



## Racehoss: Big Emma's Boy

*Albert Race Sample*

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## **Racehoss: Big Emma's Boy** Albert Race Sample

“My mama was a whore, and a damn good one. Tricking and gambling put food on the table for the two of us. She was married to a black man. The day I was born he walked out on her ... and I got the blame.” Born in Longview, Texas in 1930, Albert Sample was the mixed-race product of Emma (a hard-drinking black prostitute and gambler) and Mr. Albert (a white cotton broker and one of her tricks). It is the classic story of the son of a troubled mother, of a young man gone bad, and of his tentative then tremendous steps toward reclaiming his own destiny. Sample emerged from an abusive childhood an angry young outcast, so it was no surprise when he became an alien of the free world. This book is the violent and triumphant story his journey to hell and back. Hell for Albert Sample was Retrieve, a unit of the Texas Prison System reserved for its worst black prisoners. A plantation prison where men slaved from dawn to dusk, it cracked the spirits of the weak and hardened the souls of the strong. For “Racehoss,” as Sample was called, it was a place to witness unbearable brutality, which he describes in awesome detail in the pages of this stunning book. His shattering and unforgettable story is told in all its stark reality, but without rancor or bitterness. Racehoss simply tells it “like it was.” A profound spiritual awakening in a solitary cell changed his future dramatically — “My life was spent in darkness. And then there was Light.” Sample’s ability to understand the forces that drove him to prison and his devotion to helping others also see the light of change earned him a full pardon and restoration of all civil rights in 1976. He became a prominent voice in the field of corrections and rehabilitation of ex-offenders, receiving numerous high-profile humanitarian awards. A natural born storyteller, he recounted his deeply moving journey of resiliency, revelation, and redemption in the award-winning documentary film RACEHOSS. Produced and directed by Sean Hepburn Ferrer, this gripping one-man performance of Sample standing on a stage before an audience telling his remarkable life story is a powerful reminder that the human spirit can triumph against all odds.

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