

## Gratitude by Andy Ortiz

Gratitude means, Thankfulness. I was like about 16 yrs old at the time, still just a little kid about the get released out of placement that was called "kid's peace." I remember that day when, I gotten released my DHS worker picked me up in his car and took me back home to living with my Aunt back in Philadelphia. It takes a lot to leave a lot of good friends that I genuinely cared about that ain't have no Family or NO Friends but, only had themselves and had to live by the system just like me. I remember me making friends with these two girls and they names were Lexi and Isabella they were white girls that had a super crush on me and admired everything that I did. Like when, I played Basketball, Football, Kickball, and went swimming. I would just so, happen to look over and see these (2) girls always watching my every move. So, I loved the attention that I was giving them I just seem to go up to both of these girl's away watching my every move. So, I loved the attention that I was giving them I just seem to go up to both of these girls and say "Hey girls what's going on." They both started smiling and both said, "Hey". I then replied by saying, "I peeped yall both have been staring at me the whole time I been swimming in this pool." They both said, "That they both liked me." I was about to laugh but, I help it in and then said, "Thank you. I really appreciate it." As I was saying it my cheeks turned so, fucking red I knew I was fucking blushing and it wasn't no way to hide the fact that I wasn't. Lexi and Isabella had both said, "Awww your blushing." I said, "oh, please stop." Lexi and Isabella then ask me "what's wrong?" That's when they introduce themselves to me but, already knew there names through a friend. I then speak up and say "I always fantasized on making out with a white girl and my name is Andy Ortiz. Lexi and Isabella had both laughed and both gave me a kiss on each side of my cheek while, I smiled they both walked away from the pool area. But, I'm thankful because, I never wouldn't have meant these girl's I would be the man that I am today. Because, I grew more confidence into talking to other girls until, they both gotten jealous then, I stopped. They both made out with me in placement but, it never went too far because, of the staff members would be steady watching our every move that we all three were doing. Which that only had me fantasized about white girls even more. May because, I never really have a relationship with one before. So, as I arrived to my Aunts house which took me and my DHS worker about two hours to get there by car. I started to write letter's to Lexi and Isabella and we remain in contact. The both had written me back a week later saying, "we love you and see you soon." I smiled and put the letters away and tucked them into a box and shoved it deep underneath my bed in my room. While, I'm at my Aunt's house my Aunt comes into my room and sits on my bed and said, "are you glad to be back home!" I told her "Honestly I want to go back because I feel like a piece of me is missing and I don't feel right being here because now I got to adjust to the new changes and worry about the friends I left behind." But my Aunt never understood my pain, but she will try to understand and she said, "I know what you're going through and Imma give you some time to adjust." I then, cut her off by saying, "They were my Friend's that I left behind and we understood each others pain and all of our Trials and Tribulations that we have went through in the past." Then, I went to open the door to my room and started yelling and telling my Aunt, "To get the fuck outta my room". She then, leaves and says, "I was just only trying to help to make you feel comfortable at home." I completely ignored her until, she left and was outta my sight I slammed the door shut behind her and sat on the floor right by the door and cried. But, I was sat on the floor right by the door and cried. But I was still thankful because I made a lot of friends while I been in the system and still remain in contact with a selected few. I also, was thankful enough the I had a family that took me in when, they aint have to. Then, a year later I got a phone call from my old placement saying, "Lexi died on 5/5/2017 and had committed suicide," I crushed my phone in half and cried but I knew to stay strong because I knew she would be in a better place. Then I got another phone call from my old placement several months later saying that "Hello Mr. Ortiz we're sorry to tell you that Isabella died on 8/29/2028 of a natural death." Then, my heart completely sunk I was then, down to my lowest and tried to commit suicide myself it just got so bad that my Aunt just 302 me into a mental health institution. Because, she felt like it was the best thing for me and she couldn't handle the pain I was going through

and needed some assistance. But, I'm thankful that I'm still alive and never gave up on my life! That's what you call real gratitude.