

13 March 2006

Little brother,

your tio javier was so devastated by your situation that he forgot to give me your name when he wrote to me and asked me to write to you six days after your arrest....

First of all, i know exactly what you are going through. you see, the reason your tio asked me to write to you is because we go way back--back to when i was 16-years-old and i found myself where you must now search, the way i did, for **hope**. trust me, it's there: in the darkest corners of your experience. it's like light that never fades, but before you can feel its brightness, you must confront the darkness. stare into its eyes as if it were a bully that will only leave you alone when he sees that you are not afraid! embrace your worst nightmares and cry as much as you can in the privacy of your cell. learn to ration your pain though; conserve your energy; don't let it rob you of the power that lives inside you. no. instead, study your feelings, analyze your thoughts, and understand your mind. this will help you turn the pain into strength, and your darkest fears into the brightest light that you will ever know. . . .

Second, like my father told me when I was sitting right there in those orange fatigues: "Do your homework!" if you are innocent, talk, act, and think like you are innocent. an innocent man does not sit back and wait for others to come save him, my friend. an innocent man does whatever he can to prove his innocence, as if you were lost at sea, without a raft, and with only the seagulls to guide you back to shore: swim, little brother, and don't stop swimming; move your legs and arms till you are no longer even in control, till your body has accustomed itself to swim automatically. . .just don't give up! the waters are mighty, but God is more powerful! keep moving and keep breathing--we will not let you drown!!!!

Third and last, always remember that "All things happen for a reason." in your life--and this is only the beginning of it!--you will encounter so many obstacles, like everyone. always remember that "Nothing happens by coincidence." you are there for a reason, regardless of how terrible that sounds. your reality mirrors your deepest desires. i know that sounds crazy, and i know it's not what you might want to hear...but it's the truth! i learned this from my experience; an experience your Tio can tell you all about the next time he visits you. ask him about the times when he used to go and see me in "the box"--that's when I really got to know him, during my hardest and most painful experiences. in many ways, Javier came to me when I finally confronted my worst fears: he came as a messenger of hope. . . .And till this day, so many years later, I consider those times some of the most meaningful in my life. . . .honestly, even if i could go back and start all over, I wouldn't change a thing.....

.....it all happened for a reason!!

Please feel free to write back whenever the spirit permits you. Don't be so hard on yourself, but understand that what you are going through is very serious also. You are young, but this experience will force you to grow faster than you would have liked. It's all good: we need more warriors in the world. I hope you will join me in fighting for what is right: truth, freedom, and justice.

Much love from the desert,

*p.s. be strong!
si se puede!*

tu amigo,

mario

*FREE LQ!
Solidarity*