

English 100, Third Place; Professor, Dr. Jacqueline Wilson-Jordan

My Brother's Keeper

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“Man you gotta make it out the hood, go away to school, and do something wit yo self,” are the words my tall, handsome, honey-skinned brother told me thirty minutes before he was brutally murdered. July 8th, 2013, has to be the most horrific day of my life. This day was the last day I spoke to my brother, forever! Life is extremely short; if I only would've known he would walk out of the house and get killed, I would have made that moment last a lifetime. Now all I have left is precious memories.

I swear, when it came to me, he would give his all, or die trying. For example, for my sweet 16th birthday I wanted a real big, pretty party, and a party bus. Unfortunately my mom only threw me the big lavish, purple party I wanted. I was so upset because I thought that there was going to be no party bus, but as always my big brother, A.K.A. my hero, had something else in mind: he surprised me with this big, white, colorful bus. It was so big it fitted about 30 people, there was a flat screen in each corner, a dancing pole in the middle of the hardwood floors, and to top it off there were flashing lights everywhere.

He never let any harm come my way ever; he was so over protective of me of me. I remember the time when I was going to have my first fist fight; he came out of nowhere and angrily told my opponent, “you better get the fuck outta her face!” I also remember every time a boy tried to talk to me, he would say, “Aye joe, you betta stop playin with me!” and when he said that, every boy knew to back off.

Everybody called my brother Moon-man because of his enormous head, but his government name was Marquis D. Chandler. He was born April 12th, 1992, and he left my side July 8th, 2013. I try to blank out the tragic image of him slumped over, with 13 shots to both his head and chest, with blood leaking everywhere in his candy red, 2006 Ford minivan, on Congress and Pulaski, right across the street from the Citgo gas station. He used to always tell me, "trust no one." When he said it, I would always reply with, "You gotta trust somebody, everybody ain't the enemy." His same old response would be, "Shit I don't even trust my damn self."

To many people my brother may just be a hoodlum, or a statistic, but to me he's a hero, more like Superman. He taught me almost everything that I know; he was a very smart individual. He taught me how to write cursive, how to defend myself, how to do math, and he also taught me something that I'll never forget, SELF RESPECT. He used to always say, "You better stand for something or you gon' fall for anything." I never really understood what he meant by that. He was killed, and I thought about everything he told me for hours. He meant make your mark, be something in life, stand up for what you believe in or get run over your whole life. My brother had some very inspiring and uplifting quotes: he knew what to say, when to say it, and he knew what he was talking about.

After my brother was killed I stayed in my room for days. I didn't talk, eat, or sleep. I just stared at the blank, white wall, picturing him. There was even time I thought that I saw him. I was numb; I had cried so much, I couldn't cry anymore. I thought about giving up, not going to school, and just saying fuck life, because I felt like life had fucked me. But I thought about what he would do if he were here, and then I thought, and thought, and thought. Then I finally came to my senses, and realized in life you're going to go through things, and it's not the events that you

go through in life that shape you as a person, it's your response to the events.

With that being said, I didn't let my brother being killed stop me. In a crazy way it motivated me more. I know my brother wouldn't want anything but the best for me, and if I had given up, he would have been very disappointed in me. Before I really didn't have any real reasons to go through with college, but now I do. It's for my brother. I will succeed and I will graduate, because that's what my brother would want me to do, and I am going to do just that, because I AM MY BROTHER'S KEEPER.