

# THE MOVEMENT

Fall Issue #39

Human Rights Coalition  
Dedicated to Protecting the

The Official News Magazine of the  
Human Rights Coalition for the union of Prisoners'  
Families

We're Ending This Year in a Beautiful Way  
acknowledging the joy, pain, & accomplishments of  
returning citizens. See page 16.



CADBI's October 23rd, 2019 Rally. This photo was taken quickly and does not include *all* of the men and women who've returned home and neither does the Human Rights Coalition Report on page 14; it's impossible to do within our small magazine. However HRC will try to highlight (at the very least) one individual in each of our upcoming issues of THE MOVEMENT.

From left to right: Charlie Brown, Sharif Boyd, Robert Saleem Holbrook, Star Granger, Donald Attilah Reese, Khalif, and Kempis Ghani Songster. Amazing work!

The best things in life are gifts of encouragement .... it's a smile that says we care, a hug given right on time, and a heart that knows what hasn't been said yet ... You'd be surprised how often we at CADBI and HRC think of you and wish you the very best.

From Ms. Yvonne



**December**

- Sheena King 12-4 (Muncy)
- Christopher Berry 12-9 (Smithfield)
- Denise Crump 12-21 (Cambridge Springs)
- Quadree Stots 12-22 (Phoenix)
- Delores Rivers 12-25 (Muncy)
- Shakaboona Marshall 12-15 (Rockview)

**January**

- Daniel Smith 1-1 (Benner)
- Amber Meidinger 1-12 (Muncy)
- Reginald West 1-22 (Fayette)
- Devon Stots 1-26 (Benner)

**February**

- Terrell Cater 2-4 (Phoenix)
- Stacey Newkirk 2-20 (Muncy)
- Cynthia Alvarado 2-21 (Muncy)
- Amy Muffley 2-28 (Muncy)
- Desiree Hicks 2-29 Cambridge Springs)

**March**

- Akiya Johnson 3-4 (Waymart)
- Kevin Butler 3-5 (Phoenix)
- Rebecca Olenchock 3-12 (Muncy)
- Willaim Abbott 3-24 (Forest)
- Andre Vancliff 3-26 (Smithfield)

**Belated**

Sometimes mere words just aren't enough, stay strong

- Rodney Derrickson 10-9 (Forest)
- Heather Lavelle 10-30 (Muncy)
- Donald Massey 10-25 (Benner)

And...



...to ALL

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## *From the Desk of the Editor ...*

### *Welcome to THE MOVEMENT.*

Let me begin by saying that I have *not* been released from prison on parole. People have been assuming that I have been released on parole, that I've been free, and home for some time now. Sadly to say, they still have me in the Belly of the Beast -- our modern day "Door of No Return". Make no mistakes about it, this is a Prison Nation for real, and ancestor Minister Malcolm X once said "America means prison." My situation is that after being imprisoned for 31 years as a Child offender



serving a death by incarceration sentence for robbery-homicide, the Philly D.A.'s Office, the Courts, and the PADOc have placed me on the course to be freed from prison, but the PA Parole Board are doing everything in their power to keep me from being parole released! That's it in a nutshell.

For the men and women serving Death By Incarceration (LWOP) sentences in PA, follow the news and study the nature of oppressors of people, because Child Lifers aren't all free, yet these Right-wing groups -- the News Media, PA District Attorneys Association, the Office of Victims Advocate, the Fraternal Order of Police, and both Republican & Democrat politicians -- are using six child lifers that have been returned to prison as a means to conduct a fear campaign that would prevent DBI prisoners from ever getting a "Parole Eligibility" bill passed into law. Even though only 6 out of about 250 Child Lifers from Philly who've been parole released from prison have returned to prison, mostly for technical parole violations, yet these right-wing groups have been running around screaming the sky is falling because of those returned child lifers. Discounting the reality that there's about 250 paroled child lifers in Philly who are civilians now, have jobs, are paying taxes, voting, getting married & having babies, opening businesses, working in government, involved in community groups, engaged in social activities, being role models, making their communities better, and just being citizens for the first time in their adult lives. That's success people. That is real life success stories that we should be vocal about to the public.

A known racist prison guard is Timberland boot stomped to death by Paul Kendrick at SCI-Somerset in February 2018, which then is reported on news stations statewide, press conferences held, the PADOc is put on emergency locked down for a massive funeral, fake tears were shed by fellow guards who despised the deceased guard, and the Guards Union used his

death as political football to advance their right-wing agenda for the PADOc. Yet on November 11, 2019, 13 Prison Guards at SCI-Mahanoy were suspended for the death of incarcerated person Tyrone Briggs, age 29, African american, from West Philly, and there were no statewide news reports made, no press conferences had, no guards in tears, no massive funeral, no one fired from their job, and once more, no one held accountable. Briggs' (another human being, I must add) death didn't even matter.

Instead, PADOc Secretary Wetzel preemptively announced Briggs' death and that 13 guards have been suspended without pay -- but no criminal charges filed -- in the attempt to quell the anger and stop the backlash of protests before it can get started. What Wetzel did is called Cover Your Ass (CYA). Notice Wetzel did not clean house of top SCI-Mahanoy officials responsible for the guards' criminal behavior, didn't fire not one single guard nor publicly call for any of the 13 guards to be criminally charged. Wetzel simply don't want to have a Black Lives Matter movement of the Briggs's family, Families of Prisoners, HRC, CADBI, DECARCERATE-PA, and other groups marching with torches & pitchforks around Dr. Wetzelstein's house demanding that he & his Igor-like Deputy Secretaries resign.

The sad part of this story is that nothing's going to happen. The 13 Guards will have their jobs returned & promoted in a year. This is white supremacy in blackface at work. Wake up!

By Shakaboona

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Smart Communications/PADOc  
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## **The Law Behind Juvenile Life-Without-Parole Sentencing**

By: Julia Sheppard, Law Student at Temple University’s Beasley School of Law

In 2012, the United States Supreme Court ruled that “children are constitutionally different from adults for purposes of sentencing” in the landmark case *Miller v. Alabama*. Quoting an earlier case (*Roper v. Simmons* (2005) which got rid of the death penalty for those under 18), the Court said that a youth’s “lack of maturity” and “underdeveloped sense of responsibility” can lead to a unique tendency to be reckless, impulsive, and vulnerable to negative influences. Our criminal justice system has decided that these considerations make children, (1) less deserving of punishment than adults, and (2) more likely to be rehabilitated over time than adults. For these two reasons, the *Miller* case decided that a life-without-parole (LWOP) sentence for someone under the age of 18 is therefore “cruel and unusual punishment,” which is a violation of the Eight Amendment of the Constitution.

As a result of this case, all judges must now consider the following factors (known as “*Miller* factors”) before sentencing a youth to LWOP: (1) their age, (2) their family and home environment, (3) the circumstances of the crime (including how much they participated in the crime and what pressures they were under), (4) whether they were at a disadvantage interacting with law enforcement and lawyers because of their youth, (5) and their potential to be rehabilitated. In a later case, *Montgomery v. Louisiana* (2016), the Supreme Court clarified that the consideration of the *Miller* factors should *very rarely* result in an LWOP sentence being imposed. They said the sentence is reserved for only “the rare juvenile offender whose crime reflects *irreparable corruption*.”

Importantly, the *Montgomery* case also ruled that everyone who had been given a *mandatory* (no other sentence allowed under law) LWOP sentence before the *Miller* case is entitled to a resentencing that takes into account the *Miller* factors. All juvenile offenders must now be given a “meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation.” Some states have decided to go further than what the Supreme Court said, and decided that *discretionary* LWOP sentences are allowed to be reconsidered as well. This means that *any* LWOP sentence in these states, regardless of whether the judge had a choice, must be looked at again.

Unfortunately, despite all this progress, a judge can still technically sentence or resentence a youth to LWOP as long as they explain how their decision is based in the *Miller* factors. If the judge is convinced someone will “forever be a danger to society” (what the law calls “irreparable corruption” or “permanent incorrigibility”), then the sentence is constitutional. The Supreme Court case *Tatum v. Arizona* (2016) said that there must be a “meaningful analysis” of the *Miller* factors before a decision is made, but this standard is unfortunately vague. There are also still

questions about what kind of evidence a judge can use to consider the *Miller* factors. For example, if someone is being resentenced, does their behavior in prison since the original sentencing count as proof of rehabilitation? Most states say yes, but others say no.

Fortunately, there are more and more studies on youth criminality and the juvenile brain coming out every day. They overwhelmingly agree that youth can be reformed over time, and that the parts of the brain that control decision-making and behavior aren’t finished developing until the age of 25. As a result, judges are less likely to believe a juvenile is “permanently incorrigible.” Lawyers across the country are also using this science to argue that juvenile justice programs and courts should apply to people up to age 25, not just 18. This group of people between 18 and 25 are often called “emerging adults,” and there is hope that one day they too will not be allowed to receive LWOP sentences, and be entitled to a review if already sentenced.

### **Call for Contributors**

THE MOVEMENT magazine is looking for quality writing, especially from the families of prisoners, prisoners, and former prisoners that can contribute to critical thought and reflection in the various sections of this magazine. In particular we are interested in the following:

**Feature articles:** In-depth, analytical articles that critically examine the criminal justice System, poverty, racism, and that provide solutions to those issues.

**Book reviews/political satire art/poetry:** Is there a book you’d like to review for THE MOVEMENT magazine? Do you create political satire cartoons or other artwork? Do you write poetry? Let us know and send us copies of your work.

**Letters:** We love to hear from you. Families of prisoners and prisoners send us a shout-out letter and visiting room photo for our ‘Love Knows No Bars’ section, and send your letters to the Editor for our new ‘Writings of Multiplicity’ section of THE MOVEMENT. Please let us know if we have your permission to print your letter.

**Art:** Your expression in art form is most wanted for THE MOVEMENT. Your art will be shared for all to see and of course you will be given credit for your work. We invite you to share as readers especially enjoy and comment on works of art.

## JUSTICE MUST PREVAIL

I forward this instant war cry to all those concerned with justice in this momentous time we are living of prison reform, restorative justice and ending mass incarceration. I commend all those in the struggle who have made it out of these dungeons via actual innocence, juvenile lifers, commutation and overall injustice. My sincere prayer is that we are all successful in our life endeavors. I speak on behalf of a certain class of prisoners, of which I count myself, whose convictions were based on fraud and were consequently given unjust sentences based on deception, half-truths and outright lies about the meaning of a life sentence, and ask the pivotal question, why haven't we been resentenced to the time we were promised?

Be duly advised that I came to prison in 19832 [sic] at the young age of 20, when, according to the behavioral scientists, my brain wasn't fully developed. Nevertheless, my family and I were told both on and off the record that, “life generally means 20 years in the sense that a prisoner for life has the legal right to a parole hearing in 20 years, not that parole would be granted, but he would be eligible for parole in 20 years.” Furthermore, I was told that I “would be eligible for pre-release.” When asked at a subsequent hearing to withdraw the plea why I entered it, my trial attorney said, “this was a good deal, Mr. Berry would get out in 12, 14, or 17 years and still be a young man.” The above promises served as the impetus as to my rationale for accepting the plea, for had I known the brutal truth that life actually means life without the possibility of parole and/or death by incarceration, I would never had pleaded guilty to a crime which was at best, third degree murder, given the circumstances of my case. Nonetheless, I was coerced into pleading guilty to first-degree murder despite the fact that I was a first time offender, that I was under the influence of a heavy dose of cough syrup and barbiturates, that I stated on the record that I never intended to kill the victim, only harm him and that I aimed at the lower part of the victim's body. The court was conflicted in accepting this fraudulent plea as my refusal to admit intent, a prerequisite for first-degree murder on seven (7) separate occasions, was a pretext for several sidebars between the presiding judge, one Francis A. Biunno, my trial attorney, one Joshua M. Briskin and the D.A., one George Shotzbarger. The judge relented and gave a curative instruction to me, stating that a jury could infer intent by the bullet striking a vital part of the victim's body. Immediately after I entered the plea, I was given a sentence which appeared to all to be 15 to 20 years to life but turned out to be a life sentence without the possibility of parole. None of the above is in dispute as all facts stated herein is contained in the record in the transcripts.

Prior to the sentencing, I expressed remorse for my unintentional taking of another human being's life and stated that I was pleading guilty because, “I just don't want to be incarcerated for the rest of my life.” Twenty (20) years ago this year, on December 10, 1999, a three-judge panel for the PA Superior court granted a conditional new trial and held; THE EVIDENCE

CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THAT BERRY WAS ERRO-NEOUSLY ADVISED THAT HE MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE. SIMILARLY, IN BERRY V. U.S., 412 F.2D 189 (3<sup>RD</sup> CIR. 1969), BERRY WAS NOT ADVISED THAT HE WAS TOTALLY INELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE. HOWEVER, THE FACTS OF THE CASE BEFORE US ARE EVEN MORE EGREGIOUS THAN THE FACTS UNDERLYING BERRY V. U.S. BECAUSE IN THE CURRENT CASE, BERRY WAS ACTUALLY MISLED TO BY OWN COUNSEL, THE PROSECUTOR, AND THE COURT INTO BELIEVING THAT HE MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE. WE CONCLUDE THAT THE PCRA COURT ERRED IN DISMISSING BERRY'S PCRA PETITION BECAUSE BERRY HAD PLED AND PROVED BY A PREPONDERANCE OF THE EVIDENCE THAT HIS CONVICTION RESULTED FROM A PLEA OF GUILTY, UNLAWFULLY INDUCED AS A RESULT OF NUMEROUS ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS MADE TO BERRY AND THAT IT IS LIKELY THAT THE INDUCEMENT CAUSED BERRY TO PLEAD GUILTY.

As you have clearly read above that a three-judge panel of the PA Superior Court agreed that a blatant injustice occurred in my case to which I was/am worthy of relief and at this juncture, shouldn't even be here. Nonetheless, as fate would have it, a double injustice and a perfect insult to injury occurred thereafter which has me still help captive twenty (20) years later. The Philadelphia District Attorney's office appealed this just ruling to an en banc panel of the Superior Court. This meant that nine (9) judges gave an astonishing and perplexing ruling that the issue of my plea being unlawfully induced with false promises of parole was “previously litigated” even though my appellate attorney, one Robert M. Lipshutz, rendered ineffective assistance of counsel for failing to raise, litigate, and preserve this issue on direct appeal. My PCRA attorney, one Daniel Silverman, raised the issue of his ineffectiveness on appeal which the three judge panel addressed in their opinion, stating; “BERRY'S FIRST ISSUE HAS NOT BEEN PREVIOUSLY LITIGATED BECAUSE BERRY'S PREVIOUS PETITION TO VACATE DID NOT ALLEGE THAT BERRY WAS LED TO BELIEVE, AT HIS COLLOQUY, THAT HE WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE. FURTHER, BERRY HAS AVOIDED WAIVER BY CONTENDING IN HIS PCRA PETITION THAT ALL OF HIS PRIOR COUNSEL WERE INEFFECTIVE FOR FAILING PREVIOUSLY RAISE THAT ISSUE.”

Over a year after the PA Superior Court decision of October 2, 2000, that rendered injustice to the justice given by the three (3) judge panel, on December 11, 2001, the PA Supreme Court denied allocatur, an unusually long delay that suggests the possibility the court was conflicted. It has since been held that a claim alleging ineffective assistance of counsel is in fact a distinct claim from the underlying substantive violation in Commonwealth v. Collins, 888 A.2d 564 (Pa. 2005). I argued this issue on a subsequent PCRA as soon as the above case was decided.

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

Nonetheless, I was unsuccessful in my endeavors as the PA Superior Court held that Collins was not applied retroactive. I have been resilient in litigating this injustice all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, albeit to no avail, for my entire incarceration. I have now been unjustly held captive, based on a lie, for over thirty-six (36) long years of my life. My case now resided before the Conviction Integrity Unit (C.I.U) of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office under the auspices of one Patricia Cummings and has been since April of 2018. Accordingly, I sincerely request the support of those interested in correcting this blatant injustice. Please contact Supervising Attorney of the C.I.U, Patricia Cummings @ 215-686-8000. Please ask that she expedite this matter for review as justice and time is of the essence! As stated at the outset, I am not the only prisoner who was fraudulently convicted by given false promises of parole. One Marcus Perez, whose case has been highlighted in the Philadelphia Daily News, was told by his sentencing judge, one Judge McKee, that his life sentence meant he would have to serve a 17 ½ to 35-year sentence. Floyd Brown was told that he would be eligible for parole in 12 years on a life sentence, and James Hardison was told that he would be paroled in 20 years. His judge attempted to give him 20 years but was corrected by the D.A. who said that the statue forbade him from doing so. There are many more horror stories of men being duped into pleading guilty to sentences of life without parole, most of whom, just happen to be Black, Brown, or poor White people. It is my contention that all men duped into pleading guilty with false promises of parole should be resentenced to the time they were promised in their sentence regardless of any time-bar or other procedural issue and the Constitution must trump any loophole! Moreover, in my case, the victim's family supports me in my quest for liberation. Thank you for reading these words. If you are sincerely concerned with justice for all being not just catch phrase, your assistance is truly required.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Berry/#AY-3534/SCI-Smithfield  
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## HRC Update on Solitary Confinement Bill

### House Bill 497

Representative Tina Davis introduced legislation (HB 497) this year to the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives. HRC met with Rep. Tina Davis, previously, and amended the bill to what is crucial to the safety and well-being of ALL prisoners. The bill has nine co-sponsors in the House. They are: Schlossberg, Donatucci, McNeil, Daley, Hill-Evans, Caltagirone, Frankel, Kenyatta and McClinton. Several other Representatives have expressed interest in supporting the bill, including House Judiciary Committee Minority Chair Tim Briggs who we are asking to push for a "HEARING" on our solitary confinement bill.

### Senate Bill 832

On the Senate side, we are currently pushing for the same bill to be introduced in the Senate as the Senate's Judiciary Committee. HRC met with Senator Larry Farnese, Judiciary Committee Minority Chair, and he agreed to sponsor the bill, which will be SB832. As of August 26, 2019 it was introduced and maybe found on the Senator's website at: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?year=2019&sInd=0&body=S&type=B&bn=832>.

So far, we have six co-sponsors of the bill. They are: Kearney, Costa, Brewster, Collett, Haywood, and Muth. That leaves two Democrat senators on the Judiciary Committee remaining that HRC should talk to -- Senators Santarsiero and Sabatina.

We continue to strategize around the Judiciary Committee Majority Chair, Senator Lisa Baker. As the chair, she is the one who ultimately allows the bill to be brought for a vote within the Judiciary Committee so that it will move on to the Senate Floor for a vote.

HRC is also working with Senator Farnese's office pushing for a legislative "HEARING" on the effects of solitary confinement. They have sent the request for the hearing to Senator Baker, who, as the Majority Chair, is the only one who can make the hearing mandatory for all other members of the Committee to attend. We are hoping for a date in the near future.

In the meantime, call your legislators, ask them to support our fight against solitary confinement and the torture and abuse that goes along with it. Tell them to support HB 942 and SB 832. Tell them that no Human Being should be held in solitary confinement over 15 days; we want this as an absolute law (not a policy change).

To find your legislator based on any address, go to: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>

**THE MOVEMENT**

[www.hrcoalition.org](http://www.hrcoalition.org)

## **Pro Se Ineffectiveness: One of the Leading Causes for Decades or Life Behind Bars**

On May 14, 1984 in the matter of **Strickland v. Washington, 80 L.ed 2d 674 US 668 (1984)** The Supreme Court of the United States held: a convicted defendant’s claim with his counsel’s assistance was so defective as to require reversal of a conviction or death sentence has two components (each of which the defendant must show in order to set aside the conviction or death sentence): that counsel’s performance was deficient which requires a showing that counsel was not functioning as the counsel guaranteed by Sixth Amendment that the deficient performance errors were so serious as to deprive the defendant of a fair trial—a trial whose result is reliable.

The term “ineffective assistance of counsel” is commonly referred to as whether on a local, state or federal level as errors made by public defender, court appointed or privately retained counsel. There errors range from conflicts of interest, erroneous advice, failure to investigate, plan, prep and prepare for proceedings; sure as trials, direct appeals, PCRA’s 28 U.S.C. Section 2254 Habeas Corpus and etc. These errors are often costly and can be the determining factor of whether someone spends decades or even, life behind bars. Most people, such as myself, suffer this fate; i.e. Ineffective Assistance of Counsel. Miseducation is often the root of the problem. As a child who was raised in a crime infested neighborhood in North Philadelphia, the lack of a proper education was the beginning of problems that seem to be the destiny for the majority of black and brown men.

I was arrested and charged in December of 2007, eight months after my 19th birthday for a firearm and multiple homicides after an alleged dispute in my community. J. Michael Farrell, a well known and prominent attorney was retained for representation. In October of 2008 I was sentenced on the firearm arrest to a term of no less than three months and no more than six years in state prison. Following that I was informed by a counselor at SCI Rockview that the pending capital case for which I was currently in litigation would allow the DOC to confine me in the Restricted Housing Unit (RHU)—without any infractions nor involving the cases for which were pending. This was troubling to me and the policy made no sense! (See **DC ADM 802; Administration Custody Procedures manual Section 1-Placement in Administrative Custody Status J**), The reason being “The inmate has a detainer for a pending capital case for which the prosecution is seeking the death penalty or is a phase 1 capital case...” As a result, I was restricted to one phone call a month and 23 hours of lockdown (with no interaction with prisoners within the general population). To make matters worse this policy put into place a system that is designed to prevent poor people from properly planning for the prepara-

tion of their trial and further handicapping the prisoner’s ability to communicate with loved ones regarding these conditions.

I was told repeatedly by competent attorneys and a mitigation specialist that there was nothing they could do about how the DOC places prisoners within their facility. Communication with the attorneys was thus, nonexistent. At the time I had no understanding of statutes, conflicts of interest, ineffective assistance of counsel, etc. I was uneducated and had to learn how to read and internalize case law that would in turn crack the code that would allow me to save my life. I was lost!

It was at this juncture that the wheels began to turn and I was finally realizing the work that was needed to assist the attorneys to save my life. It is often stated that a prisoner’s inability to present a claim of trial error is of particular concern when the claim is one of ineffective assistance of counsel. The right to effective counsel at trial is a bedrock principle in our justice system. It is deemed as an obvious truth! The idea that any person hauled into court who is too poor to hire a lawyer cannot be assured a fair trial unless counsel is provided. The right to counsel is the foundation for our adversarial system. Defense counsel tests the prosecutor’s case to ensure that the proceedings serve the function of litigating guilt or innocence while protecting the person charged. The defendant requires the guiding hand of counsel every step in the proceedings; without they face the danger of conviction because they do not know how to establish innocence.

It should be noted that the SCOTUS in the matter of **Martinez v. Ryan, 132 S.ct, 139 (2012)** held “the due process clause of the 14th Amendment guarantees a criminal defendant the effective assistance of counsel during pre-trial, trial, post-trial and as well as direct appeal”. It is during these crucial stages where counsel’s actions or failure to act affects the petitioner moving forward. During the PCRA proceedings counsel (appointed or privately retained) is designed to recognize errors from the previous attorney’s trial and direct appeal, and bring those claims forward. Therefore to present a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel at trial and in accordance with the state’s procedures, a prisoner likely needs an effective attorney which is guaranteed by the 6th Amendment. The same would be true if the state did not appoint an attorney to assist the prisoner during direct appeal. The unlearned prisoner in case law may not comply with the state’s procedural rules or may not be able to comprehend the substantive details of federal constitutional law with the habeas corpus in mind (28 U.S.C.22544). The habeas corpus is a backstop. It allows federal court review the merits of federal claims in state courts. But federal courts do not sit to review state law. So federal courts will not review claims when the state court’s decisions are supported by state law reason, “an independent and adequate state ground.” **Coleman v. Thompson, 504 U.S. 722, 729 (1991)**. One such ground is a violation of the state’s procedural rules. The federal habeas statute requires state prisoners to exhaust their state remedies before pursuing federal habeas relief. **28 U.S.C. Section 2254 (b)(1)**.

*(Continued on page 29)*

# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

## From Etta Cetera

October 25, 2019

Thanks for sharing this Mamma Patricia Marshall Vickers. How amazing is it to be able to stand next to Naomi Blount advocating for our mutual friend Avis Lee to be released. To be able to hug Naomi. To be able to hear her sing. To meet her family. Naomi is the 2nd adult woman to have her life sentence commuted in PA in last 30 years. She is 69 years old and spent 37 years in. Not out even four months and she is already working for LT. Governor John Fetterman going to rallies and speaking on behalf of the women she left behind.

There are so many women like Naomi who deserve a second chance to make our communities better. To give back. Persistence is Fertile. Never give up that change can happen. Cuz it is. Despite the delays, denials, the postponements etc. our loved ones ARE coming home. #speakthemhome #freeavis #enddeathbyincarceration #cadbiwest

LOVE & Gratitude to the Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration - CADBI



## From Derrick Davis, Founder

YouthMindsMatter  
www.youthmindsmatter.org

I would like to thank my friends at HRC and The Movement for allotting me the opportunity to share with its readers one of the most cherished days I've experienced since my incarceration. On August 30th, 2019 we (YouthMindsMatter) hosted our first back to school give away, where we provided over 50 back to school book bags filled with school supplies, and T-shirts. The T-shirts were donated to us from "Poverty's Creation", so I would like to thank my fellow comrade Sinorn Dip (aka Heem) here at SCI Dallas for donating those shirts to the youth.

Although I was not able to attend, the joy I felt for finally being able to help build up what I once tore down, literally felt like weight beginning to lift off of my chest, and I'm now hooked! While we still have ways to go, we're committed to preserving the innocence in which you see on these children's faces, and I'm encouraging my brothers and sisters behind these walls to commit also. Even though our efforts and our intentions are first and foremost to uphold our responsibilities to our communities and to our youth; I promise you that the solace in which you will find from this soul soothing work will be more fulfilling than you'd initially fathomed. I hope you enjoy the pics and I pray that they

bring you just as much comfort in your times of distress as they did myself.



I would like to thank the following Lifers here at SCI Dallas for helping us put the event together. James Frazier DF7876 (aka Basil), Gary Green AS2652, Maximino Perez (AM6662), Bryan Huggins EL7079 (aka Scrap), and Rodney Wells AY7511 (aka Hoppo). Stay strong men, and keep fighting the fight. I've grown to love you all over the years, and there are brighter tomorrows ahead of you all. Your strength and your light illuminates well beyond these walls, and society will eventually be graced with your return.

In solidarity... Buck <sup>100</sup>  
Follow us on FB, IG & Twitter @YouthMindsMatter

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NOVEMBER 2019

## CADBI DAY OF ACTION REPORTBACK



### Hundreds flood the Capitol to demand an end to Death By Incarceration and honor those lost to violence

On October 23, hundreds of people from across the state rallied at the state capital in Harrisburg to demand an end to Death By Incarceration (also known as Life Without Parole) in Pennsylvania. Featured speakers were all people who had both lost loved ones to violence and had loved ones sentenced to DBI or received that sentence themselves. We were calling on legislators to pass legislation to end Death By Incarceration and instead embrace policies that heal our communities.

CADBI chapters and our allies traveled from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Reading, York, Delaware County, the Lehigh Valley, Coatesville, and other cities and towns across the state to fill the capitol with a message that we need accountability and healing, not perpetual punishment.

Banners were unfurled from the second story of the Rotunda that said "Create healing and redemption," "Stop cycles of violence," "End LWOP," "Pass SB942," and "Listen to dual victims."

We heard powerful speakers, including Representative Movita Johnson-Harrell; Senator Sharif Street; CADBI member Kim King; Bobby Harris; Pastor Dr. Larry Anderson from Great Commission Church, and others. The rally was emceed by CADBI members Kempis Ghani Songster and Lorraine Haw, better known as Mrs. DeeDee.

*"If mass incarceration stopped violence, then America would be the most peaceful, nonviolent country in the world, because no other country incarcerates more people." -Ghani*





Photos by Karlee Morris, [hrccoalition.org](http://hrccoalition.org)

The rally was also attended by several Senators and Representatives who came to show their support for SB942.

After the rally, we marched through the Capitol singing songs about healing and redemption. A delegation of faith leaders and family members who had lost loved ones to violence went to Governor Wolf's office to deliver a letter asking him not to reappoint Jennifer Storm, who currently heads the Office of the Victim Advocate. Storm has consistently opposed legislation that would give those serving life sentences access to the parole process, and has dismissed the experiences of "dual victims" who have lost loved ones to both violence and incarceration.



Governor Wolf on SB942 news coverage

After, we met back in the Rotunda to build an altar for all those who have been lost to violence or sentenced to die in prison. People placed flowers on the altar and spoke the names of those who could not be with us.

Rally participants also had the opportunity to visit their legislators' offices, and drop off packets of information about what it is so important to support parole eligibility for all.

The impact of the event was felt far beyond just those who attended. CBS21, ABC27, the Penn Capital-Star, the Allentown Morning Call and other news outlets all covered the rally, and thousands more people saw photos and video on social media.

Though we still have a long way to go to pass legislation that gives everyone a chance to come home, we are heartened to see that our movement grows bigger, stronger, and more far reaching every year. Thank you for being a part of it.

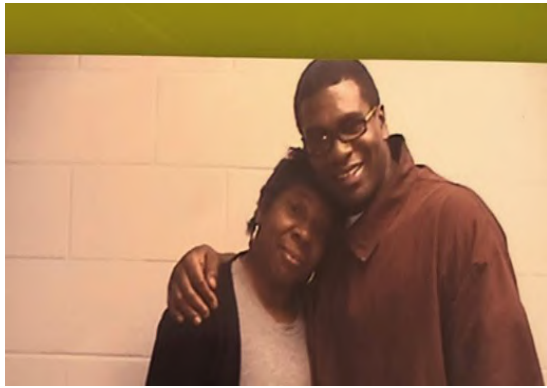
*This year's rally was cosponsored by Reclaim Philadelphia, ACLU of Pennsylvania, Human Rights Coalition, Healing Communities PA, LifeLines Project, Decarcerate PA, Lancaster Stands Up, FAMM, POWER End Mass Incarceration, Amistad Law Project, Put People First - PA, 1Hood, Keystone Progress, and the Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project.*

**THANK YOU** to all the cosponsors and all the people and organizations inside and outside of prison who helped make this rally happen!

# LOVE KNOWS NO BARS

## For families and the incarcerated, the holidays are ‘devastating’

By: Joseph Darius Jaafari



In 2011, Sandra Hill had one Christmas wish: She wanted to see her godson, Robert Williams, who was locked up in State Correctional Institution Albion, about five hours west of her home in Darby. She had given up on that wish because of tight finances, but a friend offered her a ride to the facility.

Hill cried when she saw Robert. She held his hand, touched his face and told him how much she loved him. Since then, she said she hasn't missed a Thanksgiving or Christmas holiday visit. Except for possibly this year, when if she sees him, she won't be able to touch or hug him because the two will be separated by a glass window.

“It affects me terribly — does something to me physically,” Hill said, referring to not being able to touch her godson. “Time and again the holidays have been a horrific time.”

Though many facilities make an attempt to recreate traditional holidays for inmates and their families, some county jails do nothing at all. And even in cases where the jails or prisons put on group events, bake-sales or performances, inmates face tough penalties if they are caught organizing their own gift-exchanges.

The families of prisoners say that they also suffer during the holidays, specifically because of the state's tough visitation policies. In some jails, all physical contact with family is forbidden, even with the inmate's child.

“Thanksgivings are not what I want them to be, and I often think about my chances of ever being able to spend my holidays with my family,” said David Lee, an inmate at Coal Township currently serving a life sentence.

There are opportunities for people to volunteer inside correctional institutions during the holidays, and multiple organizations put on programs that offer gifting a toy to an inmate's child. Some county jails also give gifts to their inmates. Last week, the Dauphin County Prison Board approved close to \$3,500 to spend on gift boxes that will include a packaged honey pretzel, a pair of socks and a cookie.

“We did a lot of activities that would help people with their spirits,” said Malik Aziz, who was incarcerated 14 years for drug trafficking. He was released in 1997. While inside, he would orchestrate “Pollyanna” gift exchanges, where inmates assigned each other to give or create a gift from the prison commissary.

Tattoos made by prison artists, who use machines created from beard trimmers and guitar strings, are common gifts, and bags of cookies from the prison commissary are a favorite among inmates.

“We couldn't spend much more than \$10 out of the commissary when we used to exchange the gifts,” said Aziz, who used to also orchestrate inmates carolling in cell blocks. “People really loved it. A lot of them needed it.”

But giving gifts is a violation of prison rules and can result in a charge and punishment against an inmate. The corrections department views gift-giving as “loaning” or “borrowing,” and can be construed as exchanging contraband.

“Technically, we're not allowed,” said Richie Marra, 55, who is being held at SCI Chester for killing a man in South Philadelphia in 1986. “But for a guy who wants to give another guy a box of donuts or bag of coffee? It means a lot.”

And while prisoners on the inside try to create a holiday-rich environment, prison visitation policies have changed so dramatically in the past few years that family members describe the experience as “dehumanizing.” Mark Frailey, who works at the Pennsylvania Prison Society organizing volunteers to visit inmates at prisons and jails, said having an intimate moment with family is nearly impossible in some county jails where no contact is allowed.

One of those jails is the Centre County Correctional Facility, where Frailey sends volunteers.

“If you talk about the reasons why people reoffend, and how we keep people out, we know that family connections help,” Frailey said. “That human connection goes a long way.”

A 2011 study done by the Minnesota Department of Corrections found that when corrections staff allowed increased visits and contact with family members, there was a reduction in inmates reoffending.

*(Continued on page 13)*

(Continued from page 9)

years I spend in the older prisons. I watched men I knew for years slowly deteriorate mentally to the point they were either incapable of holding a conversation or would be caught in a never-ending dialogue with themselves in a world of their own. I watched people look up at the sky in isolation yards and ask why the sky is red or ask why do they hear a siren because they were delusional. I watched and experienced men who considered themselves hardened strain to tap each other's fingers as a greeting through the chicken wire cages just to have some human contact.

And what is the rationale behind these solitary units? The DOC's will tell you they are necessary to house violent and dangerous prisoners. The Vera Institute of Justice reported that, "in Pennsylvania, the most common violation associated with a sentence to segregated housing was 'failure to obey an order,' with 85 percent of those written up for this type of violation sent there" (2015). This study was done in 2015 with the cooperation of the PADO. Vera has found similar rates across the country in solitary confinement units. I'm sure DOC's do not cite these statistics when offering up bids to architects to design prisons with solitary units. The overwhelming majority of the people occupying these isolation units are in these units for violating rules and bureaucratic regulations such as passing items in the dining hall, talking during a count, using the phone at unauthorized hours, having extra linen for the cold, or being in an unauthorized area. None of these infractions justify solitary confinement and the long-term trauma it inflicts on a person's psyche.

The United Nations Report on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment has found that negative health effects can occur after only a few days in solitary confinement, and the mental health risks rise with each additional day spent in such conditions. This has led the UN to declare that any time over 15 days in solitary confinement amounts to torture. All of the rule infractions I cited above carry a 90-day Solitary Confinement sanction, with multiple infractions resulting in consecutive sanctions. If the majority of the people across the country who occupy solitary confinement units are there for infractions that do not involve harm or weapons, then why is it necessary? It is necessary for one reason, it is convenient. It is easier to warehouse human beings than it is to help them. There are alternatives to solitary confinement.

I am a prison abolitionist; I aspire to live in a world free of prisons and where we find new ways of dealing with people who transgress within our societies. I also am a realist and understand that is an aspiration that we are generations away from accomplishing. However, this panel has the ability to make a bold statement and action by finding that architects who design prisons with solitary confinement units are participating in the violation of people's human rights to be free from torture and/or wanton infliction of pain - deliberate or in-deliberate.

Thank You.

(Continued from page 12)

Centre County's jail warden, Christopher Schell, said the jail makes exceptions for parents with children under 18 years old, but those inmates must first take a class that can take as long as six weeks. He justified barring contact between inmates and their family saying that in many instances, family is the reason why they're locked up in the first place.

But even if there is an opportunity for a contact visit, families say that any semblance of normalcy isn't possible due to restrictive visitation policies.

Marra's sister, Marcie, remembers fondly eating hot turkey dishes with her brother on Thanksgiving at the prison he was held in. For years, she had been able to bring food to her brother and spend all day with him (the prisons have extended visiting hours for the holidays). She, her mother and Richie would sit down together for a meal as any other family would during the holidays. It felt normal, she said.

But last year, the state eliminated hot foods in visiting areas after the department of corrections said some officers became ill from exposure to synthetic drugs, specifically marijuana and suboxone. They suspected visitors were the culprits. Sue McNaughton, spokesperson for the Department of Corrections, would not answer if there was evidence that visitors gave inmates drugs or if drugs were discovered in visiting areas.

The department takes the position that people were likely exchanging narcotics in the common area near the microwave stations, where people would congregate and warm up meals. So, prison officials ordered them removed and restricted vending machine items to those that can be served without cooking.

"Society today, we surround everything around food. You sit down and share a meal," Marcie said. "Can't do that anymore. You know, it's just something else that [the prison] took away to make it dehumanizing."

Now, instead of a hot turkey dinner to share with her brother, she has a cold, soggy turkey sandwich bought from the vending machine.

Until recently, inmates could receive holiday cards from their families. But another policy change by the corrections department requires all mail sent to prisoners to be routed through a processing plant in Florida. Items are then photocopied and the originals are destroyed; only the copies go to prisoners.

"I used to send birthday cards or Christmas cards, but I don't anymore," said Patricia Vickers, whose son is currently locked up in SCI Rockview. "The prison just seems to prevent any bond. You need family to support you, to have some type of reason to come home. You need that kind of connection, but the prison breaks that."

FROM: <https://papost.org/2019/11/25/for-families-and-the-incarcerated-the-holidays-are-devastating/>



comments from Larry Blackwell head of the guards union as reported by the Associated Press:

. . . Larry Blackwell, president of the Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association union, issued a statement saying his organization disagreed with the decision to suspend the employees without pay.

“These are people who have rights and families to support,” said Mr. Blackwell, declining to comment on the pending investigation. “They should be placed on restricted duty with pay.”

Now ask yourself how many of us (out here and inside prison) have been punished before ever seeing a judge? Don’t we have rights and families to support? Yet we are all presumed guilty until we prove ourselves innocent. The reality of it all is that so many of us have lost our jobs, homes, had our children taken away, labeled criminal and worse; and we haven’t even had our court date. We’re in prison (in some cases solitary confinement) waiting to see the judge and no one cares.

FOX News, November 17, 2019, by [CNN Wire](#)

. . . “The Commonwealth is entrusted with the health and safety of all persons in their custody. Tyrone Briggs may have been an inmate, but he was still a human being with a family just like any of us and deserved their protection,” said Hank Clarke, an attorney representing the Briggs family, in an email to CNN on Saturday. . .

The news media wants to make scandalous headlines and the DOC wants to tarnish Tyrone’s worth by publishing why he was originally sent to prison. They want you to feel that if a person is in prison, he somehow deserves the treatment he receives. Or that because there was an “altercation” with another person in prison he hasn’t changed his behavior and therefore he deserved the treatment he received.

Why do we keep falling for this reiterate? Tyrone Briggs was someone’s child, an older brother and a fiancé; he was a person and deserved to be treated like a human being. I can guarantee you one thing for sure and that is being only one month from coming home, Tyrone was not looking for any type of trouble. He died because the guards and medical staff did not think him worthy of being treated like a human being. It is not the guards (or medical staff) job to be judge, jury, and God. It is not our job, either. We haven’t heard all sides of what happened, and we weren’t in the courtroom when the 15-year-old was initially sentenced.

I met Shaleda and Ervin Busbee and they were heart broken. The last time Mrs. Busbee saw her son free he was at 14 yrs. old, the next time that she’ll see him free, she will be burying him. Tyrone’s mother could not stop her tears, she couldn’t catch her breath. His family was looking forward to his return. His mom said everyone at her church knew Tyrone from how

(Continued on page 29)



## Heart Breaking

By Mark Scolforo,  
Associated Press,  
November 18, 2019

13 prison employees  
suspended in Pennsylvania  
inmate death

HARRISBURG —  
Thirteen employees at  
a Pennsylvania state  
prison have been sus-  
pended without pay  
while the agency in-  
vestigates the death of  
an inmate last week.

Tyrone Briggs, 29,  
died Nov. 11 after an  
inmate-on-inmate

assault that day inside the State Correctional  
Institution-Mahanoy in Frackville, Schuylkill  
County, the Corrections Department said Satur-  
day.

Officials say Corrections Secretary John Wetzel  
made the decision to suspend the 13 employees  
until administrative and criminal investigations  
are completed. . . .

This news flash is not the first concerning suspicion about the death of a person in prison or, when I think about it, any wrong doing of the Department of Corrections (DOC). What’s surprising about this is that thirteen prison staff members were suspended when routinely the DOC turns a blind eye. For example, a very similar situation happened to another juvenile prisoner, John Carter, 32 years old, on July 25, 2012 at SCI-Rockview. He was murdered by the guards. And now, here we are again. I for one would certainly like to know what happened in that situation. Maybe if the men who took John Carter’s life with excessive use of pepper spray and medical neglect were prosecuted, Tyrone would be alive today.

We who have loved ones in prison fear that one day we may get that same phone call. And who would care? No one because the news media and DOC do all they can to diminish the value of prisoners’.

The news media and most folks feel that prison staff lives are more important than the lives of prisoners. Take a look at the

*Got to See! In theaters near you on December 25th*



Vanity Fair Cover—left to right, Michael B. Jordan, Bryan Stevenson, Jamie Foxx

## *Just Mercy* Gets to the Heart of the Matter

Michael B. Jordan stars as a tireless civil rights advocate in this straightforward tale of justice lost and found.

By Richard Lawson

Though it is, of course, important to acknowledge the intractable gloom and desperation of the world, it can be valuable—vital, really—to have some reminder of hope and its agents. The term used for such reminders, in movie and TV and book form anyway, is often “inspirational”—and yes, inspiration is a part of the equation. But there is also galvanization, a call to action or at least closer attention from afar. The upcoming film *Just Mercy*, which premiered here at the Toronto International Film Festival on Friday night, offers that stoking, that encouragement. It’s a rousing and moving enough film that one is compelled to excuse the limits of its artistry.

The film, from director **Destin Daniel Cretton**, is based on a book by **Bryan Stevenson**, a tireless civil rights advocate who works to free wrongly convicted people, many of them black men, from death row. Stevenson’s focuses—because our country has made them so—are matters of race and poverty, the chief factors in judicial discrimination and wrongdoing. *Just*

*Mercy* largely concerns one of Stevenson’s early cases, that of Walter Macmillan, an Alabama man convicted of murdering an 18-year-old white woman in the 1980s based on evidence so absurdly flimsy and nakedly prejudiced that this story could only be true.

Cretton dutifully details the struggle to overturn the conviction, as young Stevenson (played with centered power by **Michael B. Jordan**) plods his way through the backwards and booby-trapped legal system in an effort to win Macmillan, at the very least, the dignity of the truth. Macmillan is played by **Jamie Foxx**, making a welcome return to drama after some years acting in action movies, thrillers, and hosting a very entertaining game show. (Cretton regular **Brie Larson** also gives a warm turn as a local advocate who teams up with Stevenson.) Jordan and Foxx have an impassioned rapport that the director gently corrals, guiding us to the requisite big speeches at the close. These two sterling actors confidently build to those rousing moments, when true justice is finally served.

For one man, anyway. *Just Mercy* is careful not to suggest that the work is done after one success amid so many failures and travesties. It’s an optimistic film in the sense that it illustrates that there have been a small handful of wrongs righted. But it’s wise to the fractional reality of that, gesturing toward the broader problem of false imprisonment and state-sanctioned murder—and asking that we in the audience don’t forget it. I think the film achieves this by the end, when *Just Mercy* issues out its stirring message.

From: <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2019/09/just-mercy-movie-review>



Along with David, Sandra and Mama Patt represent their loved ones (pics on back of T-shirts) Rob & Shakaboona in hopes that they return home, like David, blazing for justice. CADDBI Healing Rally, October 23, 2019

## From the Editor: David

Garlock has a small (don’t blink..lol) part representing himself in this movie as one of the men Bryan Stevenson freed from prison. He is running towards his goal of representing all who are like him, telling his story, reaching back to help, not by just talking the talk, but he is walking the walk. David is Director of New Persons Ministries and an advocate for criminal justice reform and much more in Lancaster, PA.

# Human Rights Coalition Report

## Against All Odds: The reality of coming home

For many, home was the last place they could think about, because they had all been ordered to spend the rest of their lives in prison for crimes they committed as children. Confronted with this reality, many sought to maintain their dignity in the midst of hopelessness and continue to create meaning for their lives. This was the reality for decades of over 500 men and women who had been sentenced to life without parole (LWOP) as children throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania has the distinction of sentencing more children to die in prison than any state in the country. More than 300 of these children were from Philadelphia, the largest number of children sentenced to die in prison of any city in the United States.

What this meant for many of these children is that for decades they would be denied many of the opportunities offered to the other men and women in the general prison population; opportunities like better paying prison jobs and access to vocational and academic training, which could prove meaningful if they were ever released from prison. The Department Of Corrections' philosophy was if you were sentenced to life without parole, you would never get out of prison, so why waste resources on those who would die in prison. This was their stance for many years. The men and women who were children when they were sentenced to life without parole had to maintain hope in the midst of this hopelessness.

For decades, many of these men and women had to confront these indignities and constant denials of their humanity, and still be resilient and maintain hope that they might regain their freedom through commutation, or win their personal legal battles with the courts. In 2012, the United States Supreme Court in *Miller v. Alabama* ruled that sentencing children to mandatory life without parole sentences was unconstitutional, and that the courts must consider an individual child's background and circumstances before imposing a life sentence on them. This groundbreaking ruling created the opportunity for many of the more than 500 children sentenced to life without parole in Pennsylvania to be resentenced and potentially eligible for parole. Still, many questions lingered. Mainly, was the community prepared to accept these men and women returning home? Would they adjust to returning to communities that had drastically changed since their incarceration?

In Pennsylvania 221 juveniles lifers have returned to their communities since the United States Supreme Court decision. As these men and women began coming home, many after decades in prison, eyes were on them to see how they would handle the transition back to the community. Many were concerned that these returning citizens would not be able to adjust to life outside the prison walls. Remarkably, despite their deep trauma, before and during incarceration and despite the impact and collateral

consequences of their experiences, most of them have been adjusting well. They are slowly seeking to rebuild their lives and taking on the day to day responsibilities that come with being free. This entails developing resumes and searching for employment, navigating appropriate and affordable healthcare, learning how to pay bills, renting their own apartments or buying homes, and adapting to advancing technology.

Working with the Youth Sentencing Reentry Project and having conversations with many former juvenile lifers, many are thankful for the opportunity to return to their communities. They sincerely want to show their families, communities, and, in particular, the family members of their victims that they are not the same person who made that incredibly poor decision twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years ago (myself included). In the words of Bryon Stevenson, they want to show that they are more than the worst thing they ever done.

As you will see within this Human Rights Report some return blazing with energy to change the world and right their wrongs. Others just want to plant their feet on freedom and smell the fresh air. Others hunger to experience the things they've missed like driving a car, eating their favorite foods, enjoying a live basketball or football game, or traveling.

The reality of coming home is: A healing and just society should never give up on a human being. Children and adults, alike, are innately capable of transformation for the better.

On the following pages we have interviewed six individuals, beginning with myself, who have returned home and have accomplished a lot, against all odds.

Thank you.

John Pace



Left to right: John Pace (YSRP), Eric Alexander and Xavier McElrath-Bey (Campaign for Fair Sentencing of Youth).



# John Pace

(Interviewed by Mama Patt, HRC)



*John Pace was freed on February 16, 2017. In two months he will be home for three years. Immediately upon his release he was offered a position with Temple University's Inside-Out Exchange program (a group that he's worked with for 14 years while in prison) where students study as peers in a seminar behind prison walls. Seven months later he was asked to join the staff of Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP) where he helps juvenile lifers who're returning home, helping them with their transition, particularly the cases where YSRP worked on their litigation. Both organizations puts him right where he wants to be doing the two things close to his heart; supporting LIFERS in general through the Inside Out Program and helping juvenile lifers who are returning home through YSRP.*

*John told me that he believes in proximity and that it has helped him out, a lot, because it allowed him to build relationships with people and organizations close to Philly and home. He spent twenty of his prison years in SCI-Graterford (now SCI-Phoenix) and was apart of the PLP (Prison Literacy Project), PPLC (Para Professional Law Center), Temple Think Tank, and acquired his degree from Villanova. Because of proximity he was able to develop a lot of relationships with a lot of people and was able to tap into those relationships when he returned home.*

*And to think that people thought he as a child was of no value, irrevocable, dispensable, a lost cause. John Pace. An inspiration to us all.*

**Mama Patt:** Hi John. Thank you for your help with this issue's Human Rights Report about successes and challenges of the men and women returning home. I think people on the outside and inside of prison will benefit from these interviews.

**I'd like to begin with asking, what was most challenging for you in getting back into society and how did you overcome it?**

**John:** Thanks Mama Patt. Most challenging. Often, when I'm asked this question I tell people, don't use me as the example because I think I was very fortunate. Fortunate because of the proximity. I found that being close to home, close to Philadelphia, it allowed me access to a great deal of resources. It would be more challenging for people who are farther away because the resources are not the same.

I didn't have the challenge of finding employment because employment was immediately available to me. I also had my sister, my family, who were very supportive to me. I will say having family support is extremely important. I was able to go live with my sister and not have to worry about a place to go.

The most challenging for me was, I felt sick. I don't know why I felt that way. But it was a sickness coming over me and I felt it similar to when I was going to be re-sentenced. But my niece said something to me about it. She said it's over stimulation. And I thought about it, and it occurred to me that because I've been away from all of this activity for so long; that's what I was experiencing. I was trying to figure all these things out instantly when in fact, naturally, there is a process for it. So that was the biggest challenge for me. That's why I say don't use me as an example. Because some people didn't have employment immediately available, so if they had to deal with over stimulation, they also had to deal with trying to find employment, and so they had additional issues. I didn't have those issues.

**Mama Patt:** What worldly changes were most unsettling or impressive or startling when you came home?

**John:** I would say homelessness. Seeing the homeless throughout the city was really startling to me. Especially as we were trying to transition out and trying to get accumulated back into the community. And yet we saw so many people suffering and living like this and in need of help. And you find yourself trying to help them and you say to yourself; "I" need help, "I'm" transitioning. Early along, me and Sharif gave them money and would say to each other, did you give any money today? But we realize we can't keep giving money, we need to find better ways to help and support people.

We have one of the biggest cities and one of the poorest cities particularly as it relates to people of color.

**Mama Patt:** What advice would you give to a returning citizen?

**John:** One of the things an individual told me, one of the older juvenile lifers- Michael Wilson - he served 47 years, he said "Be in a hurry to go slow". And I thought, what does he mean by

*(Continued on page 18)*

(Continued from page 17)

that? It was a strange parable; and then it clicked. What I understood it to mean is don't try to catch up, cause when you try to catch up that's when you often make those mistakes, so take your time and you'll get there. This is a process. And this is really what we go through as young children, we often try to be adults before our time, but you're going to get there, you're going to have those responsibilities. A lot of us coming out as adults, didn't get that experience, that childhood going through that natural progression. So now we're doing it as adults. So, take your time and all those things will come. Have a plan when you come out here, be patient with yourself as you're going through that plan, and stick to your plan, and if you're consistent often times you'll have success.

**Mama Patt: How did your prison experience help (or not) you with re-entry into society? We talked about all the programs earlier in this article; but can you give us any more?**

**John:** And I will say, yes. I talked about the programs, but a lot of these things were not what the prison provided for me. A lot of these things were done *in spite of* prison.

I was fortunate. At the very beginning of my incarceration I encountered some of the older gentlemen who provided me with inspiration that got me to reading and wanting to learn. It put me on a pathway, very early, of growing.

Being on this pathway I was always thinking I want to learn, I want to go to college, thinking about where I wanted to be at a particular time. Being in those spaces helped me begin to think about how I want to see my future.

[Even though I was a lifer] I had a positive outlook in regards to my potential chances of coming out. My case went to the United States Supreme Court after arguing for many years about ineffective counsel. And with lawyers helping me it eventually got to the Supreme Court with a 5 to 4 decision against me, which is rare, and preparing for commutation. So, I was on this pathway all along, thinking about if I had an opportunity what did I want to do with it.

**Mama Patt: What have you done that you've never done before and was gratifying or that you are very proud of?**

**John:** I've been very fortunate because I work with organizations that really provide me the opportunity to be able to experience a lot. I know I've been blessed with that regard. One of the things I've been able to do, is driving. So now I drive.

One particular time I was asked to come to the University of Pittsburgh for a panel discussion. Just so happened, my flight was cancelled. I had to be there by 8am the next morning. I had to think of another way to get there, so I got a rental car and drove 5 hours to Pittsburgh. It was really peaceful. I got there at midnight. I remember when you, me and others went to Alabama and we had to stop and get gas, coffee, to eat, but this time I did it alone. It was really gratifying to me because "I" did it; "I" was able to do that. Taking long drives like that is very gratifying to me.

**Mama Patt: What is the reality of coming home?**

**John:** Reality is there's a practical side to our transition. There's a learning curve for all of us. There's a lot of things that I don't know, that I'm going to have to learn. I'm learning about going to the Market Place to get [medical] insurance. I get ticked off as much as I wanted a job, I was getting Medicaid, getting free insurance, but once you get the job now you got to pay for your Medicaid. You don't know about this stuff. Now not only do you have to pay for it you've got to choose the right one. For some people coming home you simply think, I get a job, and everything is going to be okay. But we've all been deprived of these early experiences and we're starting a later age.

So be prepared to be challenged. For me, I welcome the challenge because, really, it's an opportunity for you to grow through these experiences. That's what life is about. And all of us go through these challenges, but you still continue to do the right thing. People say because you're being challenged, therefore you'll resort back to some of the things that got you in there. NO! You still do the right thing. You're going through natural challenges in life. I say embrace them, embrace these challenges.



Left: John Pace; Right: Shavonne Robbins  
WUWW (900AM—WURD) Interview with Juvenile Lifers. Philadelphia  
Watch on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GDpts0dNJw>

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# Star Granger

(Interviewed by Mama Patt, HRC)



*Star served 35 years as a Juvenile Lifer in SCI-Muncy; and as of November 2019, has been home for one year. Star is a beautiful person full of energy and taking in "ALL" of her freedom. She says "Whatever I'm doing, I'm doing it right here in Philly. If I've got a cold, I have a cold in Philly. When I have a headache, my headache is right here in Philly; NOT MUNCY!"*

*On another note Star says to the politicians, policy makers, or shot callers - every time things go wrong, they find reasons to say no. We as a nation ask ourselves, when we look in the mirror, to be better than we were yesterday or an hour ago. But when someone stumbles and fall, you want to leave them there, saying we should've never let you walk. Does that make sense to you? When things fail, you fix it; and, some things you may not be able to fix, but you try to understand it. You don't condemn...like If my sink breaks, I'm not going to have my whole kitchen torn apart, tear up the oven, tear up my washer. With the juveniles, some juveniles messed up. So they [politicians] want to harden up on parole; and, say parole should be different. It's not that at all, it just the luck of the draw sometimes.*

**Patricia: What was most challenging for you in getting back into society and how did you overcome it?**

**Star:** A lot of things that they promised us when we were upstate about the re-entry programs - housing medication and treatment is the biggest challenges that I faced when coming home. I found

out that we can't even get public housing because we have a record; I feel the system set us up to fail. I was able to stay with my sister and working with Gadinza to get a place, but at the end of the day it shouldn't be that hard; I was blessed to have a sister, but what about people who have to stay at a half-way house; it's stressful.

**Patricia: What worldly changes were most unsettling or impressive or startling when you came home?**

**Star:** For me seeing the homeless people, people on drugs. When I left Philadelphia, it was a place called Skid-Row, now these poor babies are everywhere, most are young. They sleep anywhere, they roll over anywhere; and it hurts my heart is so heavy to see them. This past weekend I was walking down the street and ran across this guy on the ground, half on the ground, half in the street. I couldn't walk pass this man like that, I called 911. But everybody else was walking pass this man.

But the most beautiful thing, I noticed how the city has evolved. All new building, tall buildings they look really, really, good.

**Patricia: How are you managing with your transition into society?**

**Star:** I'm doing well. When I came home, I had a job in Philly. I've been trained, I traveled, I've been to Washington, I've been to Florida. I'm part of ACLU Consultant, Broad Street Ministry, Mothers In Charge, Prison Society, YSRP and ICan. I'm in college, right now, taking IT training. ICan took me to Washington to be a part of their presentation: it was a beautiful thing to tell my story. I was at Penn State last week and gave a speech, at St. Joseph College doing a website for ICan. ICan is an come up with alternatives to incarceration for juveniles, abolish death by incarceration, like CADBI.

**Patricia: What advice would you give to a returning citizen?**

**Star:** Not returning citizens, "all my friends". I would tell my friends that I'm coming back for yall. Don't give up, cause I'm not giving up.

**Patricia: How did your prison experience help (or not) you with re-entry into society?**

**Star:** As far as the process of parole be warned it isn't spectacular. Everything they tried to tell us, we didn't get. It's all a bunch of lies. As far as prison experience, what I've always known in my heart, was that wasn't my destiny. I wasn't going to die there. I always had hope that this day would come, so I stayed focus; be accountable to me.

However if I could reach out to someone to help them better understand - It's not always gloom and doom, that's 88% of it, but the other percentage of it is based on you being aware and staying focus, so you don't get caught up. Because that's what they want you to do, that's what they're always going to talk about - the bad stuff, the bad stuff. But the good side is staying focused, is doing what you can do for you, then parole or commutation is in your future.

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**Patricia: That's good advice.**

**Star:** That's not advice. I didn't have a choice, I grew up there, I was raised there. I was raised by the system, in the system. But one thing that always stuck out in my head - when people make decisions about different programs being cut - how can you expect someone to grow to be a better person when the tools in front of them are setting them up to fail. What they tell you - when it's convenient - is you're a product of your environment; "key word" when it's convenient for them to say that. If that's true then all of us, that came home, are a product of our environment that we was raised in? Is that consensus? So, being raised in the system, does that make me a product of that environment?

**Patricia:** That's a good question. No. You have to be your own person.

**Star:** You have to be. But if they don't give you the right information and tools to do that, then they're setting you up to fail. You see the point I'm making now?

So, that's all I'm saying. I had to govern myself like that, had to stay focused to make sure by any means necessary. So that whenever the time came, if they came up with any kind of law, I'd be ready to come home.

**Patricia: What have you done that you've never done before and was gratifying or that you are very proud of?**

**Star:** I've done so much. It's weird. I've done a lot. I would say, my family, my family vacation. We went to Florida; it was scheduled for 6 days. But we stayed for 3 because Hurricane Dora was bearing down, we got cancelled out of there. They declared a state of emergency and we couldn't fly back because the planes were cancelled. So we beat it [that storm] only stopping for bathroom breaks, looking through our rear-view mirror.

**Patricia: That sounds so nice, going on a vacation with your family. How many of you was there?**

**Star:** It was 10 of us. We rented a house with a pool; I jumped right in it, the first day. I went to the park and everything, was riding the roller coaster with my hands up real high (everybody else was scared), with my Mickey Mouse ears.

**Patricia: That's sounds great, you've got to send me a picture so I can put it in THE MOVEMENT. Now, can you tell me what is the reality of coming home?**

**Star:** The reality is, that it is reality. Coming home to a very unsure situation, fear, anxiety, confusion. Very, very, intrigue. Impressed. Angry about my surroundings, about people killing each other. That's my reality.

**Patricia: Is there anything more that you would like to say?**

This parole situation. There's a lady up state that's been offered parole for years, she went in front of parole board, each time she got paroled, but she can't go home because she don't have a home plan. She needs transitional living. She had a stroke so she

needs a place that can deal with that. When I was there, she'd been in front of the parole board for 3 years. I've been looking after her, I'm her mentor.

Can I give a special mention and thanks to some people who've helped me since I've been home? Mr. D. Jassidjas at City Hall - "He's a judge and one of my best friends". And thanks to my family, of course. My sister received me, her name is Kim. And I'd like to mention my lawyer Joseph Grimms.

**Patricia:** Thank you, Star. It's been a pleasure talking with you. And if there is anyone who is able to help Ms. Anderson come home by simply providing transitional housing or has knowledge of someone who can provide transitional housing please contact her at:

Edith Anderson/ #OO8598/SCI-Muncy  
Smart Communications / PADO  
PO BOX 33028  
St Petersburg, Fl 33733



**Star with family**



**Star, on roller coaster, hands high .. yesssss!**

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# Sharif Boyd

(Interviewed by Aaron Appel from HRC)



*Sharif Boyd has been home three years as of February 2020. While he is not in the spotlight like other advocates out here, every chance he gets to go to Harrisburg to talk to the legislators, he's there. He's been attending and gathering support and sometimes speaking at a number of events concerning mass-incarceration. He is down with the movement and hates that he can't be part of everything as much as he wants to.*

**Aaron: What was most challenging for you in getting back into society and how did you overcome it?**

**Sharif:** Adapting to society is very challenging. Just getting bumped by people when catching Septa is hard for people like me. But I would say finding work is the most challenging. I'm working two jobs right now, at Goodwill and a care clinic. Had to quit a job that wasn't working, making a bunch of nothing, but more than \$0.42 hour. Living life itself is easy. I'm keeping hope alive and currently looking for housing and staying with my fiancé.

**Aaron: What worldly changes were most unsettling or impressive or startling when you came home?**

**Sharif:** After being Incarcerated for 36 years, it's a foreign world out here. I was on my way to court when I first came home and saw a bunch of homeless people, that was very hard. It's sad that Philly has lost so many of its black-owned businesses.

**Aaron: How are you managing with your transition into society?**

**Sharif:** Family support. I have very good family support. When I first came home I stayed with my brother. The challenge came

when I got jobs.

**Aaron: What advice would you give to a returning citizen?**

**Sharif:** Remember we worked hard in the situations we were in. What's out here is easier than what you left behind. No limits now. The world is yours. Keep your dreams alive. Prepare yourself to come out here, you've got to plan, lock it in - whatever you got in your head. Don't worry about short cuts, stick to your plan.

**Aaron: What have you done that you've never done before and was gratifying or that you are very proud of?**

**Sharif:** I've been traveling, went to Phoenix and Washington D.C. I met Eric Holder [Attorney General of the White House during President Obama's presidency]. Went to Vegas with my fiancé; I enjoyed Vegas [laughing]. I am so blessed to have actually been on a plane. I work hard, but I wouldn't trade it for nothing in the world.

**Aaron: What's next for the movement?**

**Sharif:** I'm fighting the fight to get folks free as much as I can. Fighting for lifers even though there's been some pushback. In Philly, the odds are against Black and Brown people. I spoke to youth at Batram High School, we met in a basement, and I saw the lunches they had in crates, it took me back to going to court when they give you those lunches first thing in the morning and it felt like I was witnessing part of the school-to-prison pipeline. A few students at the talk were rebellious, but afterwards they gave me and my co-presenter hugs. The government doesn't want to give us opportunities to hold a real dialogue with the youth. They [the youth] need to see the faces of lifers who are home.

**Aaron: Anything else to share?**

**Sharif:** Freedom is wonderful. I pray that everybody locked up can come home. Family support is strong and still needed, hard. I'm happy with life, paying no mind to the snow or the rain. I love my family out here, but I miss my family inside.



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# Terrance Lewis

(Interviewed by Trika from HRC)

*Terrance has not been home for a full year as of yet but he has been doing the work! He's been traveling with Patricia Cummings and DA Larry Krasner speaking about the CIU and wrongful convictions.*



**Trika: What was the most challenging for you getting back in society and how did you overcome it?**

**Terrance:** Let me start off by saying, I'm still in that process in regards to overcoming my particular challenges. I've been home now for 5 ½ months, I've been away for 21 ½ years transitioning with no assistance, no help whatsoever, from my city or the state. So mind you, I came home as an exoneree. I was wrongfully incarcerated for the 21 years for a murder I didn't commit. I've been blessed because I'm not on parole however the catch 22 is I haven't received any assistance as far as a reentry package, or some kind of help – mentally, emotionally, literally nothing. Because I'm not a parolee. In the city of Philadelphia, there's nothing in place, there's no compensation or program for those who are wrongfully convicted. Nowhere in Pennsylvania; there's no program and that should be in place.

The most challenging, for me, is returning back and not having that stability. How I'm overcoming it, reality is, I'm a soldier, I'm a survivor. This is not the part of my life where I come apart-at-the-seems or hoot and holler. I'm being a fighter. I'm being a warrior, having that drive that commitment. I'm team-

ing up with coalitions and lobbying for a compensation bill, for some kind of help for people in my situation. This year, there's 10 people that Larry Krasner exonerated who come back here and, unless they have a family support system, they're homeless and everything else that comes with that and that's reality. Their lives have been uprooted for no crime of their own.

**Trika: What worldly changes were most unsettling or impressive when you came home?**

**Terrance:** Technology, hands down. When I left it was December of 97'. To see people, it's eerie to me, the fact that phones are so accessible. It preoccupies people in the worst way. But where I come from in the city, crime is still prevalent, schools are being shut down, prisons are still being built.

**Trika: How are you managing your transition into society?**

**Terrance:** I'm managing. Life is what life is. I don't ever want to come off as everything is honkey doorey because that's just not how things are. Not right now, eventually it will be like that I'm certain of that. The transition is a process, it's a learning experience. Because I've been away for so long I'm taking it one day at a time. Let me say this, from the core of my soul: My worst day out here is better than my best day I ever spent in there. But nonetheless, it's still a process. A process that needs the principles where everybody has to be responsible in carrying the burden, as a community, period. Especially, if we're going to go up against social injustice, criminal injustice. I promise you, we definitely have our work cut out for us. Dig deep, roll our sleeves up, keep the iron in the fire, let's be sincere about it.

**Trika: What advice would you give to a returning citizen?**

**Terrance:** The most sincere advice I would give is to value his time. Since I've returned 5 and a half months ago the most precious commodity that is valuable is time itself. Everybody wants to help piece you back together and has expectations of you and you can't be everywhere at one particular time. Take your time. Preserve it, guard it, shield it.

**Trika: How did your prison experience help (or not) you with re-entry?**

**Terrance:** Honestly, I didn't need to go to jail for a crime I didn't commit but it gave me structure. It taught me how to prioritize because I was a kid. I didn't have a lot of mentors, I didn't come from that academically privileged setting. It gave me the structure, that's why I'm patient. It's easy for me, when an obstacle gets in the way, I know how to adapt, adjust and overcome it. I can credit that to being in that particular place at that particular time in my formative years. I had to develop the patience, 21 years, you don't know what patience is until you have nothing but patience to hold your faith on.

**Trika: What have you done that you've never done before and was gratifying. What are you proud of?**

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**Terrance:** I traveled in seven days, I cleared seven states by myself. Coming from that restriction, that place where blindness was placed on my perception of what life is. So coming out here and having to navigate and learn immediately, I purchased a car. On my way back from visiting family in Atlanta, I got lost and found my way back. That right there was gratifying because it helped me establish my independence. I didn't have anybody to rely on, it was just me and the GPS and I was literally 1,100 miles away from home. I had a chance to clear my mind, I took on the road with me what I learned in jail. That was gratifying at a time where I was supposed to be scared and have anxiety. Us re-entries come home, after being taken away from this world and being placed in a gloomy world that's hopeless; coming from there to this place, a place of unlimited freedom. I'm proud of my accomplishment of going through what I went through. My journey, to come home to have no assistance but to continue to have that trust, due to my faith, is an accomplishment. Because a lot of people would literally come apart at the seams and they wouldn't know what to do. Only 5 months in I got a car, I got a place to stay, and I did it on my own. Some people would go crying to somebody but when you don't have anyone there to help you and your government and state legislatures won't help you, what do you do then?

**Trika: What is the reality of coming home?**

**Terrance:** It's still surreal at times. At times that's the feeling or thought I be having, like yo I'm really home. Especially in Pennsylvania, as a lifer, I was condemned to die. Five months ago, I was supposed to be dying in jail. That was the attitude, and that's not the case now. To be here after, for so long, not knowing when that day would come, but always having the drive, remaining focused. The reality of coming home is still surreal, it's fresh, it's still beginning, I'm still growing. Every time I come out of the door the air I breathe is new, everything is different.



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## “Capital Hill”

By: Universal Truth (Tizzy)

We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to office. (Aesop, c 550 B.C.)

Policymakers on Capitol Hill

Are bloodsucking ticks

The masters of illusions

With their bag of dirty tricks

Those with the capital

Are the kings of the hill

Above the constitutional law

Which they break at will

The election process is a front

I should say masquerade

Your voting rights isn't a right

Unless the candidate is getting paid

The US presidential campaigns

Are funded by special interest groups

When elected to public office

They pull covert special interest coups

Drafting domestic & foreign policy

To exploit the poor at home and abroad

The means of production they own

And 85% of the capital of the world

\*\*\*\*\*



be missing turns and everything, you know, haha, but I get on track eventually.

**Jackson: How are you managing with your transition back into society?**

**Rob:** I think I'm managing well. You know, like I said, I'm workin and that allows me to take on certain responsibilities and do things that I used to hear people talk about doin. You know like, using a credit card, paying different bills. I have my own car. I had a car. I went and traded that one in and did something real stupid, I went and got a car note, haha,. Don't never get a car note!

**Jackson: What advice would you give to a returning citizen?**

## Robert Burgess

*(Interviewed by Jackson from HRC)*

*Robert 'Woodie' Burgess was born and raised in West Philly. He served 37 years in prison as a Juvenile Lifer and came home in November 2017. He works for Solar States and also works for Sumitra Solar. He owns his own home and his own car. And is looking to put solar panels on his own house!*

**Jackson: What was most challenging for you getting back into society and how did you overcome it?**

**Rob:** I don't know, if anything, you could call it challenging because I prepared from Day One. I prepared for this moment. I had a vision of getting out and with that vision I made education my priority. Through education I was able to get into different programs that allowed me to come out here and apply that same attitude. Those skills that I developed, through that education, allowed me to land jobs. The challenge, I guess, is just waking up in the morning! That's the most important for those guys inside, is the skills and programs, because it's those programs that allowed me to work. I always said, I used to tell guys, "When I get out, I'm going to install solar." And now, I'm installing solar. I learned how to do it and I'm doin it!

**Jackson: What worldly changes were most unsettling, or impressive, or startling when you came home?**

**Rob:** Technology has come a far way, but I kept up with technology. When I was up in Pittsburgh they had the program for information sciences and from that I learned how to program computers. So I was up with the technology it was just that I didn't have no real, hands-on experience. The most crazy thing is the Google Maps. Like, I'm in a car and I can put in the address and it directs me right there and I'm saying to myself, "Can you imagine when we didn't have this here? How would we get from here to New York, to a specific location?" How hard it was...And now you can put in a location and it directs you, "Turn here, turn there." I

**Rob:** I would advise them to get as much education as you can. And don't just rely on the institution to educate you. When I was there, they didn't have certain books or certain programs. What would I do? Am I not going to learn anything? No, I buy the book, and I read and learn it. We actually had a solar program and I was a teacher's assistant that was at [SCI] Mahanoy. There was an electronics class. That was a good program. I got my Federal Communications License, my RESI [Residential Electronics Systems Integrator] Certification, and Wireless Communication Certification. All that through the ETA [Electronic Technicians Association]. A lot of stuff they didn't teach me. You know, they didn't teach me how to write a computer program in C Sharp. I had to buy the book! They didn't teach me how to develop a website. I had to buy the book! So get whatever you can, man. Get the book, learn it, get that vision and come out with that confidence. Say look, "I know this. I can do this." Also, I took a program when I came out. The training program, that's how I met Micah [of Solar States] and he seen that I knew what I was doing. That was through OIC [Opportunities Industrialization Center]. That was a good place for returning citizens to learn trades and solar.

**Jackson: How did your prison experience help, or not, with your return to society?**

**Rob:** It helped, you know, like a said, with the programs I was able to get into and the skills I learned. Early in my incarceration, they had the JC's [Junior Chamber], that was like an inmate organization similar to, say like, a Boy Scout, but grown up. But it's from there that I learned organizational skills: How to write a proposal, sitting on different committees, voting. I sat on the Board of Directors 4 out of the 5 years I was involved. That was preparing me and it gave me different skills to help that transition. The drafting program, the architectural drafting, the computer programs – all of these things prepared me to come out here. It was through that computer program that now, I be telling my nephew and sisters and stuff how to do certain stuff on the computer. They come to me, "Can you hook up my Fire Stick?" And they be surprised, "How do you know how to do all that?"

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and I say, "Well, I learned it." It's all about the attitude. Am I just gonna sit back and let them waste my time? No! I got to educate myself! If they ain't got it, I got to go get it! *They put me in the hole for having too many books in my cell...* I did 45 days in the hole for having too many books in my cell. They had a thing goin on at Pittsburgh where they were talking about people having too much property in their cell. Well I had books! I used to be up 3 in the morning, and I used to read books.

**Jackson: What have you done that you had never done before since come home? And was it gratifying?**

For the first time in my life, I went to a Cabaret and it was really nice. And I just went there. I've been out – November the 14<sup>th</sup> will be 2 years – and I just went to a Cabaret for the first time in my life. It was at a place called Treasures on Germantown Avenue. But the whole time I was there I was watching the camera man. He was making all the money! I knew him. He was charging \$20 a picture. He had to take over 200 pictures. I said, man, I'm in the wrong business! I got to be doing this here! Aw man, I got to learn photography. The crazy thing is I did photography in my early days at [SCI] Camp Hill. I used to do the GED photos. When guys would graduate, they would come down and get cap and gown pictures. We was trying to actually develop like a concept of a year book. You know, alumni type of thing for guys that actually graduated. But for the most part, guys wanted their cap and gown picture to send home to their family. And these here were like, real cap and gown that had nothing to do with the prison. When you see it, you would think, "What school did you go to?" But I actually did photography, but I'm thinking like, I might need to pick up that camera again!

**Jackson: What is the reality of coming home?**

**Rob:** The reality is that, man, God is Good. It's beautiful out here. You know, you get in situations, but, it's beautiful, man, it's beautiful. The reality is, you know, people seem to be in a rush to get here, to do this that and the other, but it's beautiful. You have a sense of humanity, when you care for people and stuff like that, and you think about a lot of the brothers that you left behind, and you wish that, a lot of em didn't have that much time. You wish it was some way that you could help. You wish there was a way you could provide some type of program or whatever to help guys or whatever, but in fact, it's just, beautiful. Like I said, God is good!

**Jackson: HRC thanks you, Rob. Great talking with you.**

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## Mrs. Streetz!

What if I told you that every once in a while I shed a few tears?

My daughter's birthday was April 30<sup>th</sup>; she said,  
"Daddy, all I wanted was for you to be here."  
It's been 19 years, I ain't been there.  
It's my own fault that I'm here and couldn't be there.  
So what, if I shed a few tears.

It hurts man!

Didn't I share with ya'll my truth about how my mother gets high by sticking needles in her veins?

Damn man, she still can't feel my pain?

I used to sit alone in my room thinking, "Damn, she loves that needle more than she loves me."

So I ran from home and went to hug, Mrs. Streetz.  
But Mrs. Streetz had no emotions and she wouldn't hug me back.

Alright, you got that Mrs. Streetz; but I'll be back.  
I'm gonna get even. I'm gonna sell everybody's mother crack!

How you like that?

Mrs. Streetz laughed at me right in my face.  
She said, "That's all you got? Here, take this case."

Stop playing with me, that's just a taste.

Anger, frustration, hate started to set in.  
I'm plottin now; I want revenge!  
Mrs. Streetz must have been listening because my mother od'd and

Mrs. Streetz took out most of my friends.

She shot some with hollow tip slugs; but she sent most to the pen.

She saved me for last and hit me with a life sentence!

What if I told you that every once in a while  
I shed a few tears?

Your comrade in the struggle, Davon McNeil

# Jose Louis Alamo

(Interviewed by Mama Patt, HRC)



I loved talking with Jose. I can tell he's a kind and caring person just by the way he talks about his children, family, and his new relationship. I am amazed by all the work he's been putting in since coming home after serving 24 years in prison; he is a Juvenile Lifer. He was born November 28<sup>th</sup> (Happy Birthday!!!) as Jose Luis Alamo, the name he's lived with for the past 24 years (state name) is DD-1483 Angel Baez. Jose came home on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Jose, thank you for agreeing to this interview.

**Mama Patt: What was most challenging for you in getting back into society and how did you overcome it?**

**Jose:** I didn't overcome it I'm still working on it. Being incarcerated for so many years, I was traumatized so much that I suffered so mentally and physically while incarcerated, as soon as I see something negative, I steered myself away from it and when something positive comes I grabbed.

Biggest challenge has been and, continues to be, proper sleep. I never thought I was ever going to be able to come home, so I think that this is a dream. Sometimes when you in jail you dream and think you're home, you wake and you still in jail. Now that I'm home it's the opposite I dream I'm...if I wake up, I might be in jail. I wake up startled I usually sleep one or two hours at a time, wake up startled, like a panic attack, like if someone scares you in your sleep. . .you wake up

**Mama Patt: What worldly changes were most unsettling or impressive or startling when you came home?**

**Jose:** The city has changed, it's re-building, you no longer see abandoned houses like you use to see back then. However, the drug epidemic is huge, so much so that you see it in plain sight. There's always been addicts but the way they're out there now is like something unheard of.

The cost of living so extreme right now. You walk into the store and spend a hundred dollars and look at what you ordered and like it's nothing there.

**Mama Patt: What area that you live in where you see so many addicts. Or is it everywhere?**

**Jose:** I live in Kingston, toward the north you have all the addicts, then toward the south a couple blocks over there's Fishtown. Fishtown is a highly developed area.

If you move two blocks down, you just have addict and drug dealers

**Mama Patt: How are you managing with your transition into society?**

**Jose:** I focus a lot on my relationship with my girlfriend and tend to run away from the neighborhood do things that keep me away from the neighborhood. Cause I'm thinking the neighborhood is so negative. Transition is a problem. You want to please so many people. You have family, and friend, and relationships, so time management would be the biggest thing right now.

**Mama Patt: What advice would you give to a returning citizen?**

**Jose:** Be patient on everything you do, and keep eyes open and your options, you're going to come across struggles, don't let the little struggles, because they supported while you in jail ... Yeah they'll give you a helping hand, but they not going to keep on giving you a helping hand.

Thank God, I had the work ethic and my health that was able to help me through those times that were difficult.

**Mama Patt: How did your prison experience help (or not) you with re-entry into society?**

**Jose:** While I was incarcerated there was a lot of re-entry programs, and a lot claim to be able to help when you got out of prison. When I came out Prison Society did not help me at all, I went to their office, they had no clothes for me, not jobs for me, they had nothing for me. Basically, they was telling you had to go to this place and that place. I went to YSRP (Youth Sentencing Re-entry program ) at first they didn't have nothing for me, but they gave me a few pieces of clothes from their small donation closet for job interviews, in fact I still have a pair of pants and jacket that are still useful to me, they connected me with CADBI, and West Phila with Slate that got me a contract organizing statewide and CO job program that you

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have to be referred to and they actual give you a job, there's no waiting period, a two to three day orientation, they give you steel toe boots, construction safety vest, glasses, clothes. Every day you work everyday you get paid. A maximum of four days a week. They helped me a lot. They gave me the ability to earn for myself while they still helped me look for a job, they gave me a job to have funds in my pocket but as they were doing that they gave me life skills that I needed with the computer and how to apply for jobs. That program, itself, was amazing.

**Mama Patt: What have you done that you've never done before and was gratifying or that you are very proud of?**

**Jose:** Now I'm more responsible. You got to figure that when I came in I was a kid; a kid that thought he knew everything in the world and thought he could make grown up decisions .

And how grown up decision effect other people. And now I may over think it, but instead I think now instead of not thinking at all.

I'm proud of the fact that I'm in a loving relationship that's more of a partnership and not a one-way street. The building that I'm having with my family is positive. I'm showing them that I can still change, because what they thought of me and what they heard of me as the person I used to be, but they're starting to realize seeing the person I am today. So that's where we are right now. And I'm so happy that it's possible.

So much is coming through for me now, I'm being blessed on so many levels, I got a good job and I still do CADBI.

I'm working for Prison Services and the Defenders Association. So, I'm also helping guys who are initially arrested that have no idea of what's going to happen to them in the next couple of months.

So, I'm helping people, I'm earning money, and I'm helping others in my family as well.

**Mama Patt: What is the reality of coming home?**

**Jose:** The actual reality of when you're coming home is that while you're incarcerated you always tend to make a plan; you make a plan A, plan B, plan C. Fortunate, for me I'm one of those people who didn't make a plan.

When I was first granted release, I was told that I couldn't go to certain parts of the city, I said that's fine I don't need to go to those parts cause I have no business being over there.

When I was about to be released , which was supposed to be in February, they pulled my date, cause someone from Harrisburg didn't realize the difference between Huntington and Huntingdon was two different parts of the city and when they revolt my home plan, they held up my date to be released. Once I was able to figure that out and tell them told them how to figure that out, they released me to a half-way house however they put a GPS monitor on my ankle for 8 months for no reason, this is the first time in the history of juvenile Lifers for no reason. There have

been juveniles who had ankle monitors but it was because they still acting up while they were incarcerated or got arrested or having trouble with the parole agent while they were released. While I was incarcerated, I had zero violations in the 24 years of my incarceration which means I never got in trouble with the DOC staff in the 24 years of my incarceration. And while I've been out which is almost 8 months, I have had not had 1 violation or a misconduct through my parole agent.

**Mama Patt: But you're off the ankle bracelet? You don't have to wear the ankle bracelet anymore?**

**Jose:** No. I still have the ankle bracelet for another 30 days. The decision was made without me. I didn't get a chance to speak. Two months after they gave me the [parole] decision, they said you can't go to these places, then two months later they [changed it and] said you have to be on GPS for 8 months and you have to go to a half-way house.

**Mama Patt: anything that you would like to add, that I haven't asked you a message or something that you want give people inside?**

**Jose:** You must be patient with yourself and must articulate to your loved ones and people around you to be patient with you as well, because everything is going to come to you at once. You can be overwhelmed and that's where you can fall into your old habits whether it's smoking, drinking, just hanging out with the wrong crowd. So, you got to give yourself *time*. Nobody expects you, as a person coming home, to jump on your feet the next day.

Be patient dealing with your job. Because you might have a job in the beginning that you don't like, don't love, and hate it. You have to stick to it until you get the job you do like. And you keep on until you find the job you love.

Don't let pride get in the way from you succeeding in life. This is what happens to a lot of guys. I was able to tell these guys this is what worked for me. Working the field, they paid you every day, \$60 a day, four days a week, you had money in your pocket, but the job I did I had to work. It wasn't sitting around under the Air Condition. I walked Kensington, Germantown, West Philly picking up trash, needles, condoms, just picking up trash with a picker and I did that for three months. Half of those three months I did also landscaping, you went into fields parks, cutting down trees, grass, and that's actually manual work.

The harder you work, the staff put it in writing, hey this person is a harder worker I can recommend him for all kinds of jobs.

Education is key as well. Play cards and play sports in jail may pass time, but education is needed out here. They want you to know how to do things and you can't go to college to learn data entry. They want you to have hands on experience. You got to have some type of idea. Everything I did as a law clerk and as a recreational Library Assistant at the institution was dragging and this and that, but out here, just knowing the skills, just knowing alphabetical order, and numerical order and things, you can actually find jobs that simple. You got to be patient because you're

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not going to be a CO over night or you're not going to be Boss overnight. You got to build to it. You got to have patience. You got to know how to ask for patience, Well I don't know how to use a cell phone.

The reason I'm saying this is because in the half-way house, the four months I was there. I came across guys and I say I got this place we can go for a job interview. and they say, Oh I'm not doing that. Why not? Cause that ain't what I do.

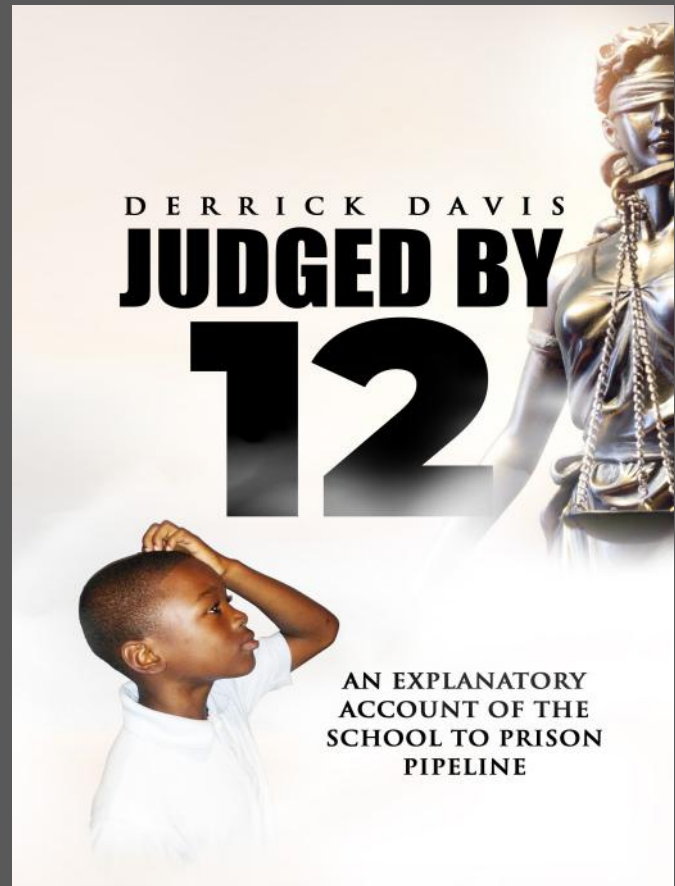
Cause right now you ain't got no money. Where you gonna get money from. "My peoples"? Well they going to get tired of that. They tired of it while you in jail! They got bills to pay.

You can't come out here and still be the burden. They don't have a problem with helping you, but in jail \$100 a month will go a long way, but out here \$100 won't go nowhere. They got their own bills to take care of, can't be taking care of a grown man. You can't think you're going to be working at a place where you'll be clean and shiny all day. You got to actually break your back sometimes. And that's what people don't realize.

**Mama Patt:** Thanks, Jose. That's good advice and folks need to know that. The only thing I ask, now, is for you to send me a nice photo (smile).



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About this book:

**Based on a true story,** *Judged By 12: An Explanatory Account of the School to Prison Pipeline* delivers poignant insight into the numerous issues plaguing a forgotten society. From impulsive youth succumbing to misguided idolization of neighborhood drug dealers, to a biased predatorial justice system, infested with racism and bigotry, *Judged By 12* gives a spellbinding account of it all.

A riveting yet inspiring, true story based on the life of a young man named Derrick Davis, better known in his Southwest Philadelphia neighborhood as "Buck". Buck would find himself being recruited at the vulnerable age of 13 by older neighborhood drug dealers, and embarking on a path all too familiar to today's urban societies.

*Judged by 12: An Explanatory Account of the School to Prison Pipeline* offers readers the capacity to understanding hidden truths which will prove inspirational to all HUMAN BEINGS, regardless of their political views, or lack thereof.

The book can be found on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Paperback \$ 5.99

eBook \$2.99

(Continued from page 14)

much she talked about him; and, she held a seat next to her with his photo; she said this is where my son will sit and be introduced to the members of my church.

She told me how Tyrone had received parole and was scheduled to come home within one month. He was looking forward to giving his mom a strong hug, going to a NFL game with his dad, and guiding his younger brother. Christmas is coming and he wanted to get his mother a real gift. Getting into an altercation with another prisoner and dying from OC spray and medical neglect, I'm sure, was not on his list of things to do before he comes home.

Now her son is gone, and her dreams are shattered. So many questions she has for the so called Department of Corrections. "Why did they take 16 hours to notify me of my son's death". "Why would you ask me does the family want the body burned; and, we haven't even *seen* him." "Why am I getting so many phone calls telling me the guards did him wrong."

I found it hard to find the right words to console Tyrone's mother and father as they cried for their son. But what I can say with confidence is that even though the guards have a Union that will fight for them, Tyrone's family has the Abolitionist Law Center, the Human Rights Coalition, 15 witnesses who want justice for Tyrone and, hopefully, support from many of you who also feel that - no one should be above the law.

I pray that his death is not in vain; but, will light up the darkness and spotlight the inaction and abuse that's protected. And force those who treat our loved ones inhumanely to be held accountable and to suffer the consequences of their actions as we all must do.

By: Mama Patt, HRC

If you would like to give towards Tyrone's funeral expenses, feel free to go to: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/nzxat-raising>

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**Sudoku Hard 573. Answers on page 39.**

(Continued from page 7)

When the state court denies a claim because the prisoner failed to comply with a procedural rule, that procedural default normally bars federal courts from rehearing the claim. **Harrington v. Richter, 562 U.S. 86, 103 (2011).**

But a federal habeas court may excuse a prisoner's procedural default if the prisoner can show both cause for the default and resulting prejudice. **Wainwright v. Sykes, 433 U.S. 72, 87 (1997).** To show cause they must explain what prevented them from timely raising the defaulted claim. Ineffective assistance of counsel is one such cause; an objective factor extended to the defense that can excuse procedural default. **Murray v. Carrier, 477 U.S. 478, 488 (1986).** When the state prosecutes, convicts and imprisons a defendant it must ensure that the defendant has the assistance of counsel for their defense. **U.S. Const., Amend. VI.** If the state provides no lawyer or an ineffective one it violates that obligation. No state may conduct trials at which persons who face incarceration must defend themselves without adequate legal assistance. If the state violates this rule its violation is cause to excuse the defendant's procedural default. **Murray, 477 U.S. at 488.**

In closing, the reason I decided to title this work as one of Pro Se Ineffectiveness is because most of the time it is one's (yourself) fault that these errors occur. I was once That Guy. I

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## **HRC NEW MEMBER FORM**

**Who We Are:** The Human Rights Coalition (HRC) is a grass roots organization of prisoners' families, prisoners, returned citizens and supporters. HRC exists to advocate for prisoner's rights, to support families coping with the stress and hardships of having a loved one incarcerated, to challenge the punitive retributive nature of the penal system, and to work to transform that to a model of rehabilitation and successful reintegration to society. Our members and allies—both inside and outside the prison walls—share a common conviction in our hearts to fight injustice, and have no ulterior motive of personal profit to do so. We are truly motivated by the strength of our belief that we can build a movement for collective liberation and win!

**How We Started:** HRC was formed in 2001 by people held in solitary confinement at SCI-Greene, a SuperMax prison in Southwestern PA. The Human Rights Coalition had its first meeting outside of prison walls on June 4, 2001 at the house of the mother of one of the men who helped conceive the idea of HRC. The meeting was small and a mix of prisoners' family members and former prisoners. Many of those who attended felt powerless in the face of the prison administration and its institutional discrimination, abuse, and torture. Yet the lives and well being of their loved ones were at stake – something they could not turn their backs to. At the end of the meeting, however, there was a consensus that a great deal of powerful energy is lying untapped, in the constituency of former prisoners and prisoners' families in this country, and if mobilized this powerful energy could transform the prison system as we know it.

**Our Vision:** The prison system is based on a foundation of punishment, exploitation, corruption, and slavery. Most of the people in prison are poor, Black and Brown, urban, under-educated, and unemployed or under-employed before they were locked down. The modern prison reflects all the social inequalities in our society, and it does not work in its current incarnation. HRC's ultimate goal is to dismantle and abolish the prison system and replace it with a system based on accountability, safety, fairness, and resilience, while focusing on healing instead of punishing.

**Our Structure:** We are a community-based organization without paid staff. We are committed and dedicated organizers, but we are not lawyers or professional legal aid. We are comprised of prisoners, their family members and loved ones, returned citizens, and supporters. We have an Advisory Council (AC) of incarcerated people who are our inside members of HRC. Our AC guides our work by reporting on conditions inside the prison, connecting us with family members to build our base, strategizing for campaigns, and making important decisions about actions, events, coalitions and legislation to support.

The Human Rights Coalition has two chapters on the outside:

- HRC-Philly meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 6-8pm, Philadelphia, PA (simply send us an email for the location)  
Email: [Info@hrcoalition.org](mailto:Info@hrcoalition.org); Facebook: Human Rights Coalition PA ; Website at: [www.hrcoalition.org](http://www.hrcoalition.org)
- HRC-Pittsburgh/FedUP!  
Email: [sd4hrc@gmail.com](mailto:sd4hrc@gmail.com) Phone: [570-763-9504](tel:570-763-9504)

HRC is also a founding member of CADBI (Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration) a coalition building power to end LIFE without parole in PA.

- CADBI meets the third Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm, Mosaic Community Church, 51st & Sansom. Philadelphia PA  
Email: [CADBIphilly@gmail.com](mailto:CADBIphilly@gmail.com) Phone: 267-606-0324

**Our Work:** HRC is currently working on two central campaigns: 1. to abolish long-term solitary confinement and 2. to abolish death by incarceration (life without parole). We are working to advance legislation to limit the use of solitary, and to get parole eligibility for lifers after 15 years. We collaborate on these campaigns with the Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration (CADBI), Decarcerate PA, Let's Get Free, Fight for Lifers, Global Women's Strike and several other organizations. HRC seeks to elevate the voices of prisoners and their families by publishing a quarterly newsletter, called 'The Movement', which is sent to 800+ prisoners throughout PA. HRC monitors and advocates against abuse inside the prisons through the maintenance of an Abuse Log and by corresponding with prisoners. HRC works to strengthen our movement, our organization's base, and our coalitions by taking collective action, organizing events for prisoner's families, doing political education, and fighting back against political repression for those struggling for their human rights.

FOR EVERY PERSON READING THIS:

## HRC Needs Your Help!

The Human Rights Coalition is currently looking to strengthen our work by expanding our base of active members. We need your help to expand our organization and build a movement strong enough to abolish prison slavery and end mass incarceration.

We want to reach out to and connect with family members of incarcerated people. If you are incarcerated and have any loved ones on the outside that you think might be interested in joining HRC...

**Send them this form!**



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If you want to **JOIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION**,  
fill out this form and mail to: **ATTN: NEW MEMBERSHIP**  
Human Rights Coalition, PO Box 34580, Philadelphia PA 19101

*OR*

Email us at: [Info@hrcoalition.org](mailto:Info@hrcoalition.org)

*OR*

Visit our website at: [www.hrcoaliton.org](http://www.hrcoaliton.org)

*OR*

Facebook

*OR*

Attend our regular meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

**HELP US BUILD THE MOVEMENT FOR PRISONER'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

I want to be a Member of the Human Rights Coalition

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What aspect of our work do you think you can help with? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am in agreement with HRC's vision and pledge to support their work to the best of my abilities.

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE MOVEMENT**

[www.hrcoalition.org](http://www.hrcoalition.org)

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FALL (ISSUE # 39)

# Your Legal Corner

WE ACCEPT LEGAL ARTICLES THAT EDUCATE AND EMPOWER FAMILIES OF PRISONERS THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND LAWS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THE POLICE, LAWYERS AND THE COURTS ON BEHALF OF THEIR LOVED ONES.

## The Cost-Benefit of Supporting SB 942

By: Shakaboona, Copyright 2019

Recently, out of pure passion and unadulterated love for the people, I railed against SB 942 stating that it was a terrible bill, that it shouldn't see the light of day, that it was fools gold, and that we should oppose it. Though I have issue with some parts of SB 942 I shouldn't have used such hyperbolic language to express my disapproval in those parts I dislike, because there is much that I do like about SB 942 that we shouldn't throw out the baby with the bath water. Yet sometimes when we're caught up in our emotions, we say things we really don't mean, and often, later tend to regret the thing we said. This is one of those moments for me.

On November 11, 2019, Pa. State Senator Sharif Street introduced SB 942 to help us finally get parole eligibility for our loved ones serving Death-By-Incarceration (DBI) or LWOP in Pennsylvania, a struggle going on for about 60 years in this state. From the 1970s until today, we can guesstimate that thousands, if not more, of Lifer men and women in the PADOC have died slow, agonizing, lonely deaths in prison from serving DBI sentences. This must end. People deserve second chances.

That being said, putting my emotions aside and looking at SB 942 from a practical standpoint, SB 942 is a bill we can get fully behind to support its passage. And with good reason, here is why:

- For the first time in PA history there will be "parole eligibility" for incarcerated men and women condemned to death through Life/LWOP sentencing schemes.
- Despite the 35 & 25 years for a person to become parole eligible, a couple of thousand Lifers can immediately get FREE, and hundreds more will be set free possibly every year thereafter.
- Those persons serving DBI sentences under Two & Three Strikes laws will also be parole eligible, and those sentenced under Two & Three Strikes in the future would get a sentence of 20-Life.
- A Life Without Parole Reinvestment Fund would be established that would transfer 50% of the money to Offender Reentry Programs with the OVA and the Parole Board splitting the difference. Reentry programs provides much help to people returning from prison needing assistance.
- SB 942 would take effect in 60 days after passage.
- The current social and political atmosphere is the right temperature for passage of a parole eligibility bill to become enacted as a law in PA, and

- This is probably a once in a lifetime deal to get done, so we should seize the time.

Yes, SB 942 has its drawbacks, such as:

- Section 4 of SB 942 doesn't provide a lesser parole eligibility term than 35 & 25 years for people who did not kill or intend to kill anyone.
- Section 4 of SB 942's language only provide parole eligibility for people serving LWOP under 42 Pa.C.S. Section 9711 (Capital Murder charge), those people serving LWOP on other murder charge categories under 42 Pa.C.S. Sections 1102,2501,2502,& 2503 *may be excluded from parole eligibility* due to unclear bill language.
- Section 1 of SB 942 amending 42 Pa.C.S. Section 1102.1 doesn't reduce the sentencing scheme based on age for child offenders, has parole eligibility at 35 & 25 years the same as adult offenders, prevents child offenders convicted of killing a cop from having parole eligibility the same as it would for adult offenders contrary to Miller v. Alabama, and gives "Reasonable Notice" to child offenders that the Commonwealth will seek LWOP "after" conviction rather than "before" trial which may be a constitutional violation issue.
- Section 5 of SB 942 excludes parole eligibility for adult & child offenders convicted of killing a cop. So, a child offender who has been sentenced to 35-Life will not be paroled according to SB 942, they must die in prison.

The problems of SB 942 is what caused me to rail against it. But weighing the cost-benefit of the question at hand, to support or not to support, I think it best to support SB 942 to get what we want now, and struggle to pass different bills to get other parts later. Because at the end of the day, something is better than nothing at all, and we can set free a lot of condemned people who would otherwise die in prison.

For me SB 942 is a bitter pill to swallow, because there's much to be desired from SB 942. It would be easier for me to accept if the cop provision excluding parole eligibility for child offenders that killed a cop wasn't included, and if there was language in the bill that gives parole eligibility to those 'who did not kill anyone' at a term below 20 years.

Those are issues we're going to have to deal with later. But before we can get to those issues, let's support SB 942 NOW.

Thank you for listening. Peace.

Your Brother & Servant,

Shakaboona

**THE MOVEMENT**

[www.hrcoalition.org](http://www.hrcoalition.org)



## **THE MEANING OF LIFE SENTENCES AT SCI-FRACKVILLE**

Nobody can disprove that we are currently in an era of criminal/justice reform, second chances, and forgiveness & healing as we have seen happening in states like Philly and Dallas Texas; and as the country just recently witnessed Oklahoma's unprecedented mass commutation release. However, assessing the process towards development, productivity, and mental stability of individuals serving life without parole sentences in Pennsylvania's prison system requires a much broader examination than the established 'imprisonment initiatives' that stagnates and diminishes hope, and any real meaningful preparation for a favorable outcome & success; whether it's through the Pardon/Commutation process, or in preparation for the possibility of parole becoming eligible for lifers.

In light of such, I am currently serving a life without parole (death by incarceration) sentence at SCI [State Correctional Institute] Frackville that has a population of less than a1000 prisoners; and, the very limited rehabilitative resources and programs established at said prison is specifically designed for parole violators and short term inmates - excluding its, approximately, 200 lifers from the process.

In the era of reform & justice this raises several serious concerns. First, having absolutely no programming/rehabilitative platform (i.e., groups, classes, workshops, lifers/long term organization) or any active agenda for lifers at SCI Frackville means that serving a life sentence will result in having nothing to show for personal reformation upon applying for a Pardon or Commutation; in conjunction with nothing being in place to even adequately explain and help lifers with the Pardon/Commutation process is contrary and counterproductive to Pennsylvania Lt. Governor's efforts and the D.O.C. [Department of Corrections] tour where he's encouraging lifers to learn and initiate the Pardon/Commutation process.

Also, the lack of any rehabilitative programs prevents me, and other similarly situated lifers, from acclimating productively within this particular prison environment. A prison environment that only provides rehabilitative needs to a certain group of prisoners (i.e., parole violators & short term) creates profound negative effects on its lifer/long term population such as, but not limited to feelings of hopelessness, depression, stigmatization, and isolation, including attitudes & behaviors associated with intense levels of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These are

very serious factors that SCI Frackville administration ignores and refuse to address.

Identifying the extreme need for a rehabilitative platform for the lifers/long term population at SCI Frackville myself and other similarly situated lifers prepared and submitted (at various times) written proposals requesting the approval of: a lifer/long term organization, a lifer/long term pardon & commutation committee, a lifer/long term mentor initiative, and lifer/long term mental health group, to name a few. Some of these proposals were submitted way before I was transferred to Frackville, however, NONE has yet to be approved or put in place.

I was one of the many prisoners transferred from SCI Graterford in December 2017 due to their [D.O.C.] process and preparation to transition to the new SCI Phoenix, in which I landed at SCI Frackville, a prison that is not adequately equipped to address or satisfy my rehabilitative needs as a lifer.

What does this say about the PADOC mission statement to..."reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change"; when treatment and education is only being provided to some offenders within the D.O.C.?

It is way past overdue that the objective of criminal justice reform actually reflects the PADOC policy initiatives of providing individualized treatment and education to 'all' offenders, INCLUDING LIFERS & LONG TERM PRISONERS AT SCI FRACKVILLE.

Shawn M. Saunders #KC-6192 SCI Frackville  
Smart Communications / PADOC  
PO BOX 33028  
St Petersburg, Fl 33733

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*(Continued from page 43)*

To settle a civil-rights lawsuit filed last year by the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh-based Abolitionist Law Project, and two law firms on behalf of those housed on death row, the department also agreed to provide resocialization assistance as well as physical and mental health evaluations.

FROM: <https://www.inquirer.com/news/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-death-row-solitary-confinement-capital-punishment-aclu-general-population-20191118.html>

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## Hello Everyone,

A number of people have asked me, how are we coping after Shakaboona's 3<sup>rd</sup> denial for parole. In answer to your questions; it exhausted all my energy and most of my hope. I felt like I was at ground zero, beginning at the beginning. But lately, because of you all, I've been moved to pick myself up and begin this struggle (with my son) all over again; you've virtually held my hand and showed concern through phone calls, questions, letters, emails, a smile, an understanding nod of the head, and (so important) hugs.

And so, here I go again a warrior (thanks, Sandra Hill) for my son because contrary to what the Parole Board has said my son has accomplished so much on his own accord (long before there was a glimpse of hope of him ever returning home) and has met every requirement for parole as summarized below :

**Remorse and Responsibility for his crime** – Shakaboona has publicly accepted responsibility and shown remorse for the death of Suzette Richardson and the resulting harm to her family. In addition he has completed programs on Victims Awareness (2016) and Violence Prevention (2013) while in the DOC. Victims Awareness addresses identifying with the victims of crime, including one's own criminal offense(s), considering the harms done to the victim, understanding how the victim copes with the crime, and considering strategies for ending victimization.

**Peer Educator and Mentor** — To mention a few, in detail, he has been assisting illiterate inmates with reading and writing while at SCI Huntingdon in 1991, conducted African American History and Culture classes, was Chairperson of the Health Committee for the NAACP branch inside the prison, during his time at SCI Houtzdale between 2004-2008 he founded a Black History Book Club and led reading discussions. And he was recognized by DOC Counselor, William Hepner, Shakaboona's supervisor, as a Peer Educator, Mr. Marshall "*has spent considerable time and effort addressing his own belief system while modifying his thinking and therefore his behavior. Not only has he engaged this process for himself, but he is continuing to work towards the betterment of those around him.*"

**Community Activist in and Outside of the Prison** – He has a long history working with inmate organizations and community groups, serving as a member, advisor, and co-founder of many prisoner and human rights organizations. He has been a member of lifers' organizations in the prison dating back to his first years at SCI Huntingdon, where he was Secretary of the Lifer's Association, through his recent time at SCI Rockview where he was the president of the Lifers Association, to his current involvement with Lifers, Inc. at SCI Graterford. Additionally, he has been a member of organizations based outside the prison such as

C.U.R.E. and Books Through Bars, has co-founded groups such as the Families Union, Human Rights Coalition, and Families and Communities United, and he has been an advisory council member of the Human Rights Coalition, Real Cost of Prisons, Decarcerate PA, and Prison Radio.

**Strong family ties** – Shakaboona has loving relationships with his family. He is in constant communication with his mother, and has maintained close relationships to his sisters Chenell and Patti, his father Arnold, his nephew Kerry, his daughter Tiana, and his grandson.

**Re-entry Plan** – My son has a home plan where he is welcome to move in with me, his mother, or stay with his younger sister. In addition many outside groups have agreed to assist him with employment opportunities.

**Mis-conduct Free** – Shakaboona has not received any mis-conducts in the past nine years. Parole requirements are one year without mis-conducts.

**Recommendation from DOC** – My son has Parole Recommendation from the PA Department of Corrections.

I believe Shakaboona has regrouped also, as he's asked me to share his response to his recent denial of parole. (*Shakaboona asked that I also explain that his use of "crucifixion" comes from the lyrics of a song from the rap group 'Public Enemy'; Shakaboona is not implying that he is Jesus; but, does strive to be Christ like.*)

Many thanks to you all.

Mama Patt

## Pennsylvania Parole Board's Political Crucifixion of Shakaboona

By : Shakaboona, ©2019

It has been nearly a year since I, Shakaboona, was resentenced at the Criminal Justice Center in Philadelphia, PA before the Honorable Judge Jeffrey P. Minehart on May 17, 2018. Who would've thought that since my resentencing, the PAROLE BOARD would be the one dead set on having me serve a Life With Out Parole (LWOP) sentence by perpetually denying me parole release from prison? Now, after all of my efforts to positively change my life and uplift our communities, I find myself in the clutches of the merciless PA Board of Probation & Parole (PBPP). Lost in a Never-Never Land of Parole, between a "definite" numbered minimum prison sentence and an "indefinite" Life maximum sentence, with seemingly no way

(Continued on page 35)

## say what ? . . . speak up! // writings of multiplicity

*(Continued from page 34)*

out. The public needs to know that crucifixion ain't ah fiction; it's real, and as Jesus knew, it's political.

My travesty of justice began at my first Parole Board hearing in September 2018, when I was interviewed by parole board members Everett A. Gillison, Esq. and Leslie M. Grey, Esq.. Though my parole hearing went exceedingly well, on October 16, 2018, I was given a Notice of Board Decision that I was denied parole. The Parole Board gave four (4) reasons why my parole was denied and had recommended that I maintain a favorable recommendation for parole by the PA Dept. of Corrections (PADOC) and maintain a clear conduct record, and stated they will parole interview me again in nine (9) months.

People across the country were livid with the Parole Board's decision to deny me parole release and proceeded to call, email, and write personal letters to the then Parole Board Chairman Leo Dunn voicing their disagreement with the parole board's decision. I too voiced my disagreement of the Board's decision by submitting a Request for Reconsideration to Chairperson Leo Dunn on November 26, 2019, that was summarily rejected.

In June 2019, nine months later, I received what would be my second parole hearing by the Parole Board. I was given a parole hearing by parole board members Leslie M. Grey, Esq. and Anthony Moscato, and although I believed my parole hearing was at the very least average, Grey gave me the impression that she already had decided to deny me parole release before she interviewed me. During the parole review, Moscato and Grey asked me a very odd question from out of the clear blue sky, "Are you called Shakaboona?". I replied that, indeed, my name is Shakaboona. They also asked a few catch-22 questions to illicit a damning response whichever way the question is answered. I left the parole hearing feeling as if they had made me go through the motions of a perfunctory parole hearing, just to satisfy their constitutional requirement of providing me the due process of a parole hearing, so they could again "lawfully" deny me parole release. I immediately phoned my attorneys and informed them that I didn't think the parole hearing went well because the Board gave me the impression they already had their minds made up to deny me parole release before the parole hearing was held, oddly inquired about my name Shakaboona, and they purposefully asked catch-22 questions. My perception was proven to be correct. One month later, on July 1, 2019, the Parole Board denied me parole for the second time although I fulfilled their requirement to maintain a clear conduct record and maintain a favorable recommendation for parole from the PADOC.

On July 15, 2019, my attorneys from Abolitionists Law Center and Amistad Law Project submitted a 'Notice of Reconsideration and Grant of Parole' to the new PBPP Chairperson Theodore W. Johnson, outlining the reasons why my parole review did not comport with the standard that the Parole Board has set and violated my constitutional rights. Two weeks thereafter the Parole Board dismissed its July 1st parole denial decision and ordered for me to receive a new parole hearing. On August 19, 2019, I was given a new parole hearing -- making it my third parole hearing -- conducted by Moscato and former Parole Board Chairperson Leo Dunn (a male of establishment Democrat background). The parole hearing seemed positive, upbeat, and fruitful. Yet it was very brief, lasting no more than ten minutes in duration. The parole hearing looked to have went very well, and I believed I would be granted parole release this time around. But looks can be deceiving. Ten days later, on August 29, 2019, I was denied parole release for the third consecutive time in less than a year.

The first time I was denied parole release prison officials, prisoners, my attorneys, and my family & friends were in shock that I had been denied parole. The second time I was denied parole release some of the Prison Administrators, Officials, Counselors, and Guards, whom all recommended me for parole release at SCI-Rockview, approached me expressing their outrage and utter disgust at the Parole Board for denying me parole release once again. One top prison administrator, whom wishes to remain anonymous, stated to me that "Someone on the Parole Board must got an axe to grind against you". Even my fellow incarcerated men of all ethnicities and cultures were outraged by the Parole Board's denial of my parole release. Many incarcerated men stated how they have never seen a prisoner get a parole denial & nine month hit by the Parole Board, then nine months later return to the Board with an even better record than before of accomplishments, good conduct, and all the necessary recommendations for parole release, only to be denied again and receive an increased two year parole hit before they can see the parole board again, although the prisoner did not get any disciplinary infraction or new criminal charge between the two parole reviews. Normally, after an incarcerated person gets a parole denial and nine-month parole review hit (i.e., nine months must pass before he/she is again reviewed by parole), at their next parole hearing they are usually granted parole release. That being the case, then my treatment by the parole board is both abnormal and unusual.

Even if we were to give the Parole Board the benefit of the doubt, that the first parole hearing and denial of parole was legitimate, the second parole hearing and denial of parole was highly suspect and illegitimate. Because prior to both of my

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## say what ? . . . speak up! // writings of multiplicity

*(Continued from page 35)*

parole hearings, I received the PADOC's recommendation for parole release, the Parole Agent's recommendation for parole release, State Senator Sharif Street's recommendation for parole release, the People's recommendation for parole release -- as power is always with the people --, and I have had a clear conduct report for nine years. So how do I go from getting a parole denial & having 4 reasons given for said parole denial and getting a nine month parole hit at the first parole hearing, to getting a second & third parole denial & having the reasons for said parole denial increase to 9 reasons and the parole hit increase to a two year parole hit until the next time I am again reviewed by the parole board? Not only that, but two of the reasons for denial of parole given at the second parole hearing were, "Your prior unsatisfactory parole supervision history" and "The existence of federal detainers filed against you". How can that be when as a juvenile lifer I had never been on parole before and having a detainer isn't a reason for the denial of an incarcerated person's parole release when probably 90% of state prisoners has a county/state/or federal detainer held on them? There's something terribly wrong with this picture.

Let's interrogate the matter. How is it that a positive incarcerated person and role model like myself, whom have a clear conduct record for nine years/have taken public responsibility for my crime/have expressed deep remorse for my deceased victim/ and whose accomplishments in prison and in my community are well documented, can attend parole hearings on three separate occasions within a year yet be denied parole release on each occasion? Why did the Parole Board choose to double down on its decision to deny me parole release at my second and third parole hearings, increase its reasons from 4 to 9 as justification for denial of parole, and increase the time to have my next parole review from 9 months to 2 years? And why did parole members Moscato and Grey ask me "Is your name Shakaboona?" during my second parole hearing, which of course I replied in the affirmative, but why is the parole board so concerned with my name Shakaboona anyway?

Am I being politically targeted, retaliated, and discriminated against by the Parole Board? Yes, no doubt about it. But why? Is it because I've been a political leader & organizer for human rights within the Belly of The Beast as a thorn in the side of the PADOC for the past three decades and the Board just don't like that? Is it because the Board, being a cog in the oppressor's system, see me as a high political threat to their establishment? Or is it because the Parole Board greatly detest that a couple of hundred grassroots people from across the state and country had the audacity to phone call, email, and write snail mail to the Parole Board on my behalf expressing their disapproval of the Board's decision to deny me parole and calling for my immedi-

ate parole release? Which may have had the Board arrogantly say, 'Who do these people think they are making demands on us. And Who the hell is Shakaboona?!'. Could this be the reason why members of the parole board may have an axe to grind against me? Could this be the reason why Moscato and Grey asked is my name "Shakaboona"? Maybe it's all of the above reasons. It certainly seems like it is. We can't speak to the intentions or motivations of what the Parole Board members are doing exactly, but we can look at the results. Deducing the facts, we can conclude that I am being singled out by the Parole Board for "special treatment" of what may be a political retaliation tactic of perpetual parole release denials until I die in prison. After all, I still have a Death By Incarceration (DBI) sentence with my new indefinite Life With Parole imprisonment sentence. Since the parole system is not working for me, maybe the commutation process will. Only the Governor can commute my maximum sentence of Life or commute my parole to free me from the insanity of sham parole reviews and indefinite parole supervision.

My legal team and I see no benefit in appealing the parole denial to the same Parole Board members who had the opportunity to correct their sham parole hearings, unfair parole decisions, and mistreatment of me, but who chose to discard their opportunity by giving me "another sham parole hearing" and doubling down on their false reasons for justifying their illegitimate parole denial decisions. Instead of an appeal to the Parole Board, my attorneys will be taking legal action on my behalf challenging the Parole Board's sham parole reviews given to me.

To my beloved supporters, friends, fellow activists, and family, some form of action must be taken to show the PBPP that their arrogance, corruption, and injustice against me and countless incarcerated people will not go unchallenged. What we don't deal with now; we will be forced to deal with later. I have made the clarion call for "Parole Board Reform" for some time now as their corrupt policies & practices are unsurpassed by any Pennsylvania state agency that I'm aware of, because the PBPP is the only state agency that has the powers of police, prosecutor, judge, and jailer all in one without any supervision and accountability for their actions. My current ordeal with the Parole Board is just a prelude of what's to come to the incarcerated persons with DBI/LWOP sentences whenever a parole for DBI/LWOP bill is finally enacted as law in this state. The Parole Board will use their unchecked parole powers to deny hundreds of people from being parole released to society for frivolous reasons, suspect reasons, false reasons, or for no reason at all. Action is necessary; Action is warranted. As we struggle for parole eligibility for DBI sentences, we also must simultaneously struggle for "Parole Board Reform" to make sure our loved ones serving

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**THE MOVEMENT**

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## say what ? . . . speak up! // writings of multiplicity

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DBI/LWOP sentences get the second chance of parole eligibility that many of them so rightly deserve.

We will no longer seek to appeal to an Orwellian Parole Board membership that doesn't have a conscience nor recognize the humanity of incarcerated people. We seek justice & freedom for myself and other incarcerated men/women whom have been subjected to unlawful parole reviews, and we seek to do what is right -- "Speak Truth to Power" followed by "Direct Action" to expose the Parole Board's corrupt policies & practices.

Therefore, I'm asking everyone's support:

1) By assisting and supporting me in seeking a "Commutation of Parole" of my indefinite Life term of parole from the PA Board of Pardons, to help me get free, stay free, and remove me from the tyranny of the Parole Board and a Lifetime of parole supervision. You may contact me at: *Smart Communications/PADOC, Kerry Marshall/BE-7826/SCI-Rockview, PO Box 33028, St Petersburg, FL 33733.*

2) Begin using the Parole Board's current political targeting and retaliation of me with unlawful parole denials as a prime example for the need of Parole Board Reform - let's make my parole situation known at public events & on social media platforms.

3) Begin speaking out at public events, in newspapers, on radio, and on social media platforms against the PBPP's unjust parole review policies & practices in the same breath when you're speaking out for parole eligibility for those with DBI sentences.

4) By giving a **donation** that will help with my Legal Defense and survival, enabling me to purchase phone calls and emails. You may send through JPay to Kerry Marshall #BE-7826.

Let us fight the good fight y'all, because freedom ain't free.  
From the Belly of The Beast,  
I am Shakaboona.

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## **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORGIVENESS**

By Bray "Jibril" Murray

I write here for the first time, IN RESPONSE to the remarks of VICTIM RIGHT EXPERT "Jennifer Storm" (that were published in ISSUE #38 of THE MOVEMENT at page 4), wherein she stated:

"How do we balance the need for necessary reform with the inherent need for safety, justice and -yes- retribution?"

I (like most Lifers serving sentences, WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE), do not personally know Jennifer Storm, and can't speak to the underlying motives of her comments. And, even though some of my fellow Lifers may assume Ms. Storm's comments to be self-serving, one must grudgingly admit that she raises a valid question, that we as Lifers must give serious consideration to, and seek to answer and resolve. That is, if we (who are still incarcerated) hope to one day rejoin and reintegrate into the Communities at large (that we ONCE caused so much havoc, grief and pain in).

In my opinion, the answer and solution to Ms. Storm's question will never reveal itself to us, unless and until we (as Lifers) embrace FORGIVENESS and the tremendous RESPONSIBILITIES that comes with it. Hence, if a Lifer has not YET come to FORGIVE him or herself for the precious life they had violently ended, nor are remorseful for it, then certainly they can't realistically expect forgiveness, compassion and leniency from others.

Neither, will the Lifers, who are UNABLE to embrace FORGIVENESS, etc., be alleviated of the tremendous guilt they must bear in their head everyday. To best understand what I mean, I would like to acquaint THE MOVEMENT's readership with a lesson in forgiveness, from the late Tammi Bakker.

Everyone remembers Tammi Bakker as the wife to the Pioneer Televangelist Jim Bakker, and during one of their televised sermonettes Tammi dropped some wisdom on the subject: "The Burden of Sin". In which, she equated it with the punishment and retribution visited upon a man or woman for murder, under the Ancient Talmudic laws of the tribes of Israel.

According to Ms. Bakker, a man or woman guilty of murder, was banished from the tribe into the wilderness WITH THE BODY OF THEIR MURDERED VICTIM FIRMLY TIED OR STRAPPED TO THEIR BACK. Hence, forcing the murderer to bear the border of their sin/crime, while wandering in the wilderness.

For most, Ms. Bakker further explained, the weight of their sin (or victim's body) eventually exact justice on the murderer by causing his or her death in the wilderness. However, in the very rare case that the sinner survives his or her divinely decreed punishment, then the same Talmudic law also decreed that they be forgiven, and allowed to rejoin the tribe.

It has often been said, "that for every physical act there is a spiritual counterpart." And although, I and other Lifers have not been forced to carry the actual dead body of our victim(s) strapped to our back (during these long decades of exile into incarceration), we have however, had to carry the guilt of our sin (that we killed another human being) in the deepest chambers of our heart and mind.

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Which is, in deed, a tremendous burden to bear, that has and always will torment us, and exact contrition from the Lifer; whether he or she is free or still in captivity. Thus, I remind my fellow Lifers that “FORGIVENESS” of self, and from others specifically, is a weighty responsibility demanding great sacrifice and service from us all. For it is written, “to whom much is given, much [more] is expected”, for the Lifer to prove all naysayers (like Jennifer Storm) wrong. Especially, those Lifers currently on parole.

In closing, I would like to thank the Editorial staff of “THE MOVEMENT” News Magazine for providing the incarcerated (everywhere) a platform to air their grievances, and share their revolutionary ideals of how we can “SET AT LIBERTY” the hundreds and thousands of poor/disenfranchised men and women victimized by the Prison Industrial Complex. Also, I extend my thanks to all members of the HRC for their selfless service and sacrifices in the the struggle to secure freedom, justice and equality for oppress people everywhere.

Bray “Jibril” Murray / #CG-8958 / SCI-DALLAS  
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St Petersburg, Fl 33733

Even though the person’s RHU confinement may not be indefinite, said policy/practice is worse than the California prison policies that were struck down/stopped in the Ashker v. Edmund Brown (Governor of California) 4:09-CV-05796 (H.D. California, 2015), case settlement in 2015. It’s worse than California’s unconstitutional policies because California policies only dealt with prisoners who allegedly associated with gang members or were gang members. While SCI Greene’s policy encompasses any prisoner alleged to be an associate of anyone allegedly involved in a “Prohibited Act.” The policy makes prisoners responsible for the actions of other prisoners and encourages prisoners to attempt to control and “police” other prisoners; which is dangerous and violates the “DOC Code of Ethics”: No employee shall permit an inmate to be in control or exercise authority over other inmates.

After 2 years, SCI Greene’s fake Violence Reduction Strategy policy has proven to be ineffective, abusive, and intended to reduce violence.

Peace.

Richard Noble, BX9351, SCI-Greene  
Smart Communications / PADO  
PO BOX 33028  
St Petersburg, Fl 33733

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## APPROVING WRONG

10/01/2019

In 2017, SCI Greene made a policy, DC-ADM 801-GRN-“Violence Reduction Strategy” that permits prison staff to place a prisoner in the Restricted Housing Unit (RHU) on administrative custody status simply because they are known to associate with a prisoner who commits a “Prohibited Act” (anything from drug possession to a fight) even if they are in a different part of the prison when the incident happens and had nothing to do with the incident.

SCI Greene staff were already doing such before the 2017 policy was made. An unnecessary amount of people would be placed in the RHU allegedly under investigation for a situation that only involved one or two people and said “investigations” are often used as guise for other things. Many prisoners complained that it violated DOC policy and the US constitution for them to be restricted and placed under “investigation” under such dubious circumstances. So, instead of stopping staff’s violation of DOC policy, the DOC changed DOC policy so that SCI Greene’s staff’s wrong is now defined as “right.”

## COLOR INJUSTICES: Racism, Prejudice, Bigotry, Ignorance.

Could it be that some people are oblivious to the hurt and confusion they cause by spreading hate? Words of extreme loathing and looks of total repulsion. All because of the color of a person's skin?

MINORITY! Smaller in number, differing from others. Such bull crap! Aren't we all made different in the splendor of our Heavenly Creator? We have so much to learn from one another. Isn't it implanted within us to love and help our fellowman? Is it not what the Bible teaches us and for others, The Noble Quran? Why does it seem like the world is going backwards in time and I'm just waiting for the lynching and hound dogs howl?! My name is not Black Betty or my little black girl! It is Sarita Miller or if some should prefer here in my present surroundings OJ-3158 will do.

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Coming to prison has placed me in regions I never knew existed on the map. This experience has thrown me into the pages of my childhood black history books giving me a first hand exposure to the primitive convictions of others.

No where else here at SCI Cambridge Springs did I undergo such an emotional determinant of racial insults than when I started working in the prison dietary. Standing up for myself caused me to endure retaliation resulting in the loss of my job. I was beyond upset because most months, I'm not ashamed to admit, I live off my pay! I served without question under the scrutiny of harassment most days. I pushed mops with dignity and cleared tables with pride.

For my Lord says in Zechariah 4:10 Who despises the day of small things? Majority of women here would rather take a misconduct, than to work in the kitchen here at SCI Cambridge. However I stuck it out because I'm not a stranger to hard work and cooking is my passion.

If my job is offered back to me do I take the risk to lose everything I've worked for in 16 years to gain my freedom under the possibility of vengeance from a staff person.

I'm not looking for a response to clap back on a D.O.C. employee. I just felt the need to reach out to all people who are incarcerated black or white red or brown who have under gone the suffering penalties of racism within the Department of Corrections. You are not alone, we may not all be physically as one but our voice soar together and these injustices do not go unnoticed.

Thank you,

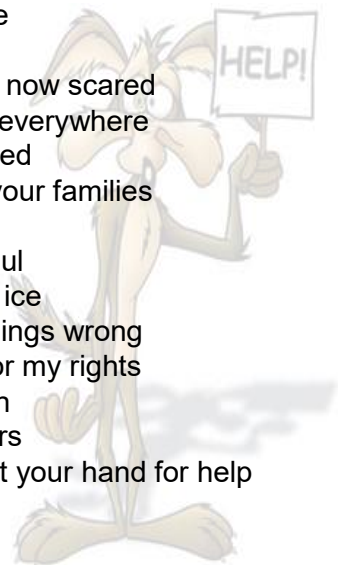
Sarita Miller/ #OJ-3158 / SCI-Cambridge Springs  
Smart Communications / PADO  
PO BOX 33028  
St Petersburg, FL 33733

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8	7	3	4	1	9	2	5	6
2	9	4	6	3	5	1	8	7
6	1	5	7	2	8	4	3	9

## ***Mine Wasn't There***

You hoped I would fail  
 You prayed for my fall  
 For in me you seen no future  
 And what you did, you knew was wrong  
 There four walls are meant for animals  
 Because that's what cages are used for  
 Your torture chambers are breaking souls  
 My life is meaningless to you  
 Less than dirt on the floor  
 If you would stop and pay attention  
 You will see what you are creating  
 It's that monster in your closet  
 The one you always hated  
 Its shadow blocks the lights  
 Only comes out certain times  
 You see it in your sleep  
 It doesn't want you alive  
 Backed into a corner  
 An animal would do evil things  
 Frustration turns into anxiety  
 And that turns into rage  
 You see us dying for senseless reasons  
 You overlook those facts  
 Brainwashing massive amounts of human beings  
 Just to cover up your tracks  
 If money is worth more than life  
 Then why is anybody here  
 The answer to that easy  
 Because the oppressor is now scared  
 Those monsters are now everywhere  
 Yeah, the one's you created  
 They cook and clean for your families  
 And still carry that hatred  
 For in my heart I had a soul  
 Now that box is filled with ice  
 You degrade me like nothings wrong  
 When I'm only standing for my rights  
 In your eyes I see the pain  
 The hurt, the fear, the tears  
 But when you reached out your hand for help  
 Mines wasn't there.



Akeem Hutchinson

## **I**t's said, "Silence is Golden"

and this may be true in certain situations, like when dealing with a trusted and proven teacher or when dealing with elders. But when it comes to our rights or our freedom, silence is NOT golden! When it comes to our rights and freedoms, silence is suicide! A matter must be addressed in order to be resolved. A matter CANNOT be addressed with silence. To address a matter in silence is to make a "tacit" agreement or a "tacit" admission; to not say anything is the same as agreeing with everything, i.e. "tacit agreement or tacit admission."

I know from first hand experience the benefit of speaking up and addressing what needs to be addressed. On March 30, 2011 my employment was taken from me for something as simple as eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. The actions taken against me were not in accordance with the established DOC rules and nor were the actions taken against me a good faith effort to maintain or restore discipline but rather was done intentionally, maliciously and sadistically to cause harm and to significantly increase my punishment. This is a violation of my ex post facto protections of the constitution. This is inexcusable as the courts have highlighted to the agents of our government in order to use their power to deal with their personal apprehension at the expense of others.

It took me about three months of continued paperwork but the end result was me keeping my rate of pay, getting a different job as well as compensation for lost wages. My victory is small but a victor nonetheless. It's the small victories that gives us the much needed strength for the Bigger Battles that are to come. In my opinion as long as prisons are overcrowded, where recidivism rates are high and emphasis is put on incarceration and not rehabilitation, then the battle CANNOT end.

Silence is simple and requires no study, no headaches, and no tedious paperwork. Silence requires nothing and if silence is the choice of action more than likely that individual will have nothing and lost everything. It was said that giving up essential liberty to obtain a small, temporary safety deserves neither liberty nor safety and will lose both. To speak out, to be active does require some work and at times it can be a bit demanding and frustrating; it will require paperwork and copies but in the end you will have the experience of what is needed when it comes to demanding your rights to be respected. You will also be able to assist the next person who may find themselves similarly situated and you're that much closer to securing your freedom.

We The People have a more power than we give ourselves credit. The Preamble of the Pennsylvania constitution states: We, the People of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the Blessings of civil and religious liberty,

and humbly invoking his guidance, do ordain and establish this constitution.

Then under Political Powers, Section 2 says: ALL power is inherent in the People and all free governments are funded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think proper.

Life is a struggle and to struggle is a part of life.

Something as simple and as delicate as a butterfly cannot exist without first going through the "struggle" of emerging from its cocoon. If we need a matter to be addressed or some type of change to be made, these things cannot be done if we remain in silence.

Mr. Corey Taft, FR2169, SCI Frackville  
Smart Communications / PADO  
PO BOX 33028  
St Petersburg, Fl 33733

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## **Special Salute to The Editor Brother Shakaboona, And Guest Editor Brother Devin Salim Rouse, In Helping Expose The Horrific 2nd Degree Scandal!**

For me and many of the 1100 others around the state of Pennsylvania, a Second Degree "LWOP" prison sentence has been the most pain filled, and life altering experience that we've ever faced, come to know and live day in and day out. For all those who don't know, if your love one was 18 or older when their crime happened and they were convicted of 2nd Degree either they never had the intent to kill or never actually killed anyone, their actual sentence boils down to life without parole. Thus, in spite of a person being "actually innocent", "wrongfully convicted", or "completely rehabilitated" from their participation in their 2nd degree murder conviction, the only true hope one has for freedom or a second chance opportunity to be FREE is to either receive a blessed ruling from the courts, a pardon by the governor, compassionate release (if terminally ill), or DEATH BY INCARCERATION. After reading the Spring issue #37 of the Movement, I instantly became more conscious

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## say what ? . . . speak up! // writings of multiplicity

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issue #37 of the Movement, I instantly became more conscious and sensitive to the fact that I am not the only one suffering from years of this brutal "Second Degree Sentencing Scandal" here in Pennsylvania.

After reading the very powerful issue and coming to learn of some of the many untold and "forgotten stories" of so many suffering from LWOP under 2nd Degree throughout Pennsylvania, I instantly realized that like myself there are "other people" like Brother Shakabona and Devin Salim Rouse who also show much care, concern and "movement" about this very extreme, brutal and highly constitutionally questionable statutory travesty that continues to follow each and every 2nd Degree murder conviction in PA.

Seeing these two brothers and the entire Movement step up and shine some well needed light on this very dark situation brought tears of joy upon my heart! Considering such GOOD WORK can only serve as a reliable vehicle to further educate, motivate more people to keep talking about, advocating for and taking even bigger steps towards ending LWOP under 2nd Degree murder convictions in PA. Such a retroactive act of justice "in an actual change in Pennsylvania's current LWOP under the 2nd Degree scandal" will also serve as a huge "first step stepping stone" in eliminating LWOP for All Lifers; they're currently serving a 1st Degree murder conviction or two consecutive 3rd Degree murder convictions. If we really want change we have to start somewhere! Abolishing LWOP under the 2nd Degree by way of the courts or through legislation seems like the perfect place to start!

I can only begin to hope that these brothers and the Movement will continue to serve as a primary source to keep people talking and informed about some of the many judicial injustices that continue to plague and pollute a criminal justice system that continues to kill us slowly and keep many of us far removed and exiled from our families and communities that are mostly located within the inner cities of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

In honor of the people who really advocate in our regard and on behalf of the hundreds of people in PA serving LWOP under 2nd Degree I would like to extend a special thanks and acknowledgment as well as a heart felt salutation to Editor Kerry Shakabona Marshall, Guest Editor Devin Salim Rouse and the entire Movement magazine for the remarkable work, research and tenacious detailed effort that was "put it on" that Spring 2019 #37 issue!

#VeryGoodWork

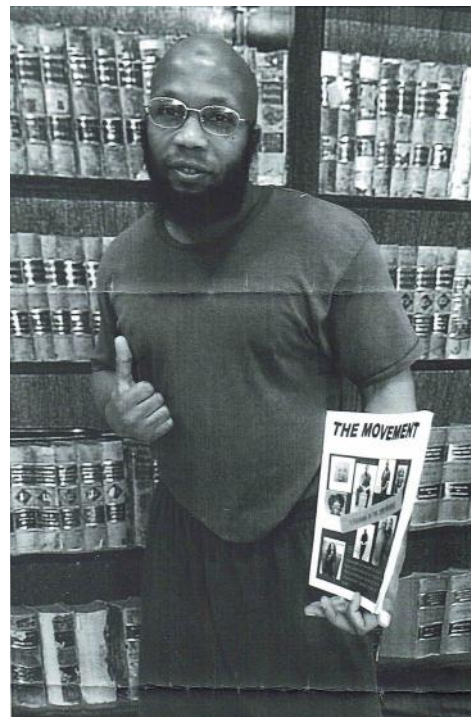
Sincerely,

Tyreem Rivers@SCIDallas

*For the sake of potentially fortifying legal minds/ideas (in the future) as a means to further aid in helping change this huge/current 2nd Degree LWOP problem in PA, please feel free to contact me:*

*Tyreem M. Rivers, #DK2865  
Smart Comm-PA DOC, SCI-Dallas  
PO Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733*

*Add me to your Connect Network account  
([www.connectnetwork.com](http://www.connectnetwork.com)) or  
Contact me on Facebook, TyReeMjusWin*



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# What's The News!

The Daily Appeal

By: Vaidya Gullapalli (@vgullap)

## In the Spotlight The way forward against death by incarceration in PA

Yesterday, the Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board looked at two overlapping injustices in Pennsylvania: the large number of people sentenced to die in prison and the use of this sentence against people who are considered accomplices to a crime but did not kill anyone and are convicted of felony murder. It also discussed a mechanism for addressing these problems: the state's clemency process, sidelined for decades but now experiencing a revival through the leadership of Lt. Gov. John Fetterman. A sentence of life in prison is an extreme punishment, yet these sentences are common in the United States. The **Sentencing Project** has found that 1 in 7 people in prison in the U.S. are serving a life sentence or what, by virtue of sentence length, is its equivalent. There are more people sentenced to die in prison than there were people in prison in the early 1970s.

Pennsylvania is one of the worst U.S. states on the matter of life without parole sentences. There are **more than 5,300 people** in prison for life in the state. (In absolute numbers, only Florida has more people in prison for life.) These sentences have been incredibly concentrated, with more than half of those people sentenced in Philadelphia. And while life without parole sentences have been used disproportionately against Black and Latinx people across the country, Pennsylvania is even **worse than the national average** on this measure.

These numbers are the product of the tough-on-crime sentencing laws that swept the nation in the '80s. In **commentary** for the Inquirer in January, Ashley Nellis of the Sentencing Project and co-author of "**The Meaning of Life: The Case for Abolishing Life Sentences**," identified three sets of laws that contribute to Pennsylvania's flood of life sentences. First, a life sentence in Pennsylvania is automatically a life without parole sentence. (It is one of only five states where parole is not

available for anyone sentenced to life in prison.) Second, life sentences are automatic for anyone convicted of first- or second-degree murder. This includes felony murder, in which a person who is considered an accomplice to murder but did not kill anyone, which is second-degree murder. Finally, the state charges children as young as 14 as adults, resulting in, as Nellis wrote, "the nation's—and the world's—largest population of lifers who were juveniles at the time of their offense."

The problem has been clear for some time. State lawmakers have introduced bills to **restore parole eligibility** for some people sentenced to life in prison. There have also been legislative efforts to address the injustice of felony murder sentencing. These bills have not yet passed in the legislature.

At the local level, in Philadelphia at least, there has been an attempt to correct the practice of overcharging that contributed to so many people being sentenced to death in prison. For too long, at the local level, district attorneys have used harsh sentences as a tool to extract pleas and have made bringing the highest charges possible the default. These charging decisions, made by prosecutors with full information about sentence lengths (unlike jurors, who lack this information at trial), make extremely long sentences the norm. Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner is trying to **change this**, introducing a policy of carefully considering the full spectrum of charges available in homicide cases and evaluating which is most appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

These necessary efforts all address the front-end and the flow into the prison system. But as is the case nationally, it is important to couple these efforts with mechanisms to **release the people** who are already in prison. In Pennsylvania, Lt. Gov. Fetterman, chairperson of the state Board of Pardons, has made **restarting the clemency process, including for people convicted of violent crimes**, a priority. Since Governor Tom Wolf took office, he has granted **commutations to 11 people** who had been sentenced to die in prison. In September, the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons **recommended commutations** for nine people in prison for life. In Philadelphia, the DA's office **Conviction Review Unit** examines cases for unjust sentencing as well as wrongful convictions.

The work to address Pennsylvania's incarceration system has been underway for a long time. The movements that propelled Krasner to Philadelphia DA have also envisioned the **review of extreme sentences**. People who have lost loved ones both to homicides and to the prison system have described themselves as "**dual victims**" and called for an end to life without parole sentences.

Last year, the Philadelphia-based Abolitionist Law Center issued a **report** on life without parole sentences in Pennsylvania and recommendations for ending the practice.

"The situation of permanent imprisonment for more than 5,300 people in Pennsylvania is untenable," the authors wrote. "It does not have to be this way. In the vast majority of the world, it is not. DBI [death by incarceration] sentences are another peculiarly U.S.-based phenomenon. Around much of the world such sentences are not permitted, and where they are they are not imposed at anywhere near the levels that they are imposed in this country. The racial demographics of DBI sentences are a scandal and a human rights travesty."

And these sentences do not just affect people in prison. They afflict families and cripple communities. "The consequences of DBI sentencing extend far beyond the prison walls," the authors continued. "The total absence of redemptive opportunity hardens punitive attitudes in society by legitimating the most destructive and divisive impulses within people: fear, vengeance, racism, and cruelty."

To fight to end death by incarceration sentences, they wrote, is also to fight for a society ordered around different values. "Ultimately, the fight to abolish DBI sentences is a fight over what type of society we want to live in, whether we will organize around values of restoration and redemption and healing or continue down the path of fear and stigma and vengeance. The fight is about how much injustice people will tolerate from the government."

From: <https://mailchi.mp/theappeal/daily-appeal-347407?e=12d5437da4>

(Continued on page 43)

**THE MOVEMENT**

[www.hrcoalition.org](http://www.hrcoalition.org)

# What's The News!

(Continued from page 42)

## Maryland trio set free after being wrongfully jailed for 36 years



Alfred Chestnut, Andrew Stewart and Ransom Watkins had been sentenced to life in 1984 for killing a 14-year-old boy a year earlier. They were freed in Baltimore on Monday after a judge cleared their convictions following a review of their case.

The case was reopened this year after Mr. Chestnut sent a letter to Baltimore's Conviction Integrity Unit. He included evidence he had uncovered last year.

Mr. Chestnut, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Watkins were arrested as teenagers in November 1983 following the death of DeWitt Duckett, who was shot in the neck on his way to class at a Baltimore junior high school and had his Georgetown University jacket stolen. DeWitt's death received widespread press coverage. It was the first fatal shooting of a student in a Baltimore public school.

"These three men were convicted, as children, because of police and prosecutorial misconduct," Baltimore state attorney Marilyn Mosby said after the men were released.

In a statement, her office said "detectives targeted the three men, all 16-year-old black boys, using coaching and coercion of other teenage witnesses to make their case".

Prosecutors said during the initial investigation police ignored and withheld reports from multiple witnesses identifying another person as the killer, and that trial wit-

nesses failed to identify the three teenagers in photo line-ups. All trial witnesses have now recanted evidence, Ms. Mosby said.

"I don't think that today is a victory, it's a tragedy. And we need to own up to our responsibility for it," she said.

The other suspect died in 2002.

Case documents had been sealed by a judge, but Mr. Chestnut obtained them last year with a public records request. At a press conference, Mr. Watkins said "this should never have happened".

"This fight is not over," he said. "You all will hear from us again."

Ms. Mosby also announced the launch of a new programme - Resurrection After Exoneration - to provide services to help exonerated people reintegrate into society, including support for education and mental and physical health.

She said the state of Maryland did not have legislation that guided compensation for those falsely convicted of a crime, and that she would work to change that.

Currently, the Board of Public Works has the authority to direct compensation.

In October, the board awarded about \$9m (£7m) in payments to five men who were wrongfully imprisoned for decades. Walter Lomax - who served 38 years for murder - received about \$3m, the largest payout ever made by the state for a wrongful conviction.

### Overtured US convictions

-The Central Park Five were teenagers convicted of the rape and attempted murder of a New York City jogger in a highly publicized 1989 case. They served 6-13 years in prison before their release, and later were awarded nearly \$45m in compensation

-Ricky Jackson received a death sentence and served 39 years in Ohio prisons until 2017, when a witness recanted, saying police had pressured him. Mr Jackson served the longest-ever sentence for any US death row prisoner who was eventually exonerated

-Robert Jones was released in 2015 after serving 23 years in New Orleans for crimes including killing a British tourist, when another man was proven to have

committed the crime

-Richard Phillips was freed in Detroit in 2018 after spending 45 years in jail for a murder he did not commit. He received \$1.5m, and his artworks, which he continues to paint, now sell for thousands of dollars

FROM: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-50557396>

## Pennsylvania will no longer hold death-row prisoners in endless solitary confinement

by Samantha Melamed, November 18, 2019

After nearly two decades in death row solitary confinement in a Pennsylvania state prison, Jimmy Dennis could no longer endure the humiliation of being strip-searched and shackled to move between the cage of his 8-by-12-foot cell, the cage of a work station in the law library, the cage of the small, fenced-in exercise yard, and the cage of a stall in the secure visiting room, where his daughter would cry when she saw him in handcuffs and chains on the other side of a glass barrier.

So, in 2008, he stopped leaving his cell.

"I went for years with no shower, no library, no nothing," said Dennis, who was released from prison in 2017 after a federal judge found that he was wrongly convicted of killing a teenage girl for her gold earrings in 1992 because prosecutors withheld key evidence. But he still has not recovered from the trauma. "It's like chipping away at your soul on so many different levels, and you feel like you're literally suffocating in your own skin."

On Monday, Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections agreed to sweeping changes that will allow the 136 people sentenced to death to enjoy many of the same rights as those in the general population: to be out of their cells 42.5 hours a week or more, to use the phone at least 15 minutes each day, and to have contact visits with family who have, in many cases, not hugged their loved ones in decades.

(Continued on page 33)

# What's The News!

## Correctional Officers in Baltimore Charged With Using Excessive Force on Inmates

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN / AP

December 4, 2019



(BALTIMORE) — More than two dozen correctional officers in Baltimore were charged Tuesday with using excessive force on prisoners at state-operated jails in a city plagued by decades of institutional corruption, inside and outside jailhouse walls.

The 25 indicted officers are accused of assaulting and threatening detainees at correctional facilities, tampering with evidence and falsifying documents, said Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby, whose office secured the indictments.

Maryland corrections secretary Robert Green said all the indicted officers have been on administrative leave since 2018, when the state Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services began investigating the allegations.

Indicted officers used social media to publicly promote their "reputation and successes," and they furtively used winks,

nods and other body language to warn each other about the presence of supervisors and other "non-members," the indictment says.

Gov. Larry Hogan said in a statement that his administration has no tolerance for corruption in the state's correctional system.

"Our correctional officers have one of the most difficult jobs in all of public safety, and we will not let the criminal behavior of the few tarnish the great work of the nearly 5,000 dedicated officers who serve with distinction every single day," he said.

Hogan, a Republican, said the department's anti-corruption efforts have led to the arrests and convictions of more than 200 officers, inmates and "citizen accomplices."

In 2015, Maryland closed the men's section of a state-run Baltimore jail that was notorious for its decrepit conditions, criminal activity and corruption. In 2013, a federal indictment exposed a sophisticated smuggling ring operating inside the Baltimore City Detention Center, involving dozens of gang members and correctional officers. The investigation also revealed that a jailhouse gang leader had impregnated four female guards.

Corruption has infected many corners of Baltimore's city government.

Most recently, disgraced former mayor Catherine Pugh pleaded guilty to federal charges stemming from sales of her self-published children's books. Another former mayor, Sheila Dixon, left office in 2010 as part of a plea deal for misappropriating about \$500 in gift cards meant for needy families.

The city's corruption-riddled police department remains under a federal consent decree following the April 2015 death of a young black man, Freddie Gray, while in police custody. The department also has been rocked by a string of indictments and guilty pleas by task force officers accused of extortion, robbery, falsifying evidence and reselling seized drugs.

Mosby said 21 of the 25 indicted officers were taken into custody Tuesday. All were members of a tactical unit with a paramilitary command structure operating inside four detention facilities in Baltimore and Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

The indicted officers face a combined total 236 counts, including charges of assault and participating in a criminal gang, Mosby said.

Mosby said the officers used violence and intimidation to "maintain its dominance and its operational territory" inside the jails.

"All 25 of these correctional officers have allegedly abused their power and abused our trust," she added.

The indictment includes alleged offenses against 25 prisoners and incidents that occurred as far back as 2016, authorities said.

"This case represents our strong effort to root out people who don't belong in the field where public safety and rehabilitation is the mission," Green, the corrections secretary, told reporters. "This is a disturbing case, but it does not represent nor should it cast a shadow on the commitment and integrity of the exceptional correctional professionals in this department."

FROM: <https://time.com/5743643/baltimore-correctional-officers-excessive-force/>

*If any prisoner, family member, or community activist would like to submit an article that is critical of the state and county prison systems, courts, D.A. offices, police, capitalist corporate America, and the government, just forward your article to the HRC's Newsletter Department for possible printing.*

## In the Spotlight

# The way forward against death by incarceration in Pennsylvania

Yesterday, the Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board looked at two overlapping injustices in Pennsylvania: the large number of people sentenced to die in prison and the use of this sentence against people who are considered accomplices to a crime but did not kill anyone and are convicted of felony murder. It also discussed a mechanism for addressing these problems: the state's clemency process, sidelined for decades but now experiencing a revival through the leadership of Lt. Gov. John Fetterman. A sentence of life in prison is an extreme punishment, yet these sentences are common in the United States. The **Sentencing Project** has found that 1 in 7 people in prison in the U.S. are serving a life sentence or what, by virtue of sentence length, is its equivalent. There are more people sentenced to die in prison than there were people in prison in the early 1970s.

Pennsylvania is one of the worst U.S. states on the matter of life without parole sentences. There are **more than 5,300 people** in prison for life in the state. (In absolute numbers, only Florida has more people in prison for life.) These sentences have been incredibly concentrated, with more than half of those people sentenced in Philadelphia. And while life without parole sentences have been used disproportionately against Black and Latinx people across the country, Pennsylvania is even **worse than the national average** on this measure.

These numbers are the product of the tough-on-crime sentencing laws that swept the nation in the '80s. In **commentary** for the Inquirer in January, Ashley Nellis of the Sentencing Project and co-author of "**The Meaning of Life: The Case for Abolishing Life Sentences**," identified three sets of laws that contribute to Pennsylvania's flood of life sentences. First, a life sentence in Pennsylvania is automatically a life without parole sentence. (It is one of only five states where parole is not available for anyone sentenced to life in prison.) Second, life sentences are automatic for anyone convicted of first- or second-degree murder. This includes felony murder, in which a person who is considered an accomplice to murder but did not kill anyone, which is second-degree murder. Finally, the state charges children as young as 14 as adults, resulting in, as Nellis wrote, "the nation's—and the world's—largest population of lifers who were juveniles at the time of their offense."

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"The situation of permanent imprisonment for more than 5,300 people in Pennsylvania is untenable," the authors wrote. "It does not have to be this way. In the vast majority of the world, it is not. DBI [death by incarceration] sentences are another peculiarly U.S.-based phenomenon. Around much of the world such sentences are not permitted, and where they are they are not imposed at anywhere near the levels that they are imposed in this country. The racial demographics of DBI sentences are a scandal and a human rights travesty."

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### The Daily Appeal

By Vaidya Gullapalli (@vgullap)

<https://mailchi.mp/theappeal/daily-appeal-347407?e=12d5437da4>

(Continued from page 29)

found myself caught up in the daily politics of prison and we all know what that means: worried about everything but freedom, which is and should be our main objective. I was once in some ways oblivious to the fact that I was sentenced to die in prison. I had the honor to surround myself with brothers such as Shakaboona, Supreme-Craig Saunders and Romansch to name a few. I want to salute Mook Maurice Able, Mosa Christopher Goodwin, Tito Fernando Real, Kyle Garlington Cali, Vito Danny Johnson, Lil Bucky, Rafiq Dixon, Sheem, Esteem Haskins, 40 Kyle Little, Bates Derrick Spivey, Heav Derrick White, Harold Murray III fiq, Stretch Darius Flewellen-brothers who fought every step of the way to remain alive to see their families again. I take on the challenges and encourage others; including myself to do more to assist the organizations that fight on a daily basis to ensure we join them in their quest for our freedom. I wise man once said one does not experience true freedom until it has been taken away and regains it. Let's get to it! Embrace and hold on to those who possess the want and to push forward in order to create avenues so we prevail. Until next time...

### REMEMBER THE RISK TAKERS!!!

Smart Com-PA DOC

Fatih Anderson/ HT3775/ SCI Greene

PO Box 33028

St. Petersburg, FL 33733



From HRC



Thank you to **RESIST, New World Foundation, and numerous others** for their assistance. This **October 23rd, 2019 CADBI Rally** was huge; and, a step towards justice, healing and redemption with testimony from people who are dual victims and most impacted by mass incarceration.

**Human Rights Coalition**

**P.O. Box 34580**

**Philadelphia, PA 19101**



## **HELP US SHUT DOWN SCI FAYETTE**

### **A PRISON BUILT ON TOP OF A FORMER TOXIC COAL WASTE DUMP**

The Human Rights Coalition (HRC), Center for Coalfield Justice (CCJ), and the Abolitionist Law Center (ALC) have found that due to the

**40 million tons of waste, two coal slurry ponds, and millions of cubic yards of coal combustion waste SCI Fayette is inescapably situated in the midst of a massive toxic waste dump. The people in prison are not being provided clean water and they are not being treated for the following health concerns:**

- More than 81% of responding prisoners (61/75) reported respiratory, throat, and sinus conditions, including shortness of breath, chronic coughing, sinus infections, lung infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, extreme swelling of the throat, as well as sores, cysts, and tumors in the nose, mouth, and throat.
- 68% (51/75) of responding prisoners experienced gastrointestinal problems, including heart burn, stomach pains, diarrhea, ulcers, ulcerative colitis, bloody stools, and vomiting.
- 52% (39/75) reported experiencing adverse skin conditions, including painful rashes, hives, cysts, and abscesses.
- Eleven prisoners died from cancer at SCI Fayette between January of 2010 and December of 2013. Another six prisoners have reported being diagnosed with cancer at SCI Fayette, and a further eight report undiagnosed tumors and lumps.

**Those who live and work in the area around the dump have a right to a clean environment, and have a common cause with those who are locked up at SCI Fayette. We would like to work in solidarity with residents and form strategies for protecting the health, safety, and human rights of all people living and working near this dump.**

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/vbbsu-water-for-all?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cp+share-sheet](https://www.gofundme.com/f/vbbsu-water-for-all?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet)