

Students surprised by family connection

Students learn they are more than 'just friends'

By Keischa Holley

Many students who come to ECSU from other places make new friends—to help them share the work, joy and heartaches of college life. But when ECSU students, Samuel Freeman, Orlando Holloway and Terry Williams became friends, they found they had much more in common than anyone might have expected.

They had heard there was an "ECSU family," but at the time, they didn't know the school's "family connection" would have a special meaning for them.

Not only are they all three criminal justice majors, they are half brothers who all share the same father, Louis Freeman, a former long distance trucker.

"At first we were shocked," said Sam Freeman, a 20-year old sophomore from Trenton, New Jersey. "The shock lasted for a little while, but it's gotten to the point now where we can laugh about it."

Orlando, 23, had been at ECSU three years when Sam came in 1991. They

quickly developed a friendship, says Sam.

Sam withdrew from school, however, in 1992. At that time, Terry transferred to ECSU from Chowan College. And he and Orlando became friends. They discovered through their mothers that they are brothers.

They knew they had another brother living in Trenton, says Orlando and Terry, but they didn't know who he was.

"Terry and I used to talk about our brother," said Orlando, "we wondered what he was like.

Sam met Terry in Sept., 1993 at ECSU. They soon became friends.

Then one day, Orlando was telling Sam about the fact that he and Terry were brothers, and, in the ensuing conversation, they realized they all had the same father.

Sam went home soon afterwards, and asked his father about it.

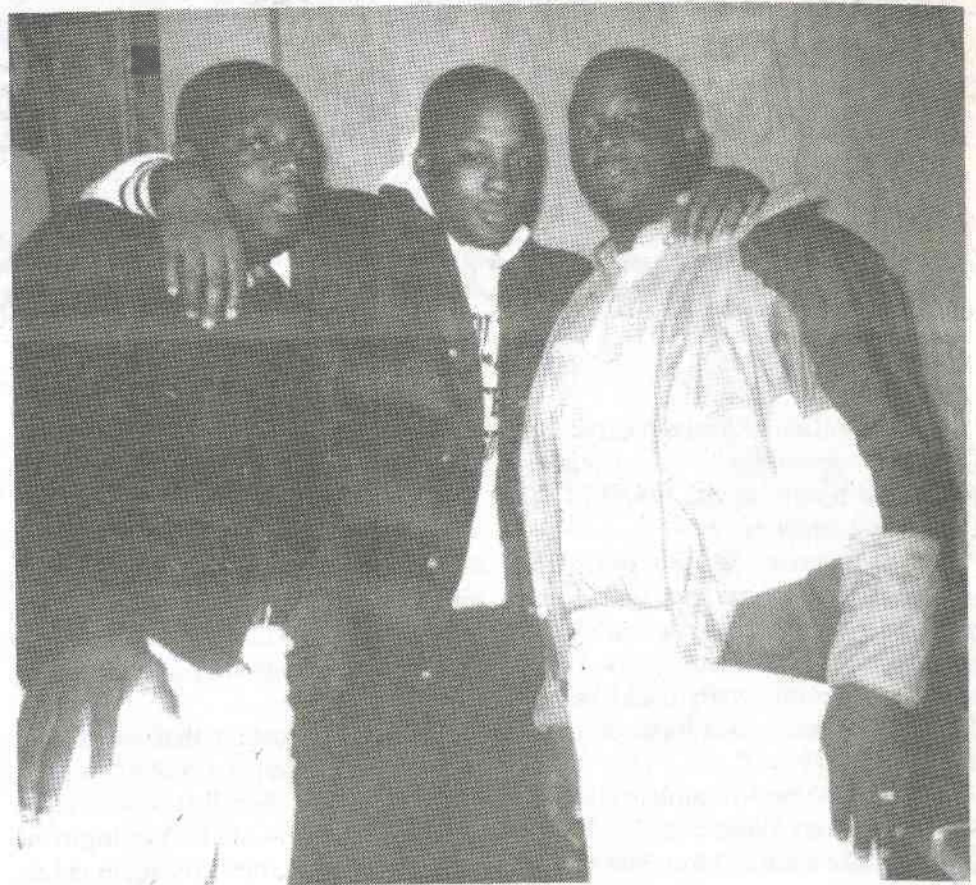
"He showed me pictures of Orlando and Terry, and confirmed they were my brothers."

The brothers are already quick to look for similarities, as well as differences among each other.

"Terry and I are the quiet ones," said Sam. "Orlando is the loud one."

Orlando, however, says he has changed a lot since first arriving at ECSU.

"I used to be loud," he says, "but now



Three of Elizabeth City State University students Terry (left), Sam (center) and Orlando (right) demonstrate their family pride and affection.

I'm not."

Another thing the brothers all have in common is they all want to work for the Drug Enforcement Agency. And they all came to Elizabeth City State University to play football.

Orlando says he has only met his father twice; Terry has never met him at all.

The brothers say although they would all like to have a family reunion with their father, there's not much of a chance of

that happening due to the distances involved.

Orlando is from Durham. Terry is from Conway. And their father still lives in Trenton.

The three brothers also say they have become much closer since they learned they have the same father.

"There was never a dull moment," says Sam. "There were a lot of people in the house, so I always felt loved."

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"I think..." I started to say.

"I think somebody needs to drop ten bucks on me for these drinks."

Quickly, I shoved a ten at the man and left the drinks on the bar.

I found Keisha in the bathroom.

"Keisha?"

"Oh, hey..."

"You okay?"

"Yeah... Why wouldn't I..."

"Well, I saw..."

"That?"

"Yeah, that."

"Girl, I am fine. He saw me flirtin' with Tim Frye and he got"

"Tim Frye flirts with everybody and it's usually harmless. That's no reason for him to..."

Keisha shook her head. "Tina, girl, it was nothin'." She staggered out of the bathroom toward a blue door.

"You followin' me like lassie, you want to come in?"

I shook my head.

"Y'know, Tina, girl, you is a brave one."

"Why?"

"Cause you don't need this—" she jerked a thumb at the door—"to get through yo day. You don't need it to keep you believin'."

"Keisha, you don't need it either."

"Tina, you jus' don't know how good you got it, 'sides what you thinkin' and suspectin'."

"Keisha, do you think I'm crazy for..."

"I ain't the one who took no vows. Only you can say what's good or bad for you."

"I don't want to believe what I can feel is true. I just don't want..."

"Gatina, girl, when you start not wantin' to believe what you feel and know, you need what's behind that door more than me. And I know you don't want to start no trip like that."

"Sometimes you make too much sense. One day, Keischa Freedman, you're going to accept what you really feel."

A tear rolled down Keisha's copper-colored cheek. Then she hurried to the door. She knocked until a beefy man answered. She looked back at me, then went in. Aimless, I wandered the club, looking for Isley. My heart was pounding and sweat dripped from under my arms. I finally saw Isley standing by the exit.

"Baby?"

He was surprised to see me. "Gatina...."

"Why are you over here? Come dance with me."

"I don't feel like it."

"Back at Centavis's place you were jumping out of your pants to get here."

"That was before I had this headache."

"Headache, Isley? Can't you come up with something better than that?"

His constant glancing over my head made me turn around. "Is she late?"

"Gatina...."

"I'm not going to scream and yell and make a big scene, Isley. I wouldn't embarrass you."

"There's no reason for you to think—"

"Isley, I overheard heard you talking to her on the phone." He looked down.

"Answer one question, will you?"

"What?"

"Did you ever love me?"

"Of course I did."

"Why are you doing this to me?"

"You said one question, Gatina."

"Isley, how could you do this to me?"

"Gatina—"

"Am I not enough for you?"

"It's not that..."

"Don't.... Don't you dare make up some excuse or give me some raggedy explanation. It won't help things. It won't get you

any sympathy." I took a long breath before saying what I knew he had to hear:

"If you leave with her tonight, don't bother about coming back tomorrow."

"Risks, Gatina? You know all about 'em 'cause everybody takes 'em."

I nodded, remembering our wedding night and our first Christmas. I didn't want to let him go.

But the impatient look on his face made me let go of my perfect dream of love.

"What happened, Isley? Why are you sleeping with another woman behind my back?"

He looked around nervously.

"I thought you weren't going to make a scene."

"You thought a lot of things."

"Gatina, stop."

"I'll stop. I'll stop pretending. You can stop pretending to love me, too."

"Gatina, I really don't want to go through this here."

"I'm going home, Isley. Are you coming?" Isley's silence hit harder than any blow Centavis ever laid on Keisha. I had to blink five or six times to hold back the tears. I didn't want him to see them.

In the isolation of the cab's dark back seat, I found myself trying to forget my wedding day and remember the number of that lawyer I saw on TV.

passive role

touch

resolution