



Randy Kearse: Changing the game plan

By CYRIL JOSH BARKER

Amsterdam New Staff, published May 22, 2010

Thirteen years, six months and two days. That's the time that author, motivational speaker and entrepreneur Randy Kearse spent in prison. And while most men consider time spent behind bars as a burden, upon returning to the outside world, Kearse considered his incarceration time as a steppingstone toward success.

Being out of prison for over two years now, Kearse is author of three books titled —Street Talk: Da Official Guide to Hip-Hop & Urban Slang,|| —The Writing Game: How to Print, Publish, Profit in the Book Industry,|| and —Changin' Your Game Plan: How to use incarceration as a stepping stone for SUCCESS.|| Numbers in sales for his work have reached in the thousands.

Who I am today is different than who I was yesterday,|| he said. -To understand who I am today, you have to know who I was yesterday.||

Yesterday, meaning over 20 years ago when he was considered royalty during New York City's crack epidemic as a high ranking dealer. Kearse's previous lifestyle is a far cry from the life he leads today. With his books published and appearances at prisons and youth programs, he said he focuses on giving back and making amends with a society he helped bring down.

Growing up in Downtown Brooklyn's Farragut housing projects, Kearse said his childhood wasn't one typical of the making of a drug dealer. He came from a two-parent home; his mother was a school teacher and his father was a transit worker. Kearse was the middle of six children.

He said, -I had a decent upbringing, and no one would've suspected I would go down the wrong path. While I was in high school, I just did average teen mischief. I was trying to be cool and followed the crowd.||

But trying to be cool led him to drop out of high school in the 10th grade, a move he calls his —worst mistake||. He got a job working as a messenger and earned his GED, but at age 19 he was introduced to the crack selling business. Kearse recalls how crack ruined the lives of people during the mid-1980s but he had little concern. He was making \$10,000 to \$15,000 a day selling drugs in New York and in the South.

—Nobody really knew what crack was going to do at that time, he said. —On summer nights, it was like people were walking around like zombies. It was a terrible time. Nobody could've foreseen what was going to happen. Crack turned good people bad and bad people worse.

Kearse's drug dealing gave him a sense of power, he said, on top of the world. But that world soon came crashing down in 1992 when the feds, the DEA, and the NYPD and Raleigh Police came looking for him. He was busted in a hotel room during a drug raid.

He gave a guilty plea to prevent a lifelong prison sentence, and judge gave him 15 years. Kearse said going to prison was like going into a different world. But he used the time to get his life together and think about the future.

—My first three years [in prison] I was just trying to survive, he said. —I had to navigate the politics of prison. Six years in, I started thinking about my future. Prison is not about how much time you do, it's really about what you do with the time.

And with his time, he focused on being an author. Getting the idea from a fellow inmate, Kearse started writing his first book —Street Talk: Da Official Guide to Hip-Hop & Urban Slang, a dictionary of slang terms containing thousands of entries.

But it would be his second book —Changin' Your Game Plan, a self help guide for people who have recently been released from prison and working to make the transition back into society — that would put him on the map. He also published —The Writing Game, a guide for aspiring authors.

Today, Kearse has his own publishing company, Positive Urban Literature Inc. He has brought his knowledge and wisdom back to the prisons by holding weekly workshops for youth inmates at Rikers Island and other places around the country.

—I took a lot away from people when I was living my old lifestyle. I want to take that influence I had and uplift people, he said. I hope to not be judged on the bad that I've done, but for the good I'm trying to do.