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HAPPY EASTER

BY EDINEZZER SAMUEL
DAILY NEWS SPORTS WRITER

KESHON MOORE and his passengers weren't sure why they'd been pulled over. It was raining like crazy on the New Jersey Turnpike and Keshon hadn't been speeding. It was late, but Danny Reyes had been keeping him awake. So it wasn't reckless driving.

"I had a suspended license, though," he says. "I figured they'd just tell me that somebody else had to drive."

So he was taken aback when the Jersey State Trooper walked over to the minivan with his gun already cocked. So taken aback that he accidentally started the van in reverse.

Bad call. The officer and his partner opened fire on the van. Confused, Keshon covered instead of stopping the van. A bullet tore through Danny's arm. Another ran through Jarmaine Grant's knee. Another lodged itself in Rayshawn Brown's wrist.

Somehow, Keshon escaped unscathed. At least until he understood why he'd been pulled over in the first place.

"I'd been on a military base my whole life," Keshon says. "I'd always been around blacks, Latinos, Filipinos, whites. I was naive. I didn't know what was going on."

Almost eight years after that April 23, 1998 incident, Keshon finally gets it — the cops were practicing racial profiling. Three blacks and a Latino in a rented minivan? That read drug bust.

"At least we got out of it," Reyes says. "We didn't know each other until that night. That was the first time we all met each other. If it hadn't happened to us, it would have happened to somebody else. And they could have ended up dead."

These four didn't end up dead. They brought a civil suit against the state of New Jersey, landing a \$12.95 million settlement. In January 2002, troopers James Kemna and John Hogan pleaded guilty to official misconduct and providing false information under a deal to avoid prison time. Kemna and Hogan originally claimed that Moore was speeding and had tried to back over the troopers approaching on foot. The two officers later admitted that the state police practiced racial profiling.

"There's been some improvement, but let's be real, in reality it's not been dramatic."

That's why Danny and Jarmaine went to the United Nations two weeks ago to speak about racial profiling. And why Rayshawn goes to New York City elementary schools to talk about the same issue. Danny believes that they were "chosen for this, to speak against racial profiling." So that's why the documentary of their experiences, due out this summer, is aptly named 4Chosen.

"What you're chosen for isn't always

Profiles

8 years later, ex-hoopsters

easy. These players didn't even know each other until they stepped into the van. They just wanted to play ball.

All four were in their early 20s, and had bounced around JUCO's and community colleges for a few years. All four had failed to capitalize on above-average height, talent and heart. They all knew their open try-out at Division II North Carolina Central represented their last, best shot at playing serious ball.

Central was a meeting point for coaches and scouts from the triangle schools — UNC, Duke, N.C. State — to evaluate talent. Vince Carter once worked out there. These guys weren't Vinsanity, but they still had professional aspirations. They so badly just wanted to play ball.

"I was thinking USBL or CBA or something," says Rayshawn.

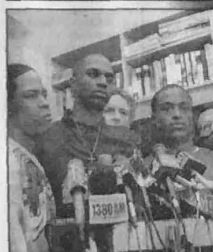
Then suddenly, he is wondering whether he'd ever shoot the ball again. He could pull up his shirt and show off a gunshot wound by his ribs. But he'd rather flash the lengthy scar around his right elbow and show people what nerve damage has done to his right hand. His pinky finger is hooked and doesn't move. It wiggles only when he moves his whole hand.

Righty Rayshawn learned to shoot the ball with his left, but his pro dreams fell apart, replaced by nightmares. For a year, he couldn't sleep.

"I'd close my eyes and the whole thing would flash before me," he says. "I had to start seeing a psychiatrist."

Jarmaine can't drive past the area on the Turnpike without slowing down. He gets quiet when he approaches the area, and his facial expression turns grim. He had wanted out of the inner city. The trip to Central was a ticket, not a chance.

"Central was going to give me a scholarship," Jarmaine says, "but then Fairview State started calling. It was the first time I was being fought over. My family knew I would come back with a scholarship."



(Clockwise from top.) Police examine van involved in 1998 shooting of Keshon Moore. Moore, Jarmaine Grant, Danny Reyes & Rayshawn Brown talk with News reporter Edinezzar Samuel, Officer James Kemna and Rev. Al Sharpton at court proceedings that followed racial-profiling incident.

Instead, he came back with a souvenir bullet in his right arm.

It had lodged itself near a nerve, and the doctors said taking it out would cause only more damage. Thanks to a mangled left knee, he could barely walk through most of 1998.

"I could see the hurt on his face," says

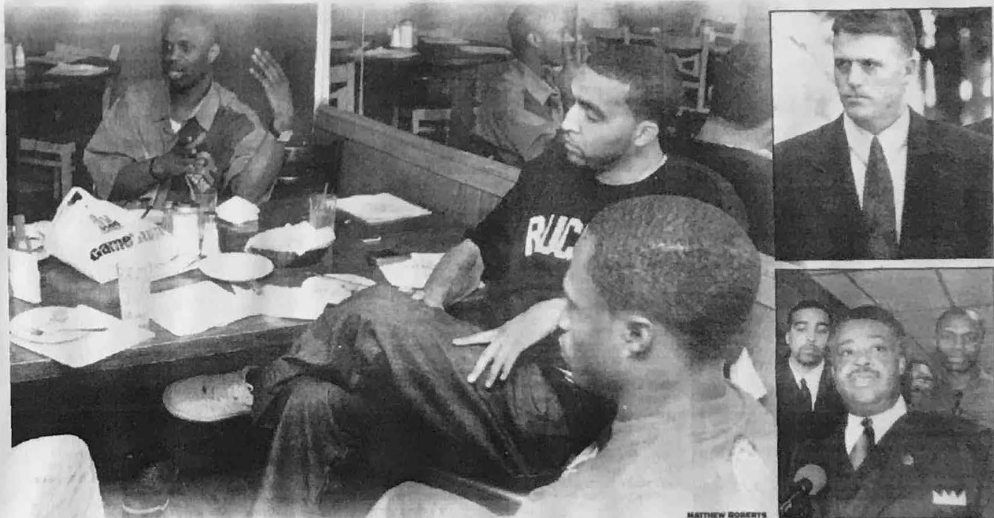
fiancée Gail Sutton. "It was like 'Wow, I'm never going to be able to walk again.'"

He joked about it, but it hurt inside. Basketball was "my religion," he says.

Now he had to worry about walking. The headaches he could deal with. The scars he could deal with. The worst thing? The dol-

in courage

remember Jersey Turnpike cop horror



leges stopped calling. They stopped calling Danny, too. He had a scholarship offer from D-1 Hofstra before leaving for Central. He went because it was a holiday weekend. And it wouldn't hurt the former honorable mention McDonald's All-American to have Coach K watching him.

"I was starting to get a lot of looks," he says.

He had foreign ball on his resume (Puerto Rican Superior League). He faced solid AAL comp (Felipe Lopez, Stephon Marbury). And at 6-7, he had height.

And then, at 20 years old, he was learning to write again. A parish skin graft runs the length of his right forearm. The nerves inside his arm were reconstructed, but for a year, he could barely hold a cup in his right hand.

"No blood was getting to my hand," he says. "It hurt. And it still hurts now."

It still hurts Keshon, too. He sits with the group at Amy Ruth's in Harlem, talking and laughing and trading PS2 video-game bars. He talks about racial profiling and how he can't see it ever stopping because "it's the system, not the people." But he grows silent when he talks about April 23, 1998, and he sneaks peeks at his reflection in the restaurant's full-length mirror.

"I dealt with a lot of guilt," he says. "I was depressed. I was about to give up ball."

He wasn't shot, he could have played for

Central. But he moved to Virginia, unsure of himself. He's only since started to finish college.

"We didn't get the chance," he says. "Somebody basically wrote our script."

They've all tried to rewrite the script. All four have invested and saved their share of the settlement. That, they say, has helped make the transition easier to a life after basketball.

But some things will never change.

They say they're smarter players, with slower steps and crossovers, but brighter up-stairs. They keep playing, with equal parts frustration and fight.

Jarmaine told everybody he lit it up at the Y on Thursday, but he left something out. He got "scorched on D." He couldn't move laterally the way he wanted. When his knee buckled, he just let.

Danny can't play everyday because his

arm starts to throb, and he can no longer dunk because his back hurts. Rayshawn will play semi-pro ball this summer, but he knows he's not the explosive Rayshawn anymore. He can't drive hard to his right.

"My game is good," he says, "but it's just not the same. Two years ago, I didn't even want to play anymore."

He played college ball anyway, at Bloomfield in New Jersey, and now he runs a record label, GUNGAME Records. They're all helping Danny with 4Chosen, trying to spread the word about racial profiling.

"We just need to let people know that the issue is really big," says Rayshawn. "We got to cut that out for one another."

A week ago, Rayshawn says he was pulled over in New Jersey again. The officer said there was a warrant out for his arrest. He

called him and put him in the back of the squad car. Rayshawn started to argue, but he stopped when the cop said, "I don't see why you're making a big deal."

Rayshawn says that the officer ran his name and eventually let him go after no warrant showed up. A routine background check done on Brown by the Daily News turned up no outstanding warrants or violations.

"I just said, 'It's not worth it,'" Rayshawn says. "As long as he's not inflicting tremendous physical harm, cops be bugging. But times are changing."

Slowly, says Danny: More states are passing laws against profiling, he says.

"And just the fact that New Jersey admitted to racial profiling was big," he says. "They have cameras and radars in every car because of us."

And because of 4Chosen, they all played together last weekend. Hip-hopers ran against Hollywood stars at Basketball City in Chelsea. Danny, Keshon, Jarmaine and Rayshawn teamed with the Hip-hoppers for the win.

Danny scored 20 points, none on dunks, to take home the MVP award. Jarmaine raised doubt three times ("He was on a mission — you could see it in his eyes," quips Danny). And Keshon got to the hole with ease, penetrating and locking to Rayshawn, who nailed three — with that banged-up right hand.

They were finally just playing ball.

Documentary coming in June

4 CHOSEN, the documentary about the April 23, 1998 racial-profiling incident that took place on the New Jersey Turnpike involving four college students on their way to a basketball tryout at North Carolina Central has been in production since 1998. It will be released on DVD in June.

Produced by Danny Reyes, in assoc-

iation with Starline Films, it features live news footage of the events and ensuing civil suit that netted the victims \$12.95 million in an out-of-court settlement with the State of New Jersey, as well as interviews with family members and the 4 Chosen. Starline Films begins shooting a feature film this fall. It is scheduled to be in theaters in early 2007.