

for a job here because if anything happens, I'd be the first to be blamed."

Referring to his numerous court appearances, Willie says, "After a while, they didn't know what to do with me. They wanted to send me to Beacon State -- but that's just more confinement. They put me in a program called Independence House but that wasn't beneficial to me because there were no job training facilities."

Willie feels that because of the constant harassment by guards, and a lack of direction in his life, he is being oppressed by society.

"Sometimes I'd be at Riker's Island and feel like committing suicide," he says. "I'd rather have somebody kill me than take my freedom away. That's my most valuable possession after my brother."

To Willie, perhaps the most damaging effect of his life at Willowbrook was the lack of understanding and the harsh treatment he received from his keepers. Optimistic and resolute to mend his past mistakes, Willie speaks of an officer he met at Riker's Island. "He told me that in mutual understanding, as much respect is given as is taken."

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