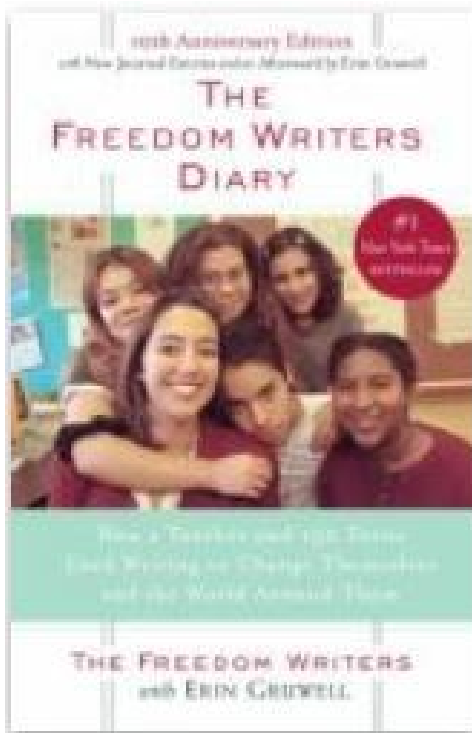


THE FREEDOM WRITERS DIARY



Adult

By The Freedom Writers with Erin Gruwell

ISBN: 0-385-49422-X

CONTENT WARNING

You are about to access material that may contain content of an ADULT nature. These files may include pictures and materials that some viewers may find offensive. If you are under the age of 18, or if such material offends you or if it is illegal for you to view these materials, please exit now.

4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
3	The illustration on this page depicts a drawing of a man in silhouette. His lip size is greatly exaggerated.
4	One of my disgruntled neighbors had the audacity to say, "If you love black people so much, why don't you just marry a monkey?"
7	Most of these niggas come strapped and ready to bust a cap. ...I don't even think everyone in this class is supposed to be in here, because there's a white boy in the corner looking down at his schedule, hoping that he's in the wrong room. For his entire life he's always been part of the majority, but as soon as he stepped into this room, he became the minority. Being white in this class is not going to give him the same status that he gets in society.
8	What the hell am I doing in here? I'm the only white person in this English class!
9	I'll lie and insist that there's been a computer error and that I am supposed to be in the Distinguished Scholars class, even though I suck in English and have a learning disability. I know she'll believe me 'cause I'm white.
10	That's just the way it is, and we all respect that. So when the Asians started trying to claim parts of the 'hood, we had to set them straight.
13	I opened my backpack, took the gun out, and put it in my waist, then I slowly walked to the back and waited for the door to open. ..."Fuck them niggas..." ...Usually, I would have run, but this time I had a gun. I knew they were getting closer, so I turned around, reached for my gun, took it out, and pointed the gun at his head. ...I put the gun back in my waist, and went home. No big deal, just another day in the 'hood.
17	Risking life, dodging or taking bullets, and pulling triggers ...It's all worth it.
18	But Sarah's boyfriend is a senior, and all of the members knew the kind of things the "senior men" did with freshman girls.
19	I presumed she must have been given specific instructions because while we sizzled, she kneeled in front of David O'Neal, a popular junior boy. I couldn't make out exactly what was happening, but he was holding something in front of him that looked like a bottle, and I think she was crying. Then her head started moving back and forth, and as a crowd of rowdy boys gathered around them she started to go help her I was pushed back to the ground as a voice screamed, "Where do you think you're going, whore? Did I say you could get up?" It was one of the members. ...I reeked of beer that had been poured on me multiple times.
20	Now that I've been initiated, and I'm officially in, my only concern is parties and stuff. All the older girls drink and really "party." ...I guess everybody in high school drink, though, so it's not too bad.
21	I got into tagging, because bangin' and dealing drugs or kickin' it with gangsters was not my thing. I started to hit up on walls with markers or cans. Kickin' back with the homies, smoking bud, and fuckin' shit up.

Page	Content
22	<p>If it passes, the government can take away health care benefits and any other public program, like school, to all illegal immigrants. I'm scared because it will personally affect my family since my mom came here illegally.</p> <p>...Someone in Ms. G's class reminded us that "187" is the police code for murder. If this proposition passes, it may murder the opportunities for immigrants like me to succeed.</p>
25	<p>When I felt the rush of air from his fist whizzing past my face, I went crazy! I started kicking him in the head!</p>
39	<p>I began to analyze and reflect on my life, my many encounters with injustice and discrimination.</p>
45	<p>I didn't do much except sit at my homie's pad and smoke. That was all I did when I ditched- chilled and smoked.</p>
46	<p>I was smoking out with my homies when the cops rolled up.</p>
52	<p>The only job I could get in my neighborhood was selling drugs- so I decided to pass.</p>
67	<p>I am struggling with a deep secret- being a "closet drinker."</p> <p>...It's so hard for me to change because I fear that people will not like the sober me. I've been doing it for so long, it's just a daily routine like getting up in the morning, going to the bathroom, and brushing your teeth.</p> <p>...I woke up craving orange juice with a little hint of vodka. Guess what I did? As usual, I went to my secret stash, and poured my favorite drink, vodka and orange juice.</p> <p>...Of course my mom was already at work, so I walked out the door with my water bottle filled with O.J. and vodka and went to school like it was an everyday thing.</p>
72	<p>I watched him steal money from my mother's purse and sell our belongings for drugs.</p> <p>...I can still feel the sting from the belt on my back and legs as he violently lashed me in his usual drunken state of mind.</p>
75	<p>I was only six when a friend of my father's molested me in his home.</p> <p>...Even standing at the bus stop, I realized that the women and girls standing next to me may have been molested, harassed, or even impregnated at one point in their lives.</p> <p>...Round one- What if the elderly woman sitting across from me was sexually molested by her uncle when she was young?</p> <p>...Knowing that people are getting murdered and that thousands of women were being raped is shocking.</p>
78	<p>Matthew was simply walking home when a van full of gangsters pulled him into their car, drove him down to the railroad tracks, beat him up and then shot him repeatedly in the head.</p>
91	<p>He says, "Why don't you have any black friends?" or " So you're going over to those honky's house again?"</p> <p>...Worse, he grew up in the South, and racism was all he saw.</p>
98	<p>Did he ever think of suicide?</p> <p>...Sorry, diary, I was going to try not to do it tonight, but the little baggy of white</p>

Page	Content
	powder is calling my name. As I chop up the white rock on my special makeup mirror into very fine powder I start thinking about the past week with Zlata and our infamous toast for change.
99	I'm what you call a closet tweeker. To clear things up, a tweeker is someone who smokes or snorts speed. Nobody knows my secret, especially Zlata, and I'd like to keep it that way. It's not something to brag about. I'm getting to a point where I can hide it in plain sight. When Zlata was here, she and Ms. Gruwell had no idea that I was high. I even got high before we went to Universal Studios with her, but I played it off as much as I could.
100	I was put in rehab after our toast for change for possession of marijuana, but now that I'm in rehab, I'm addicted to speed. ...When I think of an addict I think of someone walking the streets, begging people for change, sucking dick for a score, leaving their babies in the trash still alive. ...For me, a quick line has turned into a fast hit from the glass pipe. The higher the intensity, the better the high. That's my preferred party favor, the glass pipe.
101	With all that behind me, I whip out my straw, sit down on the toilet, making sure the bathroom is locked; bring it to my nose and snort. The burn is a sure sign that I'm on my way to my next high. Oh yeah, it's going to be good. No more headaches, body aches, or stomachaches until of course, the high is over, but only until I reach for my best friend called crystal meth.
113	I asked her why, and her response was "We don't read black literature in this class because it all has sex, fornication, drugs, and cussing."
117	A carton of milk was thrown, someone shouted "Fuck Niggers," a big crowd formed, and fighting began.
118	The boy who confronted him suddenly punched him in the face. He fell unconscious into the bushes then everyone rushed him at once. There were twenty angry boys against one. Someone grabbed him by the neck and dragged him out on the street. They started kicking, and punching him in his ribs, face, and anywhere they could reach. Someone picked up a metal trash can and slammed it into his face.
121	Suicide is something that's always on my mind, "24/7." There isn't a day that goes by without the enemy shooting suicidal thoughts through my mind. ...There I was, standing in the dark, holding a kitchen knife to my wrist. My heart began to beat faster and faster as I held out my arm. I pulled back my sleeve, exposing my wrist. My mind blacked out. I looked down to see that the knife had barely cut into my skin. The knife was too dull.
125	A guy in the corner even said, "Misogyny? Did you say massage me pee-pee?" and started laughing. ...My male cousins were advised, "Make sure you put a hat on that Jimmy!" or "Get as many girls as possible!" ...My boyfriend and I had been together for two years before we decided to have sex. Then when it came time for what was supposed to be my special moment, I thought there would be caressing and passionate kisses. Instead, it was a five-minute bang, bang, bang.

Page	Content
127	<p>"Hmm? What is that? Who's touching me?" Whatever it was. I didn't like it...it was Uncle Joe. What was he doing to me? Whatever it was, I wanted him to stop. I opened my mouth to tell him to stop, but the words wouldn't come. It was as if a ton of bricks had fallen on me, knocking the air from my lungs, making me unable to speak.</p> <p>I felt his body right next to mine and his breathing got stronger and stronger. He was touching me in places I didn't know could make me feel so dirty. I didn't move a muscle. I made my body as hard as a rock, as he slowly slid his hand up my shirt caressing my back and the side of my breasts. He kept on trying to make me lie on my back, but he was unsuccessful.</p> <p>He got closer and closer. I could actually feel his skin touching mine. The feel of his sweat and his lips on my skin made me want to cry. A gigantic lump formed in my throat and to this day, nothing makes it go away. Uncle Joe wasn't being rough with me, which made it hard for me to decide whether or not what he was doing to me was wrong. It tore me up inside to think he would actually do me any harm. I was only a little girl, but I knew what he was doing was wrong. But why? Uncle Joe is the most righteous person I've ever met...After Uncle Joe invaded me, he got up for a drink of water.</p>
129	<p>If you pull up my shirtsleeves and look at my arms, you will see black and blue marks.</p> <p>...The first shove, the first time he slapped me, when he started calling me names, or the time he squeezed my arm so hard I had a bright red handprint around it? ...When he exploded, he would hit me, shake me, push me, squeeze my arms, and yell things like "You stupid bitch, you can't do anything right."</p>
130	<p>We would be kissing pretty heavily and he would get a little too excited. He would want to have sex and I always told him wasn't ready. He would start pulling my clothes off, saying, "We are going to do this!" Then he would just stop and push me aside and order me to get dressed.</p>
132	<p>The color purple was coming from my mother's eye where my stepdad had punched her.</p>
134	<p>When my mother comes home, he has the audacity to take the money and go buy beer and drugs, more specifically cocaine.</p>
139	<p>I've seen prostitutes propositioning men right in front of my students; I even had a crack dealer approach my car once and try to sell me rock.</p>
145	<p>With the smell of marijuana in the air, the mumbling of drug dealers trying to make their sales, the horrific sounds of gunshots, and the sight of graffiti, which is more popular than Van Gogh.</p> <p>...The only grass that's alive is the grass they smoke. But grass isn't the only thing that they smoke. I see crackheads getting high in the "cut" smoking their pipes.</p>
146	<p>After the gunshots stopped, a woman screamed, "Help me, please...why, why, why?" I looked out of my bedroom window to see a man with a bullet wound in his head the size of a quarter and blood oozing out of his head like ketchup coming from a Heinz bottle.</p> <p>...I have watched men pistol-whip their girlfriends or smash their heads through car windows.</p>

Page	Content
150	"As his penis twirled in my mouth, thoughts of the popcorn he promised me ran through my mind..."
151	When I started to read the story, all of a sudden everything hit me: "I sat on the operating table, shivering...my stomach flipped as I lay back and placed my feet in the stirrups." How was I so lucky to get a story about abortion? It was my secret come to haunt me once again.
156	Washing my mom's blood, which was shed from time to time; a sacrifice to make him happy. He lived for blood- her blood, enjoying every fist that hit her flesh, and every scream that took place.
167	"Please get off me!" I screamed at the boys who were at least two feet taller than me and had extremely deep voices. "Shut up you fucking nigger, your kind don't belong here," they screamed as they kicked me harder and harder.
171	All of those horrific pictures of children with their arms and legs cut off of their bodies and put together on another adult or child's body was like looking at a collage of bad dreams that was put together like a picture puzzle.
176	If he died it would have been for the simple fact that we were black and in the wrong place at the wrong time.
178	I had constant flashbacks of all the guns put to my head, all of the bullets that barely missed me, and all the times I thought to myself, "Just give up, they're gonna kill you anyway."
179	"And get the hell off my couch!" He grabbed me by my shirt and threw me across the room. Then he picked me up by the neck. All I could think of was why is he was doing this to me. I didn't do anything to defend myself, it's kind of scary having a six-foot-four giant, with arms built to play football, grab you by the neck and throw you into the trunk of a car. While in the trunk I could hear my mom screaming. I could hear the sound of his fist smashing against her face. I stayed in that grease-infested trunk for at least a day. It was morning when my mom finally let me out. The daylight burned my eyes. My pants were soaking wet with a combination of dirt, car oil, and urine.
180	All of my mother's welfare money supported her maniac boyfriend's cocaine habit. ...My mom was eight and a half months pregnant. With all the stress in her life, she had to be rushed to the hospital in premature labor. And I was stuck in the house with a child abuser, woman beater, murderer, drug user, and ex-convict. I was constantly being hit. Constantly being told I would never be anything, I ain't shit, I'll never be shit. I knew there would be trouble as soon as my mom left for the emergency room. The second this thought entered my mind, this madman started yelling at me. "It's your fault that she's gone! Don't start that crying shit. I ought to beat your ass." I was home by myself most of the time my mom was in the hospital. My mom's boyfriend exchanged all her jewelry with his dealer so he could buy his drugs.
181	Sometimes they just argued over why there's money in the house and no cocaine. For years he sold drugs out of the house where my mom paid rent.

Page	Content
183	<p>Apparently Jeremy had brutally raped and murdered a seven-year-old girl in a Nevada casino.</p> <p>...Jeremy began playing tag with the little girl, followed her into the women's restroom, where he raped and murdered her in a bathroom stall. The friend with Jeremy was also in the restroom at the time, but he left and did nothing to stop this crime.</p> <p>...He had child pornography on his computer, and he was abusing drugs. This is a lethal combination. Although not an excuse, such things can make a person with such a dark and disturbed side commit acts they may never have if not under their influence.</p>
185	<p>I found out they were really here because of a kid at our school named Jeremy Strothmeyer, who had gone to Las Vegas and raped and murdered a seven-year-old girl while we were in Washington.</p>
186	<p>People were saying it was because of drugs, specifically speed, that led Jeremy to murder a seven-year-old girl. Bullshit! I used to be a "tweaker," but not even at my lowest point would I ever murder anyone.</p>
189	<p>Maybe it was her drinking, maybe it was her drugs...Maybe it was me.</p>
191	<p>My aunt's niece and her friends would bring drugs in and out of our home; they would stay up at all times of the day and night, while my sister and I would stay locked up in our room.</p>
196	<p>Crackheads getting high right in front of me, and drug dealers making more money in one day than a stockbroker makes in one week.</p> <p>...Cheryl was kidnapped, raped, driven to a desert, and had acid poured all over her body. She was left to die.</p> <p>...Cheryl got up from the ground even though acid was eating away at her skin. She began to walk toward the sound of moving cars that were on the highway, about one hundred feet away from her. The acid had blinded her and she had to rely on her other senses. Once Cheryl reached the highway, a motorist spotted her and took her to the hospital.</p>
202	<p>Instead, all the girls my age are already knocked up by some cholo.</p> <p>...I always thought that the only people who went to college were rich white people. How did she expect me to go to college? After all, I live in the ghetto and my skin is brown.</p>
215	<p>"You are so lucky you didn't have to go last night," one of the pledges said. "We had to play a game called Jingle Balls. Well, the most popular senior guys were standing in front of us..." Then they went on to tell me how all the guys were screaming at them and telling them what to do. They said the guys had their balls out of their pants and the pledges had to kneel in front of them and sing. They told me how they had to sit on guys' laps, sing to them, and even kiss them.</p> <p>...Now that I'm so-called "popular" I stood in shock listening to the young girls sing "Jingle balls, jingle balls, Jingle all the way..." I couldn't believe it! I watched the pledges on their knees, inches away from the guys standing in front of them with their balls out of their pants. The freshmen girls were singing this song, in disgust, as the high school participants crowded around to watch. After a couple of minutes, the males were getting frustrated. I didn't know why at first until I heard,</p>

Page	Content
	<p>"The fucking bitches are closing their eyes. Make them open their eyes!" The senior girls disregarded their comments and continued watching. When they went through this ceremony four years ago, the males were allowed to wipe their balls on the pledges' faces, but this year the girls were spared this.</p>
233	<p>To me, a pimp is a tall, smooth-talking middle-aged man who uses his slick ways to manipulate the minds of young women- not a five-foot-tall Jewish grandmother!</p>
241	<p>I pierced my nipple and my mother nearly had a heart attack.</p>
244	<p>Many people don't accept me when they find out I'm a lesbian. I realized I was a lesbian just recently, when my best friend told me that she loved me and I returned her love.</p>
248	<p>I asked her if she had ever been sexually abused. ...When she confessed that her uncle had molested her, I was shocked. That was the same person who had raped me!</p>
251	<p>But when new friends introduced me to drugs, I began to lose interest in football. I started drinking and smoking moderately in the summer after sixth grade. I was twelve years old. My drug experimentation soon spun out of control. ...My new friends were all into drugs, too, so it made it easier to get high. This transformation too two years before full-on addiction. By the time I had reached my freshman year in high school, I was smoking pot three to five times a day. Besides smoking, I was drinking around the clock. Soon drinking and smoking wasn't good enough. I needed a bigger and better high. I tried everything that I could. I would try or do anything to get high. I had shroomed, tried many uppers and downers. I had tried acid (LSD) time and again. The worst for me was nitrous. It was the most addictive drug I did. ...I had a nitrous oxide tank in my closet so I could get my daily high. I remembered one time when I had run out and it would take a day to get it filled up, but that was too long. I need to get high right away, so I tried a whip cream bottle, but it did nothing for me. I remembered watching a news special that talked about how people get high with household cleaners. So that's what I decided to do. I went to my closet and found some computer cleaner and it did the trick.</p>
254	<p>When I told people in my AP Government class, a class that is predominantly white, with one black person beside myself and two Latinos, instead of congratulating me, they immediately asked "What's your GPA? What did you get on your SATs?" As if to imply that id didn't deserve my acceptance</p>
257	<p>Where had I gone wrong? I had been careful not to have unprotected sex; I had learned my lesson last time I had become pregnant. Then I remembered the night the condom broke. When I had become pregnant at fourteen, it was because of my own irresponsibility. I felt that I had no choice but to have an abortion. Afterward, though, I felt like I had killed part of myself- I began to drown. It took almost three years to recover from the depression that engulfed me after the abortion of my first child.</p>

Page	Content
259	I live in a neighborhood where the sounds of gunshots are my lullaby. The smell of weed lingers in the air and most of the people around drink 40s like it's going out of style. The crime in the area is horrific. People have either been locked up or are on the streets dealing drugs.
261	Nothing has been the same since my parents started smoking crack. The house is always filled with the smell of stale, burnt, cocaine. The odor is left behind in the pores of their skin. So, when I go to give them a hug, the smell still lingers. I hate seeing their eyes all big and bulging, their bodies twitching like a fish out of water. After watching them hit the pipelike there is no tomorrow. I know that they have a serious problem. Getting high is their daily routine. It is like they don't care if they have children or not. All they really care about is feeding their urge for drugs. ...When I was younger, they would lock me up in the closet because they wanted to get high and beat up on each other. One day it got so bad that my father smashed my mother's head in between the couch and the wall. I became so used to being in the closet that I put snacks in there and a mini TV to watch.
263	They will be getting high from my gold charm. Now I see what is really special to them...the drugs instead of me.
265	And not a day could pass without the help of that white powder. I didn't even need it to get high anymore. ...I wanted to take some sugar cubes laced with LSD and I flipped out. ..."I'm going to take your ass, white boy."

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	15
Bitch	6
Fuck	13
Goddamn	1
Nigger/Nigga	3
Piss	2
Shit	12