

DeAnné

Look At Me

I am almost twenty-two years old. When I look in the mirror, I see that I have brown eyes and nice long hair. Right now it's black, but I change it all of the time. I have light skin that tans easily. Sometimes I wear make-up, sometimes I don't. I'm five-five, one hundred thirty-eight pounds. I wear a lot of silver jewelry. I have a Marilyn Monroe piercing on my face and my belly button. I have one tattoo on my lower back—a tribal design with Japanese letters. There are three letters and they mean money, power, and respect. I got it when I was eighteen. I have a wild look from the way I do my hair. I do my make-up like a celebrity. When I'm lazy I won't do it. The tee shirt I'm wearing says, "If you're rich, I'm single."

I'm fun and I laugh about everything. I'm the leader of my friends. They always want me to be where they are. When we go somewhere, they always follow me. They copy me, too—the way I talk, the words I use. They start to use them. They want me to do their hair, do their make-up.

I'm full Navajo. We still eat our food, and we speak Navajo to each other sometimes. I don't know that much. I know more Spanish than Navajo, because I grew up in Tucson. Our traditions—I'll go to the medicine man when I get sick. There are certain things we believe, like, if a coyote runs across the road, you can't go past it. Or, if somebody dies and you are pregnant, you're not supposed to see the body.

I'm single and have a boyfriend. My boyfriend motivates me. He's everything I want in a guy. He's really smart. If I have

any problems, he gives me advice. When I was going to do my GED, he said he would help me study. He shows me a lot.

Parents and Family

I don't have a dad. He passed away before I was born, so I never knew him. My sister is eleven months older than me. I've had a stepdad since I was one, and he is still with my mom. He's half-white and half-Navajo. He was like my dad growing up, but when I started getting older and being like more of a woman, he pushed me away. As a kid I was his tomboy since I was into basketball. It's awkward now. When I go to my mom's, me and him don't talk. He's there and I'm there.

He's like a pervert—always looking at girls and watching movies with pretty girls. My mom's really Christian, and she doesn't like it when he does that. He tries to be slick about it, but he's not. I don't like to be around him because I think he's looking at me.

It's awkward, too, between me and my mom. We're cool with each. We'll communicate, but we don't have a lot to say. She don't tell me she loves me, and I don't tell her I love her or anything like that.

She did tell me recently that she loved me. My mom and my sister got into a fight, and my mom was basically saying that whatever happens, happens, and just remember I'll always love you. When she says it, I don't feel anything. It sounds weird coming from her. My mom doesn't know how to express herself. She's not affectionate, and she's mean. She has

something smart to say about everything. She thinks she's right all the time.

She's greedy—she's like the greediest person I ever knew. When I asked her to pay for my GED, she didn't want to do it. Finally she did, but she said, "When are you going to pay me back?" She doesn't offer me anything. My mom has money. She's educated and has her own business. She makes good money, but she acts like she's broke, and she's not. Her husband is an engineer, and he makes a lot of money, too. She's just stingy.

My mother's been to court for domestic violence. When I was a freshman and my sister was a sophomore, she hit us in front of the police station. We were at the police station because my sister and I were going to run away to California with some guy. The cops raided his house that day as we were taking our bags there. We pulled up and all kinds of cops were around his house.

I said, "What the hell?" and we were leaving. The cops seen me and my sister. They took us in for questioning. My mom had to pick us up. When we got in the car, my mom started screaming her head off. She was hitting my sister with the keys. I was sitting in the back, and my mom couldn't reach me. She was trying to hit me but only scratched my chest. My sister jumped out of the car and ran back to the station. My mom went into the station, and they arrested her.

My sister is probably my best friend. We're close, but I don't trust her. She has anger problems. She's single and has three kids. My sister studied online and has a job with a collection agency.

My grandmother is on the reservation in Chinle, Arizona. That's where we're from. I go up to visit, but I don't like it because it's real dirty. Boring. Me and my other grandma were close. She was like the mom I didn't have, and she helped raise me, too. I lived on the reservation on and off whenever my mom couldn't take care of me and my

sister. That was before I went to school. She'd tell me she loved me and she'd be there for me.

I don't talk to my father's parents. They always treated me different than my sister. That grandmother tells everybody that I'm not her granddaughter. She caught my mom in bed with my father's brother. I don't know, whatever.

When I was growing up, my mother and stepdad went a lot of places. It wasn't all bad. Sometimes we'd be cool and have fun. We went camping, water skiing, snow skiing, to Yellowstone Park, and the Redwood forest.

Belief in a Higher Power

My family is Mormon. Me and my sister were baptized in middle school, but we never took religion serious. I think I started taking it serious when I was in a bad situation or when I felt alone. I am religious, but I'm not really into it. I believe in God, and if I get a chance to go to church, I'll go. My mom and my sister are really strong into it. I believe it, but I don't know if all my faith is into it. Every night before I go to bed something is telling me, "Pray," but I don't want to. I know I should, but I don't. It's like I'm praying and nobody is listening to me. But I know that at some times in my life He was there for me.

School

I went through all of my elementary school in Gallup, New Mexico. Then we moved to Albuquerque, and I did one year of middle school. We moved to California and all over. I don't remember how it went. We lived in Kansas, too. My stepdad was going to school and working. We moved because of job transfers.

I was always sad, really quiet, and shy, shy, shy. My teachers would call my mom and say, “Your daughter’s too shy. She needs to participate.” I was always like that. I didn’t talk to nobody. I was smart and could have been in the GATE [Gifted and Talented Education] program, but we were always moving, so I didn’t get a chance. School was never hard. I had two special teachers in elementary. They said they knew why I was shy, but I never said anything about my mother. I knew I would get into trouble.

I had one or two friends in school. I had a cousin in elementary school who lived down the street. Sometimes my mom would let me go over to her house for an hour or two. Me and my sister had chores at home. Sometimes we’d get into trouble because we would leave and my mom would be looking for us. Then we’d go home and get beat. We were always scared of her. We’d say, “When we grow up, we’re going to run away.”

One time she threw make-up away in her bathroom. Me and my sister saw it in the trash, and we took it out. It was blush, and we took it into our room. She came in and beat us up. She’d hit us with her hand and we’d fall. She’d be picking us up by our hair and kicking us. We got blush on the carpet, but it was dark carpet—nothing to get all crazy about. In the morning she was in the kitchen cooking for us, and that was the first time she ever told me she was sorry. I freaked out. She said, “I’m sorry I hit you guys like that. Just don’t play with my stuff.”

I was in two schools in Albuquerque, one in California, and one for eighth grade in Tucson. I was into basketball and started to open up in the eighth grade. Toward the end of eighth grade I started not being shy. I always had one friend that I would kick it with. I wasn’t really popular.

Dropping Out

My sister and I ditched school a lot. We’d go to the mall, chill out at home, or be with our friends and smoke weed. I went two times for my senior year at Pueblo High School, but I got suspended for three months and didn’t go back. I wanted to work and didn’t want to deal with school. I was young and dumb. I wasn’t thinking, “Oh, I need my education.”

I think if kids are having a hard time, they should just deal with it, no matter what. If parents are butt holes and being mean, stay at home and do whatever you have to do to finish school.

I started living on my own when I was almost eighteen. Three of us got a one-bedroom apartment. All of my life I was getting Social Security, but my mom never gave my sister and me the money. She was really greedy. When I moved out, I was still getting checks. I called my mom and said, “I’m not living there no more so I want my checks. I want my Social Security, and if you’re not going to give it to me, I’m going to go to the office and report you.”

“Okay, okay,” she said, “but I need that money for my car payment. Do you think you can lend me \$200 bucks?” I said, yes, like a dumb ass. I gave her \$200, and I was getting \$750. With that money I’d pay the rent, but it didn’t last forever.

Not All Money is Good Money

I got my first job at Little Caesar’s Pizza when I was sixteen. One day my sister picked me up from work, and driving home my sister crashed the car. My mom made us quit.

I was a maid at a hotel, and I got fired in my third week. I didn’t have a ride, so I called in. They said, “We’re going to let you

go.” I didn’t like the job anyway. Me and my sister got a job at a call center. It was too far, all the way on the east side, so we quit that after two months. Then I had a job at an auto parts store for six months. After that I worked at a clothing store, and when I was short in my cash drawer, they fired me.

I was broke at nineteen and needed a place to live. My aunt took me in. I had some friends that knew some people. They said, “Yeah, you should work at Pandora’s Box as a waitress. You’re pretty. You’ll make a lot of money.”

Someone brought me clothes and, boom; I was working there the next day. It was a strip club, and I served drinks all night. It was easy, and I made good money. The money just sucked me in. I could have danced and been a waitress, and when I started I said, “Hell, no! I’m never going to be a stripper. Never!” I couldn’t see myself doing it.

All of the girls said, “Watch, you’re going to start dancing.”

“Yeah, right,” I said to them. One old guy kept asking for a dance. He was really old, so I didn’t care. We went into the VIP room, and I made 10 bucks in one song. I said, “Dude, this is so easy.” I gave him a dance with my bikini top off. Before I knew it, I was dancing more and more. I gave up waitressing and on and off for four years did the dancing. I averaged \$150 to \$200 a night, but on my good nights I’d make over \$400. I worked, usually, Wednesday to Sunday, whenever the place was packed. Me and my friend worked at a couple of clubs. When we were the prettiest girls, we made good money.

I stopped dancing because of some health issues and my ex-boyfriend. On probation, they put me on Antabuse and I couldn’t drink. I tried to dance without drinking, but I didn’t make that much money. I would go to the liquor store every night before work and buy a half-pint of Hennessy and drink it all

before I went in. I would always have to drink, all the time. It made me more flirty. I’d do my work and get out. That’s how I got my DUI and how I made my money.

I’m not working now, but not having a high school diploma didn’t matter. I always lied on an application. I would say that I graduated and no one ever asked anything else. When I say I have a felony conviction on an application, no one ever calls me back.

Juvenile Arrests

My first contact with the law was as a juvenile. Me and my sister were always running away for months at a time. Once we went house-to-house, staying with our friends. That was for two months. Sometimes we’d stay outside, chilling, because we didn’t want to go home. My mom put missing signs all over Tucson. That’s how we got caught.

We didn’t care how bad the situation got; we just didn’t want to go home. Sometimes we didn’t eat for days. We were in high school and wanted to go to dances and hang out. My mom would say, “No, no. Do your chores,” and she’d make a list. She didn’t let us do anything. We didn’t have a life.”

I got caught two times for stealing clothes in the mall. I’d put the clothes in a bag, or if I wanted a jacket, I’d just put it on and walk out. Once it was, “Excuse me, ma’am, can you come with me?”

And I’m, “Hell, no! Why?”

They took me back to a room and arrested me. One time they called the police, and then the store dropped the charge. Another time I begged them not to call the police. “I swear I won’t ever do it again.” They let me go. I was a thief, big time. I started stealing in my sophomore year. My junior year was heavy, and my senior year was really heavy. When I started making my own money, I wouldn’t steal no more. I stole

expensive jewelry, perfumes, and clothes from department stores. I would carry a bag with me and pull something off the hanger and put it in the bag and walk out. It was easy. In the eighth grade, me and my sister got into a fight at home. It was on my birthday, and I was being a brat. My mom called the cops, and they took us to Juvenile. We wanted to stay there because we didn't want to go home, but they didn't keep us.

Adult Arrests

When I was twenty, I got a DUI. I was leaving Pandora's, and I was drunk off my ass. My manager knew I was drunk when he called me into the office. He said that I had to go home, and I left. He didn't ask me if I needed a cab. He didn't walk me to my car or anything. Not even a block away, I crashed. I was doing sixty on the curve by Stone and Drachman. The cops were monitoring and saw the whole thing as I crashed into the stones in the middle. They wrote me up but didn't take me in. My car was totaled. I only had it for a month, and I had just gotten my driver's license. I went to jail for thirty days.

I got my second DUI eleven months later. I was still dancing, but it wasn't like the first DUI. I had taken my friend's car and went to a Circle K. I passed out in the car. Someone called the cops because the car was running and I was asleep. They took me to Pima County Jail, and I did another thirty days.

On Christmas Day last year, me and my sister were in a car and we got in a fight. My sister called the cops on me, and we both went to jail overnight. Altogether I think I have spent one hundred and ten days in jail.

Drug Use

The first drug I ever tried was weed, and that was when I was in middle school. In the

fifth grade me and my sister tried it, and it was different—it was fun. We smoked it a lot, but we'd hide it from my mom. When we would run away, all we'd do is smoke weed. My sister had a boyfriend, and she got pregnant. So she was doing her own thing. I was a pothead for a while. Then I started doing rocha. It's a date-rape drug. I used that a lot, but there were times I would use it and would wake up and not remember what happened. Or I'd wake up with a guy and I'd say, "Oh, hell, no. I'm so stupid."

Then I started using ecstasy at Pandora's. I met some guy, and we were really good friends. I started experimenting with ecstasy, and I liked it. When I had the chance, I would do it. My friends would always buy it for me. That was the only drug I really got hooked on. I tried every drug there is and sherm—embalming fluid that I'd smoke. I tried shroom, and I didn't like it. I was tripping out and tried to kill myself. I was in depression for years and years. I couldn't even walk. I didn't like heroin. I had two shots since the first one didn't do anything. I never did heroin again. Cocaine was always there, but I didn't like the feeling. I never tried acid. Ecstasy is the only drug I've ever liked. I'm clean since February 2005. I've been in AA and counseling for substance abuse.

When I was using, me and my boyfriend were selling drugs. So we were always using. That's when I went to jail again for violating my probation. I didn't go to the probation office to get my Antabuse for three days in a row, but I wasn't drinking. I was dropping dirty for ecstasy a lot. I just didn't care. I was just like, whatever. I didn't think I'd get arrested until I did. I spent forty days in jail.

I've been depressed, sad all of the time, since high school. The only time I felt good was when I was doing ecstasy. That's why I did it so much. I couldn't go to sleep without sleeping pills.

Probation

I'm on probation for three years. I have sixteen months to go. If I violate, I go to jail. They were supposed to put me on IPS [Intensive Probation Services], but they didn't. My officer is nice. He's cool and he understands. He's serious, but at the same time he's a nice guy.

The only thing I didn't like doing was my GED, but I got it over with. That's something I don't have to deal with no more. It took me six months, but I was only going once a week. Every Thursday I go to counseling. I'm doing a woman's group, and I'm almost done. We work on our self-esteem and our problems.

Sex at Fifteen

I lost my virginity when I was fifteen. No one ever sat me down and told me about sex. You see it on TV and everyone talks about it, so I just knew. My mother never talked to

me about sex. She probably knew that we knew. She wouldn't let us go anywhere by ourselves, so it wasn't an issue to her. I've been on the shot, and I've used pills. I always gain weight, and I'm always hungry. Now I just use condoms.

Turning Point

Probation has been a turning point in my life. It has made me change. Otherwise, I'd just be out of control, like how I was before—doing drugs and partying.

The parties were fun. I was a promoter for a nightclub called the Hot Spot and really popular. Everyone knew me, and I was always dressed the best. I had everything I wanted. I thought I was a shit. Everyone liked me and wanted to be around me. I was always in the strip bars. It was like being a celebrity. I was so caught up in it—I just loved it. I partied all of the time. On probation, I'm not supposed to go to bars. When I went to jail everyone knew.

I'm confused about what comes next. I want to go to school, be successful and rich, and have everything I want. I also want to have a family.

Looking back, I'd say: Keep positive people around. Stay away from drugs. Finish school even if it is high school. Don't ever be a stripper.

