

Al Capone had solidified his stranglehold on every profitable part of the city worth taking. Not only was crime out of control, law-abiding citizens saw it as normal a bodily function as breathing. Amidst the tension, turmoil and terror, everyone's momentary breath of fresh air came that first day of spring. That's the way it was supposed to be, wasn't it?

In a particular housing project people were up late, hanging out until all hours, doing countless things they weren't supposed to do. Darla was usually a heavy sleeper, but that night she was jolted upright in bed from recurring nightmares of the same theme: death. Early on, the pediatrician at the clinic had warned her of a difficult pregnancy; the prediction was proven true when her fetus had begun violently thrashing to get out. Later, she prematurely gave birth. It wasn't her first. But it was the first time that the baby was alive.

In a world where the word genius was thrown around as leisurely as any morning smile, Deja' Debreu' was one of the few who deserved that label of distinction.

Teachers and administrators loved having her out front on a pedestal, bragging that their school system was responsible. Concealed behind the placid expression on her face was a teenager who thrived on vengeance.

She was a mathematical wiz. Everything revolved around a numerical conclusion. She often had the answer before the equation was fully presented. She had claimed every academic achievement that she sought. She even had a formula for her meals. First, she'd drink all the beverage, then eat the meat, then the vegetables. Three distinct procedures that seemed to be in with Halloween. The specter remained, lost forever was the remote possibility that Deja' would ever cultivate any sense of belonging. The psychiatrist at the school for the gifted and talented had pinned Deja' as the poster child for the defiantly maladjusted.

Her high academic achievement prompted school officials to advance her from sixth grade to ninth—skipping middle school entirely. Anything to get her out of their school forever.

At such a young age, she had the rest of her life all figured out. By her sophomore year in high school her mother would constantly lecture, “You’re judged by the company you keep... Associate with kids like you.” Unfortunately, the only teens like her were Nathan Leopoldo and Richard Loeb.