



PRESS RELEASE

3rd Degree

TX: 28 October at 8pm

The Man Behind the Green Face

George Jacks is an ex-con bearing all the signs of years spent in prison, his face and body covered in tattoos that make his skin look green. Despite a life of crime and years as a member of one of the notorious numbers gangs in prison, George is trying to become a productive member of society.

George grew up on the Cape Flats, but landed up in jail at an early age. After that, he was in and out of prison for robbery and rose to the rank of lieutenant in the 28s. Finally, on his release in 1994, he decided to change his life.

Criminologists say this is no easy task, but George's family and neighbours created opportunities for him to re-integrate, rather than treating him with fear and suspicion. George embraced the opportunity to turn his life around.

Experts say that not affording prisoners a second chance, adds to the crime problem in this country. They urge the public to look beyond the jailhouse tattoos and gritty faces of men when they are released, to give them a second chance and not discriminate against them for life.

George now spends much of his energy trying to keep kids off the streets – his life serves as a warning to youngsters attracted to the gangs and a life of crime. Many others in the communities of the Cape Flats are trying to provide kids with role models other than gangsters.

Third Degree spoke to Hip Hop artists Ready D and Emile Jansen of Black Noise who help kids find alternatives through music and dance - and look at how a community project, Proudly Manenberg, has helped locals take back their suburbs from drugs and crime - and offer kids hope for the future.

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