

Supernatural Experience Causes Legendary MMA Fighter to Exchange His Gang for the Gospel

Growing up in Leisure City, Florida, was anything but easy for Rene Martinez, also known as "Level."

"I grew up without a dad," Martinez told *CBN News*. "My mom was in the streets. [She] was into the Santeria, which is like a form of witchcraft, sacrificing animals all over me as a kid and I started seeing demons. They haunted me my whole life."

When Level turned 12, that darkness led him into a life of crime, which included breaking into homes, stealing guns and getting involved in drive-by shootings.

In 1990, he started a gang known as the Latin Syndicate.

Gang Life

"We had almost like 300 members and feds were investigating us," he said. "Half of my homies are in prison. Half of them are dead."

Level said he came face-to-face with death numerous times.

Coming Face-to-Face with Death

I remember the time the gun jammed in my face," he explained. "I remember the time the bullet grazed my head. The other time the bullet whistled by my ear. The times I was running through the backyard and they were shooting at me. All the times I got shot at. All the times I was half-dead, but I was still alive."

Level's life changed somewhat after he became a dad. To better provide for his family, he pursued bare-knuckle fighting and MMA—Mixed Martial Arts.

“I became a professional fighter as my journey went on in life,” said Level. “I was always good at fighting. I started fighting bare-knuckle with Kimbo Slice. I was beating everybody bare-knuckle; we're betting money in the backyards, bare-knuckle, I'm winning. My name got so big that Telemundo came, and they offered me a pro contract.

{eoa}

Click here to read the rest of this story from our content partners at CBN News.