

Corey Johnson - 52

In just three days, I'll be dead. They'll stick a needle in my arm and pump me full of medicine that's not supposed to be used for killing. Only to help people. Some say it will be an easy death - kinda like falling asleep; but others are saying that ain't the truth - that my lungs are gonna fill up with fluid, and I'll know it, and I'll drown. It scares me to think of it.

I know I was an awful guy when I was young. I don't mean to complain or make excuses, but I had a horrible childhood. I think I was born not too smart, but it didn't help that my mom was addicted to drugs and didn't know how to take care of kids. She abused my mind, physically hurt me, and made me hate myself; then she abandoned me when I was 13 and I ended up in a place for kids who couldn't learn and were emotionally damaged. It was a bad place - no love, no one to hold me. I felt like nothing. At 18, I was on my own - no education. I didn't know how to do anything; no support - no chance of making it. I was lost.

But, I finally found my place with the "Newtowne Gang" - they made me into a man - a bad one - but at least I had some people who I thought cared about me. But, it turned out real bad. I became a crack cocaine dealer and in 1992, me and some other guys went on a killing spree - like is happening now, but by the government. The thing is, the jury didn't know that my mind was disabled, that I didn't always know what I was supposed to do. So, I went along. Maybe because I'm black, I'm considered broken and bad. Maybe they're right, cause I surely did kill people. But, then, nobody made a rule that if you were really handicapped in the mind, you couldn't be killed. So, I'll die, not like my friend, Vernon - who did the same crimes as me. Somehow, the jury knew he was Really sick in the head. He got Life.

January 14 is the date I'll shuffle down the hall to the cold, blank room. I'll say my prayers and try to remember that lots of people said I was a "model prisoner all the years I was on death row." My days of hurting others were over. Too bad I didn't get a chance to be really good. I'm sorry for what I did. Could you pray for me, please?

