

McKenzie Roe

Writing and Rhetoric Stretch A

Nancy Rinehart

Author's statement and Rhetorical Purpose FOLLOW the essay.

The Real Chi-Raq

The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not “get over” the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal, and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same, nor should you want to. Losing somebody you're close to will have a major impact on your life like in 2011 when I lost my big brother.

He became just another news headline; he wasn't “loving brother, hard-working son”. If anything, my brother's death was labelled “6 shot within 6 hours”. He didn't get any recognition for his accomplishments, any description about his death; he didn't even get his own name published. He was just a statistic to the rest of the community.

That is one problem that you see happening repeatedly: media covering up what is really going on. Another big problem now in 2016 is police brutality and although, thankfully, my brother never experienced that, he was still alive when the police were writing “murder” in their reports, putting up the red tape and pulling a blue sheet over his head. They claimed he was losing too much blood and that he was going to die, as opposed to rushing him to the hospital, forcing my godmother and me to take him to the hospital ourselves, with his body drenched in his own blood.

Chicago is considered the murder capital of America to the rest of the United States. We've always had a saying where I'm from: "If you're not from here, don't come here", because nobody cares who you are, where you're from, how tough you are, etc. You must suspect everybody and trust nobody, because even my brother was killed by his best friend over "something somebody told him" which I found out to not even be true. His best friend had slept in our house, ate our food, even went to our church. Simply, the police don't view you as priority, the media portrays you as a number, and even the people around you act differently. I know all this because about 5 months after my brother death two girls tried to say their babies were his so that, his mother and I would take care of them financially, but even before that people swore they were his friends, and they weren't. My brother taught me everything I needed to know in case something like this happen and I always asked him why he would talk about death when we were so young, and he said "growing up in Chicago, you never know which day will be your last". Before his death we watched this happen to his dad, our uncle, his brother and probably five of our friends, so he taught me



all I need to know such as Illinois state laws, I know what the police can and cannot do, say or pull me over for. He was by my side from the time I was born till he took his last breath; we went to school together and slept next to each other. I stayed on his side like a hip.

After his passing, I never looked at my city the same. One thing he never taught me was how to live my life without him in it, that was my biggest adjustment. I didn't know how I was going to function without him in my life because I'd literally never existed without him. So, all I can do is fulfill his dreams for him, because in Chicago you have to make it out of the hood in order to succeed, everybody wants to see you do good but never better than them. The media labels us as "Chi-Raq" comparing our murder rate to Iraq's, and they look



at us as entertainment, knowing they will never step foot in the real Chi-Raq. Rappers are considered idols in our eyes, because they have a voice, unlike us. One popular quote we live by is “I rather get caught with it on me than without it”, referring to always needing a gun when you go outside to stay safe. There are fewer problems with getting caught with a gun on you in Cook County they will take you to jail but you can immediately bond out for a small fee and then just pay another fine opposed to ending up dead being caught by



somebody else without your gun and ending up being robbed or even dead.

Where I come from it's the city of no pity. You can get your life taken in broad daylight. Though I hate my city, I love my hood. The 290 expressway is a movement for people from out west just claiming our part no gangs or any affiliation just togetherness, simply stating where we are from and what it made us. The city made me who I am today, Chicago wasn't always bad when we were little we could walk to the park and get a



snowball on the way from the candy lady. Back then block parties were popular and safe, now they're rare. We would play Double Dutch in the water from the fire hydrant on the hot days, while my brother was on the court playing basketball. My grandmother always said "you can make it anywhere if you make it in Chicago", most don't make it out sadly it had to be my best friend and brother but that's why I'm here to tell my brothers story; that is what it's like to live and die in Chicago.

Author's Statement and Rhetorical Purpose

McKenzie Roe

I was motivated to write about my brother's death when we were told to write about Chicago because I was positive other students would cover the fun activities and tourist attractions but, I figured nobody was going to talk about the reality of Chicago, the killings, the drugs, the gangs and the poverty. Thankfully, most of the kids in my class never experienced it, never had to and never will, but I did, so I must be the one to inform everyone else about the problem.

While I could simply have just spoken on the topic of living in Chicago, I focused more on my brother's death, because he was just another number to the news and the people watching it. I talk about how police treated my brother, how media portrayed him, and how I had to watch him die in front of me. My brother couldn't tell his story himself, that is why I'm doing it. So for everyone who doesn't know this story, it's about what it's like to live in Chicago, the Chicago you don't see on TV or downtown by the Sears Tower (and yes, where I'm from it's the Sears not Willis).

I used alphabetic text by typing my paper and inserted images to help visualize and tell my story to get through to the audience. I arranged the pictures by placing them within my essay where they apply in the text. I thought that would make a better visual for the reader rather than captioning each individual picture and having them go back to remember what I talked about. I think my essay portrays strong ethos because I talk about personal experience through my own trials and tribulations. My use of white space is limited because of my essay using most of the page but it is used for the side tabs, double spacing and borders around my pictures. Lastly, I got my pictures from various websites. The homicide photo was from ABC7 News website and the celebrity ones are from Twitter and the last one is from Google Images.