

Always running essay
sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I am an eleventh grader at Westview High School, and in my literary class we did a memoir unit. In this unit we were given a choice of two memoirs to read. Out of those two books I selected your piece, Always Running.

Truthfully I didn't have much reasoning behind choosing your book other than that it seemed a lot more interesting than our other option, and my teacher played it up by saying it was "full of sex and violence." Although I have no real argument on why I choose your book over the other, I am extremely satisfied that I did.

The novel explored the issues surrounding gang life, the life of poverty and also got incite on cities throughout LA that are greatly influenced by Latino culture. With that, I think the overall theme of this piece is standing up and fighting for what you believe. When you were younger, you were pushed around by the school and legal system because of many factors. Some being, that you did not know English, and you grew up in poverty. As an adolescent you were involved in a number of gangs activities and witnessed many deaths. Despite your reputation, you stood up to your school principal and fought for equality among the students. Years later you stood up to the police when you saw them harassing a drunk Mexican woman. You also protested against the Vietnam war later on in life. All of the stands that you took ended with you suspended or in prison, but still you never gave up and never stopped fighting for what you believed to be right.

Your book doesn't necessarily require extremely deep thought, but it does get you thinking. I believe that in your book there are many morals/ lessons that if not looked for could possibly be missed. Taking the environment that you grew up in into account, you proved that who you are as an adult doesn't

t have to directly mirror the environment and people you were surrounded by growing up. You defied the odds that were written for you and made your life your own. I admire that you rescued yourself from the self-destructive lifestyle that you were originally pursuing. This rescue came through art and politics.

Your writing and artistic ability got just enough molding in your youth that you began to find greater power in a pen and your writing than in a gun or gang. You also recognized that gangs have become even more dangerous and present in modern society than when you were younger. With that, you got a drive to gain power so that you could ultimately change the social conditions that cause gangs and gang related activities. As an adult you show great concern for your son, because you know all too well the way the lifestyle of gang members appeal to the poor and underestimated, so you fear he may not be able to escape it the way you did.

As for your writing style, I enjoyed the imagery and the ways you played with the genre of memoir. What we think memory is? What kind of things do we remember? How do we remember it? For me much of my memory is just what you showed; little snapshots of moments in time. So I related to that aspect of your writing.

From a political and some what social perspective, this piece does a good job of shining light on some reasons kids join gangs and provides ideas of possible paths out. You talk about gangs as a kind of mass suicide and that's a concept that really stuck with me; here are all these kids who are just looking for family while hating themselves along the way.

I do have one question that I feel would get an interesting answer.

Although you faced many challenges throughout your life, is there anything you would change about it, or do you look back on it as an experience that molded you into who you are today?