



PHOTO BY PATRICK HYUN WILSON

## Sincerely, Darrion

When **Darrion Jeffery** posted the video to his latest song, “Dear Sacramento,” he didn’t expect much, maybe 2,000 views. The Sacramento-area rapper, who goes by Darrion on stage, says he grew up surrounded by drugs, violence, gangs and death. In “Dear Sacramento” he confronts the complicated relationship he has with the city that’s caused him a lot of pain but that still holds a special place in his heart. The video opens with clips of police violence in Sacramento and features Jeffery, sitting on the front steps of a house and writing a letter to the city.

Within a week, the video racked up more than 100,000 views on YouTube, blowing away any expectations Jeffery had. The song is the title track to the album he released on Sept. 27, which is comprised of similarly themed songs addressing the issues of poverty and violence. SN&R caught up with Darrion to talk about his music, what life was like growing up here and the hold the city has on his heart.

### When did you start making music?

I started rapping when I was 13 years old and I was in a—like a dance group. We called ourselves the Fly Boys, and I had a big brother, my brother-in-law, and he was rapping. I just got inspired. I seen him doing it, and I always loved music, and I just tried it out for myself. And I ended up falling in love with it.

### What were those first songs about?

The first songs was really about being a little kid, like, just turning up, having fun, 13 years old, just seeing what I see and stuff. They really had

no meaning behind them. The deeper I got came later on down the line. When I was 17, I started doing poetry in high school. I joined a program from my English class called SAYS, and I started doing poetry.

### What do you rap about?

Yeah, they was telling me like, you know, “Your story, it’s touching because a lot of folks are afraid to say anything.” I would talk about the gang violence—and you know, you’re seeing things as you grow up in a poverty-stricken environment ... What else could I rap about? ... I could be around a person and then the next day they get killed. Just like yesterday: A person, from my area, a good kid, was murdered yesterday afternoon. You know what I mean?

### How were you inspired to write “Dear Sacramento”?

I’m from a bad area, and I see some things. I see kids who are less fortunate. And that stuff kind of affected me. I’m like, man, I know how to hustle. I can go get me some money, and you know, figure it out, but you got these kids that really ain’t got no choice ... They might not have a father around, or they may not have both parents around, you know, and the gang members and stuff? I’m around all of that.

### The song is a response to the violence and police brutality in Sacramento, but you come back around and reaffirm your love for the city. Where is that love coming from?

The people. The people. ‘Cause it’s home, man. Ain’t no place like home. They love me out here for real, for real. I love them back regardless of what happens and what’s going on. It’s really a love-hate thing, ‘cause I hate what goes on out here. I hate how people live. I hate the streets. I really do. With a passion. I lost so many people to it. I hate it. But you know, it’s home. □



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