

Dear Rodney,

Ms. Grockis told me about your situation under house arrest. And that your brother is, too. I also heard the 2 of you've figured out how to trick the ankle bracelets a little so you can sit across the street. I like that.

I don't like it because, as an adult who's trying to be a good model for you, I don't want to encourage rule breaking. I like it because you're smart and this proves it. I hope you see that.

You've been dealt a bad hand being born where you were. Your circumstances are not your fault yet they will be if you don't take action to work out of it. Your teachers can help you. I can help you. Remember the photographs you took on our Day of Service? That was all you, man; I just pointed you in the right direction. You have so much power inside you to be whatever you want to be. But you've going to have to work hard. Harder than I had to and I know how hard that was. Come talk to me or I'll find you.

By Rachel Shine.

Written on April 17th 2010 Suspension Stories event in "*There's No Comparison for Adults*" workshop facilitated by the Neighborhood Writing Alliance. In this workshop, adult participants recalled and wrote about a time from their youth that mirrors the school discipline situations today which sometimes end in arrest.