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It's Never Too Late: Fatherhood From Inside Prison

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[00:00:00] **Shakur:** This is Tommy Shakur Ross, one of the hosts of Uncuffed. Today's show comes from the guys at Solano State Prison. But first, we have a special message from our friends Earlonne Woods and Nigel Poor of the podcast Ear Hustle.

E and Nige here. Uncuffed teaches incarcerated people in Solano State Prison and in San Quentin the fundamentals of storytelling and audio production, and shares the stories of guys inside.

[00:00:29] **Nigel:** And their studio in San Quentin is right next to Ear Hustle's.

I mean, literally right next door. Sometimes we have to actually ask each other to be quiet when we're recording.

[00:00:38] **Earlonne:** Not politely either. You've heard a lot of Uncuffed guys on Ear Hustle, too. Guys like Tommy Shakur Ross. Thanh Tran.

[00:00:46] **Nigel:** Oh, and don't forget, Greg Eskridge.

[00:00:49] **Earlonne:** Old homies of the show.

[00:00:50] **Nigel:** And Earlonne, I do love what those guys do.

It's amazing. And it's great sharing a space with them inside San Quentin. But, they just hit a real snag. Right as they launched their new season earlier this month, their main source of funding evaporated. No fault of their own, just a good old-fashioned bureaucratic snafu.

[00:01:09] **Earlonne:** So now, they're trying to make up that funding gap so they can finish up their season and keep their program in Solano and San Quentin going.

[00:01:17] **Nigel:** If you wanna support Uncuffed, please go to weareuncuffed.org/donate.

[00:01:23] **Earlonne:** That's weareuncuffed.org/donate.

K A L W.

[00:01:39] **bf:** Yeah, you know, what's up. You're listening to Uncuffed, recorded and produced by people, yeah real human beings, in California prisons. I'm bf thames. We're all here at Solano State Prison. We got a couple guests here today, and we also have another Uncuffed producer slash student. What's your name, bro?

[00:01:59] **Orlando:** Orlando Hassan Hassan Johnson.

[00:02:02] **bf:** And our two guests.

[00:02:04] **Jamil:** My name is Jamil, aka Jamil Jamal, the handsome camel.

[00:02:08] **bf:** I can dig it.

[00:02:10] **Joe:** And Joe Perry, aka Joe P. I'm at Antioch, California, East Bay Area.

[00:02:15] **bf:** That's right, for sure. All right. This episode that we're gonna listen to here, I haven't heard it. Only one person in the room has heard it, and it's called Prison Father's Pain. The first thing I'm gonna say about that. And we're just gonna have a short discussion right now. The first thing I'm gonna say about that is, I was a daddy's boy. I really loved my dad. I pretty much worshiped my dad. Overall, I think fathers and fatherhood is really underrated, and I'm just now starting to be happy about some of the commercials that I see on television, you know, like the diaper commercial, I'm like yeah, of course.

Do that! Dad to another. I mean, come on, man. How can you not love that.

[00:02:57] **Joe:** Was a man in a more active role? Absolutely. I know for me, myself, I had custody of my kids prior to my incarceration. They awarded me full custody of my son. He's now with the woman I was with at the time when I got incarcerated. But I had a chance to be involved full-time as a full-time father.

I raised my kids, diaper changes, bottle feedings. You know what I mean? The whole nine yards. Potty training.

[00:03:20] **bf:** You should have.

[00:03:21] **Joe:** I mean, I got hands on with it. So it was a blessing, and it is, to me, I'm very grateful for the experience that I had, and I'm fortunate enough to have a date, you know, God willing.

I'll be returning to my family in a few years and get straight back to it. You know, I look forward to being a father and being involved.

[00:03:38] **bf:** I love that. Never underestimate.

[00:03:40] **Joe:** Yeah. For real.

[00:03:41] **bf:** Your position as a father.

[00:03:43] **Jamil:** I wish I could claim to have been so hands on with my kids. I really wish that I had claimed that, but you know, I, because of my dysfunction, I didn't really know how to be a father.

I thought that being a father was just dropping off clothes, you know, taking them to the, get ice cream to functions and stuff like that. And I had no idea what being a father is. And one of the tragedies of that is because of some of the decisions that I made, the selfish decisions that I made, my children are still suffering.

And, you know, the crazy thing is that they're all adults now. So now they're able to address me as adults. You know, when my kids were young, I, they used to say, yeah, my dad is at the University of Folsom. You know, it was just a cute little thing that you said to your kids, because you didn't really want 'em to know where, where they was at.

But because I stayed neglected my duties for so long, the consequences are real. And I lost my son. My son, Khalil, my baby boy was killed in 2018.

[00:04:39] **Joe:** Were you able to repair your relationships with your children as you grew older?

[00:04:43] **Jamil:** I'm still in that process. You know, I got two 32 year old daughters. My son is 29. My youngest daughter is 23. Khalil would've been 22 this year. He was killed and, and all of that is, is a consequences of the decisions that I made early on. But where I'm very fortunate is that they gave me another chance to be in their lives. And so a lot of these lessons about really being a father, I'm learning right now. So I'm.

[00:05:08] **Joe:** Never too late.

[00:05:08] **Jamil:** Yeah. It's never too late, and I'm very fortunate they have a heart that is inclined towards forgiveness and allowing me another chance. And so it's, it's a wonderful healing even in the tragedies of being a father.

[00:05:20] **bf:** Yeah. And I'm sorry to hear about your son.

[00:05:22] **Jamil:** Thank you. Yeah, I too. Appreciate that.

[00:05:25] **bf:** As I mentioned, it's called, the piece that we're about to listen to now and talk about a little bit is called Prison Father's Pain.

And it was by our own Orlando Hassan Hassan Johnson. And he interviewed Vandrick Jones, also known as Hamza, Brother Hamza. So we're gonna listen to that right now. Then we'll get right back at you.

[00:05:56] **Orlando:** As-salamu alaykum.

[00:05:59] **Hamza:** Wa-Alaikum-Salaam.

[00:06:01] **Orlando:** Give me the names again.

[00:06:03] **Hamza:** Qivan

[00:06:03] **Orlando:** Qivan.

[00:06:04] **Hamza:** And Vandrick.

[00:06:05] **Orlando:** Vandrick's the oldest.

[00:06:06] **Hamza:** Junior. Yeah.

[00:06:07] **Orlando:** Vandrick Junior. Okay. So, Vandrick Junior in the life first.

[00:06:12] **Hamza:** Vandrick Junior is gonna life first. And he is 23 now.

[00:06:17] **Orlando:** 23. What's his lifestyle?

[00:06:20] **Hamza:** He took a wrong path.

[00:06:22] **Orlando:** Mm-hmm.

[00:06:22] **Hamza:** Over like the last, probably like four years. He got involved in the streets. The first year, it wasn't that bad. I thought I was gonna be able to save him. After this.

[00:06:32] **Orlando:** How'd you think you were gonna be able to save him.

[00:06:33] **Hamza:** By communicating with 'em, letting 'em know all the things I have been through, what I'm going through, taking that path in lightly. I don't think you really, you don't really know the outcome of the situation that you placing yourself in.

So when I was here, I was able to communicate with 'em a lot. But when I got sent from here to High Desert, to another prison, it's like less communication. I feel like that's where our disconnection came in at.

[00:06:55] **Orlando:** And your other son?

[00:06:56] **Hamza:** He was good. He graduated, had got a scholarship to play for Utah in 2015.

So he was on the verge of doing good.

[00:07:06] **Orlando:** Mm.

[00:07:06] **Hamza:** He was doing real good. He was out there a year and, you know, he never had a freedom, like, you know, to be outgoing when he want to and all that. So when he went out there, he started partying, got caught up. He came back within a year, and now he's not in school no more. So he came out here and started hanging out with my other son, my oldest son, which is his older brother.

They a year in something apart.

[00:07:30] **Orlando:** Right.

[00:07:30] **Hamza:** And my son, I feel, got him involved in the street life. And he started robbing and stealing. Doing all the kind of things that come with living in the streets.

[00:07:42] **Orlando:** Mm-hmm. And go ahead and tie that in, since you're talking about that to, to what happened to your first son, because I know he is incarcerated, but your second son who was talking about who went to school and, you know, kind of, he's not incarcerated.

[00:07:56] **Hamza:** He's not incarcerated.

[00:07:57] **Orlando:** Right. So go ahead on.

[00:07:58] **Hamza:** So yeah, my oldest son brought him into what they was doing. So now they start being together. On that height.

[00:08:04] **Orlando:** Mm-hmm.

[00:08:05] **Hamza:** And so one day I was in the visit room talking to my son Qivan, and he tell me like, dad, I need to tell you something. Because he said, I've been hanging with my brother. And my brother, you know, got me doing X, Y, and Z.

[00:08:16] **Orlando:** Why you think he told you? Because you guys are close or what it was on him weighing on him? He didn't wanna be doing it? Why? Why remember? Because your first son, didn't never, you never had this kind of conversation with your first son before the fact, right?.

[00:08:27] **Hamza:** I was telling him, I was telling Qivan how much pain my oldest son is causing me by what he doing.

[00:08:34] **Orlando:** Got you.

[00:08:35] **Hamza:** And he seen how much pain I was going through. We was crying. We both was crying out there. And he like, dad, I got something to tell you. I've been doing the same thing. I just couldn't let you sit there. Talk about him, what he doing? And we've been doing it together. And that broke me, man. That broke me.

[00:08:53] **Orlando:** I have a son. Okay. He went through a lot growing up, and what's so painful. The vicious cycle part, I'm respond. I take blame for it because I left, and he was at that time, eight or nine years old. Okay. I got him back in my life when he was an adolescent, 13, 14, and lived with me. Fast forward to where he gets to get out of the house, and, you know, 18, 19.

Now, he's 24, 25. And he's my co-defendant in the crime that I'm in here for now. And I'm in here for a much longer term than him, because I was, I had priors, they hit me with priors. They were very upset. You know what I mean? He, that was his first time. Fortunately, he already did his first term in prison.

He's out right now. So yeah, I, I know exactly what I put him through. Then I'm not talking about the crime that we were doing. I'm talking about before that. And that's reprehensible for what I just said about, hey, me and my son. That's my co-defendant.

[00:10:02] **Hamza:** My son, my oldest son, my junior. He told me afterwards that, that I was trying to emulate you.

[00:10:08] **Orlando:** Mm-hmm

[00:10:09] **Hamza:** In the game.

[00:10:09] **Orlando:** Mm-hmm.

[00:10:09] **Hamza:** Right.

[00:10:10] **Orlando:** The vicious cycle part. There are so many things that I had seen him do, not just his behavior, his mindset and certain things that I never thought. I was like, he's not gonna have to go through that sexual abuse that I went through when I was a kid, that he also went through, and I wasn't even anywhere around, you know what I mean?

I had there no influence on that. The influence I did have is cuz I was gone. It happened during the time I was gone. But, I think to myself, I was like, wow, that's crazy. How did these, how do these things? It's not even anything that we did directly, but it's, it is a lot of it is indirectly. You did. It wasn't like you talked about the street life, which your, your with Junior. To make him attracted to it like that. It seemed like it was instilled in him.

Like it was part of his blood, like him being an addict. Doesn't that hurt.

[00:11:00] **Hamza:** What you're saying makes a whole lot of sense. Right. And I understand you're just saying about the vicious cycle, two years ago, Qivan got shot. That following weekend, Saturday, Qiana bring him to come see me, and he gimme the detail of what transpired.

And it's so hurtful to say what transpired, because it was the exact same thing I'm in jail for. Meeting somebody to, to purchase something, wind up, taking it, get shot. I'm talking about same exact case. I left the video. I let him do all this talking that day. I told him to come back the

next day. I break out my summary that I get from San Quentin when they give you the. The summary of your case.

[00:11:39] **Orlando:** Mm-hmm.

[00:11:41] **Hamza:** And I, it is like a page and a half long. I told 'em to read it. I go out there the next day, I say, read this. And it say, on Aug, 20, 2002, such and such and such. And so met this person, this, this, this happened X, Y, and Z. Right? I said, what that remind you of? I said, keep reading. So after he got to the end, he gave a paper back to me. And I asked him, how do you feel about what you just read?

He like. I just did the same thing. I said, how much time you think I have? I said, I got 33 years to life. On something they just gave you a pat on your back for. I feel like that part right there, it started to break that cycle. Cause I showed him something in writing, and I wasn't just telling him something like out of a book or.

[00:12:19] **Orlando:** Right, the reflection.

[00:12:20] **Hamza:** So I, I feel like he took that advice and ran with it.

[00:12:23] **Orlando:** And your other son?

[00:12:24] **Hamza:** My oldest son, my junior. I think he's starting to recognize what he putting hisself through, because now this cycle is getting real vicious because he have a son now.

[00:12:34] **Orlando:** Yeah, wow.

[00:12:35] **Hamza:** A year and a half old. So now, I see I could penetrate him through his child. Whatever I could do to penetrate his heart.

[00:12:42] **Orlando:** Mm-hmm.

[00:12:42] **Hamza:** To get him to understand what I'm saying. That's what I'm gonna do. I feel like he getting it to a degree. I won't say a hundred percent, but I got his attention.

[00:12:51] **Orlando:** The change in my heart and, and the changes that make in my life to show as an example. Whether they choose to fight the good fight and do the right thing or not.

Okay. But then when it comes to their children, oh, I can have a really, really strong and direct impact. And that's what you're saying. Right.

[00:13:09] **Hamza:** That's when I had him.

[00:13:10] **Orlando:** Yeah.

[00:13:11] **Hamza:** And I'm like, man, you can't leave him in that position I left you in 17 years ago. I understand your pain better than anybody. You don't have your son going through that same pain as I caused you.

[00:13:32] **bf:** That was our own Orlando Johnson in his interview with Vandrick Jones. You know, I got a lot to say about this. I wrote a lot of notes here. I got some strong feelings about a lot of the things that were said, but I, I want you guys at will to go ahead and jump in, and just sort of share your thoughts and any connections or disconnections that could have happened while you were listening to that piece.

[00:13:59] **Jamil:** You know, one of the tragedies of this situation we're discussing with regard to fatherhood. Especially with us that are incarcerated. We have to fight so many battles on so many different levels to try to even the scales. Hmm. So it's ironic because here I am, a 51 year old man trying to develop a better sense of self, trying to develop insight into my past.

But also, I have a responsibility to my children who are grown, who have suffered the consequences of my decision. And so now here I am growing, trying to be a complete human being, but also I have a responsibility to my children to help them grow. And there's so many things that pull emotionally, psychologically.

And so I feel this great deal of guilt and shame because of the direction that their lives have taken in some cases, because I'm not there. And this same guilt and shame, I've been fortunate enough to use this motivation, to push me to find the best version of myself. And so, as he said earlier, it is never too late.

And so, at 51 years old, I'm really just coming into my own identity as a father with my children. And although it's late, it feels very good. But at the same time, it requires a great deal of pain and insight to have to shoulder those burdens.

[00:15:22] **Joe:** For me, I was kind of shocked that, as a parent that, I don't know which one of them it was, but he took his son on a mission, you know, I mean, and was his co-defendant in the crime. For me.

[00:15:34] **Orlando:** That was. That was me.

[00:15:36] **Joe:** That, that was you. That did that.

[00:15:38] **Orlando:** Yeah.

[00:15:38] **Joe:** Okay. For me, I'm just speaking bluntly. Just, just honestly here. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. For me. Having a son, I don't know if just, just people being stuck in such a mindset that they're blinded, you know what I mean? To things being wrong or right.

Or, or being a product of their environment or whatever it may be, but real love, like I would never want or wish the struggle of the streets upon my children, you know what I mean, what I went through and you know, what I had to do to survive or pay the rent, get the bills paid and

whatnot. I, I was just amazed that, that, that he took his child, or that you took your child, bro. You know.

[00:16:13] **bf:** Bro, I wrote that down too. I got Hassan co-D with son. Like what the.

[00:16:19] **Joe:** For me, I, yeah, that, that, that, that was just beyond me, but for me. My responsibility as a father has always been to guide my son and my daughter. My daughter's 12. My son is eight. Away from a, a, a mindset of criminal activity.

You know what I mean? I wouldn't wanna wish this on them at all. You know, that would be my biggest failure is if they followed my footsteps and ended up in here with me, or, you know, alongside of me. I think we all, as parents have a responsibility to give them the best opportunities and guide them in the best direction possible.

They gotta learn from our mistakes.

[00:16:56] **bf:** Well, well, how do you, how do you. People say, you know, you should learn from your mistakes. I'm like, yeah, that's okay. But you should learn from other people's mistakes.

[00:17:06] **Joe:** Exactly.

[00:17:06] **bf:** That's wisdom right there.

[00:17:07] **Joe:** You gotta learn. You gotta teach 'em the value of freedom.

[00:17:11] **bf:** I mean, even more than that, I wanted to ask, what do you guys think about Hamza when he was mentioning.

Saving, he used the word, save, saving his son through communication. I understood that, but I don't know how effective that would be.

[00:17:28] **Jamil:** I think I kind of understand, and I think it's a little bit different with regard to the expectation because we can give our children advice, and we can share our experiences, but ultimately at some point, they make their own decisions, especially as adults.

So when they become adults, and despite the things that my actions may have contributed to their state of mind. At some point, I can only give them input and try to share my past, share, try to share examples and give them the best energy and support. But whether or not they are saved is in their hands. And that's what I think the difference is, because I feel very bad about the part that I played, but that guilt and shame that I talked about, I have to stop carrying that as a ball in chain for myself, because even though I did play that part in their development or under development, they're grown and their learning to make their own decisions based on that.

And I can't continue to traumatize myself because of those decisions. And I can save myself from that by understanding that, as much as I love them and as bad as I feel, I can't save them. They have to save themselves.

[00:18:39] **Orlando:** For me, I feel the repair once I can start living and showing in this example, the change that I know that I'm making in my heart. And actions and things of that sort.

Once I can start spending that type of time with my son, God willing. And him seeing the whole picture of me after everything that's happened, and what I've learned and what I'm showing him that he sees. Like when people see you, your loved ones see you and say, oh man, you changed, I can tell. And I'm not talking about something that's immediate.

I'm talking about something after a period of time. That will help. There'll still be the pain there because it's just hard to get. It's it, it, it's hard to get away from that. That pain.

[00:19:30] **bf:** Oh, I, I get it. What's on your mind, P?

[00:19:32] **Joe:** Just thinking about mistakes that I made, and, and being a father from behind the walls and trying to stay involved and keep in touch with my kids.

And just has, as I've grown as a man and learned from my mistakes, I just try to give them the guidance that I've learned, you know what I mean? I realized how much that I've done wrong, that it led me where I'm sitting right now, you know? And I think it's my job. It's my responsibility, my duty to share that with them, and, and you know, make them realize that the path I took was not the right one.

And just pray to God that they learn from my mistakes. I just think it's very real and very possible to be involved and still be a father and play a role in their lives from prison. I do believe that.

[00:20:20] **bf:** Well, I wanna speak to that. I wanna speak to that. I didn't tell you guys. I don't have biological children. I got two stepchildren. One of my step kids.

And I'm only saying that for identification purposes, because after that I'm gonna say my kids.

[00:20:35] **Joe:** Right.

[00:20:35] **bf:** All right. But one of them is in prison. He's been in prison now. I've known him since he was a baby. I held him on my lap. He's like, how old is this dude? This dude is like 32 or 33. And then I have a daughter, and she just turned 22.

I raised her over the phone and in letters.

[00:20:56] **Joe:** Mm-hmm.

[00:20:57] **bf:** From the time she was four years. Coming to visit me in different prisons. There were times where my daughter was having problems. Did not wanna talk to her mother. And she would talk to me. She's like walking home, she's on her cell phone.

[00:21:12] **Joe:** Absolutely.

[00:21:12] **bf:** And she's walking home, and I'm walking her home.

[00:21:16] **Joe:** Right.

[00:21:16] **bf:** By listening to her crying and talking. I'm like, baby, look around, you know, you in the neighborhood, you know, you know, and, and just letting her really just vent or whatnot. And she would always call me, these are her words. Because I know my wife's gonna listen to this.

She would say, "Dad, you're the good parent." Mm-hmm. And that touched my heart. We can father from prison and parent from prison. I know I touched a bunch of stuff right there, but I wanted to just get it in because I wanted to get it in.

[00:21:46] **Orlando:** That's all right. That's fine.

[00:21:47] **Jamil:** It's crazy. Cause all of the negative things you said about being a father, I have five kids by five different women.

You know what I mean? And so with regard to fatherhood, I set a pattern that was very, yes, very, very negative and very, very different than the person that you see today. So.

[00:22:03] **bf:** Just for the broadcast, I'm looking at him funny, right.

[00:22:06] **Jamil:** Very, he looking at me very funny. Because

[00:22:08] **Orlando:** That's what I meant. But when I was saying about being the antagon, you know what I mean?

Because that's, that's, I know that you have that, that view. And I'm, I'm gonna let you get right back on that.

[00:22:17] **Jamil:** Well, no, I mean, I, I accept that antagonism and if I had to describe myself, I would say that the actions that I did with regard to recklessly having kids is what an idiot would do. I mean, we gotta be able to call the truth the truth, you know what I mean?

And that's developing real insight. And so.

[00:22:33] **Orlando:** Wow.

[00:22:33] **Joe:** Yeah. I like that. Developing a real insight.

[00:22:35] **Jamil:** Having, having a, a child another year later, having a child another year later, having a child. Going to jail, going to jail, having a child, having a child. That is, there's no logical, sensical rhythm to that. So I can own that. When he says I'm looking at your real crazy.

I accept that. Yeah, but the one thing is that it doesn't define me today, and I've learned a great deal of lessons. And, and when we, you know, back to him saying that pain.

[00:23:02] **bf:** Mm.

[00:23:02] **Jamil:** When, when, I can laugh at it with you now. But the actual experience and the lessons that I've learned from that, and the least of, of which is not losing my son.

Great deal of pain in dealing with that, you know? So when you have to look your child in the eyes in the visiting room, and they're crying because they're telling you as an adult, dad, I need you.

[00:23:22] **Orlando:** Wow.

[00:23:23] **Jamil:** The reason why I'm going through this dad, is because you're not here with me. Yeah. It's heartbreaking. You talk about pain, that's pain. But pain can be a motivator or it can be a destroyer.

And what I really, really like about Hamza because I know him personally, is he takes that pain. And he utilizes it for a brighter future. We all agree that he can't control the outcome of what's gonna happen with his kids, but his energy, his dedication, is to rectifying the wrongs of his past and try to give his son a better future.

And that in a nutshell is what a father is. And it's not always pretty. It's not always correct. Perfect order. It's not always rosy. Just the fact that I'm in jail, trying to tell my kids to do right is ironic. That I'm in a situation doing wrong, trying to tell you to do right. Is ironic. You like, you should learn from it though, like. But I'm gonna continue to do it.

[00:24:19] **Orlando:** But you know what I wanna say to Pete that I appreciate what you said.

I mean, even though I, I jumped in there and let you know that it was me, it wasn't because of that. I mean, if I didn't say anything, and I would've respected and appreciated what you would've said, regardless of how raw it was, because that is disgusting. Deplorable. Yeah. We all make mistakes. Yada, yada yada, but you know, those are definitely one of the things that, man I could never take back.

And I would.

[00:24:49] **bf:** Is that the source of some of your pain?

[00:24:51] **Orlando:** Please, man? That's, absolutely. Yes it is.

[00:24:54] **bf:** Okay.

[00:24:55] **Orlando:** Yes, absolutely. That's one of the.

[00:24:57] **bf:** I have a question for you.

[00:24:57] **Joe:** Can I ask you something personal? Since then have you made an effort to to be a positive influence in your son's life and change him for the better, now that you've realized the mistakes that you made with your parenting at that time?

[00:25:15] **Orlando:** My son sent my wife, I think a screenshot of the Uncuffed, the logo. And he said, tell my father said I'm proud of him. And that I love him and I'm proud of him.

[00:25:31] **bf:** How did that make you feel?

[00:25:32] **Orlando:** But to that point, it made me feel.

[00:25:33] **Joe:** Do you two still have a close personal relationship today?

[00:25:45] **Orlando:** We need to work on our relationship. He loves me and he misses me. I don't wanna say, answer that question and say we have a close and personal relationship, cuz it's not the relationship that I would want.

[00:25:57] **bf:** I got a, I had a couple more notes here. One was about Hamza. It seems like, you know, and I don't know because I haven't been in a position that you men have been in. You know, my fatherhood thing is just a little bit different. But when Hamza mentioned that his junior, Vandrick, influenced the other son, it seemed like Hamza was taking some sort of responsibility and piling on yet another level of pain on himself. Because it sounded like he was taking responsibility. Is that what you guys got from that? When he said one son influenced the other?

[00:26:34] **Orlando:** Absolutely.

[00:26:35] **Joe:** Yeah. He felt like he failed him because he was their example. You know what I mean? His oldest son was corrupting his younger son, because his oldest son was following in, in the footsteps of his father. Look.

[00:26:45] **bf:** Yeah, but how far does that go, P? I mean, what, when they have kids, you gonna be, are you gonna be feeling pain because your grandkids are not behaving and then your great grandkids?

I mean, when do we stop making ourselves responsible? Jamil's spoken up.

[00:26:57] **Joe:** We're always responsible.

[00:26:58] **Orlando:** There's a biological-

[00:26:59] **Joe:** Children. You always gonna shoulder a responsibility to guide them. And you, whether you realize it or not, you are their idol. They admire you. They, they soak you up like a sponge. You know what I mean?

[00:27:10] **bf:** Remember I told you how good my dad was, P? So who who's responsible for me then? Cause this dude didn't do anything but give me the best. Teach me the best.

[00:27:20] **Joe:** I think about that too. I thought about that too. Since I've been sitting in this chair, listening everybody's conversation. My mom was real heavy in the Baptist church.

My dad worked full time. I grew up in a, in a low income neighborhood, and I think that, that I was just a product of my environment. You know what I mean? And my peers, you know, everybody has this overwhelming feeling to be needed or accepted, you know, by their peers. And at a young age, you know, I wanted to be accepted by the kids in my neighborhood and, and you know, the peer pressure, it was, I mean, I, sec, I, you know, we succumb to it.

You know what I mean. To the peer pressure of your environment. You know, everybody, during that time, was gang banging and selling dope. And I wanted to buy a car, some of my partners that was 15, 16 years old, they was already pulling up to the house with whips and, and, you know, they was fresh with the shoes and the clothes and all that.

My parents couldn't afford that for me. So, you know.

[00:28:17] **bf:** So you're absolving at least your father.

[00:28:20] **Joe:** Yeah, I mean that responsibility. I don't blame my parents for the way that I came out.

[00:28:25] **bf:** That's, that's what I'm telling these guys.

[00:28:27] **Joe:** But I feel like they were a good example and role model for what parents should be.

I don't blame them at all.

[00:28:33] **Jamil:** I think intellectually, we know that we can't really control the outcome intellectually. That's the father's mind. But the father's heart. Hmm. Will always feel responsible when things go wrong with his children. Yeah. And.

[00:28:50] **bf:** Well said.

[00:28:50] **Jamil:** That's that inner battle and which one is right? Which one is wrong? To what degree does it balance out? So I know that my children are adults and that they make decisions and they can take what I say. They can not take what I say and just await it. I'm facing the consequences of my actions. They will face the consequences of their actions and see the fruit of their labors.

However, when it goes wrong, whether it be with my grandchildren, whether it be with my children, when they face obstacles, I will find a way to connect it to me not being there. And it will make me feel a certain way. And I have to go through a cognitive process that says, Jamil, you can't be so hard on yourself. And you can't always take responsibility for what happens with, in their lives.

So there's always that battle, I believe. The intellectual.

[00:29:40] **bf:** Makes sense.

[00:29:41] **Jamil:** What, you know, to be logical, but your heart. I mean, your kids are your kids, man. And they gonna tug at your heart until the day you die.

[00:29:53] **bf:** All right, that's a wrap. We know y'all enjoy it. You ain't gotta tell us. You can find Uncuffed on KALW 91.7 in San Francisco, or at weareuncuffed.org. Subscribe to Uncuffed in any podcast player. Join our community on social media by following @weareuncuffed. Thanks to the team at KALW Public Radio: Ninna Gaensler-Debs, Angela Johnston, Sonia Paul, James Rowlands, Andrew Stelzer, Ben Trefny, Eli Wirtschafter, and our sound design, Eric Maserati E Abercrombie.

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I'm Brian Thames or bf thames. As always, thanks for listening.