

My name is James Johnson I'm here to let you know who I am where I'm from and what I've been through I am 52 years old I live in a transitional living program I'm in CDL School for truck driving I recently was incarcerated for domestic how did I get here I made some mistakes in my past but when I come to talk to you about is how my past of 30 years ago back to me now I have been the treatment I have been to therapy for mental health and anger and I've been incarcerated more than once right now I'm trying to lift my best life I am cleaning sober I'm in full-time truck driving school go to Bible study twice a week can I go to church on Sundays I have a couple personal mentors that are helping me and guiding me I've tried to work with an expungement team running into barriers so how did I get here 30 years ago my whole life was turned upside down because I was put in the situation that I had no control of and more or less was a scapegoat situation happened in my community I was at your age of 16 at that time living my best life I was the neighborhood DJ I was all athlete in my community with baseball football basketball and I even played floor hockey I also was a teen father so I had to throw up a lot faster than the average kid so one day the incident happened at a party at DJ my name came up I grew up in a Mexican community on the west side of St Paul and I believe the color of my skin was my thing now I can't I don't have any control over what happened back then I remember my mother tried to protect me and moved me out of town before then I had a full ride to Cretan Durham Hall to play football I remember the look on my mother's face when two boosters came to talk to my mother after Saturday football game let her know I would have tutors in a full 4-year ride sponsored by the booster from there I was told I had a 85% chance to go to college on a free ride scholarship not even 3 weeks later I was picked up by the Saint Paul PD and said I was involved in something I'm not here to dispute what happened back then all I can tell you is I was raised if it's none of your business stay out of it I DJ the party there were some young girls there some will run away and runaways from a different community play the music I packed up and I left by the end of this ordeal I was convicted of a crime that I had no part in all my dreams are taken away my mother tried to move into another city and found out a life in Chicago what's going nowhere for me she chose to send me back here and deal with whatever they had for me at that time I was a little older swallowed my pride because my dreams of where I wanted to be in this world and go was over I was sent to a juvenile facilities where 11 months later I was in a bad van accident and watch nine kids die so going into adulthood with all this trauma angry not understanding why counselors at this facilities wanted me to admit to something I didn't do but that's another story today I'm here because as I got older I made a few mistakes but I just don't understand how those mistakes can keep coming back and haunt you I'm about to finish truck driving school and I had three offers on the table a job starting at \$85,000 a year \$95,000 a year in another one at \$110,000 a year doing what I love to do drive because of things on my criminal record I can't take those jobs I can't get an apartment and I couldn't figure it out why so I started asking myself yes I went to prison for crime that I committed I did my time but on my relief something in my path came into play to make me have to register now I've always thought the juvenile record was to stay sealed and had nothing to do with your adulthood I was a kid whatever happened then happened and I moved on I was always told as long as you didn't do same or simile which I felt all my life and

knew all my life that I never did that in the beginning anyway so things really got to change in my life depression anger frustrated hateful took another blow to my heart to my mental health of having a fair chance to rebuild my life I was told some kind of story it was two crimes against a person we look at you as a dangerous criminal The public's not going to see it I was thrown in the hole for 60 days cuz I refuse to sign I didn't understand what something happened back then when I was a kid can affect me now so sooner or later I gave up see no way I was going to win I lost all confidence in myself I start feeling like I was useless like the color of my skin was my sin how can this happen to me so I learned how to get through the obstacles and deal with it I went on in 2006 to be released 2007 got married bought a house and ran a successful DJ business what I've done most of my life caught a domestic arguing with my stepdaughter but yet they made it seem like I was arguing with my wife as I went to court but the real problem started when I did 16 months for failure of registered because they knocked on the wrong door because information was not properly it's changed between people and Ramsey county in the BCA I did what they wanted to do the paperwork came and filled it out I sent it back and one day my girlfriend's daughter gets kicked in a full-on raid like I just murdered someone once again I'm angry frustrated and not understanding the public defender says well with your past Mr Johnson you looking at time they're not going to give you a deal so take the deal nobody never mentioned that it would start over every time I got in trouble so I do 16 months now it's on my record failure to register I can't get a good job I can't get a proper place to live I've been homeless off and on and now with these recent job opportunities that I cannot take I don't know where I am headed in life I thank God that our holy Spirit and Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is in my heart and I have mentors to talk to and pastors to talk to but what do I do when this program comes to an end what do I do for means of money how do I get a fair chance to take care of myself something I had no control of for the things I've done in my life you can go to any judge that ever convicted me I always admit it to what I've done wrong is wrong and I was taught right from wrong but I don't know how to defend myself from this new laws being made every year and being treated like I'm a public threat when I've served my time and tried to move on year after year in 19 years old that I was convicted by two female prosecutors in a female judge in 2020 I was convicted by a female prosecutor who told the judge I was dangerous had a prior domestic with my wife that was about to drop off but yet he's in compliant with registration and I was convicted so I asked you how do I move on from this why did this happen to happen to me the public didn't do this to me because I was not a public minute I did make some mistakes in my life I didn't hurt anybody in the process of any of my mistakes but once again the color of my skin is my sin I know why laws are made I understand those laws I just don't understand what I was accused of and what happened when I was a kid have so much leverage to keep getting me convicted for the most simplest thing I'm only human we argue as I was handcuffed and walking out of the apartment I heard the white officer tell her you don't never have to deal with that guy again when I ran his name he's got a prior that should lock him up for a long time it is hard to understand the law when you're standing in court someone's got 8 or 9 domestics who really beat their wives or girlfriends and got less time than I did and they don't have to register I'm not here to point fingers or to say the color

of my skin is why this is happening to me I'm here to find out how can I get a fair chance to move on with my life to get a good job to try to have my own apartment I work with a program called Handy help I've been denied four times four apartments low rent apartments in bad neighborhoods I can't even get that by the end of April this program is over and the little money I get from the state that program is going to be up what am I supposed to do who do I talk to the group that works with expungement told me it would take anywhere from 9 months to 24 months for me to resolve anything on my record how do I move on from this I'm not a murderer as an adult I didn't molest or rape anyone broke into anyone's house and Rob them snatched the purse car jacked I have one violent crime that I admitted to and another violent crime that I had to swallow my pride and deal with I'm asking what do I do how do I move forward can someone make me understand how did my whole world get turned up side down at the age of 16 and now it's happening again at the age of 52 when does the dark cloud go away when do I get a fair shot to live a normal life