

Film features former inmate turned barber

BY ADELE UPHAUS-CONNER
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Under his long-sleeved, button-up shirts, Antoine Carey is covered in tattoos from his neck to his hands.

He got some of them in prison, during the five years he served at Haynesville Correctional Center for attempted second-degree murder, carrying a concealed weapon and distribution of cocaine.

Carey, 35, keeps the tattoos mostly covered while cutting hair at Faded & Company, the Fredericksburg barbershop he established in 2016, using the barber's license he earned while

incarcerated.

There, besides offering precision cuts and fades to paying customers, he gives free haircuts to kids in foster care, homeless children heading back to school and homeless men and women looking for employment and housing.

He can't completely cover the tattoos—but they may help him connect with the youth he speaks to at area high schools and foster care organizations, with whom he shares his story of redemption, hoping to inspire them to make better decisions.

SEE CAREY, A5



MARC CAREY

Carey and director Tawaan Brown at the premiere of 'Fade in Full' in Spotsylvania.

TO SEE THE FILM

Watch "Fade in Full" at vimeo.com/319484463.

CAREY

► FROM A1

It makes a difference, Carey said, for the youth to hear from “someone they can relate to, someone who looks like they already had the experience.”

It might have made a difference to him.

“Instead of someone speaking at you about what not to do, I’m speaking with you,” he said. “I’m trying to build a bridge with those who stand in need.”

Carey hopes that “Fade in Full,” a new 22-minute documentary about his life, can help him reach more people in need of second chances.

The documentary, made by Caroline County filmmaker Tawaan Brown, was released at Marquee Cinemas on Feb. 24—five years to the day since Carey was released from prison. One hundred and eighty one of the 200 available tickets to the premiere were sold.

“The general manager [of the theater] said he had never seen that much community support for an independent film,” Brown said.

Carey grew up in Tappahannock, the only son in a family with three sisters and a single mother. His parents were divorced, but his father lived in the area.

“I didn’t grow up in a bad neighborhood, but I still found my way into trouble,” he said.

He was charged once during high school with possession of marijuana, a misdemeanor offense that Carey calls “a slap on the wrist.” Rather than dissuade him, he said, the experience showed him he “could stand to be in a little trouble.”

At Norfolk State University, he started selling cocaine under the nickname “College Boy.” On Carey’s 22nd birthday, a cop found him smoking marijuana in his car with a friend. Also in the car were a bag of cocaine and three concealed weapons.

He was charged with numerous felony offenses and in 2009 was sentenced to 17 years in



MARC CAREY

Carey poses with family at the Feb. 24 premiere of ‘Fade in Full,’ at Marquee Cinemas.

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—ANTOINE CAREY

prison, with five suspended. He had to turn himself in five days after the birth of his son.

Carey said he likens prison to “being buried alive.”

“I wanted to redefine myself,” he said.

Carey took the opportunity of earning his barber’s license while incarcerated. He chose that option because it would make him employable out of prison, even with his criminal record.

“I found out I wasn’t so bad at it,” he said.

He also spent time in the prison law library, researching the offenses he was charged with, and he was able to have several of them dismissed and his prison time reduced.



MIKE MORONES / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Carey worked with a local filmmaker to make a documentary about his life that he hopes will set an example for at-risk youth.

Carey was released in 2014. He started working as a barber at Kingdom Cutz in downtown Fredericksburg.

“I was given a key to open the shop in the morning,” he said. “People would look at me, like, ‘Who is this guy with the key to this building?’”

In a few years, he had saved

money and built up enough clientele to open his own business.

He also started working with local organizations, such as Embrace Treatment Foster Care, FailSafe Era and the Teen Enrichment Network to help fight recidivism and help at-risk youth break from family cycles of incarceration.

“I feel like I have an obligation to speak out and provide kids with an alternative,” Carey said, adding that he’d like to start his own barber academy one day.

Last year, Carey reached out to Brown—who makes films for Busch Gardens, the Rappahannock Area YMCA and others—about filming a documentary about his life to use in his public speaking engagements.

“I was busy, so I had to pray on whether I had time for it,” Brown said. “But I was attracted to the redemption part of it. I know what it’s like to fight back from a history of mistakes. I felt there was a good story to be told. This is someone I want to get behind.”

He ended up doing the film for less than his usual rate because he believed so strongly in the message.

In the film, Carey re-enacts key episodes in his life. He’s seen cooking drugs in a motel room, being arrested and being escorted into his prison cell.

Brown said the motel scene, which took place at one of the motels off U.S. 1, was “the creepiest thing I’ve ever filmed.”

“Antoine explained what the room would look like, that it would have a hole in the curtain for [the drug dealer] to peek through,” he remembered. “And it was exactly like that. I’m used to having to dress a set, but I didn’t have to do a thing.”

“Here [Carey] is re-enacting the person he used to be in the place he used to do it. It was very surreal. And the creepy thing is, [the drug deals are] still happening.”

Carey said portraying the actions of his younger self was like “ripping the scab off a wound.”

“But it was to serve a greater purpose,” he said.

And he said that if given the chance to go back in time and do things differently, he wouldn’t.

“The experience of jail was to prepare me,” Carey said. “God is the prefect orchestrator of things.”

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