fence had a reputation at that time for being one of the baddest gangs

in the East Los Angeles area. I moved in with my mother and father again. I had six sisters, three brothers. No one else in my family ever got in trouble. I got into White Fence at the age of 14 and from there I experienced alcohol and drugs. No one in my family had ever taken drugs. I started gang-banging, started shooting at people in drive-by shootings. I was involved in stabbings and taking harder drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

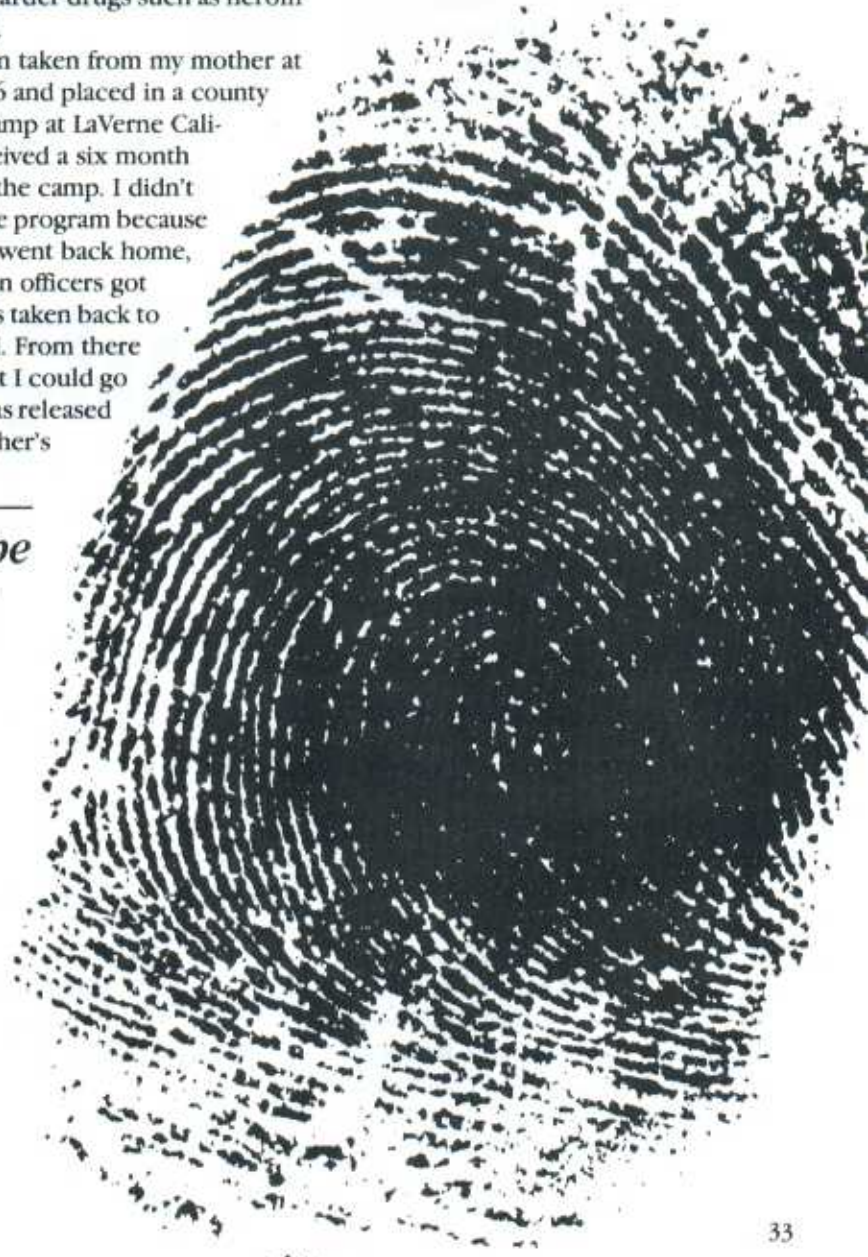
I was again taken from my mother at the age of 16 and placed in a county probation camp at LaVerne California. I received a six month sentence at the camp. I didn't complete the program because I AWOL'd. I went back home, the probation officers got me and I was taken back to Juvenile Hall. From there the judge felt I could go home so I was released into my mother's custody.

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I went back to White Fence, hanging around with the guys. I started using hard drugs. Then I started doing robberies and that led to more robberies, but finally I was caught. I assaulted a police officer and was committed to CYA for three years. I did all that time in the Youth Training School in Ontario. I



was paroled, successfully completed my parole, and got off parole. But three months later I was again involved with the guys in White Fence.

In 1975 I was committed to the Department of Corrections for rape, assault with a deadly weapon on a peace officer, six counts of robbery and other assorted crimes. I was sentenced to six years in state prison. I was classified as a high risk and sent to San Quentin. From there on life seemed to change for me.

I always wanted to go to prison and I guess it was just the glory of being there with the big guys. I was in prison and still didn't have a direction in life. I still wanted to commit crimes and tell everybody I was in San Quentin. It was a glory thing.

In 1980 I was getting ready to be released from San Quentin. I was involved in a lot of illegal activities within the prison walls. I was charged with murder and prosecuted in Marin County for a gang killing in the prison. I went through trial and was finally acquitted and paroled out of San Quentin in 1981. Even after all that I still got back into the illegal activities out on the street.

In 1982 I was charged with another attempted robbery. At the same time as the attempted robbery I was shot twice in the stomach by a security guard. I went back to prison. This time I was in from 1983 to 1985. In 1985 I was still on parole, still messing up, still didn't have a direction in life.

In 1988 I got myself involved in working again with Thermadore/Waste King, making good money. My weekly paycheck was enough for me to live on so I knew that if I continued doing robberies and dealing drugs I was eventually going to end up back in prison, again involved with the gangs within the walls.

I decided to turn my life around in 1989. I was doing a lot of volunteer work here at the GVRP with Gil (Gilbert Garcia, project director of the Gang Violence Reduction Project) and other ex-inmates. I was showing up every day. They knew I wanted to change my life.

In 1990 Gil asked me if I wanted to come aboard as a California Youth Authority gang consultant. I accepted the job and since then I feel that my life has changed a lot. I have met a lot of good people in law enforcement. All through my years growing up I always

thought of police officers as the bad guys. I thought they always wanted to throw me in jail. But then I learned by speaking to many of them and seeing where they're coming from all this time it was my negative thoughts about them that caused the problems. All this time it was me not being able to trust nobody just because they had a badge. But now everything has changed and I trust them. More than I trust my friends.

At the present time I'm involved in a golf program consisting of sixteen kids from the Montebello area. We're showing them how to golf. We have three professional golfers that instruct me and the kids in the proper way of golfing. The clinic consists of hitting the balls on the range and then we go to the putting greens to practice. I never thought I would find myself at a golf course let alone my feet on a golf course. But anyways I'm enjoying myself along with the kids.

It seems the more I get involved in the program here at the California Youth Authority the more I want to continue. I've been given the opportunity to try to straighten out my life, and since working

here at GVRP the program has given me the incentive to do even better. Yes, at times I still get discouraged at a lot of things, but I know I have to take one day at a time. I'm going to continue doing the best I can. The more I get involved in projects here at GVRP it makes me want to continue doing better in life.

Ever since coming to work here at GVRP I find that my family has extended their arms to me, they are more open to me than they ever have been before. They know my heart's sincere in the work I'm doing. So I continue to do the best I can in staying out of prison and being drug-free and staying away from my old friends because I know my old friends will get me in trouble. And for sure they won't end up back in prison — it'll be me because I'm the one with the criminal record. So I'm going to end this interview now saying I am proud to continue doing the best I can.

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