



# Lucky Me

The Life and Times  
of Lucky Cesar

by Julio Jordan

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## Dedication

To my father Ernesto and my children, Tytiana, Jonathan and David. To the Charriez family. To E.160th Street and Elton Avenue.

To all those who were not “lucky” enough to make it out and to all those who did.

Appreciate life and stay blessed, always!!!







## About the Author

About the Author: Julio Jordan grew up in the South Bronx during the birth of crack, AIDS and the worse murder rates NYC has ever seen.

By the time he was 10 years old, he had witnessed what most people won't in an entire lifetime. He raised himself on the cold streets of the south Bronx.

Jordan states, "My goal is to share my journey with you and take you on a walk through the realities of my life; the chapters that make me who I am. We all have a story to tell; problem is most of us are never able to tell it! I refuse to let my experiences, struggles and pain end in vain. I hope through my stories you are able find some peace in your own life or help others to find peace in theirs. This is my goal, this is my ultimate purpose."



## Intro

My life is an open book,  
Written in blood,  
All that I've been through,  
Thank the man up above,

When most people think about the 4th of July, they envision summer barbeque picnics. It's a time to reunite with family and friends, all the while anticipating the spectacular fireworks display which is to come later in the evening. It's what the Fourth is all about.

For most it is a celebration. It is a day off from work and one which brings pride and joy because of the symbol of independence and commitment to freedom which is represented.

So it is ironic on a day which focuses on independence, commitment, honor and love, a young mother would give birth to a healthy baby boy and just a few days later abandon him.

She disappeared just as the fireworks faded away from the NYC skyline.

Abandon is a very strong word. Webster's Dictionary defines it as "to yield utterly; to desert; to forsake; to withdraw protection, support, or help".

Most animals guard their young with their lives. If you try to approach a mother bear or lion and mess with one of her cubs, let's see how long it would take for her to rip you to shreds.

One would figure a human mother would have a greater want and need to protect her young.

One would also figure she would have a greater want and need to love her child. To nurture her child; to be the best mother she could possibly be.

It usually works this way. Unfortunately, for me, it did not.





## Chapter 1

I'm surprised that I'm alive,  
And not rotting in jail,  
But it's my will to survive,  
That has helped me prevail,

My story starts off during the summer of 1974, one year before my birth. My father, Don Flaco, had to leave New York in a hurry because he had decided to rip off one of his heroin suppliers.

He made off with \$30,000 in cash and a cache of firearms and jewelry. He sold what he could and bought a one-way ticket to Catano, his hometown on the beautiful island of Puerto Rico.

He figured if he stood in NY he would definitely be a dead man; so leaving was his only option. Besides two sons he barely knew, he had nothing holding him back. So off to PR it was.

A new start at life, with a nice wad of cash; what else can a man ask for?

One problem though. Did I mention he was heavily addicted to heroin since he was 14 years old? Now, at 34, he was going to start a new life. Unfortunately his old one would play a major role in the outcome of this "new" one.

One month after arriving in Puerto Rico he was practically broke. He had all that money and nothing to show for it. He rode the train down many tracks without ever once leaving the room.

Think of the possibilities. He could have opened a business and wisely invested the money; he could have been set for life.

Instead it went up his veins, whichever was the healthiest, so he received the maximum effects. He kept himself looking sharp and definitely knew how to hide his inner demons.

The feather in the hat accented the fedora and his guayabera was freshly

pressed. A crease in his slacks was a must. He had a confident swagger about him and it was this which attracted a young beautiful woman to him.

She was the girlfriend of one of the locals. She was as beautiful as the island itself. Her hair was long and black and silky, a smile sent from heaven. Her eyes were captivating and seductive. She truly was a sight for sore eyes.

He would have never thought of taking someone else's woman but the way she was treated angered my father. They would meet secretly and he would promise to get her out of her current situation. My father made her believe he was a wealthy businessman who owned several companies back in Brooklyn.

Since he had some money and knew how to flaunt it she bought into the dreams he sold her. She was very young and naïve; he was older and knew how to kick game. Whether it was lust or love, I don't know.

He packed his belongings and bought himself and her plane tickets to NY and gave her an ultimatum. Either she boards the plane with him or she stays in the miserable life she was in.

He already knew what she would do but wanted her to feel like she had a choice and she chose to leave.

The only problem was she had just given birth to a baby boy. She did not want to hurt the child's father so she chose to leave the boy with him. She had a daughter, a small innocent child she would also leave behind.

At least this is what she told my father. Why he believed her, who knows, but they made it to Brooklyn. Once again it was the beginning of a "new" life.

Fortunately for my father, the guy he had stuck up was murdered so he didn't have to worry about him anymore. That didn't matter, he had something worse. Now his addiction was greater because of the steady abuse. Since he had the money, there was no limit to his use.

Now the money was gone. No more parties, nice clothes, nothing! Even worse, the woman he had convinced to leave with him saw firsthand he wasn't everything he said he was.

No businesses, no cars, no money. Nothing! And to top that off, he was a junkie. Unfortunately for her, she was stranded in NY and was also a few months pregnant.

Whether it was her beliefs or just a lack of money which influenced her decision, she decided not to abort me. Whatever it was I thank God she didn't. She kept the both of us healthy during her pregnancy. Worst case scenario was she would leave my father and raise me on her own.

She wasn't an addict, and one would figure she wouldn't want to have herself, or her unborn child, exposed to this disgusting lifestyle. This was understandable and downright commendable. Any mother with such a mentality is the pure representation of the word mom. So this was her mentality, right? Well, not quite.

She brought me into this world in the early afternoon on the 4th day of July 1975. I was born healthy, full of hair and eager to start my new life. So much excitement being it was the Fourth. Everyone celebrated the day and my parents had a greater reason to celebrate because they had a newborn son.

My father was trying to change his life around. He tried to fulfill the promises he made to my mother. He was confident they would make it and therefore trusted her greatly. The day we were released from the hospital she decided to take a walk.

I know she was probably worn down from having given birth, so it was only right. She had carried me for nine months and had now held me in her arms for my first 2 days of existence in the hospital.

Go ahead mommy, relax and make some time for yourself, had to be my thoughts as she placed me in my crib. I am happy to have you and you look so happy to have me, I thought as she kissed my forehead. She told my father she would return shortly. She said she would take a walk and buy me some milk.

What a mom! Even when taking time for herself, she makes some time for me. Bye mommy, see you soon, had to be my thoughts as she left the apartment. I knew she would return shortly.

Twenty eight years and counting for her return.



## Chapter 2

I've seen so much,  
It has made me immune.  
All the poverty and death,  
I grew up so confused,

Many people I know were raised without a father. It is always the mom who holds the family together. It doesn't matter if you're poor; she always makes the family feel rich because they have her. Growing up it was different for me. No mommy to tuck me in. No mommy to cook breakfast in the morning. No mommy to show me how to love.

I spent most of my early childhood alongside my father. He was now both mommy and daddy. To be honest, considering the situation, anyone else would have kept it moving. Not my pops! He assumed his duties just as a father should. Imagine the fact he was 34 years old and a drug abuser for over 20 years. He was unemployed, with no education and barely had a place to live. As if this weren't enough, he now had a newborn baby to take care of. He couldn't even take care of himself.

None of this mattered. He took responsibility and didn't worry about tomorrow. He did what he had to do today. He fought to keep me protected. Now that's a soldier. My pops was a survivor and in a way I was born one. Since he had a newborn and no place to live, social services provided us housing. They also gave us Medicaid and food stamps to keep me healthy and fed. As far as we were concerned, we were rich.

The fact he was on public assistance gave him a lot of time to fulfill his favorite pastime. And his was hustling. Didn't matter what it was; he sold it. He'd sell you a bag of Ajax if you let him. He sold prescription pills and small quantities of drugs. He even used to hustle the methadone he was receiving at a drug treatment clinic.

Instead of getting off drugs, he was getting deeper into them. Since he always hustled up a couple of dollars, he always had money to get high. And did he ever!

One would wonder where he left me while he was doing all of this and the truth was, I was right there with him. It wasn't like he could leave me at home with mom.

Despite all of my dad's bad decisions, he never let me out of his sight, and I love him for this. He could have stuck me up in a stranger's house. He could have left me there for days or even weeks. He could have abandoned me, but he never did and would never even think of it.

I obviously don't remember my first couple of years but, I do have a vague recollection of a run in we had when I was four years old. My father was out on the hustle as usual. Although I was born in Brooklyn, the department of Social Services placed us in the Bronx. On this particular day we were in Brooklyn and just getting on the train to return home.

Moments before the doors shut, my father exited the train, pulling me alongside him. He approached a woman waiting for a train. They spoke briefly and then she approached me, picked me up and gave me a hug and a kiss and asked me how I was doing.

I replied "good" and leaned towards my dad because I didn't know who this strange woman was. She attempted to gain my trust but something in my gut told me not to allow her to. "Who was this strange woman", I thought to myself. She seemed nice and eager to meet me. Her smile was warm and her eyes were welcoming. She looked familiar and as she spoke, I recognized her voice. Did I meet her before or was she an old friend of dad's I did not recognize?

It wasn't like I was an antisocial kid; I liked all of his female friends. But you know how kids will be. My dad told me to go ahead and it was okay. It was then he told me her name was Carmen and she was my mother.

You must understand, when he said she was my mother, I didn't know how to react. When you don't have something, you really don't care about it. You're already used to living without it. All I know is she talked to my dad about how she made a mistake and wanted us back. She begged for another chance. My dad wasn't buying it. She had abandoned us once already and he would not allow this to happen again.

Also, upon talking to family back in Puerto Rico, he learned she had done the same to her daughter and another son, when she left with my dad. She



pleaded with him but my dad knew the type of person he was dealing with. She bought me some pajamas and then she left out of my life just as she had done before.

Although my dad had given her all of our information, she never took the initiative to come and see us. I was already used to not having a mom, so she wasn't missed.

Another relative I spent some time with was my older brother. Although I was raised alone, my father had two other sons from previous relationships. Since he was always strung out, their mothers up and left him. I really don't blame them either.

My brother Luis used to stay with us every other weekend. We used to have a lot of fun when he used to come over. He had a huge fake rubber cockroach he would put on my shoulder when I wasn't paying attention. I always fell for it and would go running throughout the house like a mad child.

We would watch TV and sometimes get on each other's nerves, the usual brotherly squabbles. We would hang out and always had fun when we were together. The fun didn't last long because, after a few visits, he never came over again. His mom moved to Puerto Rico and it was the last time I would see my brother.

We continued to live in the Bronx and would constantly move. My dad would end up getting evicted for one reason or the other. At one point we were completely homeless and ended up at one of his friend's house.

It was then I realized life wasn't so great. The conditions we were living in were deplorable. The friends had a huge dog that used to shit in the house. The dog went on the floor, the couch, and the beds. He shit and pissed wherever he wanted to. The entire apartment smelled rancid. A pungent odor of feces and urine coupled with the smell of rotten eggs permeated the entire apartment. . Flea bites made my skin itchy and rashes on my skin were all too common.

Besides my dad and I, there were three other people living there. There was only one bedroom and it was more like the garbage can. Since everyone in the apartment was a dope head, they didn't mind these conditions and I couldn't care less because I didn't know any better.

My meals consisted of whatever there was and the usual drink in my bottle was sugar water. Thankfully, my father had his case reopened and social services placed us in the Bruckner Housing Projects.

The buildings stood tall, 20 or 30 of them within a few city blocks. Each story housed 15 families and there were 25 stories in all. Many families lived here and most had one thing in common- drugs and poverty! I am not saying everyone was affected by this; it must have been just the ones I knew.

It was like the concrete jungle sucked the life out of those who dwelled in them. The piss stained elevators held many secrets. If these walls could talk, boy would they have a lot to say. Many were trying to live honest lives but most were shooting dope and each other. It was a dangerous setting but no one cared because it was just the way life was.

There were many positives to living in the projects though. There was a sense of unity. Everyone looked out for each other. If you needed some sugar you could check your neighbors at apartment 2D. And even though we didn't have much, everyone shared what little they had. It was about helping each other out, not about what you were getting in return.

Life in the projects was hectic but it sure beat our previous situation. Since we didn't have much, it was easy to keep the apartment clean. We didn't have a phone, color TV or any of the many things most took for granted.

Our bed consisted of a mattress we acquired off of the street; many of our furnishings came from the same place. They were new but just to us. They smelled musty and slept on. As long as there weren't any piss stains on them they were fair game. Most of our clothing was acquired through second hand stores and whenever possible he used to accept donations from local churches.

Most of our meals were served at local soup kitchens except for the first few days after the first and fifteenth of each month, which was when the welfare checks came.

The money was usually spent on drugs. I could honestly say I never starved but food was scarce in my house. We always ate even if it wasn't at home and this was all that mattered to me. I was already a survivor. I knew how to do for myself, even at my young age.



I used to dress myself, feed myself and I wasn't even six years old. I didn't have anyone to take me to school so I used to walk with the other kids who were in the same predicament. Even though I was so young, I felt like I was grown and not because I didn't know any better, but because it was all I knew. Through one of my friends, I was even able to get my first job.

At five years old I was working at the Pathmark Supermarket up the street from where I lived. I would go there everyday after school and early on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

My job was packing bags. I didn't have a paid position but the tips would make up for it. I quickly figured out the key to getting the big tips was the way you greeted the customer, and how their bags were packed. This was my first lesson in customer service.

Also, I had to be fast in order to acquire the cashiers' trust. I knew how to pack the bags so the weight of the items was equally distributed. This ensured people who walked with their groceries in hand, had a better balance and handle on them. I also offered to carry bags for the elderly and since they knew me, they would agree. Some of my friends would take advantage of their kindness and rob them, you know, steal their purse or what not. I was happy with the tips I would receive.

Sometimes I would get a dollar tip and many times I got nothing. Since I was too young to work, they would exploit me. I didn't care because there were days when I would leave with twenty bucks, and at that age I felt rich!

When we moved to the PJ's my father had brought along a woman who was living in our previous residence. Her name was Theresa. She was a nice lady. She was a white woman, I believe she was Jewish. She was heavy set woman but small. She had a warm friendly smile though and her eyes were full of love. Her face bore the struggle and pain she had endured all these years but she rarely let it show through her genuine compassion. She truly cared for me and my dad and we felt the same way towards her. This was my first exposure to having a woman living in my house. I would sometimes tell my friends I was half Jewish just for the hell of it.

My father felt bad for her because she was still living in those conditions, so he invited her to stay with us. She was a good woman. She was my first

mother figure even though I never really got the opportunity to bond with her.

I was five years old and was much more interested in playing outside.

She went to the hospital and upon returning, told my dad she had diabetes and needed to start taking insulin shots. She hated the needles but knew there was no choice because if the medication wasn't taken regularly, death was inevitable. There were times my dad had to practically force her to take her shots. She argued but always gave in.

Since my father was always on the streets during the day, he had asked me to check up on her throughout the day. All I had to do was go upstairs every couple hours and make sure she was ok.

On one particular day during the summer of 1980, I remember going up and checking on Theresa. The first time I went up I asked if she was ok and she told me yes. She was sitting on the bed, reading a book and watching TV. She was in good spirits at the time and she told me to go enjoy the beautiful day. The sun was shining so bright.

I went back out to play manhunt and returned a couple of hours later. This time she seemed to be taking a nap. I went back outside and returned a few hours later, giving her enough time to rest. I approached her to wake her up and make sure she was ok. I tapped her on the shoulders a couple of times. She was lying on her stomach and faced down. I tried to awaken her by moving her. I turned her by the shoulders and lifted her head.

What I saw next shocked me; her face was purple and swollen. It had the imprints one gets when sleeping on one side too long and her eyes were rolled to the back of her head. All that was visible was the white in her eyes. I panicked and went back outside to play like nothing had happened. I did not know any better.

When my father returned home he found her like this and called 911. He immediately came looking for me to make sure I was ok. I told him I was and he asked me what happened to her. I told him I didn't know. I did what I was supposed to and didn't know anything else.

The police and ambulance came. At first they thought my father may have killed her. The autopsy later determined it was because she failed to



take her insulin shots. She hadn't taken one in weeks and her death was inevitable. I felt bad but as always, life moved on.

As a result of our living conditions, the police summoned social services so they could investigate my dad to make sure I was ok. I had a counselor who used to come by every Tuesday and Thursday and take me to McDonald's for lunch. He would then proceed to ask me if my father was abusing or neglecting me. I let him know my dad was all I had and he would never do anything to hurt me.

He helped my dad get a job at a factory making belts and tried to help him get off drugs. He constantly checked up on us. He was one of the few people at the time who really cared about us.

I vividly remember one Christmas morning. It was the usual holidays for us, just another day, nothing special. No tree, no family dinners and definitely no presents. Most five year old's would not be very happy. I really didn't care because every year before this had been the same. I was used to it by now and did not get my hopes up anymore.

It was during the Christmas of 1980 when I first saw the true meaning of Christmas. That evening we heard a knock at the door. My father answered it, and rushed back to the room and told me someone was looking for me. I asked who it was. Before I could get to the door, I heard "Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas!" I was so excited! Santa Clause was at my house! He had a great big bag of toys and not the cheap ones.

For a moment, I felt like the world was mine, like I had every toy on the planet; before this I had none. He told me to believe in him and I told him to make sure he returned next year. He promised he would and left saying he had many more kids to see. I thanked him for all the gifts.

Later I asked my dad if it was really Santa Claus and he replied yes. Even though I played along, I knew it was my counselor. The same one who was checking on me a couple times a week. Soon after, the investigation was over and I never saw him again. I appreciated every gift I was given but gave most of them to my friends the very next day. It goes to show I was already used to having nothing.

My father stayed away from trouble but it seemed like trouble would always find him. There was an incident when a kid, who was about 12

years old, punched me in my stomach and stole my baseball I had received for Christmas. Since I was just five years old, my first reaction was to go to my father and tell him what happened. He was furious.

He went outside and asked me which kid it was. I pointed him out and my father approached the kid. Before the kid could say something my father picked him up and slammed him on the playground floor. He didn't hurt the kid but he definitely let him know to never mess with me again.

The kid ran home and told his mom, who had my father arrested. The kid said my father hit him for no reason. Once the boy confessed he had beaten me up and had stolen my ball, his mother quickly dropped the charges. She then thanked my dad for disciplining her child. Back then there was an unwritten rule. Everyone looked out for each other's kids. If they got out of line, one would discipline him so long as the punishment fit the crime.

Nowadays it is called abuse and assault along with a list of other charges. I'm not saying it worked, but I know kids were more respectful back then. Only the grown-ups did the shooting in my day.

These are just a few of the things I was accustomed to seeing at an early age. It wasn't something I had asked for, nor wanted; it was what life had given me. At that age, it's really not your choice. I just dealt with it the best way I could for a five-year-old.

Whenever I had the opportunity I would go outside to play with my friends. We did the normal mischievous little kid stuff like throw rocks at cars, set garbage cans on fire and play ding, dong, ditch where we would go knocking door to door and running away before the person knew who did it. The only problem was most of the time I was unsupervised, so I had to watch myself.

I had to be careful not to get caught up in a situation I couldn't handle. I think if it wasn't for someone up above looking over me, who knows what might have happened to me.

Unfortunately someone slept at his or her post because something did happen to me. It is something which is too personal to share even though I have shared and will share many events which occurred in my life. This situation makes me uncomfortable but I'm happy to say it has not had a negative impact on my life. I would not wish this upon my worst enemy



but what doesn't kill you makes you stronger! It has not changed my outlook on humanity.

Thankfully, the emotional scars had healed by the time I learned the person who had been involved in this incident was shot three times at point blank range. It goes to show you every dog has his day and you do reap what you sow. I would never wish harm on another person.

One thing I would say is if you violate my family, I will violate you. It all goes back to those animal instincts.