A frail black man sat on his grandmother’s porch finishing a cigarette as if it had just released some anxiety from his body. It was the middle of the day in the country and it was quiet, assuming that most people were at work in this small town. Marshall Davis was the current exception to this rule, he ran into some serious trouble with the law a few years back so now he was waiting to hear back from a job. Inside of the house was his grandmother sitting in the kitchen listening to radio.

Entering the house, Davis told his grandmother, “I was out all day yesterday looking for a job and no luck yet, but I am still searching.”

After gaining further knowledge into Marshall’s family history, it was easy to tell why he spent most of his time on the outside of the house. Marshall’s family living room was filled with pictures and books from wall to wall. In some of these pictures were the images of highly successful people.

There were teachers, professors, computer engineers, social workers, deans of collegiate institutions, medical workers, nurses, and high school and college graduates. Davis came from a strong bloodline of high achievers and educated black people. It seemed as though he tried but came up short in his attempts to achieve his family’s success.
Davis even said, “My grandfather built this house with his bare hands and one day I want to leave a strong legacy, but it just never seems to go my way.” As Davis was asked why he had a criminal record he wanted to exit back onto the porch. He looked away into the sky as if he was daydreaming as he told his story. “My criminal past started at a young age. In grade school, I would often get expelled or written-up. As I got older my life got more complex and so did the crimes.”

In 2006, Davis was convicted of assault and battery as well as evading police, which is a felony charge in the state of South Carolina. Davis spent a short stint in jail on those charges, but most recently Davis spent six months in Eutawville County Jail because of unpaid child support.

Davis, now 24, says, “I have made plenty of mistakes in my life and I regret the felony charge on my record but I don’t feel anybody knew the situation and now it seems as though nobody will give me a second chance. On the night of the felony charge, I was supposed to come here to my grandmother’s house. Instead, I was stuck in an altercation with my then girlfriend, Caroline.”

Davis noted that during that day he and Caroline had been arguing. The arguments quickly escalated into rage and Caroline told Davis to get his belongings and get out of her house. Davis was fed up with the situation and so he gathered his belongings and put them into his car. On the way into the car, Caroline got in. She said she needed a ride to the store and they should just talk about things.
Davis said, “On the car ride over, the argument escalated to a dangerous level, she began screaming and shouting, and then I felt a fist strike across my face. The next thing I knew I was yelling and hitting back and my foot was lying on the pedal. I was now going over 90 mph in a 65 mph zone. There were blue and white lights swirling behind me. In that instant I blacked out. The next thing I remember was being told to lay down and the police handcuffed me.”

Davis went on to say, “She told the police I was attempting to hold her hostage, which of course was not my intention at all.”

Davis was charged with a felony and now finds it hard to find and maintain a job. He says he regrets that night and if he could take that night back, then he would.