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Before the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

Hearing on Proposed Resolution Urging the Illinois General Assembly to Pass HB 172 to Restore Judicial Discretion in the Transfer of Juveniles to Adult Court

Written Statement of Jennifer Vollen-Katz, Interim Executive Director of the John Howard Association of Illinois, in Support of Proposed Resolution Urging the Illinois General Assembly to Pass HB 172 to Restore Judicial Discretion in the Transfer of Juveniles to Adult Court

Honorable Members of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee:

The John Howard Association of Illinois (JHA) is Illinois oldest prison reform group and the only independent, non-partisan organization that monitors the state's juvenile and adult correctional systems. Our mission is to achieve a fair, humane and cost-effective criminal justice system by promoting juvenile and adult prison reform, leading to successful re-integration and enhanced community safety.

For the last three years, JHA has focused its efforts on improving the criminal justice system's response to young people who are subject to automatic prosecution as adults (automatic transfer youth) under Illinois' transfer laws. Beginning in 2012, JHA in cooperation with staff from the County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) and mental health staff of the Isaac Ray Center (who provide mental health services to youth in pre-trial custody at JTDC), began the Legal Literacy Education Project (Project). The Project provides monthly legal literacy education clinics to all automatic transfer youth in custody at JTDC, and the parents and family members of these youth, to give them a basic understanding of legal terminology, and the processes and procedures used in adult criminal courts.

Through our work with the Project, as well as our longstanding work monitoring juvenile and adult prisons in Illinois, JHA has had the opportunity to speak with hundreds of automatic transfer youth and their family members, as well as the attorneys, correctional

staff, mental health professionals, and teachers who work with this population. This work has provided us with a unique view of the impact of automatic transfer laws on youth, families, communities, and the criminal justice system from the time youth are charged as adults through the time they are incarcerated in adult correctional facilities.

Today an overriding body of evidence and research establishes that transfer laws which mandate the automatic transfer of youth under 18 for adult criminal prosecution are not an effective deterrent, result in higher rates of recidivism, and undermine young offenders' healthy development, growth, and rehabilitation.[1] Objective data likewise confirms that Illinois' automatic transfer laws are used in an intensely discriminatory fashion against youth of color who hail from some of the most impoverished, disadvantaged neighborhoods in the state and in the nation.[2] In documenting the negative impact of automatic transfer laws, however, little attention has been paid to the personal views and experiences of young people actually prosecuted under these laws.

In 2014, JHA issued a special report on automatic transfer youth, "In Their Own Words: Young People's Experiences in the Criminal Justice System and Their Perceptions of Its Legitimacy."[3] This report chronicles the personal experiences of six automatic transfer youth on their journey through Illinois' criminal justice system from arrest through incarceration in adult prison.[4] The six young people who that are the subject of the report – Travis, Jordan, Angie, Ben, Calvin, and Emma –all exemplify the demographics of the youth who are automatically prosecuted as adults in Illinois in that they are all African American and grew up in neighborhoods that suffer from some of the highest levels of poverty and crime in Illinois.

JHA believes these young persons' biographical accounts, as much if not more than any objective data, powerfully illustrate why the Cook County Board of Commissioners should pass the *Resolution Urging The Illinois General Assembly To Pass HB 172 To Restore Judicial Discretion In The Transfer of Juveniles to Adult Court*. The individual accounts are attached as an Appendix to JHA's testimony here, and we respectfully urge the Committee to read and consider these accounts in deciding on the proposed resolution.

Had a judge been given the opportunity to hear evidence of these young persons' backgrounds, development and maturity, and individual characteristics and situation, and decide the issue of transfer, it is questionable whether any of these youth would have been prosecuted as adults. By operation of the automatic transfer laws, however, no one

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[1] See *The Impact Prosecuting Youth In The Adult Criminal Justice System: A Review Of The Literature* UCLA School of Law Juvenile Justice Project, available at: http:// www.campaignforyouthjustice. org/ documents/UCLA-Literature-Review.pdf

[2] Juvenile Justice Initiative Special Report, *Automatic Adult Prosecution of Children in Cook County, Illinois: 2010-2012*, available at: http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/532

[3] JHA's full report on automatic transfer youth is available on JHA's website and can be found at: http://thejha.org/sites/default/files/JHAInTheirOwnWords.pdf

ever had the opportunity to consider the youths' circumstances, risks and needs, or potential for rehabilitation before sending them to adult criminal court and prison. We leave it to the Committee to determine after reading these youths' accounts whether the goals of justice, fairness, accountability, proportionality, and protection of the public welfare were served by automatically prosecuting these youth as adults.

Appendix to JHA's Testimony In Support of Cook County Board of Commissioners of Proposed Resolution on HB 172

Youth Biographies

(Excerpted from JHA's Special Report: "In Their Own Words: Young People's Experiences in the Criminal Justice System and Their Perceptions of Its Legitimacy." The full report can be found at: http://thejha. org/sites/ default/files/ JHA In Their Own Words.pdf)

Travis, a 17-year-old African American male youth, was serving a 15-year sentence for armed robbery in an adult prison in Southern Illinois at the time of the interview. He grew up in public housing in the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago and was intermittently raised by his aunt while his mother and father were incarcerated. At age 16, he was automatically charged as an adult with armed robbery with a firearm, but he pled guilty to the lesser offense of armed robbery- no firearm.

Jordan, an African American male in his mid-20's, was serving a 20-year sentence for first degree murder at a maximum-security adult prison at the time of the interview. Jordan was raised by his mother in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. His father was frequently incarcerated. At age 15 Jordan was arrested and charged as an adult with first degree murder after stabbing his friend during an altercation. He asserted self-defense at a jury trial, but he was found guilty of first degree murder and given a minimum sentence of 20 years' imprisonment.

Angie, a 17-year-old African American female, was serving a 14-year sentence for armed robbery- no firearm at an adult prison at the time of the interview. Angie grew up on Chicago's West Side with her grandmother. Angie's mother abused drugs and was frequently incarcerated. At age 15, Angie was arrested and automatically charged as an adult with armed robbery with a firearm. She pled guilty to the lesser charge of armed robbery-no firearm.

Ben, a 17-year-old African American male, was incarcerated at an adult prison on a 13-year sentence for armed robbery- no firearm at the time of the interview. He grew up on the South Side of Chicago with his mother, aunt, uncle and members of his extended family. At age 16, he was arrested and automatically charged as an adult with armed robbery with a firearm. Following a bench trial, he was found not guilty of the greater charge, but guilty of the lesser offense, armed robbery-no firearm.

Calvin, a 17-year-old African American male, was incarcerated in segregation at an adult prison on a six-year sentence for armed robbery-no firearm at the time of the interview. He grew up in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago. At age 16, he was arrested and charged as an adult with armed robbery with a firearm. He agreed to plead guilty to armed robbery - no firearm in exchange for a negotiated sentence of six years.

Emma, a 17-year-old African American female, was incarcerated in an adult prison on a 12-year sentence for armed robbery with a knife at the time of the interview. She was raised by her mother and her grandfather in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs in Cook County. Emma was arrested and charged as an adult with armed robbery at age 17. She agreed to plead guilty in exchange for a negotiated sentence of 12 years' imprisonment.

Travis's Story

[The police] took my whole family from me - mother, father, uncle - and locked them up.

Travis, a 17-year–old African American male, grew up in extreme poverty in neighborhoods on Chicago's south side. When Travis was very young, his father was sent to prison on a 14-year sentence. As a single mother working a full-time job, Travis's mom did not have enough time to care for Travis, his two brothers, and his little sister. From a young age, Travis learned to cook and clean and take care of himself and his siblings.

When Travis was still in grade school, his mother was arrested on a drug charge and sentenced to five years in prison. Travis was sent to live with his aunt in public housing at the Robert Taylor Homes. As a child growing up in the Robert Taylor Homes, Travis often felt torn because on the one hand he wanted go outside and play with his friends, but on the other hand he was afraid that he would get shot or hurt. Life at Travis's aunt's house was chaotic, crowded, and stressful. Travis's aunt was raising about ten other boys by herself, including her own children and the children of other friends and family members who had been sent to prison. Travis's uncle was also incarcerated at the time.

Death was a normal part of growing up in the Robert Taylor Homes. Travis saw people gunned down and was exposed to violence routinely. In the neighborhood, everyone had a gun. Travis explained: *You needed a gun in a fight so you could show it to the other guy and walk away.* There were guns in Travis's home too. Travis remembered playing hide-and-seek one time as a kid and finding a gun under a bed in his house.

When Travis was about six or seven, he starting getting into fights often. He liked school, but he felt hyper all the time. It was hard to sit still all day in class, when being outside, gangbanging, and hanging out with older guys seemed a lot more exciting. At about the age of eight, Travis was kicked out of school for the first time after he beat up an older boy while trying to protect his cousin. The police came to the school, arrested Travis, and took him to the police station, but released him later that day. At age 12, Travis was again arrested by the police and kicked out of school for getting into a fight on the bus.

As a child and as a teenager, Travis moved back and forth between different households and different schools frequently, sometimes living with his aunt, sometimes with his grandmother. By age 12, Travis was hanging out with a gang, which was natural to him, since most of Travis's family members were gang members or former gang members. At

age 12, Travis also began using drugs and alcohol. He was arrested and placed in the juvenile detention center a number of times during his early teenage years, but the most time he ever spent in detention was about a month. Possessing marijuana as a juvenile was not a big deal, and even if it was crack or heroin, Travis knew he would probably just get probation.

Travis felt deep hatred and distrust for the police. He explained: *They took my whole family from me—mother, father, uncle—and locked them up.* Other people in the neighborhood felt the same way since the police took away and had locked up their families too. The police often harassed Travis and other people in the neighborhood, and it was well known that they would plant drugs or guns on people they wanted to target. Once, when Travis was walking to the store, the police picked him up, handcuffed him, and dropped him in another neighborhood far away, so he had to find his way home through rival gang territory.

Travis believed that things had gotten worse and more violent since the police locked up all the old gang leaders and broke up the old gang hierarchies. He felt the old gang leaders had helped the neighborhoods keep some degree of social order in the past. Travis explained: *The police might not have liked them, but they kept things more in control and there was structure. It wasn't safe, but it was better. Leaders of the gangs had some mutual respect for each other and they could even kick it together. For instance, if young guys did something stupid and reckless or shot at someone for no reason, the old gang leaders would put them in place and punish them. A lot of times, the older gang leaders acted like parents to younger guys, and made them go to school, stressing it was important to learn something. They would give younger guys a beat down if they kept skipping school.*

Travis believed that without the older gang leaders to control things. He explained: *Young guys now run wild and shoot at each other over anything— money, someone took your girlfriend, you shot at me once before.* He noted that there was nothing for kids to do in the neighborhood but gangbang anyway because they had closed down all the gyms and recreation centers. Travis explained that while in the past a single gang would control a large chunk of territory in a neighborhood, now the neighborhoods were divided into small gang cliques and there were rival gang factions on every block. Travis wished he could return to a time when gangs used fists and beat downs to settle scores, not guns. He concluded: *Now it's just I shoot you first, or you shoot me. It's all bad.*

When Travis was about 14, he went to live with his mom in Indiana once she got out of prison and found a job. That year, Travis stole a car on impulse. He did not plan on keeping the car; he just wanted to see what it was like to drive. Travis was arrested, charged, and sentenced to probation. Travis's mother lost her job that year, so she and Travis returned to Chicago to live with his aunt. An arrest warrant was issued for Travis in Indiana for violating probation.

At the age of 16, Travis was arrested for armed robbery with a firearm and armed violence. He remembered the day of his arrest because it was his mother's birthday. The

police took Travis to the police station and questioned him without a parent or guardian present. Travis was high and drunk at the time. He remembered the police telling him his *Miranda* rights, but he did not ask for a lawyer because he was worried that it would make him look guilty. At first, Travis thought that he would be treated like a juvenile, as he had before, and that the police had just picked him up for violating his probation.

The police held Travis for several days and questioned him. They would not let him make any phone calls or contact his mom. Around the second or third day, the police called Travis's mother to come to the police station. Travis remembered hearing over a police intercom at that time that he should be sent to the homicide unit to be questioned. His mother heard it too and began crying. The police tricked Travis and his mother into having him sign a statement admitting to armed robbery by telling them that Travis could go home if he did. Travis rushed to sign the statement because he was scared and believed that if he did not sign it, the police would try to charge him with a murder.

While awaiting trial for armed robbery, Travis was first sent to the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC). He was there for almost a year but, on turning 17, he was transferred to Cook County Jail. Even though Travis had good conduct and was doing well at the juvenile detention center, Travis's attorney did not seek a stay asking the court to allow Travis to remain at the juvenile detention center while in pre-trial custody rather than being transferred to the adult jail.

At first, Travis was represented by a public defender. The attorney never visited Travis at the juvenile detention center or at jail, and he did not return Travis's calls. Communication between Travis and his public defender instead consisted of 30 seconds of rushed conversation between court calls. Later, Travis's family scraped together enough money to hire a private attorney. However, contact and communication with the private attorney was just as bad as with the public defender. The private attorney did not return Travis's phone calls, visit him in jail, or take time to explain what was going on in the case. Travis had a general sense of what was happening in court because of his prior juvenile cases, but he still had many questions. When he tried to ask the judge a question at one court call, the sheriff ordered Travis to be quiet, so Travis did not try to ask questions anymore. To Travis, the whole process was unfair. Every court date was the same thing—the attorneys just asked for a continuance and would not tell Travis anything about what was going on.

Life at Cook County Jail was very different and much harsher than at the JTDC. The morning that Travis first arrived at the jail, he initially was put in a holding pen by himself, but the pen soon filled up with older adult inmates. Travis was afraid, but he tried to calm himself down by giving himself a pep talk and repeating over and over in his head: *Be cool. Go with the flow. No time to cry now, whatever happens.*

At the JTDC, Travis had attended school, saw his family regularly, participated in activities, and received mental health treatment and behavioral and group therapy. At Cook County Jail, Travis was rarely allowed to leave his cell and no longer saw his family every week. He was placed on a waitlist to attend school because there was not

enough class space. The staff at the jail treated people much worse than at the juvenile detention center. Whereas the JTDC staff were cool, treated people good, and would talk to you, the jail staff treated people like nothing.

Shortly before trial, Travis's attorney informed him that he faced up to 80 years in prison unless he agreed to plead guilty to a lesser charge of armed robbery-no firearm and a sentence of 15 years. Travis decided to plead guilty instead of going to trial because he just wanted it to be over, and he knew that he would kill himself if he got 80 years. He also felt that there was no point in trying to fight the charges and prove his innocence since the prosecutor was running the whole show. The judge and the prosecutor acted like best friends in court, and the judge just agreed with everything the prosecutor said. Under the circumstances, Travis believed there was no chance for a fair trial.

After being sentenced, Travis was sent to the Northern Reception and Classification Center at Stateville prison. He lived there for two months in segregation conditions, where he was locked in his cell 23 hours a day and allowed no family contact. After two months at the reception center, Travis was sent to his parent facility, a mixed medium/maximum security adult prison. He had hoped to attend school and get his G.E.D. once there, but there was not enough class space, so he again was put on a waitlist. Travis was deeply discouraged that he could not attend school and strongly believed that anyone in jail or prison who wanted to get an education should be allowed to do so. Travis reflected: *If you lock people up and don't teach them something, it's a lose/lose situation.*

Travis spent the majority of his time in his cell in prison. He tried to stay positive by thinking about the good things he could do when he got out. He also tried hard to keep himself busy by reading books, composing songs, and writing in a journal. He sent his writings to his mother and his girlfriend so that they would stay connected with him. Travis hoped to go to college and get a job after prison, as one of his older brothers had done. He felt very guilty about getting locked up because he had promised his little sister that he would take care of her and would not go away to prison.

Travis was worried that he would not be given a second chance when he got out and that, even if he found employment, he would be stigmatized because of his prior criminal history and immediately fired if anything ever went missing or wrong on the job. The thing that Travis most wanted was to help financially support his family and make his mother happy once he was out of prison. But he worried that he wouldn't be able to find a place to live when he got out as most of his family members had been in gangs, and conditions of parole prohibited parolees from associating with gang members.

Travis reflected that the two things that could greatly improve the humanity and fairness of the criminal justice system would be to: (1) make sure that young people have good attorneys who take time to communicate and explain things; and (2) make sure that young people can visit with and talk with their families regularly because being away from your family is very hard when you are young.

When asked what should happen to young people who commit serious crimes, Travis answered that people should think about what they would want to happen if it was their own son who messed up. When Travis's cousin committed a serious crime as a juvenile, he was given juvenile natural life, so he would finish his sentence and restart his life when he turned 21. Travis thought that this sentence made more sense and was fairer than sending teenagers to adult prison.

Travis believed there should be separate correctional facilities to house young offenders under age 25 or 26 where they would be given a chance, provided with an education, and put through a boot camp program. He explained: *Young people don't know what they are doing. They don't understand all about right and wrong yet. They need a chance to work through it. We are still young in our minds and get misguided. Young guys get in trouble because they try to do what the big guys do.* Travis observed that lots of older offenders, unlike younger guys, had given up on life and quit trying to change: *They have nothing to look forward to. You are a fool if you don't hope and look forward.* This difference in outlook towards the future was another reason Travis felt that it was a bad idea to house young offenders with older offenders.

Jordan's Story

The rebellion of youth is just a season, not a whole life.

Jordan, an African American male in his mid-20's at the time of the interview, grew up in Chicago for the first eleven years of his life. He was the middle child in the family, having one older brother and one younger sister. They lived with their father and mother. Jordan's father grew up in gangs and was in prison much of his life. Jordan never had a good relationship with his father. He recalled of the time when his father lived with the family: *It was rough. He beat the hell out of us.*

When Jordan was about nine, his father abandoned the family. Jordan's mother decided that the best thing would be to move with the kids to suburbs so they could grow up in a safer neighborhood. Jordan was glad to leave the city, and wanted to move to the suburbs as soon as possible. The move was good for the whole family and for Jordan in particular. Unlike the city neighborhood that Jordan grew up in, the suburbs seemed less callous and hardcore, and Jordan felt more at home and respected and liked for who he was.

Jordan's mother tried to make up for the past and turn her life around by becoming a strict Christian. She tried to cater to and baby Jordan, but this made things worse because Jordan felt a lot of anger and aggression inside. Still, life in the suburbs was much better than in the city. Looking back, Jordan believed that moving to the suburbs was critical because it allowed him to let down his guard and develop into a more perceptive and sensitive person who was conscious of people's emotions.

At age 14, Jordan began hanging out the wrong crowd, who were older guys in gangs in the neighborhood. As Jordan described himself at that time: *I was just a kid who reacted, but not in an intelligent fashion.* When Jordan's best friend died, Jordan pulled back from

the streets and stopped hanging out with the gang. People who used to be his friends started to bully him. At one point, three guys that he used to hang out with jumped on him and gave him a beating.

At the age of 15, Jordan's life changed forever when he was charged with first-degree murder after he and an older boy, who was Jordan's friend, got into a violent altercation. During the fight, the friend began chasing Jordan around the neighborhood. Jordan called his mother on his cell phone to ask for help, but the friend caught up to Jordan and pulled a knife. During the ensuing struggle, Jordan stabbed his friend.

Immediately after the incident, Jordan's mother called the police and took Jordan to the police station to explain what happened. Jordan was at the station for hours. While he was there, his friend died in the hospital. At that point, Jordan was charged as an adult with first-degree murder. Jordan recalled: *It was unreal, like watching a movie. I felt numb. For all the animosity, he was still my friend. I was godfather to his child.* The only thing that made Jordan feel better was that his mom understood he acted in self-defense and did not mean to kill anyone.

During the pre-trial period, Jordan was first sent to the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC), where he stayed for about a year and half. He had some missteps at first. He was jumped by some kids once, and didn't retaliate the first time. He learned from that experience that you have to respond if you are attacked or you will be victimized by bullies. Life in the juvenile detention center ultimately was fairly easy to navigate for Jordan because he was the biggest kid there. Also, unlike adult facilities, there wasn't much gangbanging going on.

At the age of 17, Jordan was transferred to Cook County Jail. Young and old inmates were mixed together, and life there was very different than at the JTDC. Gangbanging was going on everywhere in the jail. Jordan had been scared to be transferred to adult jail and mixed in with older adult offenders. However, the thing that frightened him most was not the people, but himself. He worried that he would lose hope, lose his identity, and not be the same person after going to adult jail.

Jordan's mother was able to hire an experienced criminal defense attorney who was a friend of the family to represent him. The attorney tried to persuade the prosecutor to allow Jordan to plead to a lesser charge, but the prosecutor refused. Jordan was tried as an adult for first-degree murder, although he was only 15 at the time of the offense. At a jury trial, Jordan asserted self-defense, but was found guilty of first-degree murder. The judge sentenced him to the minimum sentence of 20-years imprisonment at 100 percent time. Jordan recalled that the judge seemed indifferent to the entire proceeding. Jordan's take-away from his court experience was: *The whole justice system was just about efficiency, and had nothing to do with people.* Jordan observed that since people had been forgotten, and the whole focus was solely on locking people up — the prisons were now bursting at the seams.

Jordan noted that it was human nature to forget, and he did not expect anyone to care what happened to a 15-year-old black kid who had been convicted of murder because it was a matter of out-of-sight, out-of-mind. He observed that the public had a short attention span even with the most sympathetic people, like the girl who was raped by football players in Steubenville, Ohio, ant they stopped even caring about that girl after one news cycle.

After his conviction, Jordan was sent to an adult correctional facility. There, he learned that to survive he had to adapt and show no weakness. Jordan reflected: *You learn that what makes you respected in here does not make you a good person out there. You learn that the things that make you a good person on the outside, like forgiveness and mercy, will get you killed in here. You either have to play the game in here or you will be played by it.*

At one point, Jordan got into a fistfight with an older inmate. While a correctional officer was trying to break up the fight, Jordan hit the officer and was sent to a maximum-security, long-term segregation unit as a result. There, he experienced and saw others experience suffering in ways that he never imagined. He witnessed men in long-term isolation lose their minds, and degenerate, screaming, mutilating themselves and smearing their own feces on the wall. Jordan said of the experience: *Those guys are lost and they are not coming back. Even if they get out and go home, a piece of them is gone, and it's never coming back*. Jordan struggled to keep his own sanity during this time by thinking to himself: *What if my mom was watching me? What would she think if she saw me losing it and acting like that?*

To survive prison and solitary confinement, Jordan learned to look inside himself and cultivate a strong conviction in his own humanity as a sustaining force. Jordan explained: *A lot of guys go from being leaders to being followers. They have no identity and are misled by the prison system about what they will accept in their lives and they let it build their character. But never let the system change you. You have to adapt because prison is a totally unnatural environment that produces unnatural behavior. But you have to remember and know in yourself that you remain inside a gentle person with a heart. God will not give you more than you can bear.*

Jordan reflected on his experiences in adult prison and in long-term isolation in particular, stating: *The public does not see or understand this kind of suffering. It's torture. Better to just kill people than allow this kind of needless suffering. If I was president, I'd do that instead of destroying all these people slowly. Maybe everyone should have someone in their family locked up so they can understand. Before I came here, I didn't understand. I thought, well, they're all murderers and rapists. There is no other side of the fence when you are on the outside, so you don't know and you tend to have extreme views. But it's not true. Yes, there are some bad apples. But there are also a lot of guys in here who have changed completely and had deep transformations who would be an asset on the outside. Prisoners are human beings. And whether they are wrongly or rightly convicted, we all have a spiritual obligation to care for other human beings. You can't judge people just by your own standards. And you can't expect the next*

man to be the same as you—his tolerance may not be as great as yours and he may be in a much worse situation. You need some humanity. People are born to be perceptive and to communicate with each other. All people have a right to empathy and consideration.

When asked what should happen to young people who commit serious offenses, Jordan responded: *People make mistakes when they are young. You are conscious, but you are not intelligent. America is supposed to be all about second chances. But when you tell a child it's all over with and you can never live a normal life, it goes against that. Young people grow and change. Everything does. Even the grass grows. But you should not lock kids away in prisons. If they were messed up before, they will be even worse when they get out.*

Jordan concluded: *Kids need a place and an outlet to cultivate their intelligence and substance, and develop a sense of self and heritage and culture. Minority kids in particular are susceptible to the disease of nothingness. The world is a five-block radius, there is nothing else outside of it, and they feel explosive. Life is so degraded and devalued. You just want instant gratification, what you want, when you want it. And that leads to bad choices. But the rebellion of youth is just a season, not a whole life. Kids have emotional outbursts that lead to horrible situations. But we're not plotting to do bad things. Don't get me wrong, some 16 and 17 year olds are stone cold killers. If someone is sadistic, then don't give him a second chance. Give that that guy the death penalty. But most guys are not like that. Most kids should be given a second chance and an opportunity to start over while they are still young. They don't even know who they are. They can be rehabilitated, but not with years and years in prison.*

In his own case, Jordan believed that he should be punished and have to answer for what he did in his youth. At the same time, he was skeptical that getting out at the age of 35 after being imprisoned for 20 years would help anyone. He wished instead that that he had been given a sentence of 5 to 10 years in prison, or alternatively, sentenced as a juvenile to a life sentence, where he would have been released at age 21. When asked what advice he had for other kids entering into the criminal justice system, Jordan responded that they should concentrate not just on educating themselves in school, but also on understanding themselves and their own minds and emotions. Jordan remembered that a critical moment for him occurred when he happened to pick up a book on psychology in the library at the JTDC and started reading. It was the first time he began to try to understand himself and other people.

Since entering prison, Jordan learned that he had an 8-year-old daughter in Iowa whom he fathered with a 16-year-old girl when he was 14. He was slowly working on establishing a healthy relationship with the child's mother so that he could see his daughter when he was released. Still, Jordan understood why the mother didn't want him involved in his daughter's life when he was younger: *I was a jerk. What was I going to do as a dad at 14?*

Jordan was anxious to be out of prison because he wanted to help raise his daughter and ensure that his mistakes were not passed on to her. He admitted he was acting like a

"control freak," but he found it incredibly hard to be locked in prison, unable to assist in his daughter's daily upbringing. Jordan believed the most important things he could give to his daughter were education, strong family support, and an appreciation for spiritual belief, cultural values, and heritage. Jordan concluded: *You can love someone with all your heart but kids need more than that. They need substance, not just love.*

Angie's Story

When you have no family or protection or love, a gang gives you that. Some kids join just to earn money, but a lot do it because they want a family.

Angie, a 17-year-old African American female, grew up in poverty in on the west side of Chicago. Angie's mother abused cocaine during her pregnancy, and Angie was born drug-addicted and premature. The first few months of Angie's life were spent in a hospital intensive care unit. Angie never knew her father, and after giving birth, Angie's mother left the hospital and never returned to take Angie home. Angie's grandmother came to retrieve Angie from the hospital.

Angie, her three sisters, the four children of Angie's aunt, and her two cousins were all raised together by Angie's grandmother. The house was chaotic, and Angie's grandmother was often violent with them. There were no rules or structure in the home. Angie felt overwhelmed by feelings of rage and self-hatred much of the time. She sometimes scratched and bit herself and pulled out her own hair. Angie grandmother referred to Angie and her sisters as "black bitches." Having grown up in the South, Angie's grandmother looked down on Angie and her sisters because they were darker skinned, and Angie felt that she preferred the other grandchildren because they were lighter skinned.

The most important person to Angie in her childhood was her older sister. She was the primary person who took care of and looked after Angie. Angie recalled that she loved going to school as a child and that she got all A's in grade school. However, when Angie's sister had children of her own she no longer had time to focus on Angie, leaving Angie to fend for herself.

In seventh grade, when Angie was around 12 or 13, she left home and started drinking heavily and smoking pot. She was picked up by the police repeatedly and returned home. She rarely attended school, and when she did, she usually fell asleep during class. Angie's grandmother fought with her at home, and Angie, in turn, took out her anger by fighting with other people. Angie recalled that the happiest time during her early teen years was the time she spent in an adolescent mental health hospital where she was committed for several months. Although Angie couldn't do whatever she wanted like she had at home, there was structure and she felt safe at the hospital. They treated her better than anyone had before.

Beginning in eighth grade, Angie began hanging out with a gang, selling dope, and staying away from home for long periods of time. The aggression and chaos at home were intolerable. Angie felt sad and angry all the time, like things were going to boil over. She often felt suicidal. During a fight, Angie's grandmother once said to her, "I should never have picked you up from the hospital. They should have pulled the plug on you as a baby." Angie remembered thinking to herself: *I wish they had. I wish I had died.*

Against this backdrop, the gang became Angie's family and her major source of love and support. She had their backs and they had hers. Angie explained: *When you have no family or protection or love, a gang gives you that. Some kids join just to earn money, but a lot do it because they want a family.*

Angie explained that prostitution or selling drugs were how a lot of people got by because there were no jobs. Guns were also an ever-present part of life growing up. Angie observed: *It's kill or be killed. You need a gun to keep people from trying to kill you. But if people know you carry a gun, then they won't mess with you or fight you. People outside don't understand that.* Angie saw many of her friends die from gun violence or get locked up in prison, but she felt this was just a normal part of life.

When Angie was 15 she was arrested and charged as an adult with armed robbery with a firearm. While she had been through the juvenile system before, she had never been in the adult system. When the police first arrested Angie, she told them that she was 25 years old. The police put Angie in a room and said that that she had better admit to committing armed robbery or they would charge her with other armed robberies and an attempt murder. Angie confessed, believing that she would still be treated as a juvenile once they found out that she was 15.

At first, Angie was sent to the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC), but upon turning 17 she was sent to Cook County Jail. Angie was in pre-trial custody for about a year and a half. She remembered her mom and her grandmother coming to visit her at JTDC and in jail. She observed: *Nobody is there for you or cares about you when you are not locked up, but once you are gone, then they miss you.*

In JTDC and in jail, Angie got into fights with staff and prisoners. She explained*: I want people to see that I won't take shit and [be a victim] because I'm young.* When Angie found out that she was being tried as an adult and facing a minimum of 21 to 45 years in prison for armed robbery with a firearm, she recalled: *My world fell apart*. She agreed to plead guilty to the lesser charge of armed robbery-no firearm in exchange for a 14-year sentence. On the one hand, Angie felt relief that it was all over and that she would have a chance to get out of prison while she was still young. On the other hand, she felt like: *A piece of me was dead*. Being locked up at 15 and spending her most important young years in prison, she didn't see how she could ever be a normal kid again.

Angie worried that she would be developmentally stuck as a 15 year old since she was growing up in prison. To try to counteract this and better herself, she kept a dictionary in her cell and taught herself three new words every day. Having been transferred to adult

prison, Angie believed the best survival tactic was to stay in her cell and try not to talk to anyone. She was frustrated because she was not in school and could not get a work assignment in prison.

Angie sometimes felt that she might explode if she got into a fight, so she tried to stay by herself. Everything seemed like a potential threat, and it still felt like kill or be killed in prison. Angie explained: *It's dangerous to walk away or hold back in a fight because people will keep coming after you, trying to hurt you again*. Prison just reinforced this idea for her.

Still, Angie believed that she had matured and come to know herself better since she began her journey through the criminal justice system at age 15. At age 17, she explained that she still felt tremendous anger, hurt, and sadness all the time, but she now tried to channel it into writing and poetry. Angie hoped to go back to school and to continue writing after leaving prison. But she vowed not to return to her grandmother's home. It was too painful, and she would be better off staying with friends.

When asked what should happen to young people who commit serious crimes, Angie thought: *They should be treated like juveniles, except in really bad cases like if a kid did a premeditated murder on purpose.* She believed it made young people worse to lock them up with adult inmates because young people could still change and learn. Angie suggested that special correctional facilities should be set up for young adult offenders so that they could go to school, work, grow up, and be normal. She hoped to change and start a new chapter in her life when she got out of prison, but she worried that she wouldn't be given a chance.

Angie concluded about her experience in the criminal justice system: *It's funny. I'm 17, in prison for 14 years for robbing a cell phone off someone I knew. It was wrong, but there wasn't no gun, and I gave the phone back later. But that white guy shoots a black kid in Florida, and gets no prison. You know what that tells me? A cell phone is more important than a black kid's life. And I'm supposed to be the crazy one.*

Ben's Story

It turns your heart cold when you lose so many people. You don't want to get attached or fall in love or have friends because they will just be ripped away.

Ben, a 17-year-old African American male, grew up in extreme poverty on Chicago's south side. He lived with his mother, two brothers, sister, and an aunt and an uncle from his dad's side of the family. The neighborhood that Ben grew up in was wild. There were always lots of guns around, and fights going on all the time. Ben got into many fights growing up, and he began smoking, drinking, and doing and selling drugs in his preteen years. He also started running with a gang. Ben's family was very poor, and Ben saw his mother constantly struggle to make ends meet and provide for the family. Members of the gang helped Ben and his family out with some money and food when they were broke

and times were tough. Ben felt that he still owed the guys in the gang for that, and he remained loyal to them as friends.

Ben started selling drugs from an early age because there were many people to take care of in his family. Ben's dad was a deadbeat who sometimes stole from Ben and the family. This really messed Ben up and he felt it was his responsibility to financially provide for his mother and the family since he own father would not. But life was very hard for everybody else in the neighborhood. Nearly everyone that Ben knew smoked weed, drank or popped pills. Still, Ben and the gang tried to follow certain rules and a code of conduct. For instance, robbing other drug dealers was fair game, but they did not tolerate robbing women or using guns with kids.

Guns were a normal part of daily life for Ben and kids growing up in the neighborhood. There were guns in Ben's own house when he was growing up. Everyone in the neighborhood carried guns for protection. You couldn't walk down a street without a gun because there were potential threats on every block. Ben and everyone in the neighborhood knew that they could face one to three years in prison if the cops caught them with a gun, but there was no choice. If you didn't carry a gun in the neighborhood, you would die. And between dying and the risk of going to prison, most people would choose prison.

Ben had many run-ins with the police when he was growing up. The police routinely stopped and searched him on the street because they knew he often had drugs on him. Ben was sentenced to juvenile probation on a drug case when he was 12 or 13, but he continued to take and sell drugs while he was on probation. Ben was honest with his probation officer about the fact that he was still doing drugs while on probation because he didn't see the point in lying. Whenever Ben knew that his drug drop was going to be dirty, he would just tell his probation officer straight up rather than wasting his time.

At age 15, Ben fathered two twin boys with his 17-year-old girlfriend. At age 16, he was kicked out of school for fighting. Ben was sent to an alternative school after his suspension. However, he quit going because the alternative school that he was assigned to was far away and hard to get to. The school was also very dangerous because it was full of rival gang members.

When he was 16, Ben was arrested and charged as an adult with armed robbery with a firearm, along with several other charges including escape, resisting arrest, and battery of a police officer. Ben was surprised to find out that he was being charged as an adult. Ben caught the charges because he happened to be in a car with his brother and some older guys when they decided to rob someone. Ben fled from the police on foot when they pulled the car over. The police beat up Ben when they caught him.

At the police station, the police and the prosecutor gave Ben his *Miranda* rights and promised that they would let Ben go if he testified against his friends, but Ben refused. The day after his arrest, Ben was accidentally released on house arrest because he shared the same name and birth date as another guy in the police computer system. Ben was

picked up by the sheriffs a few days later when they realized their mistake and he was placed in custody without bond. Because Ben had turned 17, he was immediately sent to Cook County Jail. At first, Ben was afraid to go to Cook County Jail because he feared being locked up with rival gang members. However, it ended up being all right because it turned out that Ben's uncles and lots of other people that Ben knew were also locked up in jail with him.

When Ben found out that he was being tried as an adult, and faced a minimum sentence of 21 to 45 years if he was convicted of armed robbery with a firearm, he was terrified. Before trial, Ben's attorney tried to negotiate a deal with the prosecutor that would allow Ben to plead guilty to a lesser charge of armed robbery without a firearm, but the prosecutor refused. Ben went to trial and ultimately was found guilty of the lesser charge, armed robbery-no firearm. He was sentenced to a total of 13 years, with day-for-day credit.

At the time of JHA's interview, Ben was housed in segregation, where he had been for over two months. Ben's placement in segregation was not due to any misconduct in prison, but instead due to the fact that he resisted and tried to flee the police when the police previously arrested him. Conditions in segregation were very harsh. Ben did not have access to commissary or television, and he had only extremely limited social contact and outside cell time. Ben felt it was unfair to abandon him in segregation since he had not committed any misconduct in prison.

Looking towards the future, Ben hoped to get a job and perhaps go to college. He wanted to have a normal adult life when he got out of prison. However, he also knew that jobs were hard to come by, especially for convicted felons, so he might have to return to selling drugs. If someone gave Ben a chance at employment, he would take full advantage of it because he really wanted to do better. Regardless, Ben would do whatever it took to support his mom, his children, and his children's mother. Having come from poverty, the most important thing in the world for Ben was to make sure that his family never wanted for anything, and that he not end up a deadbeat like his dad.

When asked what should happen to young people who commit serious crimes, Ben responded that it would be better to treat them as juveniles and let them start their lives over at 21 by giving them juvenile life sentences. He explained: *It's not kids' fault. They have no choices. Older guys take care of them and make the choices for them.*

Ben reflected that in his 17 years, he had already lost a lot of people he loved. At the time of the interview, Ben's 15-year-old close friend had recently been shot and killed. But everyone in the neighborhood had also lost people they loved to violence or prison. Ben reflected: *It turns your heart cold when you lose so many people. You don't want to get attached or fall in love or have friends because they will just be ripped away.*

Calvin's Story

People need to remember that kids are still growing up and figuring things out, and they won't be the same forever.

Calvin, a 17-year–old African American male, grew up in extreme poverty in Englewood on Chicago's south side. At the time of JHA's interview, Calvin was functionally illiterate and struggled to use basic grammar to express ideas in writing. Many times during the interview, Calvin had to have questions repeated because he did not understand. Calvin explained that even though he wasn't book smart, he was good with his hands and excelled at fixing mechanical things. His grandmother used to say of him that he had "brains in his fingers," and Calvin hoped to get a job one day using this skill when he got out of prison.

Growing up in Englewood, Calvin recalled having many run-ins with the police. In Englewood it was normal for the police to stop and mess with you. If you were young, black and male, they just assumed you were a criminal. It was humiliating, frightening, and made people angry, but everyone in the neighborhood just learned to live with it.

Throughout his preteen and early teen years, Calvin was routinely stopped, questioned, searched, and taken to the police station. Usually, the police held Calvin in custody for a short time, called his parents, and released him. Once, when Calvin was 13 or 14, he was arrested, charged as a juvenile, and held at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) for several days. Ultimately, he was given probation in the juvenile case and allowed to go home.

At age 16, Calvin was arrested and charged as an adult for armed robbery with a firearm. Calvin had never heard the terms "A.T." or "automatic transfer laws" before his arrest. On the day Calvin was arrested, the police called his mother and told her that she had to bring Calvin down to the police station to sign some papers. When they got there, the police separated Calvin from his mom and told her that she could not be in the room with him. When Calvin was alone, the police told him that things would "go bad" if he didn't talk and "go good" if he did. Calvin thought the police would let him go home with his mom like they had in the past, so he told them what they wanted to hear. Calvin was charged as an adult with armed robbery with a firearm and taken to the JTDC.

Calvin was appointed a public defender to represent him and spent almost a year housed at JTDC in pre-trial detention. During that time, Calvin's public defender rarely communicated with him. He did not visit the JTDC or return Calvin's calls. On court dates, Calvin's attorney would speak to him briefly and just tell the date for his next court appearance, but he would not take time to sit down and explain to Calvin what was happening in the case or how the trial process worked. Everyone in the courtroom—the judge, the prosecutor, the defense attorney—talked really fast and said things that Calvin

did not understand. For Calvin, the hardest and most frightening thing was feeling completely lost and out of control because he did not understand anything about what was going on in his case or in court. As Calvin summed up: *No one tells you nothing. No one will talk to you.*

About a month before Calvin's 17th birthday, he learned that he was going to be transferred to Cook County Jail from the JTDC. A security staff teased Calvin, telling him that adult inmates were going to do things to him since he was so young, which scared him. Mental health staff at JTDC worked to calm Calvin down and prepare him for the transfer. A mental health staff member who worked closely with Calvin noted that his defense attorney could also file a motion to stay the transfer and ask that Calvin be allowed to remain at JTDC since his behavior was excellent and he had adjusted extremely well. The staff member helped Calvin gather all of his certificates of good behavior, achievement, and good conduct that he had earned at JTDC to give to his attorney to help support a motion to stay. When Calvin brought this documentation to his attorney at the next court date, however, the attorney summarily dismissed him, stating, "This judge doesn't grant stays."

On the morning of his 17th birthday, Calvin was transferred to Cook County Jail. He vividly recalled that day, as it was raining outside and he kept looking out the window at all the people, houses, cars, and the umbrellas going by, wondering if he would ever go home. He remembered wishing he could just ride in the transfer van forever.

On arriving at Cook County jail, Calvin was placed in a bullpen holding area with hundreds of older, adult prisoners. There were men sleeping all over the floor. Calvin, who was short and had a slight build, tried to look tough but he felt panicked and terrified. He was held in the bullpen from about 10 a.m. to about 3:00 a.m. before being transferred to Division 11 (the unit in Cook County Jail where 17-year-olds were housed). During the entire time in the bullpen, Calvin held his bowels and would not go to the bathroom because he feared he would be attacked or sexually assaulted by the older guys.

Life in Division 11 was very different than at the JTDC. Calvin was in his cell most of the time, rarely saw his family, and did not have mental health staff that he could talk to. There was not enough food and Calvin felt hungry all of the time. Calvin's anxiety and stress increased to such a degree that he began to shut down, contemplated suicide, and withdrew from his family. Knowing that his mother was pregnant, he did not want to burden her by telling her what he was thinking of doing.

As the pre-trial period dragged on, Calvin's attorney still refused to communicate with him or visit him at jail. On one court date, Calvin learned that he was facing a minimum of 21 years in prison for armed robbery with a firearm. He was shocked and completely unprepared for the news. He flew into a rage at his attorney in court, and stopped talking to his attorney altogether from that day forward. One day, Calvin's attorney came to see him and told him that he had some bad news and some good news. The bad news was that Calvin was facing a minimum of 21 years in prison and his attorney couldn't do

anything for him at a trial. The good news was that the attorney could negotiate a sentence for the lesser-included offense of armed robbery-no firearm and a sentence of six years if Calvin pled guilty. Calvin knew that the judge, the prosecutor, and his defense attorney would punish him with a 21-year sentence if he tried to go to trial, so he gave up and pled guilty.

While still 17, Calvin was shipped to the adult Northern Reception and Classification Center at Stateville prison where he was kept in segregation conditions for more than a month. During this time, Calvin had no contact with his family and was basically locked in a cell 23-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. He felt as if he was mentally breaking down.

From the Reception and Classification Center, Calvin was shipped to a medium-security adult prison and housed with adult, general population inmates. Because Calvin's family was extremely poor, they could not send him any money in prison. Inmates mocked and picked on Calvin, calling him smelly and dirty, because he could not afford to buy adequate hygiene products like soap, deodorant and toothpaste. Calvin tried to "sell" food items from his meal trays to other inmates in exchange for more hygiene products. He also wrote to a mental health staff member that he used to know and asked to borrow ten dollars, but the staff could not help him because it was prohibited under client/patient rules. One day and older inmate came to Calvin's cell and tried to assault him, so Calvin fought back. Calvin was transferred to another prison and placed in segregation for three months for fighting as a result. After the assault and his release from segregation, the prison thereafter housed Calvin with another 17-year-old inmate and kept them both separated from general population adult inmates.

At the conclusion of the interview, Calvin reflected on what he believed was fair and should happen when young people who commit serious crimes. He thought that young people should be punished for hurting people and breaking the law, but they should be kept in places like JTDC where they were helped and treated decently, and not kept with adult prisoners. He concluded: *People need to remember that kids are still growing up and figuring things out, and they won't be the same forever.*

Emma's Story

When bad things happen to young people, they sometimes do bad things in return because they are hurting. Give them a chance, give them some help—don't just send them away.

Emma, a 17-year-old African American female, grew up in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs in Cook County. She and her younger sister and older brother were by raised by their mother and their grandfather. Emma's mother worked long hours, so Emma's grandfather was often their caregiver. Emma was very close with him. Her best memories in life were of her grandfather teaching her how to cook and sitting on his lap in a rocking chair while he told her stories about what it was like being a soldier in the war.

Throughout her childhood, Emma and her family moved often, usually about every two years. The family lived in Section 8 public housing, and Emma's mother worried about the children growing up around violence, gangs, and drugs. Emma's mother relocated the family frequently, trying to find better neighborhoods in which to raise Emma and her siblings. The relocations were hard on Emma because every time she adjusted to a new school and made friends, the family would have to move again.

When Emma was 16, her grandfather died. In her grief over his death, Emma began smoking weed and drinking alcohol. Emma explained: *When you lose someone that close to you, you just feel like you want to die. I felt like dying then.* One night, Emma snuck out of the house and went to a party. She got very drunk and was gang raped by a group of older guys. But Emma did not tell her mom or anyone about what happened because she felt like it was her fault since she snuck out, got drunk, and was not supposed to be there.

After the rape, Emma began using marijuana and alcohol on a daily basis. One night, Emma and her sister, who was a few years younger, went to a party and got very drunk and high. Emma and her sister wanted to leave, but they couldn't find anyone to come pick them up. She recalled: *It was raining and we didn't have any money on us and [we] were fucked up and stranded.* On impulse, Emma and her sister decided to do something reckless. Emma recalled: *We were like, fuck it, we've got no money or ride, let's just rob someone.*

They hailed a cab, pulled a knife on the cab driver and took some cash from him. Emma had never done anything like that before. She remembered that at the time it felt exciting: *Like a rush. We couldn't believe that we did it. It didn't seem real. It was like a dream. I'd never done anything like that.* Emma and her sister tried to recapture the feeling by robbing another cab driver a few weeks later for quick money, again when they were high and drunk. They were arrested by the police that time. Emma remembered: *I knew it was wrong. I don't know why we did it. I knew we were going to get caught too. We weren't going to hurt anyone, but we were high and not thinking.* She felt so angry, sad, and messed up after being raped, she didn't think. Looking back, she wished she had talked to someone about what had happened to her.

Because of her age, Emma was charged as an adult with armed robbery. Because her sister was a year or so younger, she was charged as a juvenile. After her arrest, Emma was sent to Cook County Jail. She didn't understand why she was being treated like an adult and sent to adult jail, when her sister was being treated like a juvenile and sent to the juvenile detention center with other kids.

Emma's first cellmate at Cook County Jail was 41 years old, and her second cellmate was 21 years old. Emma was terrified because she initially was placed in the Maximum Security Unit at the jail with killers and violent adults. The cells were dirty and nasty and had biting bugs, and the food mostly consisted of bologna sandwiches. Emma began to feel like an animal. Her only relief was attending Cook County Jail's school program.

She loved going to school because for the few hours a day that she was in class, she could pretend she was a normal kid and not in jail.

As a 17-year-old with no prior criminal involvement, one of the hardest things for Emma was having no information about what was going on in her court case. Emma's public defender did not explain what was happening and basically told her nothing. Emma had no understanding of how the law and court processes worked. She repeatedly tried calling her public defender to ask questions and request a meeting, but her calls were never returned. Emma's attorney would only speak to her quickly for a few minutes at court calls.

Eventually, Emma gave up trying to call or talk to her attorney. Emma's ultimate decision to plead guilty in exchange for a 12-year sentence was strongly influenced by the fact that she did not know or understand what was going on in her case. When Emma's attorney told her that she should take the State's first plea offer, Emma figured there was no point in negotiating or fighting for a lesser sentence. Emma's younger sister ultimately pled guilty as a juvenile to the same charges in exchange for five years' probation. Emma recalled that when her family found out that 17-year-old Emma was going adult prison for 12 years, while her younger sister was being given juvenile probation for five years for the same offense: *They lost it because it made no sense.* Emma's mother later admitted to her that she dealt with the news by getting drunk. Emma recalled that when her mom found out that her one daughter was getting out on probation, but the other was going away to prison for 12 years: *It was as if the whole world had turned upside down and went crazy*.

From her experience in the adult criminal justice system, Emma concluded that the fix was in once the State charged a person. She believed: *The judge, the prosecutor and the public defender get more money if a person goes to prison.* From Emma's point of view, it seemed that the judge, the prosecutor and the public defender were all working together to get a conviction and sentence, especially if the defendant was black. Emma hoped that she could get a job after her release from prison, but she worried that she would not be able to find employment because of her prior conviction. She also hoped to get an education and eventually go to college, but given that she did not have access to education in prison, that also seemed doubtful.

When asked what she thought would have been a fair punishment in her case, Emma responded: *I wish they had treated me like a juvenile, like my sister. Or maybe they could have let me go to boot camp or given me a shorter sentence, like six years since I never did anything like this before.* The one good thing that had come out of the experience was that Emma finally talked to a counselor about being raped. Emma reflected: *When bad things happen to young people, they sometimes do bad things in return because they are hurting*. Emma believed that the criminal justice system should treat young people differently than adults and recognized that they can change. She concluded: *Give them a chance, give them some help—don't just send them away.*