

STANLEY DESIR

Ayo Ock Lemme Gef Uhbaconeggandcheese

I'm at a family function sitting with my cousins and close friends. We're explaining our struggles with growing up in the boroughs. When it was my time to speak, I said: "Don't trust nobody, be aware of your surroundings and shit could always be worse." Those were the three main ideas I learned growing up in New York City. My oldest brother is 34 and he's been in and out the feds since he was 18. He got two strikes. My other brother is 24 and it took him 7 years to get his diploma. I'm going to break down each main idea. We live in one of the most populated cities in the world. You meet a lot of people and you open up to them. Just don't trust anyone. Growing up in Flatbush, you see a lot of behavior which we would describe it as "snake" or "shyste". I watched my brother's so-called "friends" snitch on him and claim he committed a number of crimes. It was painful to see at a young age. At the age of 7, I already had it instilled in me that trusting someone is dangerous. I'm now 18 and I really never had a lot of friends. Yeah, I know people and they know me but I try to keep my close friends to a small number. I got trust issues. Majority of my close friends are either Haitian or Jamaican. I'm Haitian and I grew up with a lot of Jamaicans and other Haitians so I feel like I can trust them and I connect more with them. You're probably wondering if my brother's experiences influenced me to be in the streets. It didn't.

Whatever happened to them, fueled me to be on a guided path throughout my life. I never got in trouble with the law, I respect everyone around me. Where I'm from most people would describe me as a "nerd" or a "citizen", but in reality, I'm just tryna get through life.

Every day when I leave my building I always have my head on a swivel. Believe it or not, I was afraid that at any moment someone would walk behind me try to mug me and blow my

Carrie Hall 2/23/19 4:57 PM

Comment: I like this title a lot, but I'm not 100% sure that it fits the essay, since you're not writing about language really (or food.) But it is a great title, so I'm going to leave this decision up to you.

Carrie Hall 2/23/19 4:58 PM

Comment: The reason I've highlighted these two words is because you're switching between the past and the present. Generally, you want to try to keep your verb tense consistent.

Carrie Hall 2/23/19 4:59 PM

Comment: Are you trying to say that you WANT to open up to them? It seems like you're warning not to open up to everyone.

Carrie Hall 2/23/19 5:02 PM

Comment: Just as an aside, we generally spell out numbers in essays. The rule is, if you can spell it out in two words or less, you spell it. "She was twenty two years old" but if it's more than that, you write the number. "It was 220 years since my great grandma came to the United States." ALSO, I would do a new paragraph for every one of your major points.

brains out. I've kind of been feeling like this since middle school. I would always hear about drive-by shootings and stabbings in broad daylight so that easily triggered me. I learned to be aware of my surroundings very fast. I look at it as a positive because I'm always alert. Now to the last main idea. "Shit could always be worse." That right there, any NYC baby could relate to me. 99% of our parents are guardians work to make ends meet and provide for us. Whenever we see homeless people on the street or on the train, we sit back and say we're grateful to be in the situation we are in because others would love to be in our situation in a heartbeat. Whenever my mom would fess me up about my school grades I would always be mad, but then I would think to myself some people wish their mother was alive to even be on their case about school. The way I learned in NYC impacted the way my academics went because I couldn't end up like my friends.

Carrie Hall 2/23/19 5:03 PM

Comment: First of all, this honesty is what makes this essay strong—the honesty and the use of language. I feel like I'm hearing from an actual PERSON from a neighborhood, and not just some generic "essay voice."

Growing up here there are 3 scenarios if you don't have an education. You're either going to end up in prison, a bum on the streets or 6 feet under. Since grade school, I always maintained an 85+ average in all my core subjects. Especially with my parents being Haitian, my mom was always on my ass about school because she wanted me to have a good future and didn't want me to end up like my brothers. Caribbean/West Indian parents believe school is the number 1 thing in life and you need to complete and handle everything by a certain age. I was always stressed out because everyone in my family would say they're counting on me and it takes a toll on a 13-year-old. I never was the one to be suicidal because who in the world would want to take their life, but I would always once in a while imagine what would it be like if I was to die or not even be born. Most of my friends or family would of never even in their wildest dreams think of me

Carrie Hall 2/23/19 5:04 PM

Comment: And, annoying as this might be at times, at least she cares about your future.

having those thoughts. I never want to think like that, but when I do it just makes me wonder. While I'm explaining myself to my cousins and friends, their faces are just in awe. I don't think they ever knew what I was going through inside. I'm not the one to open up to people because like I said before, I don't trust people. Some people would look at my story like I'm damaged or

Carrie Hall 2/23/19 5:06 PM

Comment: You definitely don't have to expand on this if you're not willing to share, but is this because you felt so much pressure? And what was the nature of this pressure? What did they expect you to DO exactly—provide financially? Become a doctor? It might help the reader understand where you're coming from if you explain.

been through stuff. I don't look at it like that. I'm truly thankful for it all because I believe New York City made me an adult way before I turned 18. A lot of kids in other cities don't have my vision or attitude until after college or later on in life. I learned a lot of life lessons living in New York City.

