



Texas Wesleyan University students Miguel Moll, left, and Charleston White want to help young people by sharing their stories.

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After doing time, ex-offenders want to make time for others

Former 'hard-core juveniles' are trying to make a difference in young lives.

Last weekend, I was surrounded by five ex-offenders, all admittedly former "hard-core juvenile" criminals who had been locked up for a total of 70 years.

All were arrested as teenagers — four for crimes that involved murder — and four of them got to know each other when they served time together in a Texas Youth Commission detention facility.

I was in no danger. These guys, all former gang members, just wanted to talk. And they have a plan for how to help young people stay out of trouble and out of the penitentiary.

One of the men, Charleston White, 34, I had profiled in a series of columns in 2003. Those columns told about his leading three teenage buddies to an Arlington mall to shoplift athletic jackets. When they ran out of the store, chased by a clerk and later con-



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fronted by another man on the parking lot, the teenager waiting in the getaway car shot and killed the newlywed good Samaritan who tried to stop them.

White, who was 14 at the time of the slaying, was sentenced to TYC, where he stayed until just before his 21st birthday. His co-defendants were tried as adults and sentenced to long prison terms. While White was at TYC, his 17-year-old brother was convicted of murder and given a 99-year prison term.

Today, White is the father of an 8-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter, and he just completed his first semester at Texas Wesleyan University, majoring in criminal justice.

The other men White introduced are:

- Henry Hughes, 34, recently released after serving 20 years for murder, three robberies and aggravated assault, crimes committed when he was 13. He was not the shooter.

- Donnell Rhone, 34, who was 14 when he was involved in a Grand Prairie robbery in 1993 in which his "co-actor" shot and killed a man. He was sentenced to 35 years but was released after five years in TYC.

- Miguel Moll, 40, served his full 19-year sentence for robbery and aggravated robbery.

- Anthony Dewberry was 15 when a friend got into an altercation in a club and was hit in the head with a gun. Outside, Dewberry, now 34, shot his friend's assailant. He was sentenced to 28 years in prison and released on parole in 2010 after serving 19 years.

White, who proudly finished the semester last week with two A's and a B, said that during the early 1990s many young black men — with no fathers in their lives, a lack of positive role

models and negative peer influences — were committing heinous crimes.

"I spent 19 years, two months and six days of my life over some chump change," said Moll, who graduated with honors from Tarrant County College and is enrolled at Wesleyan with White.

When asked why he committed the crime, Moll said, "I wasn't thinking. Stupid. Greedy. My decision-making process was not developed."

Hughes, who works at a discount department store, echoed those sentiments: "I was a stupid young kid out of control."

These men want to be examples for others, hoping to make a difference now that they're out of prison.

Dewberry is an electrician at an area hospital, and Rhone works in construction.

"My message is to help out the youth — to show them there's a different way," Dewberry said. "They glamorize our lives, and they don't have the knowledge of the institutions."

The men want to do what White has been

trying to do for a while. They'd like to go to schools, institutions and groups and talk to youngsters about the real effects of gangster life, to provide a contrast to what young people see in movies and on television or hear about in rap songs.

The men realize that, with their backgrounds, some organizations may not want them, but White has drafted a letter to a juvenile court judge and contacted the offices of state Sens. John Whitmire and Royce West, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department and Giddings State School.

If they can reach five out of 20 kids, they'd count it a success, and White believes they might be able to prevent another incident like the one recently where a group of young boys in Dallas killed another one by pushing him in front of a DART train.

These men want to help. They should be given that chance.

Bob Ray Sanders' column appears Sundays and Wednesdays. 817-390-7775. Twitter: @BobRaySanders