

THE MOVEMENT

Fall 2017
Issue #33

Human Rights Coalition
Dedicated to Protecting the
HUMAN RIGHTS of All!

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



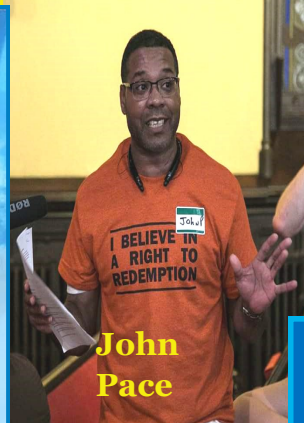
Jeffery



Charles Brown



Jerry Givovanni Reid



John
Pace



Barry Ryan



Vincent 'Sharif'



Hayward
'Red Dog'
Fennell



Luis Suave Gonzales



Shavonne Robbins



Paulette
Carrington



Kempis
'Ghani' Song-
ster



Courtney
Boyd



Bobby
Harris

2018
A
Few
Good
Returning
Citizens
&
More
To
Come!
Welcome Home
from
HRC

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights turns 70

Let's stand up for equality, justice and human dignity

Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December – the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year, Human Rights Day kicks off a year-long campaign to mark the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being -- regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.



Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, (United States) holding a Declaration of Human Rights
© UN Photo

Drafted by representatives of diverse legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration sets out universal values and a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. It establishes the equal dignity and worth of every person. Thanks to the Declaration, and States' commitments to its principles, the dignity of millions has been uplifted and the foundation for a more just world has been laid. While its promise is yet to be fully realized, the very fact that it has stood the test of time is testament to the enduring universality of its perennial values of equality, justice and human dignity.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights empowers us all. The principles enshrined in the Declaration are as relevant today as they were in 1948. We need to stand up for our own rights and those of others. We can take action in our own daily lives, to uphold the rights that protect us all and thereby promote the kinship of all human beings.

#StandUp4HumanRights

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights empowers us all.
- Human rights are relevant to all of us, every day.
- Our shared humanity is rooted in these universal values.
- Equality, justice and freedom prevent violence and sustain peace.
- Whenever and wherever humanity's values are abandoned, we all are at greater risk.

We need to stand up for our rights and those of others.

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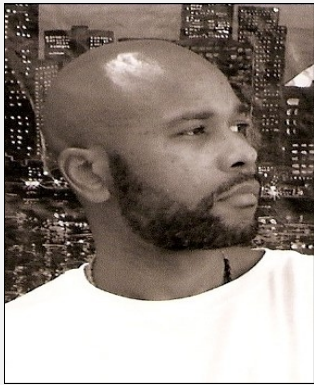
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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR



*Bro. Shakaboona, Co-Editor
Email: Shakaboona41@gmail.com*

Greetings Everyone!

Welcome to The Movement, a prisoners' HUMAN RIGHTS MAGAZINE.

2017 is officially over.

We now begin a brand new year of 2018, another opportunity in time for self-improvement, among other things, from the Old Man into the New Man. But time moves onward, and waits for no one. That's why we must be on time, with time, in everything we do, lest we do things out of due season and our works bear no fruit.

Speaking of doing things in due season, in Philly, CADBI, HRC, and DPA are doing a great deal of work throughout Pennsylvania around getting Child Lifer prisoners paroled, ending the abuse & torture of Solitary Confinement, and seeking Parole Eligibility for all prisoners serving Life Without Parole (LWOP). We hope our work done now will yield results for all in the near-future.

The big issue in Pennsylvania though is seeking an end to Life Without Parole (LWOP) sentencing scheme (also referred to as Death By Incarceration (DBI)), the Other Death Penalty) and acquiring Parole Eligibility for all prisoners serving LWOP/DBI sentences. This is being done through a statewide grassroots educational campaign, organizing efforts, and applying people pressure on the PA legislature to enact HB135/SB942 into law.

With UNITY, acquiring parole eligibility for Lifer prisoners in Pennsylvania can be accomplished practically overnight.

Unfortunately, Lifer prisoners can't seem to get out of their own way to save their life. For instance, Pennsylvania Lifer groups refuse to include in their membership prisoners serving "Virtual Life" sentences (i.e., prisoners serving "football numbers" terms, like 60-120 yrs.), even though it would exponentially increase their numbers and power.

They have allowed pig politicians (the Enemy) to conveniently exclude "Virtual Life" sentence from the language of HB135/SB942, although there is no real difference between a LWOP sentence and an aggregate 60-120 yrs. sentence -- they're both DBI sentences! They allow opportunistic politicians to write legislative bills HB135 / SB942 without their involvement! How laughable is that. Even worse, they are about 5,000 Lifers or more in PA, yet when CADBI hold annual rallies in Harrisburg, PA to get parole eligibility for lifers only a puny 300 families of lifers are at the rallies. Huh!?

So let us begin the New Year of 2018 with a real pledge. PA Lifer groups, let's pledge to strategically increase our numbers for people power by including Virtual Lifer prisoners in our ranks and legislative bills to help us get parole eligibility for everyone with DBI sentences.

Let's pledge to only view politicians as "enemies" (temporarily posing as our friends), and understand that we have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, only permanent interests. And our interests are, among other things, parole for lifers. Let us 5,000 Lifer prisoners pledge to mobilize "5,000 Families of Prisoners" to rally for parole eligibility of Lifers at Harrisburg in 2018. And let us remember that Freedom doesn't come without sacrifice and struggle; it never has, and it never will. Peace!

From Your Brother and Servant,

BRO. SHAKABOONA, CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Box A, #BE-7826

BELLEFONTE, PA 16823

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I want to support the Human Rights Coalition by giving a Donation!

Name: _____

Institution/ID (if necessary): _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Donation Amount: _____ \$10.00 - \$25.00
 _____ \$50.00
 _____ \$100.00 or above

Families, we rely on member support, any gift you make above \$25.00 helps us a great deal.
Please make checks payable to the Human Rights Coalition and mail donations to HRC,
4134 Lancaster Ave, Phila., PA 19104, ATTENTION: Charitable Donations.

Kids who are a bit too old for mercy

By :Samantha Melamed

From: <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/crime/juvenile-lifers-18-years-old-appeals-pennsylvania-supreme-court-20170705.html>

"In Philly courts, whether they'll die in prison comes down to their birthday" originally published July 6, 2017

In 1982, when Judge Armand Della Porta sentenced Orlando Stewart to spend the rest of his life in prison, he did it with apparent regret. "This is the best example of how wrong mandatory sentencing is," he said.

Stewart was the last of 10 West Philadelphia teenagers sentenced in the 1981 death of University of Pennsylvania graduate student Douglas Huffman. They'd gone out in a pack, looking for someone to rob. One teen hit Huffman, knocking him to the pavement, where he hit his head hard enough to fracture his skull. Huffman declined medical treatment, and was found dead in his bed two days later.

Seven of the teens served short sentences, some as little as a year. Ronald Saunders, who orchestrated the attack, was sentenced to life. But he was made eligible for parole this March after U.S. Supreme Court ruling that drew on evolving brain science to conclude juveniles are less capable than adults, and cannot be doomed to life without parole under mandatory sentencing rules. Charles Manor, the teen who knocked Huffman to the ground, was also made eligible for parole.

But Stewart, who never touched Huffman, won't get a new sentence. That's because two months and 10 days before the crime, Stewart turned 18. Those two months were the difference between kid and adult under the law – and between the "hope for some years of life outside prison walls" promised in that 2016 Supreme Court decision and the certainty of death in prison.

Now, appeals by 18-, 10- and 20-year-old lifers like Stewart have begun to reach Pennsylvania's highest court. One was filed in June by Charmaine Pfender, who was 18 when she shot a man she says was attempting to rape her at knife-point, killing him.

Such petitions argue that the same immaturity and impulsivity that diminish younger teens', culpability continue well into 20s, as a person's brain continues to develop.

If successful, the appeals could have sweeping implications: More than half of Pennsylvania's lifers entered the state prison system between age 18 and 25. That's 2,763 inmates.

These arguments appear to be gaining traction elsewhere. An Illinois appeals court in December granted a new sentencing hearing to Antonio House, who was 19 when he participated in a gang-related killing. And a federal judge has agreed to hear arguments in the Connecticut case of Luis Noel Cruz, who was 18 when he participated in a murder.

Laurence Steinberg, a Temple University psychologist specializing in brain development, says such arguments have a scientific basis. His research shows that, while cognitive abilities mature by age 16, other parts of the brain mature later. Areas that influence criminal culpability, like impulsiveness, risk-aversion, and resistance to peer pressure, continue maturing into the 20s.

"The science would certainly say there's significant brain maturation that continues to go on at least until age 21, if not beyond," he said. "The legal question is harder than the scientific question."

After all, he added, we have lots of age boundaries we draw in society that don't make any sense from a scientific point of view. Why on earth would we let people drive when they're 16, but not see sexy movies until they're 17? Driving is a much more dangerous thing to do. Why do we have different ages for purchasing tobacco and purchasing alcohol, if we believe those are both harmful things for young people?"

In light of evolving neuroscience, some jurisdictions have begun to set up young-adult courts, targeting those between 18 and 25 for consideration that is somewhere between juvenile and adult proceedings. San Francisco, Brooklyn, and Chicago have all launched such initiatives.

Drawing a line

But a string of U.S. Supreme Court cases, beginning with *Roper v. Simmons*, the 2005 case that abolished the juvenile death penalty, the court determined "a line must be drawn." Age 18 seemed a conventional choice.

This line has led to perplexing moments in the courtroom over the last year and a half, as Pennsylvania judges have worked to

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resentence some 500 juvenile lifers – the largest such population in the nation. Their sentences were deemed illegal under *Miller v. Alabama*, a 2012 case, but it took a second case, *Montgomery v. Louisiana*, to get Pennsylvania courts to apply the ruling retroactively.

At least a half-dozen lifers who sought new sentences in Philadelphia waited for months while lawyers tracked down birth certificates from the 1950s, '60s, or '70s to determine whether they were on the right side of 18 at a time of the crime. One, Steven Drake – the only 18-year-old in a group of 11 youths charged in a 1971 stabbing in West Philadelphia – was 23 days too old to make the cut, according to the date of birth on his court docket.

To Bret Grote, "Arbitrarily drawing this line and hunting down birth certificates, it points to the fundamental unfairness."

Grote, a Pittsburgh-based anti-incarceration activist who co-founded the nonprofit Abolitionist Law Center, is representing Pfender and two others who argue the *Miller* ruling should apply to them. One is Arthur Johnson, who spent 37 years in solitary confinement until Grote sued and won his release into the general population last September. More than 100 lifers who were just a few months or years over 18 at the time of their crimes have written to him seeking representation.

Years of abuse alleged

Pfender's appeal is the first to reach the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, according to Grote. The court has not yet determined whether it will take the case.

"I think as a legal question, Ms. Pfender meets the requirement of *Miller v. Alabama* of having diminished culpability," he said.

Pfender, he said, suffered years of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse by her father, and began drinking alcohol regularly at age 8 to cope.

Donna Hill, her mother, believes those traumatic memories were triggered at the time of the murder. "It was self-defense. She didn't want to be raped again," she said.

Hill said that these days her daughter is a civic leader in prison who's developed programs for mothers and children. She's the type of person who plays Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny during visiting-room holidays.

"I would think people would look at their own histories and think, 'Wow, when I was that age, I really didn't have an adult brain. I really didn't think the way I do now,'" she said.

The trouble is, pinning down just what makes an adult brain is tricky.

"There is no number that anyone would agree, 'OH this is adulthood,'" Beatriz Luna, a University of Pittsburgh neuroscientist who studies how neural processes develop.

"We have never found that by 18 any of these processes are mature," she said. "Now we have extended our studies up to the age of 30. Certainly, we have results that show that by 20, things are beginning to stabilize."

Steinberg said few studies have focused on 18- to 24-year-olds, so more research is needed. But whatever that science yields might not make a difference in court.

"You could argue late adolescents are still less mature than adults-nobody in the scientific community would dispute that," Steinberg said. "On the other side, you could say, 'Yes, but they're mature enough.'"

FROM: <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/crime/juvenile-lifers-18-years-old-appeals-pennsylvania-supreme-court-20170705.html>

**Constant weight loss from malnutrition
Stomach grinding hard like a car with a
bad transmission
Gasses escape my rear
smelling like a burning clutch
Complaints in court
but it's clear they don't give a _____
about us
Whoever wrote the words
"You can lock away my body
but my mind will forever remain free"
must not have ever been solitary confined
like me**

Rya Delle
July 21, 2015

Man Wrongfully Condemned to Life In Prison As Drug Kingpin Gets License to Practice Law: Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson to Produce TV Series Based Upon His Life

Isaac Wright, Jr., wrongfully convicted and sentenced to life in prison for being a drug kingpin was sworn in as a licensed attorney and has signed a deal with rapper/actor/producer Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson to produce a TV series based upon his life—a fitting complement to an incredible and unbelievable story of adversity, survival and success.



Isaac Wright, Jr.
(PRWEB) DECEMBER 04, 2017

Wright was arrested and charged with running one of the largest drug distribution networks in the New York, New Jersey metropolitan areas. He was tried and convicted in 1991 under New Jersey's drug kingpin law and was sentenced to life in prison.

Teaching himself the law while incarcerated, Wright represented himself at trial and on appeal, embarking on a

legal fight that culminated in his exoneration after spending over seven and a half years in New Jersey's maximum security prison. After his release from prison, Wright spent another seven years pursuing a law degree, obtaining his undergraduate degree in 2002, entering law school in 2004 and graduating from Saint Thomas University School of law in 2007 with the honor of having the law school's cafeteria adorn his name. Passing the New Jersey Bar in 2008, he spent the next nine years being investigated by the New Jersey Bar's Committee on Character before being granted admission to the bar by the New Jersey Supreme Court on September 27, 2017. Upon his swearing-in, Wright became the first and only person in U.S. history to be condemned to life in prison as a drug kingpin, secure his own release and exoneration and then be granted a license to practice law by the very court that condemned him. This uniqueness is highlighted by the way in which Wright achieved his release and exoneration.

Attorney Gilbert G. Miller, the assistant prosecutor appointed to oppose Wright's appeals and other court action, said it best: "I found Mr. Wright to be highly intelligent and...a better brief writer than most attorneys I have encountered. I was most impressed with Mr. Wright's ability as a legal strategist. Mr. Wright developed the legal strategy and authored a defense pro se brief in an attack on the king-pin jury instruction in *State v. Alexander*, 136 N.J. 563 (1994). Mr. Wright's arguments prevailed in *Alexander*. Mr. Wright used his success in *Alexander* to have his own king-pin conviction reversed" in *State v. Wright*, 143 N.J. 580 (1996).

The Kingpin reversal got rid of Wright's life sentence but he remained in prison on numerous other convictions with sentences totaling over 70 years. Wright's ultimate release came as a result of his cross-examination of veteran police detective, James Dugan, during an evidentiary hearing in 1996, convincing Dugan to break the code of silence and confess.* Dugan's confession opened revelations of wide and systematic misconduct and cover-up in Wright's case. Then Somerset County Prosecutor, Nicholas L. Bissell, Jr., who tried Wright's case personally was fingered as being the orchestrator of that misconduct, directing police officers to falsify their police reports while he personally dictated the false testimony of witnesses against Wright and made secret deals with defense attorneys to have their clients lie to the jury that Wright was their drug boss and that they had pled guilty and was going to prison, when in-fact, they were never going to spend a day in jail.

Dugan pled guilty to official misconduct in order to escape prison. Wright's trial judge, Michael Imbriani, was removed from the bench and sent to prison on theft charges and Bissell, after learning of Dugan's confession on TV news, took flight with federal authorities in pursuit. As police were kicking in the door of his Las Vegas hotel room, Bissell put a revolver to his head and pulled the trigger, committing suicide. Wright's remaining convictions were vacated and he was immediately released from prison. The charges were dropped and the case against him dismissed.

Now entering the legal profession as a licensed attorney who was once condemned to life in prison, Wright provides a specialized talent based upon unique experiences and abilities that no other attorney can offer their client. "I went to law school for one reason and one reason only," Wright says. "To slay giants for a price. And if the giant is big enough and the cause is important enough: I'll do it for free, especially when it involves helping those who cannot help themselves."

Wright is currently Of Counsel with the law firm Hunt, Hamlin & Ridley located in Newark, New Jersey and is quickly

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becoming one of the most sought after attorneys in the country for transactional representation in entertainment and finance as well as for criminal, civil and corporate litigation.

From: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2017/12/prweb14967521.htm>

An Update from Abolitionist Law Center

Abolitionist Law Center (ALC), our clients, and our supporters have made important strides in overturning laws aimed at censoring and silencing prisoners' voices, in challenging decades-long solitary confinement, and in pushing for life-saving treatment for hepatitis C+ prisoners. Over the last few years, lawsuits filed by Abolitionist Law Center have:

- Ended solitary confinement of pregnant women at the Allegheny County Jail
- Won the first court order in the country forcing prison officials to provide new hepatitis C medications
- Won release from decades-long solitary confinement for Russell Maroon Shoatz and Arthur Cetewayo Johnson
- Overturned a statute that would have silenced prisoners and anyone who published the speech of prisoners

Your support makes it possible for us to win these fights. Please donate by going to <http://abolitionistlawcenter.org/donate/> and together we can keep building the movement to abolish mass incarceration.

As a movement lawyering organization, our primary method for winning the abolition of mass incarceration is to amplify the voices of activists inside and outside the prison walls. We understand that social change is a political process and the most effective way to achieve deep and sustained improvements is through the organization and mobilization of communities. With this in mind, we have successfully fought to protect the rights of prisoners to engage in political speech and self-education, and we have successfully helped to push back on the overuse of solitary confinement (which is often used as retaliation for advocacy from within the prisons). We have

also expanded our work to defend movement activists who are not incarcerated, such as [Saundra Cole](#) and [George Ciccariello-Maher](#), against harassment from police and white supremacist individuals and hate groups.

With your support, we increased our efforts to ban Death By Incarceration (DBI), also known as life without parole, abolish long-term solitary confinement, and force prison administrators to provide curative treatment for prisoners with hepatitis C. We hired three new staff members focused on these issues: Jamelia Morgan, Lauren Johnson, and Quinn Cozzens. We co-founded the western Pennsylvania chapter of the [Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration \(CADBI West\)](#) and we increased collaboration with our friends at the [Amistad Law Project](#).



Check out this legal dream team below: Nikki from Amistad, Saleem, ALC, Kris from Amistad, and Bret from ALC

Originally Published in: News From Maroons Global Network,
December 2017



Want to help end Life Without Parole sentencing in PA?

Get involved with CADBI.

We are always looking for more people to get involved. We are an all-volunteer campaign made up of members both inside and outside of prison. If you are currently incarcerated and are not yet a CADBI member but would like to join, please write to us at the following address and ask us to send you a membership form:

CADBI c/o Decarcerate PA
PO Box 40764
Philadelphia PA 19107

Just as important, if you have friends or family in the Philadelphia area who would like to join, CADBI meetings happen every third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm at 1515 Fairmount Ave and everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

The Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration works to end death by incarceration (aka "life without parole") sentences in Pennsylvania. The coalition's anchoring organizations include Decarcerate PA, Fight for Lifers, Human Rights Coalition, and Right to Redemption.



AS I DETERIORATE

BY: GEORGE "BIG GEORGE" DALIE

*My mind wanders like scattered particles
drifting into outer space
No destination
just random thoughts all over the place
Visions from my past
flash before my open eyes
Words roar from my lips
as I engage in conversations with memories
Profanity inveighed at old enemies
while both hands flag away at those who have abandoned
me
Finger tips raw from clawing at the concrete
So cold my body shivers
teeth chatter
and the administration is on notice
but still won't turn on the heat
Been pacing this box for so long
you can count the mileage on my feet
In the day light
there is no peace
Two different channels on two blaring T.V.'s
Tortured souls paint murals on walls with their own feces
The smell of oppression is no longer foreign to me
Prison guards
working the grave-yard
bang nights-sticks off metal railings
and slam doors as they make their rounds
There is no sleep
A nervous wreck now
My body jerks and jumps at every sound
Fatigued and weak
Constant weight loss from malnutrition
Stomach grinding hard like a car with a bad transmission
Gasses escape my rear
smelling like a burning clutch
but its clear they don't give a ...
about us
Whoever wrote the words
"You can lock away my body
but my mind will forever remain free"
Must not have ever been solitary confined like me*

George Dalie
July 21, 2015

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

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 three chapters on the outside:

- **HRC-Philly** meets every 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6-8pm, LAVA Space 4134 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia PA 19104
Email: Info@hrcoalition.org ; **Facebook:** Human Rights Coalition PA ; **Website** at: www.hrcoalition.org
- **HRC-Pittsburgh/FedUP!**
Email: sd4hrc@gmail.com Phone: 570-763-9504
- **HRC-Chester** meets every 3rd Monday of the month from 6-8pm, Church of the Overcomer 1010 Sunset St, Trainer, PA 19061

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, Project Hope 1515 Fairmount St. Philadelphia PA
Email: 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 700+ 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!**



If you want to **JOIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION**,
fill out this form and mail to: **ATTN: NEW MEMBERSHIP**
Human Rights Coalition, 4134 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia PA 19104

OR

Email us at: Info@hrcoalition.org

OR

Visit our website at: www.hrcoalition.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: _____

Tell us a little about yourself: _____

Why do you want to be a part of HRC? _____

What aspect of our work do you think you could help with? _____

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

Your Signature: _____



My big brother, Jerome Coffey and me, Najla Smith.

Why Do Happy Memories Hurt So Bad?

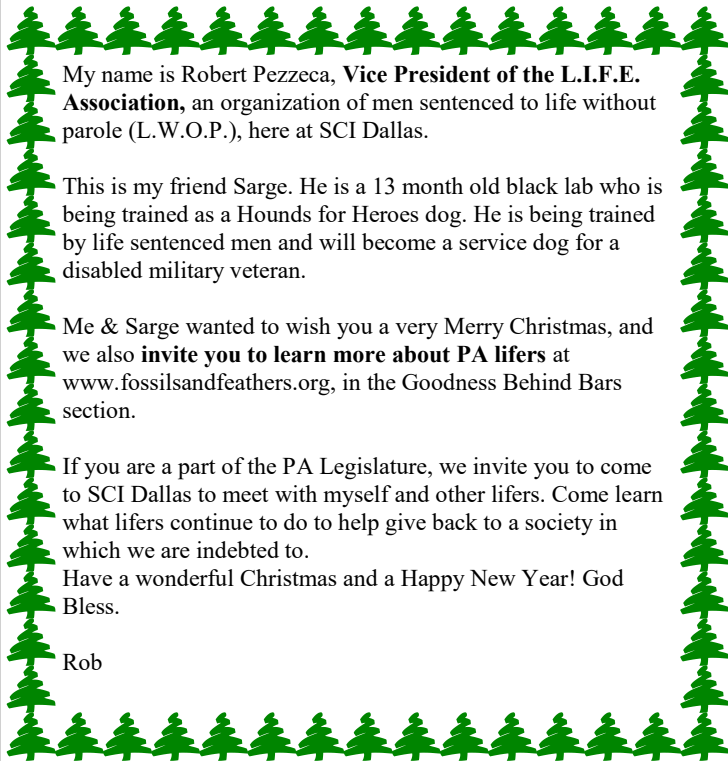
By Najla Smith

The weekend of November 25th, 2017, I will never forget in my life. Why? Because out of my twenty years on earth I never met Jerome 'Hoagie' Coffey, my "big brother", personally or physically.

So I traveled from Philadelphia to Erie County, Pennsylvania to visit my big brother at SCI-Albion and I apologized for the 20-years of absence, it wasn't my fault, due to family squabbles.

The visit was amazing because I had a chance to personally meet my big brother opposed to phone calls, emails, and letters. We discussed gray areas such as family history, current events, politics, and exchange personal stories. We discussed our father's death. We both cried about my personal tragedy of violence, being shot and being in critical condition. We talked about his 12-years of torture in PA D.O.C.'s solitary confinement and how he is still trying to recover. My big brother encouraged me to seek post education beyond getting my High School Diploma on top of getting involved in a Women's Organization that empowers self-respect and dignity to women, specially African-American women. All-in-all this visit was inspirational, educational, and therapy for me and him.

Lastly, my family and I personally thank Sister Lukeisa Alvin for making this visit possible. We appreciate you.



My name is Robert Pezzeca, **Vice President of the L.I.F.E. Association**, an organization of men sentenced to life without parole (L.W.O.P.), here at SCI Dallas.

This is my friend Sarge. He is a 13 month old black lab who is being trained as a Hounds for Heroes dog. He is being trained by life sentenced men and will become a service dog for a disabled military veteran.

Me & Sarge wanted to wish you a very Merry Christmas, and we also **invite you to learn more about PA lifers** at www.fossilsandfeathers.org, in the Goodness Behind Bars section.

If you are a part of the PA Legislature, we invite you to come to SCI Dallas to meet with myself and other lifers. Come learn what lifers continue to do to help give back to a society in which we are indebted to.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year! God Bless.

Rob



LIFE ONCE GIVEN, IS WHAT WE MAKE OF IT WE DARE
MAKE OURS A CLEARING FOR LOVE AND JOY
JOY TO THE WORLD

DECK THE HALLS - ALL HANDS ON DECK!!

HUMANS! Are We – a Hopeful and Optimistic bunch indeed; EVEN given the barbaric past. We LOVE unashamedly, often unconditionally and completely. SUCH is a child's heart. Thus we Greet you with the Love of Humanity filling our breastplate. People the Planet over have reason to Rejoice and Celebrate. We Delight in Celebration - mindful of the Male made existential challenges ahead, i.e., Nativism, Racism, God Bias, Global Warming and Nuclear Holocaust!

HUMANS Are We – uncivilized as a species, relying upon Might (Male domination/force) to determine the course of Human destiny. An evolutionary misstep in dire need of **Female** correction, lest it lead to Human extinction.

HUMANS Are We – at War (Male made) all over the Garden of Eden, killing each other and everything for dirt (territory to build fiefdoms – male bastions of power and privilege where Alpha Males would be GODS! with sexual exploitation built into the fabric of **every** institution).

HUMANS Are We – Need look no further than Donald Drump to witness this phenomenon in real time. First, Draft Dodging, **Clap ducking**, Drump slays the dragon (election) - ascends the presidency, vanquishing every adversary En route. Drump then proclaims himself King and Each in their turn, **SHAME-LESSLY** bow to kiss the Ring, seeking Favor and Privilege in his Fiefdom, Paul Ryan, Mitch McConnell, Bob Corker, Orrin Hatch and Linsey Graham! ***More than Drump has been ensnared by Puppet Master Putin – pay attention - Follow da money!***

CRUMBS – The Elite via their Apologists have made a POWER MOVE; passing a tax cut bill that is one of the largest ROBBERIES in history (Jesse James tosses in envy). Eighty per cent of the wealth generated by labor and misrepresented by paper will be transferred to the One percenters - the richest folk in Amerikkka.

BRIBES – Be not deceived; for public relations' consumption, Drump and company tout the raises and bonuses given to workers as reason to support their theft of worker created wealth. Raises were designed to give Drump pretext and cover

for the Act of Class Warfare perpetrated against the working people.

Working people make da donuts, (Social production of Wealth) tax cuts for rich folk {less wages from profits for workers} take the lion's share of this pie, and give it to the Rich (Private appropriation of socially created wealth). The System – Rich get Richer!

MISDIRECTION -- every charge levelled at Drump's critics is in fact a left handed confession of guilt; exactly what Drump has done and is doing. From FAKE NEWS to RUSSIAN collusion. From Hillary accepting illegal campaign funds, Compromising National Security by use of private E-mail accounts and to lying under oath. Drump now claims The Democrats are engineering a Coup to overturn **Putin's Coup which Installed Drump in the first place!**

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COUP – The Czar of Russia believes, Human history demonstrates Humanity is best served by the Elite/ Powerful leading the masses; making the important macro decisions directing human destiny. He believes DEMOCRACY is an aberration on the continuum of human evolution. Thus when analyzing the weaknesses and strategizing his assault on Amerikkkan Democracy, Putin concluded he could exploit our many differences and have us come apart at the seams; unforeseen was the fact Drump could win. Clearly Drump's victory is the puppet master's greatest Coup achievement. The People's Call to Arms - FOR:

WHILE BEMOANING our loss, we will not be seduced by **Drump TV's** (Fox News) Alternative facts, inaccurate nostalgia about How Great Amerikkka was before Drump/Obama. The Amerikkkan Democratic Empire was, erected upon the backs/graves of Millions of Natives/ Africans /Poor folk - and never 'We da Peeps'. Drump's success provides the first genuine opportunity for "WE THE PEOPLE" to wrest government from the hands of the Elite.

DON'T DESPAIR - You (help) is on da way! We are sparing no quarter/effort to educate, organize and turnout for the emancipation of Humanity from the weight of our collective evolutionary missteps. In the last year alone starting with the (two) Million Women's March, Millions of us have **Registered** our **WILL** to Right the Ship of State. Our agency of choice -- the vote; and the power of the purse. Vote the Traitors out. Spend your money wisely - affirming life.

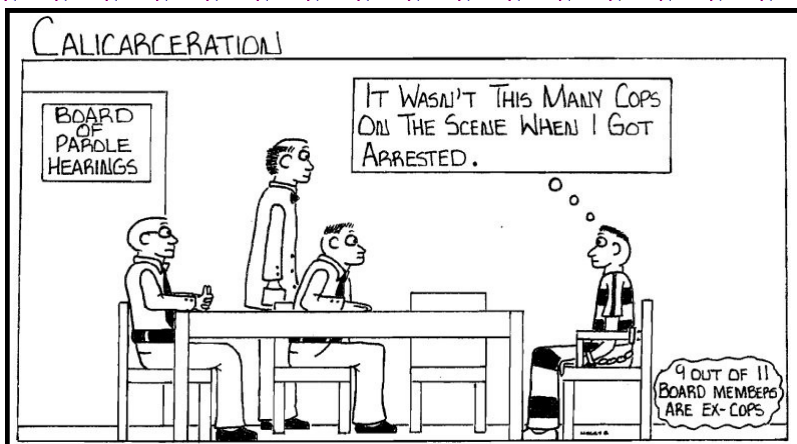
Compel the Corporate citizen to be responsible and do the people's will - buy friendly. Fire the Traitors, those who would murder our planet to be King with benefits - privilege and servants.

Every effort must be made to enroll the nearly 40% of eligible voters who do not vote; the roughly 60% who do - but don't vote in midterm elections, the 30% who vote against their own class interest and the 18 year olds who will be voting for the first time.

We redouble our commitment to Each Other, Human Civilization – Human Excellence – Human Happiness and our own FUN! Who we are (our legacy) is defined by the people whose lives we have touched. Give of Self to those of us who have less, are homeless, without health care, suffer the pain of loneliness, have lost our way or have given up on Life and need even more.

Do Joy, Be Love – Make Merry! Right shall triumph over Patriarchy!

Love Sef n Reds



Artist: Marcus A. Bedford, Jr.
K-00220, J Wing 226L, P.O.
Box 600, DVI Fac.A
Tracy, CA 95378
Titled: This Many Cops

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!



Support J20 Defendants And Our 1st Amendment

This time last year there were probably more protestors in Washington, DC at Trump's January 20, 2017 inauguration than supporters. I, for one, stood in awe of the protestors wishing that I was there to lend my support and

scream my dissatisfaction of the position we found ourselves in at that time. In fact many Americans felt the election was rigged and wanted to show/demonstrate their disapproval. And, what better way to show our discontentment in the land of the free? We protest!

The First Amendment of our Constitution declares that in America we have the freedom of speech and protest.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

But in this Trump era of backward ways, where Trump has declared that news is fake and racism is just, the protestors were rounded up, restrained for six hours on the sidewalk of our Capital (without food, water or the use of toilettes), arrested, and charged with felony, inciting a riot, and other outrageous charges amounting to 60 years in prison for each demonstrator. Protestors, medical staff, news reporters, legal observers, and even bystanders were arrested and charged sending the message that 1.) Protesting is against the law and will not be tolerated; 2.) You cannot support protestors in any way or you will serve serious time in prison along with them 3.) You cannot wear the same colors as the protestors or you, too, will be identified as a protestor and will also get serious prison time; 4.) You can and will be arrested and convicted without evidence; and 5.) Beginning with The First Amendment, the Constitution is fake law and therefore should be disregarded.

Later, after the 200 protestors were released from jail, they stood stronger in their convictions and have been titled the J20 Defendants. Throughout the year J20 Defendants created a tight network in support of each other (even though they were from different states) and attended each other's' hearings and, yes, held further demonstrations throughout the year 2017.

For the remaining Americans who were not arrested on January 20, 2017, but you share their sentiment and you were there in spirit and vigor, this is not the time to sit back and watch or to say this is not my fight. The decisions made in these J20 cases will impact us all, it could rip our constitution into shreds or it could make it stronger.

By: Mama Patt in support of HRC's Warrior & Defender, Andy Switzer



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7 things you can do to support the J20 Defendants

As the Trial gets Underway

On January 20, 2017, while Trump was being sworn in as president, police trapped over 200 protesters, medics, legal observers, and journalists on a block in downtown Washington, DC and mass-arrested all of them. Police confiscated their cell phones and broke into them, seized their social media data, even raided their homes.

In April, the US Attorney's Office **pressed the same 8 felony charges indiscriminately against all the arrestees.**

Today, 193 defendants are facing six decades in prison *just for attending a protest.*

The Trump administration wants to set a precedent so they can argue that anyone wearing black in vicinity of a broken window is participating in a conspiracy and deserves to spend the rest of his or her life in prison. Their goal is to criminalize protest itself. The prosecution has based their case on claiming that basic elements of large protests are evidence of a "conspiracy to riot" and commit acts of vandalism. As evidence, they are citing normal protest activities such preparing for the possibility of arrest, the presence of street medics and legal observers in case of police or fascist violence, and even sharing information about public plans to assemble. The outcome of this case could have disastrous consequences on all dissent in the United States.

1. Spread the Word

To introduce people to the basic facts about the case,

please spread the **video** at (<https://vimeo.com/241199392>) produced by subMedia.tv. You can also follow @DefendJ20 on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **Twitter**.

2. Combat Police and Media Lies about the Case

Police and media outlets have dishonestly represented the J20 case from the beginning, in hopes of concealing this assault on the right to protest. For example, on at least two occasions, Metropolitan Police Department Chief of Police Peter Newsham **inaccurately claimed** that the people he ordered mass-arrested had started the limousine fire on Inauguration Day. This is flagrantly and intentionally dishonest. The limousine was set on fire ***several hours*** after the hundreds of defendants facing charges were kettled and detained by MPD.

Unfortunately, some lazy journalists have parroted News-ham's lies. In addition, influential media outlets including *USA Today*, BuzzFeed, ABC, CBS, NBC, and the BBC have **used images of the limousine fire** to illustrate articles about the defendants' cases, effectively identifying the defendants with the fire in the minds of potential jurors. In November, *USA Today* **spread false information that the fire was burning at 10:30 am**, although the fire took place late in the afternoon.

3. Speak up against the Charges

The inauguration defendants aren't an isolated case. The

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broad use of conspiracy allegations will have a massive impact on all movements for social justice. The government hopes to set a precedent they can use to threaten anyone with life-altering felony charges and prison time on the basis of political affiliations. If the prosecution wins by turning ordinary aspects of protest organizing into evidence of “conspiracy,” this will stifle dissent of all kinds.

Trump came to power by denying the rights and humanity of Mexicans, Muslims, the LGBTQI community, and people of color while promising to intensify policing. He refuses to denounce avowed neo-Nazis even when they murder anti-racist protesters, yet he has made sure that the J20 defendants face the very worst that the law can deliver. His first day in office coincided with an immediate crackdown on political dissent not seen for decades.

If you are a part of an organization, please publish a solidarity statement expressing support for the defendants. Now is the time for prominent activists and social justice figures to speak out. You can find **an example of a solidarity statement go to <http://defendj20resistance.org/2017/11/01/ue-defend-our-civil-liberties.html>** from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America. Write your own!

You can also **sign a petition at <https://www.change.org/p/us-attorney-for-dc-drop-the-charges-against-j20-protesters-dropj20>** demanding that the charges be dismissed.

4. Donate to the Legal Defense Fund
Donate at https://fundrazr.com/j20resistance?ref=ab_2xlk8MMxZft2xlk8MMxZft.

193 people have bravely committed to taking these unjust charges to trial. Many are based outside of Washington, DC yet are forced to travel for regular hearings. Their cases have been divided into nearly 20 different trials lasting through the end of 2018. Each trial could last for weeks. During this time, the defendants will not be able to work, while needing to pay for housing, food, and transportation in DC. \$250,000 is a conservative estimate of the total costs facing those who are standing up for their right to protest. Your financial contribution is one way to show that you see this legal battle as an important milestone in the fight for a better world.

5. Organize a Solidarity Rally

Bring your community together to make your support visible to the prosecution and potential members of the jury. If you’ve never organized a protest before, **learn how at <https://www.wikihow.com/Protest>** and visit the **Defend J20 website** (<http://defendj20resistance.org/>) for material

you can use to raise awareness. There have already been **two** weeks of **international solidarity actions** supporting the defendants. You can take inspiration from these to organize your own events.

6. Offer Emotional Support

If you know people who are being charged in this case, support them. Keep abreast of their court dates and when they will go to trial. Make sure they have whatever resources and emotional care they need. Explain the importance of this issue to others in your life and the public at large. Getting the charges dropped against the J20 defendants isn’t just about the specific individuals facing trials. It’s an opportunity to rally our communities to take action, stay strong in the face of state repression, and work to build a better future.

7. If You Live in DC...

Help build the local visibility of this case. We need people to show up at court and support the J20 defendants.

Visit the **DC Legal Posse page** (<http://www.dlegalposse.org/>) to learn how you can get involved. You should also contact them to get a **yard sign** expressing your support.



For more information, updates, and background on the case, visit **defendj20resistance.org**.

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!



Women, Poverty & Incarceration—A Listening Session with Larry Krasner—the anti-mass incarceration candidate for Philadelphia DA. Election is Nov 7. Held at the Crossroads Women's Center/Philadelphia.

Sponsors: *Global Women's Strike, Human Rights Coalition & Women of Color in GWS*

Larry Krasner, Philadelphia's incoming District Attorney (DA) is to be sworn in on January 2, 2018. So What Happened?

By: Kerry 'Shakaboona' Marshall, Mama Patt, Sean Damon

This fall - November 2017 - Mr. Larry Krasner, the first DA who was not a prosecutor and has never been a prosecutor, was elected as District Attorney. Some Republicans would say this recent DA election in Philly went off course, miles away from the get-tough-on-crime agenda to an agenda of human rights, healing, and the same justice for everyone - rich or poor. So, what happened?

I'll tell you what happened.

For the past two decades the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) has sown the seeds of criminal injustice reform in the city of Philadelphia and throughout the state of Pennsylvania. This is very important to note because HRC represented a new radical model and advocacy of **human rights** in criminal justice reform that distinguished itself from the old paternal/liberal model and advocacy of prisoners' **civil rights** in criminal justice reform.

This new radical model that HRC initiated represented a historically significant shift in ideals, organization, and actions in the criminal injustice reform/prisoners' rights advocacy community towards the true LEFT of the political spectrum. The said historical shift brought forth a new radical model and advocacy within the age-old National Prisoners' Rights Movement - established by ancestor Comrade George J. Jackson in California - that transformed in the Nation Prisoners' Human Rights Movement (NPHRM) established by political prisoners

Maroon, Shakaboona, and Shabaka in Philly and led by the HRC-Philly organization.

The HRC Philly chapter created a new model of ideals, organizations, activism, and community power, partly consisting of nine key components.

- Organizations must be established and run by the families of prisoners;
- Must advocate human rights of prisoners, families, and communities;
- Prisoners must be on the Advisory Board with a vote;
- Organizations and members must be non-partisan, exercise positive-neutrality, and vote according to our collective interest in politics;
- Must build coalitions with organizations and different movement;
- Must organize families of prisoners and communities into voters' bloc to influence elections;
- Must propagate human rights in criminal justice reform via mass public actions and education to change public discourse and opinion; and
- Must conduct direct political actions campaigns too influence elections and criminal justice reform.
- Must be financially independent (self-sufficient) and established cooperative economic development programs for communities;

Consequently, HRC has inspired the formation of several other prisoners' human rights organizations as prisoners who were leaders within HRC's Advisory Council joined and influenced Advisory Boards of local and national organizations such as the DecarceratePA, Families and Communities United, Real Cost of Prisons, Fair Sentencing of Youth, CADBI, American Friends Service Committee, and Reconstruction, Inc.

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

It was political conscious prisoners that pushed the issue of criminal justice reform to the radical left by founding the HRC and initiating the NPHRM which kicked off a bevy of criminal injustice reform activism. Prisoners encouraged their family members and loved ones to join community organizations as rank and file members to ensure their voices were heard.

Graterford prisoners, in particular, organized a political action campaign in Philly that had their families and communities influence the 2015 Pennsylvania Supreme Court judicial elections, resulting in a clean-sweep of democratic justices being elected to the PA Supreme Court.

Further contributing to the change in Philly's public opinion regarding criminal injustice reform was the longstanding corruption of Philly's infamous DA Office, the Gestapo-Stasi-like Philadelphia Police Department distinguished for their unmerciful brutal assaults on peaceful protestors and for their killings of black and brown peoples in the streets, the much sensationalized national #BlackLivesMatter movement, and not to mention Philly's first African-American District Attorney Seth Williams, who in 2009 was elected to "reform" the DA's office, only himself to be charged and convicted with a 23-count federal criminal indictment for bribery, corruption, and embezzlement in 2017. Hence placing the democratic primary race for DA in its proper context - the proverbial stage was set for a grassroots candidate like Larry Krasner.

However a little-known fact in Philly which local/national political analysts and pundits have been purposefully ignoring when reporting about Larry Krasner's Philly democratic primary for DA win, is how it was incarcerated citizens at SCI-Graterford and their allied community organizations that influenced the democratic primary election for DA and ran a mass grassroots political action campaign throughout Philly that directly propelled Larry Krasner to victory. A victory in a city where a left-wing civil rights activist attorney running on a criminal justice reform platform would have never stood a chance just four years ago!

The community organizations' spokesperson at Graterford was able to contact 2 out of 7 candidates running in the democratic primaries for DA and explained that SCI-Graterford prisoners are 5,000 in number, whom can have about 5 family members for the candidate of their choice equaling to a

potential 25,000 strong families of prisoners' voters' bloc.

Twenty-five thousand - 25,000 - potential voters is a number no serious candidate is willing to ignore in any election. This compelled candidate Tariq El-Shabazz to politically campaign at SCI-Graterford on about four (4) occasions and candidate Larry Krasner to schedule a campaign event at SCI-Graterford, as well, until Graterford prison officials cancelled Krasner's political event.

The incarcerated men at SCI-Graterford overwhelmingly support candidate Larry Krasner for DA with a robust political action campaign of voter education, voter registration, political forums, and Get Out The Vote drives towards their families, loved ones, friends, and ex-felons that directed them to vote for Larry Krasner. Operating parallel to and in partnership with the SCI-Graterford prisoners' political action campaign were "coalitions" of community organizations such as Media Mobilizing Project, ACLU Pennsylvania, and Color of Change who organized to form the Coalition for a Just DA who in turn mobilized other community groups also seeking criminal injustice reform and campaigned to elect Larry Krasner as Philly's next DA. As a result Larry Krasner is now Philadelphia's new District Attorney and will be sworn in on January 2, 2018.



Krasner and Wayne Jacobs of X-Offenders for Community Empowerment

Will Krasner live up to expectations? Well here's what's happening.

Only two days after the election of Philly DA a broad coalition of progressive organizations held a press conference in front of the Philly DA's office. This coalition of immigrant groups, prisoners families, young people who were held pretrial in Philly jails, LGBTQ youth of color and returning citizens laid out a progressive vision of what could be accomplished within the first 100 days of the new DA administration. Together they pledged to defend Larry from political attack **but they also pledged to push him in the progressive direction we all need him to go should he stray.**

Families, organizations and Ex-Offenders plan to keep our efforts on track through Coalition for a Just DA (a large coalition of people's organizations and social movement groups across Philadelphia and which counts CADBI and Amistad Law Project as member groups).

(Continued on page 20)

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Krasner may be in the drivers seat but movements of working class people struggling for criminal justice reform will be the engine. We can't count on saviors. In the next year we plan to mobilize and all of the individuals and grass root organizations responsible for Larry Krasner's win will be crucial in those efforts.

If your loved ones are not already plugged into such efforts have them come to one of the following meetings:

- HRC monthly meetings, 2nd Wednesday of every month at 4134 Lancaster Ave, 6:00 pm.
- Decarcerate PA , 4th Saturday, 1207 S. Chestnut St, 11:00am –3:00 pm.
- Reconstruction Fight for Lifer's monthly meeting, 2nd Wednesday of every month at 1808 W. Tioga St., 4:00 pm.
- CADBI's monthly meetings, 3rd Wednesday of every month at 1515 Fairmount Ave, 6:30 pm.



Press Conference 2 Days after Larry Krasner was Elected

Mechie Scott

Excerpt from the Life Line Project.

Marie "Mechie" Scott serving over 40 years in prison.

What are some of the strategies, tactics or practices that you and people you know use to support one another and to challenge the conditions /realities that you experience?

Forty years ago, we'd stage sit-ins and hunger strikes. We had the one element that made such practices possible; UNITY. When the system found a way to destroy that by giving me 180 days for a misconduct and giving my comrade 30 days for the same misconduct, we were tactfully pitted against one another, and despite our announcements of how the system was using the divide and conquer method, no one believed us. Today, a female will tell on you simply because she's suffering from the disease of codependency and just needing to be patted on the head. In the 80's, we resorted to class action suits. I was a part of the Beehler vs. Jeffees civil action which brought non-traditional education here for women so that they could get better paying jobs upon release.

Now, the only thing we have is a lifers group that can only fit 12 people. We have an organization that can't function right because the staff coordinator doesn't want it to work. In essence, it's nothing here to support each other anymore. It's the old against the young almost. Even down to fighting physically. The women here have lost hope. For a lot of reasons. Some rightly so. Others because they've become complacent and others are just simply lazy and want to jump on someone else's band wagon when and if it rolls around. Most don't want to do the ground work to get further. Myself, I am fed up with it, so I'm on my own almost. My great-great grandfather is the famous Dred Scott, so there's no way in hell I'm going to lay down and give up with trying to fight for my freedom!

Marie 'Mechie' Scott
OO-4901
SCI-Cambridge
451 Fullerton Avenue
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403

FROM: <http://lifelines-project.org/2016/02/15/mechie-scott-interview-1/>

Call for Contributors

THE MOVEMENT magazine is looking for quality, writing, especially from the families of prisoners, prisoners, and former prisoners that 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 prisoner and prisoners send 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.

Moving? Don't forget to send us your new address!

Retraction

Page 12
of
The Movement Issue # 32

Sample Flyer Text Below:

GOLD COAST CONSTRUCTION & REAL ESTATE, INC.

Worker's Union for Ex-Offenders

200,000 Strong! The Time Is Now!

No union Fees! Have Your Federally Bonded Letter.

Plan For Re-Entry! Prepare Your Parole Employment Plan. . .

HRC received several complaints that after reaching out to this program, it seems that it does not exist.

Please except HRC's sincere apologies.

We regret that we were used in such a fraudulent manner and, in the future, we will be more conclusive in verifying our sources.

WTF!



Parole????

*I don't know
what that is,
but it sounds
ridiculous!!*

BY: PV&KB

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THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcalition.org

Building Power to Abolish Long-Term Solitary Confinement

By: Jackson Kusiak

Solitary confinement is the prison within a prison that is designed to break the will of people and make them compliant to the rules of the brutal system of prison slavery. It is high time for us to cast off our chains and abolish long-term isolation once and for all! The Human Rights Coalition has been at the forefront of the movement to abolish solitary for the last 17 years. HRC was founded in 2001 by individuals held in isolation in the Supermax prison, SCI Greene. Since then, prisoners, returned citizens, their family members and loved ones have been working with HRC to end prison abuse in solitary confinement, and advocating for the human rights of every person held behind bars.

In 2013, following the lead of movements to end solitary in other states, HRC took the historic step to introduce our own Legislative Proposal, "An Act to Reduce the Use and Abuse of Solitary Confinement." This bill was written by our very own Brother Tut, a former jailhouse lawyer and returned citizen, who spent years in isolation for his advocacy and organizing work on the inside. Brother Tut, along with HRC Advisory Council members and outside supporters, crafted a bill that would end the practice of indefinite isolation that has landed people in the hole for months, years, even decades! We based our bill off of a similar bill introduced in 2011 in Maine, which was supported by the ACLU and succeeded in dramatically reducing the population in the hole in Maine State prisons. Across the country, 20+ states have passed bills limiting solitary confinement, especially for juveniles and vulnerable populations. The Obama administration created new rules prohibiting Federal prisons from holding juveniles in solitary. Our efforts in Pennsylvania are stemming from the victories that have been won in other states and the national movement that is fundamentally changing the policies that uphold mass incarceration in Amerikkka.

On June 18th 2017, HRC led our Juneteenth Parade to call for the abolition of solitary confinement and modern-day prison slavery! We led marchers, drill teams, and floats down Fairmount Ave in Philly past the notorious Eastern State Penitentiary - the world's first penitentiary, and the institution that originated the practice of long-term solitary confinement in 1821. Prison reformers created ESP in order to make prisoners 'penitent' by holding them in isolation, in silence, and forcing them to work. People from across the globe flocked to ESP to view the prison's design and function and this led the "Pennsylvania System" of solitary confinement to be exported to nearly every jail, prison, and penal institution around the world. Our Juneteenth Parade was a joyful celebration of the history of abolition and our movement's power, but it was also a day to renew the call to action for our modern-day abolitionist movement.

The next day after our Parade, on Juneteenth itself, House Bill

The Maine Model

- **Fewer people are sent to solitary, most are disciplined with some alternative to solitary.** Alternatives include cell confinement in general population, loss of privileges, loss of work opportunities, etc...
- **Prisoners sent to solitary spend less time there.** There is a cap on the maximum amount of time you can spend in solitary. Prisoners are made aware as soon as they arrive at the SMU that the prison wants their stay to be temporary and to last as little time as possible. A team of staff made up of corrections and mental health professionals meets to create a plan for returning the prisoner to the general population.
- **Prisoners in solitary are held in better conditions.** Prisoners in solitary are given access to more care and services to prevent deterioration of mental health.
- **Prisoners in solitary are given a clear path and incentive system, based on achievable goals, for earning their way out of solitary.**

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

1581 was introduced by Rep. Tina Davis, which would limit the use of solitary confinement in PA prisons! The bill prohibits vulnerable populations (juveniles, people over 70, pregnant and post-partum women, LGBT) from being sent to the hole. HB 1581 was based off another bill that passed the House and Senate in New Jersey in 2016 (but was vetoed by Chris Christie). With 13 co-sponsors and strong language limiting the use of solitary, HB 1581 is a powerful bill that HRC has decided to support, providing that there are some significant changes and amendments added. Over the last few months, HRC members have met with Rep. Tina Davis (who introduced the bill) and Rep. Joanna McClinton (a co-sponsor who sits on the Judiciary Committee) to discuss the bill, our proposed amendments, and to map out a strategy for moving the bill through the legislative process. Both Representatives were very receptive to HRC's input, and they expressed that learned a lot from our research and our personal stories of people who've done hard time in the hole. We pushed for a more expansive, abolitionist perspective on solitary and learned some key details about which politicians we need to pressure to get a hearing on this bill, to move it out of committee, to get a companion bill introduced in the senate, and to push it to a vote.

We know that in order to do all this we've got to build more power locally, regionally, and statewide. We need to expand our base and reach out to constituents in Republican-held districts in order to push this bill forward. We know we've got our work cut out for us, but we're out here fighting for freedom so we're moving straight ahead!

Our Proposed Amendments

- **Maximum time spent in solitary 15 days - no more than 20 days in a 60 day period -** to prevent people from being continually resented to 15 days. This cap applies to everyone, not just vulnerable populations
- **Prohibition on the use of restraint chair, chemical agents, shackles in solitary**
- **Step Down Program and rehabilitation** for people leaving solitary
- **The creation of Independent Monitor or Ombudsman** (not employed by the DOC) who would investigate conditions in solitary
- **The creation of a Civilian Review Board** (Mental Health worker, Medical Professional, Social Worker) to preside over Misconduct Hearings, instead of a Hearing Examiner.
- **Changes to Misconduct Hearing Process** - able to call witnesses, able to call legal counsel and an 'Inmate Advocate', and able to present evidence (given access to video).
 - **Alternatives to solitary**



L-R: Jackson Kusiak, Rep. Joanna McClinton, Karen Ali, and Wali Bilal.



Top Row L-R: Wali Bilal, Richard 'Tut' Carter, Rep. Tina Davis, Karen Ali, Jackson Kusiak, Karen Lee. Bottom Row L-R: Nicole Brigstock and Andy Switzer.

11/9/2017

MEDIA RELEASE: Allegheny County Jail to Cease Housing Pregnant Women in Solitary Confinement

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County has settled a lawsuit filed last December by five women who challenged the county jail's practice of housing pregnant inmates in solitary confinement.

The women are represented by the Abolitionist Law Center, the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, and the law firm of Reed Smith LLP. Four of the plaintiffs spent time ranging from six to 22 days in solitary confinement while pregnant and incarcerated at Allegheny County Jail (ACJ).

"The women who brought this lawsuit exhibited tremendous courage under harsh and despairing conditions, and through their efforts they have secured important human rights protections for pregnant women at the Allegheny County Jail," said Abolitionist Law Center Legal Director Bret Grote.

The plaintiffs were typically placed in isolation for minor, non-violent rules infractions, including possession of too many pairs of shoes in one case and possession of a library book in another. During their time in solitary, they stayed in their cells for 23 to 24 hours per day and were rarely given the opportunity to even shower. They were also denied access to proper nutrition for pregnancy throughout their incarceration.

"We are grateful that officials in Allegheny County have recognized how harmful it is to keep pregnant women in solitary confinement," said Reggie Shuford, executive director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania. "It's unfortunate that it took a federal lawsuit for them to recognize this, but we're pleased the county has agreed to a progressive, comprehensive, and humane policy. People who are incarcer-

ated have a right to basic healthcare needs and to be treated humanely."

As part of the settlement, officials from Allegheny County have agreed to numerous new policies and accountability measures that are among the most comprehensive and progressive procedures for housing pregnant inmates in the United States. The settlement prohibits the jail from placing pregnant women in restrictive housing except in rare instances where the inmate poses a serious and immediate risk of physical harm, and decisions to place pregnant women in restrictive housing must be reviewed by the deputy warden and cleared by a medical professional.

In addition, administrators at the jail will provide appropriate diets for pregnant inmates and will track the distribution of meals, and women who are lactating will be allowed to use a breast pump.

The county also agreed to specific enforcement measures. The federal district court will retain jurisdiction to enforce the settlement agreement's terms for three years. ACJ will also provide a current list of all pregnant women at the jail to the plaintiffs' lawyers on request and will provide copies of documents related to the placement of any pregnant women in restrictive housing to the plaintiffs' attorneys.

"Allegheny County has taken an important step in joining the national trend that recognizes there are better alternatives to solitary confinement within our prisons and jails," said Alexandra Morgan-Kurtz, staff attorney for the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project. "These policy changes will provide a healthier and safer environment for pregnant women detained at ACJ."

The case is *Seitz v. Allegheny County*, and the plaintiffs are represented by Bret Grote of the Abolitionist Law Center, Sara Rose and Witold Walczak of the ACLU of Pennsylvania, Alexandra Morgan-Kurtz of the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, and David Fawcett and Aleksandra Phillips of the law firm Reed Smith LLP.

More information about the case is available at www.aclupa.org/seitz.

From: <https://www.aclupa.org/our-work/legal/legaldocket/seitz-v-allegheny-county/>

Human Rights Coalition Report

SOLITARY FACT SHEET

FACTS ABOUT SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

HISTORY

- Use of solitary confinement was largely discontinued in the United States in 1890 when the Supreme Court ruled that it led to mental deterioration and resulted in no rehabilitation of those incarcerated.
- The practice was re-implemented in the 1980s and 1990s as part of the so-called "War on Drugs".
- The number of isolated individuals nationwide increased from under 60,000 in 1995 to over 80,000 in 2005.[i]
- Today there are over 80,000 individuals in solitary confinement in United States' prisons. This number rises 100,000 when factoring in county jails, immigrant detention centers, and youth centers.[ii]
- Supermax prisons, which are generally composed solely of solitary confinement cells, house approximately 25,000 Americans.[iii]

"SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FACTS" - ADAPTED FROM THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE[IV]:

- Complete isolation in the cell for 22 to 24 hours of the day. For the remaining hour or two, individuals who are confined are allowed to go outside (while still alone), to a walled-in pen, or shower
- Cramped cells which contain a toilet, a sink, all of your possessions, and a cot
- Average cells range from 6' to 8' by 9' to 10'
- Those in solitary receive meals through a slot in the door

- Infrequent phone calls and rare non-contact family visits
- Extremely limited access to rehabilitative

or educational programming

- Grossly inadequate medical and mental health treatment
- Restricted reading material and personal property
- Physical torture such as hog-tying, restraint chairs, and forced cell extraction
- Mental torture such as sensory deprivation, permanent bright lighting, extreme temperatures, and forced insomnia
- Sexual intimidation and violence

USE ON MENTALLY ILL

- Symptoms of mental illness can result in being placed in solitary confinement in many prisons
- While in solitary confinement, incarcerated individuals receive little to no psychiatric consultation, including going as many as nine months without prescribed monthly treatments
- According to the American Psychiatric Association, clinicians agree that when subjected to solitary, "inmates' psychiatric conditions will clinically deteriorate or not improve." [v]

GENERATION OF MENTAL ILLNESS

- "Many prisoners become so desperate and despondent that they engage in self-mutilation" and have "smeared themselves with feces, [sat] catatonic in puddles of their own urine on the floors of their cells, or shriek [ed] wildly and bang[ed] their fists or their heads against the walls that contain them." (Chris Haney-testifying before Dick Durbin's judiciary subcommittee hearing on confinement) [vi]

- Common symptoms of people in solitary confinement include hallucinations, panic attacks, depression, loss of memory, mood swings.[vii]
- Approximately 50 percent of prison suicides occur among the 4 percent of people in solitary confinement.[viii]

THE COSTS OF SOLITARY (FROM SOLITARY WATCH'S "THE HIGH COST OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT"[IX])

- It costs the state up to three times as much to keep an incarcerated person in solitary as it does to keep them in the general prison population: yearly costs can reach \$77,000 and higher, per individual in solitary, per year.
- Construction costs for solitary confinement cells are also higher, with one study putting the price at two to three times that of a normal cell.
- After Mississippi reduced its solitary population from 1000 to 150 and closed its one supermax, Mississippi taxpayers were saved \$8 million dollars a year, according to the ACLU.

INEFFECTIVENESS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

- States that reduced their use of isolation in prisons by up to 75% saw significant decreases in prison violence.[x]
- When Mississippi reduced the number of people held in solitary confinement from 1000 to 150, incidents of violence within the facility decreased by almost 70%.[xi]
- One state-wide study showed that people who were released directly from solitary confinement into society had a recidivism rate of 64%, as opposed to the 41% rate of individuals who spent some time in the normal prison setting before returning to society.[xii]
- "Segregation was developed as a method for handling highly dangerous

(Continued on page 26)

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prisoners. However, it has increasingly been used with prisoners who do not pose a threat to staff or other prisoners but are placed in segregation for minor violations that are disruptive but not violent, such as talking back (insolence), being out of place, failure to report to work or school, or refusing to change housing units or cells.” - Michael Jacobson, President and Director of the Vera Institute of Justice[xiii]

TARGETED USES OF SOLITARY

- In addition to disproportionate use on mentally ill populations within prisons, solitary is used as a tool against already marginalized and disadvantaged populations.
- African-Americans represent about 14% of Americans [xiv], 38% of incarcerated persons[xv], but about 60% of people held in solitary confinement.[xvi]
- About 300 immigrants are held in solitary confinement on any given day at the 50 largest detention facilities that make up the sprawling patchwork of holding centers nationwide overseen by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials.[xvii]
- From a report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, “[T]he Inter-American Commission is deeply troubled by the use of confinement (“administrative segregation” or “disciplinary segregation”) in the case of vulnerable immigration detainees, including members of the LGBT community, religious minorities and mentally challenged detainees. The use of confinement to protect a threatened population amounts to a punitive measure. Equally troubling is the extent to which this measure is used as a disciplinary tool.”[xviii]
- Religious minorities are often subjected to solitary confinement, especially those of Muslim faith. Specific units in prisons were created so that Muslims would have less access to the outside world and their families.[xix]
- Adolescents placed in solitary confinement often cannot see family members, access proper nutrition, read books, or study classroom materials. Some prisons place juveniles in solitary confinement by default to “protect” them from adult inmates; jail officials in three states reported that all young people under age 18 in their facilities were held in protective solitary confinement.[xx]
- LGBTQ individuals are more likely to be placed in solitary confinement for common offenses or gender expression where they are subject to endure physical and sexual abuse.[xxi]

HOPE FOR CHANGE

- Solitary confinement qualifies as “cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment” and even torture - Juan Méndez, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and High Commissioner on Human Rights (Jan. 2012)

- U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) issues new solitary directive for immigrants changing use to last resort only, review anything more than 14 days, but stops short of banning it (Sept. 4, 2013)
- States like Mississippi that have reduced solitary populations have seen drops in violence and prison costs.
- New York City Department of Corrections has recently decided to end the use of solitary confinement on minors. [xxii]
- In response to a lawsuit by the New York Civil Liberties Union, the New York State Department of Community Corrections agreed to reform their use of solitary, with steps being taken to immediately remove youth, pregnant women, and developmentally disabled and intellectually challenged individuals from extreme isolation.[xxiii]
- Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin held two hearings calling the U.S. senate to “end use of solitary confinement for juveniles, pregnant women, and those with serious mental illness.”[xxiv]

FROM: princetonspear.com

WTF!



Huh? Solitary confinement?? Girl!!!! You talkin a whole lotta crazy they don't even do that no more. Or at least they shouldn't.

BY: PV&KB

Human Rights Coalition Report

Freedom a Struggle After Years in Solitary Confinement

Nov. 4, 2017

By RICH LORD and KATE GIAMMARISE, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Twelve days after his release from prison, Richard Dale Thomas hadn't let go of the routines that got him through 2½ years of solitary confinement.

ADVANCE FOR USE SATURDAY., NOV. 4 - In this Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2017 photo, Richard Dale Thomas talks in Uniontown, Pa., about his time spent at SCI Greene. Because of his solitary confinement Richard said that he spends most of his time on the porch and cannot stand small rooms or riding in the car and prefers to work outside. Richard recently left prison after a 7 year stint that included 2 and a half years in solitary confinement. (Darrell Sapp/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette via AP) The Associated Press

UNIONTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Twelve days after his release from prison, Richard Dale Thomas hadn't let go of the routines that got him through 2½ years of solitary confinement.

Every day, 1,200 pushups.
Pacing to the point of exhaustion.
Keeping his distance from unfamiliar people.

"You get used to being by yourself for so long, when you get out, you're not used to people being near you and touching you," the 32-year-old Uniontown man said. He was trying to avoid the behaviors — breaking things, mostly, and "snapping out" at authority — that got him "hole time" totaling nearly 1,000 days, during each of which he spent 23 hours by himself. "I was losing my mind because I was locked up in the hole."

States including Colorado, Texas and California have begun to reduce the use of enforced solitude — sometimes called "segregation." Two years ago, state Corrections Secretary John Wetzel called it "unprecedented that you have the corrections field open up the books and look at segregation and say, 'Look, we need to do better.'"

But if "better" means fewer people in solitary confinement, then his department hasn't improved. As of late September, Pennsylvania had 1,235 inmates in disciplinary cells — 2.6 percent of the prison population — up from 2.3 percent in late 2015.

The department declined repeated requests for an interview on the topic, made over two weeks. A spokeswoman wrote in email that the department has, for two years, worked to review its use of restricted housing and hopes "to reduce the use of restricted housing without sacrificing the safety of staff and the institution." The department claims that by some measures, it has trimmed the use of solitary confinement, which means 23 hours per day in a cell, sometimes with a cellmate. At the end of 2016, the average time an inmate spent in restricted housing was five months, down from six months the year before, and the median time was 39 days, down from 47.

The lengthiest tenure in segregation, though, was 16 years. Jules Lobel, a law professor at the University of Pittsburgh has sued prison systems over their isolation practices. "Even though Wetzel presents himself as a reformer," he said, "the reality is that the reforms are very slow moving in Pennsylvania."

"I was bad, man"

"I don't listen to music when I'm walking down the street.

I need to hear if someone's coming up on me," said Richard Thomas, as he stood on his mother's front porch seven weeks after his release. "I gotta be on point with my surroundings."

In stores, his anger surges if another shopper cuts into the path of his cart. He can't bear standing in checkout lines. He'll joke around one minute, then explode into a tirade, then quickly calm down. "I've always had anger issues," he said. "It got worse from being locked up in the hole for 2½ years."

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A crack problem drove the burglaries that put him in prison. Then on June 1, 2014, as he was approaching eligibility for parole, he broke a rule at the State Correctional Institution Greene. During "count," when inmates are supposed to stand in their cells and be tallied, he sat. He was sentenced to a month in disciplinary custody. "I lost my parole right then and there," he said. "I ended up snapping out," smashing a television and earning more hole time.

He went on a lonely rampage. For two years, he was disciplined multiple times each month for abusive language, contraband, destroying property, disobeying orders and making threats. He sabotaged his plumbing, swallowed a razor blade, and "damaged around 100 cells," he said, as he was shifted from prison to prison, hole to hole.

"I was bad, man," he said.

Solitary confinement turns bad to worse, according to some psychiatrists. Left with no socialization and no decisions to make, prisoners suffer "the decimation of life skills," said Terry Kupers, a psychiatrist who was a witness against California's prison system, and wrote the new book *Solitary: The Inside Story of Supermax Isolation and How We Can Abolish It*. "On average, what happens is, they become very anxious, panicked even, when they are around strangers or in crowds," he said, "and it comes from being isolated for so long."

Forced reforms

Due to a 2015 settlement forced by Disability Rights Pennsylvania, the state no longer uses solitary confinement to punish seriously mentally ill inmates. Inmates with psychiatric problems deemed less severe, as was Thomas, still get hole time.

In September 2016, five years after the United Nations' expert on torture called for a ban on solitary confinement terms longer than 15 days, Pennsylvania was in court, defending its right to keep people locked down for decades. U.S. District Judge Christopher Conner, though ordered that Arthur Johnson, then 64, be returned to SCI Greene's general population after 36 years in solitary.

Courts are forcing other states to shift away from using indefinite solitude as a punishment.

The Southern Poverty Law Center is suing the Alabama Department of Corrections over its practices of putting people in solitary for certain behaviors, and due to crowded prison conditions.

In June, a federal judge in the case wrote, "Mental-health and correctional professionals have recognized that long-

term isolation resulting from segregation, or solitary confinement, has crippling consequences for mental health." Citing the testimony of plaintiff's expert Dr. Craig Haney, he noted, "isolation of the type experienced by prisoners in segregation has harmful psychological effects even on those who are not mentally ill, and even mentally healthy prisoners can develop mental illness such as depression, psychosis, and anxiety disorder during a prolonged period of isolation." As a result of a case litigated in part by Lobel, California has moved thousands of prisoners out of long-term solitary confinement.

In September, Texas formally ended the use of solitary confinement as a punishment for any single violation. (The state still has around 4,000 inmates in "administrative segregation" because they are viewed as general security threats.) For routine violations, Texas prisons take away an inmate's privileges, put him in a higher security unit, or take away credit for "good time" that might otherwise lead to early release.

Why give up "hole time" as a standard disciplinary tool? "At the end of the day," said Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokesman Jason Clark, "we determined that we didn't need it."

And this month Colorado corrections Director Rick Raemisch, who spent 20 hours in solitary in 2014 and wrote that it left him "twitchy and paranoid," announced that the state will no longer isolate inmates for more than 15 consecutive days.

Dire prospects, no net

For someone like Richard Thomas, there aren't many programs or services to help him rebuilt his life or find full-time work. He has access to certain public benefits, such as Medicaid and food assistance. But he's most interested in finding a job.

"I want to work for my money," he said. "I ain't no (expletive) charity case. I work hard for my money and that's the way I want it."

An American Civil Liberties Union report released earlier this year on the benefits of hiring formerly incarcerated people found "a lack of stable employment increases the likelihood that an individual will return to jail or prison; research has found that joblessness is the single most important predictor of recidivism."

Bill Thompson, executive director for the Westmoreland Fayette Workforce Investment Board, said his agency doesn't offer any services specific to ex-offenders, though he said they are free to take advantage of the services offered to the general public. "If he walked in (the CareerLink

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offices), someone would provide one-on-one case management support and based on that discussion, try to lay out a reemployment plan," Thompson said. The Department of Corrections is currently "fleshing out" a process of referring departing inmates to CareerLink, a spokeswoman wrote.

"If people are coming out of the state prison with no work skills and no support system from the corrections system to help them find work, then what are our expectations as a society?" asked Ken Regal, executive director of South Side-based anti-hunger advocacy group Just Harvest.

"There is not the kind of comprehensive safety net to get people fully back on their feet. That ought to be our goal."

Struggling to stay calm

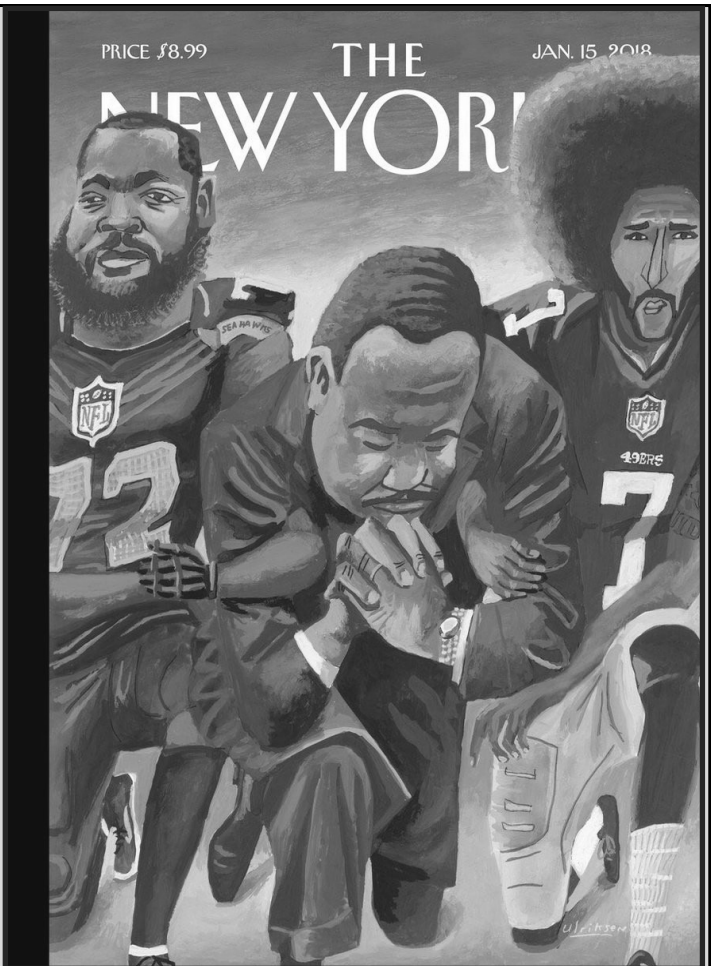
Richard Thomas said that in his experience, the hole is "not a place of rehabilitation. It's a place of hell."

In August 2016, a deputy warden at SCI Mahanoy came to him with an offer: Behave for four months, and he could get out of the hole. He kept his end of the deal, and the warden let him out of the hole at year's end. In August, with little warning, the state recalculated his time served and sent him home, nearly a year earlier than he'd expected. "I'm just so thankful he's out," said his mother, Dorothy Isler, as they talked in her living room. She's worried, though. "He's got so much anger, when he gets mad," she said. "This is terrifying for me.

"When you're mad," she said to him, "you're not my son."

"I'm fine now — I think. I'm better than I was," he answered. He's been fishing and driving golf balls with the 9-year-old son he hadn't seen in years, and trying to scrape together money for birthday and Christmas presents. He's working odd jobs, and hoping to be hired somewhere, though he feels temperamentally unfit for jobs like fry cook or supermarket worker.

"It's a struggle out here to keep my calm and not snap out over every little thing," he explained. "Solitary confinement changed me. It has a lot to do with the struggles that I try to deal with."



1/8/2018 The New Yorker's latest cover is a Black power masterpiece, a tribute to three men who have stood up for civil rights. **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**, along with **Colin Kaepernick** and **Michael Bennett**, are the subjects of an illustration that married art and activism for the publication's January 15 issue.

SOURCE: The New Yorker, NFL

Read more at: <https://newsone.com/3768017/colin-kaepernick-news-the-new-yorker-martin-luther-king-michael-bennett-kneeling-cover/>

What's The News!

New parole officers coming as DOC, parole merge

BY: LIZ NAVRATIL

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Nov. 2017



John Wetzel, Secretary for the Department of Corrections.

HARRISBURG — A new class of 70 parole officers will start in January, and half of them are being hired with money saved by the merger of the state Department of Corrections and Board of Probation and Parole.

The merger will mean other changes, said John Wetzel, secretary for the Department of Corrections. “I think that’s just the start,” he said.

The Department of Corrections oversees the state’s prisons and halfway houses. The Board of Probation and Parole decides whether to grant people early release from prison and supervises them when they return to the community.

The two merged last month after Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration issued a memorandum of understanding instructing them to work together in areas where they overlap. Some in law enforcement circles have expressed skepticism about the merger — both because it didn’t go through all of the legislative channels and because they fear the parole board could lose some of its independence. Under the new arrangement, the two groups will share records and also business offices. This could allow them to coordinate on leases of halfway houses and other facilities. It would not change

things at prisons, which the state will continue to own. Many other details of the merger will be ironed out in the coming months, while the two groups survey their workers to seek their ideas about how the process should unfold.

“We see this as an opportunity to redraw how we do everything,” Mr. Wetzel said. It’s possible the two departments could work together to coordinate transportation — parole officers, for example, can spend large portions of their shifts taking people to halfway houses, while the DOC also already transports prisoners from place to place. If the DOC employees could take over the transportation duties, parole officers might be able to spend more time meeting with the people they supervise, Mr. Wetzel said. It’s also possible the two could coordinate on assessments to help gauge the needs of parolees — right now, they receive assessments in the prison system and often again from their parole officer. The results of those screenings help determine what kinds of programs people participate in while they’re on parole.

About 75 percent of the people who go through the state’s prison system and leave struggle with addiction, and just shy of 30 percent have some form of mental illness, according to DOC statistics. Mr. Wetzel hopes that sharing and streamlining more of that information could help better tailor programs for each parolee and reduce the chances that they’ll commit new crimes.

“Even though we have similar goals,” he said of the two departments, “they’re not the same goal, and similar is not good enough to get outcomes.” Ideally, he said, the new arrangement will allow the DOC and parole board to better coordinate to get those outcomes.

Some parts of the merger worry people working in law enforcement circles. The Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, for example, fears that pairing the two agencies could weaken the parole board’s independence. The Wolf administration has said that the parole board will continue to have full authority to decide who would be released on parole and who should return to custody after infractions of the rules of their supervision.

But Richard Long, executive director of the state DA association, said members fear that if parole officers are deeply attuned to the budget for prisons — and thinking, intentionally or not, about the high costs of incarcerating someone — they might be less likely to recommend that someone who has violated the rules of their parole return to prison. “If someone should be revoked...and they’re not revoked, that weakens public safety,” he said.

Mr. Wetzel said, “I don’t know any criminal justice professional who would make a decision that would impact the safety of the community based on money.”

Mr. Long said his group also has concerns about the way the merger came to be. Legislation authorizing the merger had been floating around the General Assembly since at least 2015 but had never passed to the governor’s desk.

The governor’s office said when it announced the merger last month that it believed a line in a budget bill known as the administrative code gave it the authority to make the move.

Had it gone the whole way through the House and the Senate, Mr. Long said he thought the change might have been “more fully vetted.”

Mr. Wetzel said he plans to meet with the association, possibly early next year, to discuss the changes.

For now, Mr. Long’s reaction to the merger is mixed. “If we end up with more agents on the streets, that’s a positive,” Mr. Long said, “but our concerns remain.”

What's The News!

A lawyer's lost bags lead to a juvenile lifer's redemption

NOVEMBER 9, 2017

JESSICA GRIFFIN



Jeffrey Branch, (left) found Mark Cedrone's briefcase on the street. He returned it, beginning a story of friendship and redemption.

The briefcases lay on the South Philadelphia street, abandoned, one neatly leaning against the other like a couple of downed dominoes. At first, Jeffrey Branch, 53, thought someone got robbed.

Nope, he told himself. Not touching those. He took another look. Something about the way the bags sat neatly just over the curb on the 2600 block of South 19th Street that July day made him reconsider. More likely that someone, rushed or distracted, leaned them against his car and drove off.

One quick look inside revealed he was right. Someone was definitely missing these bags. He stood there, unsure what to do next.

A man who had grown accustomed to accounting for his every move for decades, he called his wife to tell her where he was and what he found. Wait a few minutes, she told him.

When no one came back for the bags, he walked them back to his house. Inside were a pricey computer, a good amount of cash, and some important-looking papers. There was also a stack of business cards: Mark E. Cedrone of Cedrone & Mancano LLC, Attorneys at Law.

A lawyer. Branch thought back to his past and couldn't help but think this was a test, one he'd been preparing for exactly 35 years and eight months.

He dialed the number, never dreaming that his act of good citizenship would spark a fast friendship between the lawyer and the former juvenile lifer.

It had already been a blessing to be able to do the right thing, Branch told me when the three of us met at Cedrone's Center City office. But the relationship that developed brings him to tears. "You know, people judge you . . .," he said, before being overcome by emotion. "He trusts me."

Cedrone, seated next to him, smiled. "I consider him a friend," he said. He's already invited Branch and his wife for Thanksgiving dinner, and he sends whatever odd jobs he can find Branch's way while trying to help him land full-time work.

Just as Branch guessed, the day Cedrone forgot his bags, he had been trying to juggle them and his dog. One of the bags was packed with money and clothes for a trip with his wife to the Shore.

Branch was in Center City when he called, cashing a check from his part-time work at a supermarket.

Cedrone offered Branch a ride home. Along the way, he learned that his Good Samaritan had a story that made his actions even more commendable.

Branch was 17 when he went to jail for second-degree murder — he was an accomplice in a robbery that left a man dead. Eight months ago, he was among the first wave of juvenile lifers in Pennsylvania to be resentenced and released on parole after the U.S. Supreme Court found mandatory life-without-parole sentences for minors to be unconstitutional.

He'd just been out for four months when he came across the bags. "You know, not many people would do this," Cedrone told Branch.

Branch's response was unequivocal. "I've been given a second chance in life and I want to make sure I make the best of it."

Here's how he put it: "I was a bad kid. This was a first test that I am not that bad kid anymore."

Cedrone, a criminal defense attorney, has heard plenty of hard-luck stories. Branch's sincerity touched him.

"We as a society generally don't leave any room for the notion of forgiveness or improvement in people," Cedrone said. "Here's a guy who made a big mistake when he was a kid, and paid a dear price for it."

Cedrone called Branch's parole officer and then wrote a letter to the judge who presided over his resentencing and the Board of Probation and Parole. "I tell this story because every day, all around us, we find reasons for disappointment in humankind," he wrote. "To the extent the court may have harbored any doubt concerning Mr. Branch's entitlement to the second chance offered as a result of changes in the legal landscape, I hope this story disabuses such doubt."

For Branch, every decision he's made in his eight months as a free man reflects not just on himself but on many of the men he left behind. "I'm not saying everyone should be released," he said. "But there are more people like me that don't have a chance and have changed their life and deserve one."

Branch's release wasn't supported by a friend of the man who was killed. When I asked Branch what he'd say to the friend if he could, he teared up.

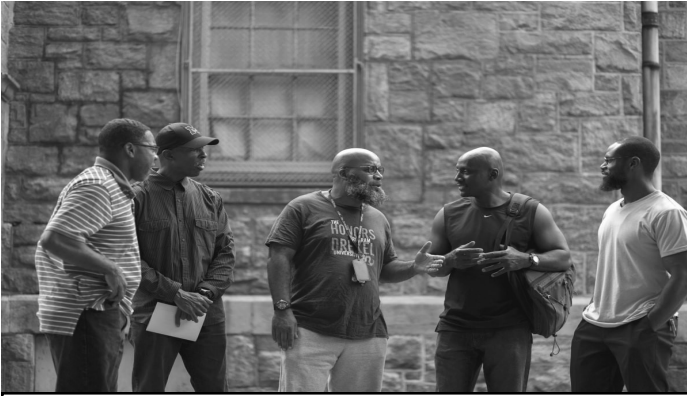
"You can't come back from that," Branch said, crying. "I'm sorry. That's all I can say, and I'm going to be better. I'm not that kid anymore."

FROM: http://www.philly.com/philly/columnists/helen_ubinas/juvenile-lifer-redemption-lawyer-cedrone-20171109.html

What's The News!

Pennsylvania let 70 teen killers out of prison in the last year. Here's what happened.

by Samantha Melamed,



John Pace (left), a former juvenile lifer, with members of the reentry support group he started in May after being released from prison. From left are Jeffrey Dean, Vincent Boyd, Charles Brown, Stacey Torrance.

For the first time in a generation, Pennsylvania prisons are releasing convicted murderers by the dozen.

In the last year, 70 men and women — all locked away as teens — have quietly returned to the community after decades behind bars. They're landing their first jobs, as grocery store cashiers and line cooks, addiction counselors and paralegals. They are, in their 50s and 60s, learning to drive, renting their first apartments, trying to establish credit, and navigating unfamiliar relationships. They're encountering the mismatch between long-held daydreams and the hard realities of daily life.

These are the first of 517 juvenile lifers in Pennsylvania, the largest such contingent in the nation, to be resentenced and released on parole since the Supreme Court decided that mandatory life-without-parole sentences for minors are unconstitutional.

Many feel they've been granted both an extraordinary privilege and a grave responsibility to demonstrate that it is, in

fact, safe to release many of Pennsylvania's more than 5,000 lifers. So far, not one of the 70 has violated parole. "We understand the value of having things in place so we don't have the Reggie McFaddens again," said John Pace, 49, who left prison in February after 31 years.

The case of Reginald McFadden — the juvenile lifer who received clemency and went on a rape and murder rampage in 1994 — effectively ceased such commutations in Pennsylvania.

Still, it has been a more difficult path than many imagined. They said representatives from various reentry organizations had visited the prisons, describing services that would be available to them.

"The ideas that they had us coming out to didn't exist,"

said Vincent Boyd, 52, who came home in February after 36 years. He's humble, willing to work hard. After earning as little as 19 cents per hour in prison, low wages don't faze him. He now cleans kitchens on an overnight shift, earning \$55 a night. But housing, employment, and access to health care remain pressing concerns. "They weren't ready for juvenile lifers to come out here. If we didn't have it on our own, we didn't receive it from anywhere else."

So, the lifers are trying to organize their own reentry program. A peer-support group led by Pace meets monthly. "I believe in self-agency," he said.

A big adjustment

Lifers who returned to Philadelphia and agreed to speak to the Inquirer and Daily News said the best things about being out of prison are, well, just about everything: Trees and squirrels and birds, parks and front porches, ice cream, soft pretzels, bubble baths. Opening up the refrigerator and choosing what you want to eat. Being with family. Being alone. Locking the door of your apartment. Unlocking it.

But the transition has also been jarring, confusing, difficult, and sometimes frightening. There's sticker shock, of course. Pizza cost 50 cents a slice when Boyd was locked up. Now, \$3 seems exorbitant. There are technological mishaps. Juvenile lifers have, like everybody else, discovered the annoyance of the group text. Boyd shook his head: "I can't stand that." They're figuring out how to dress themselves. Almost anything is better than a prison uniform, but fashion can be tricky. "We're dealing with a different generation," Pace said. "They like a lot of tight stuff. You got to be thoughtful that, when you're buying jeans, they're not skinny jeans."

There are also more serious challenges. After decades in close confines, the wider world can seem a scary place. It's hard to shake the feeling everyone's watching you after so many decades of being watched. And they find it strange that people will pass them on the street without bothering to say hello.

"Everyone is disconnected, walking down the street with headphones," said John Thompson, 55, who spent 37 years in prisons. He was often held in solitary as punishment for possessing weapons, which he deemed necessary for survival. Yet, he doesn't think the outside world is any safer.

Michael Twiggs, who was locked up for 41 years, often forwards warnings he encounters online, the type of ominous but easily debunked missive that was ubiquitous in the early days of email. "I do see a lot of warnings," he said. "I don't know if it's real or fake, but I do try to pass it on."

Some of their fears have proved justified. Wage theft, in particular, has plagued men who worked for weeks or months without pay. (Joseph Baynes, 59, shrugged it off when it happened to him. "The brother hired me sight unseen when I was in prison. I'm grateful for the experience.")

Many are not yet making a living wage, but some are highly educated.

Pace, for one, has a bachelor's degree from Villanova University, earned over the course of 13 years. He's employed as

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a trainer for the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program and hopes to earn a master's degree next.

And Twiggs, 59, who for two decades was president of the Para-Professional Law Clinic at Graterford Prison, is now working full-time as a paralegal with the appeals unit of the Defender Association of Philadelphia.

A little help

So far, the lifers who have been released after three or four decades have not faced much public outcry.

Jennifer Storm, Pennsylvania's official victim advocate, expects to hear more concerns from victims' families as lifers who've served less time come up for resentencing. After all, everyone who is serving a life sentence in Pennsylvania was convicted of murder or felony murder – participating in a felony in which someone is killed.

Pace hit a man with a blackjack while attempting to mug him; the man died 10 days later. Twiggs shot another teen on the street in Southwest Philadelphia. Vincent Boyd and his nephew Courtney, both released this year, were among a group of teens who beat a man for a six-pack of beer and were sentenced to life after he died of a heart attack. Thompson shot a man who was breaking the windows of the North Philadelphia house where he lived. Baynes shot a 64-year-old woman in a robbery on the street.

Advocates say these men have matured and are now rehabilitated. They just need a little help to get back on their feet. It's hard to come by, though.

The Department of Corrections has helped where it can, working with lifers to obtain identification and offering a six-month housing voucher.

Jondhi Harrell, who runs the Center for Returning Citizens in Nicetown, said that he's been assisting about a dozen lifers with developing life skills and plans, but that he needs funding to do the work effectively. He's also enlisted David Rudovsky, a civil rights lawyer, to help match law firms with lifers who have paralegal

experience. Rudovsky said he's gauging firms' interest.

Joanna Visser Adjoian of the Youth Sentencing and Reentry Project said reentry providers have tried to step up. "But there's a real resource issue," she said. Individual counseling would be ideal, but the project is instead launching a website to refer lifers to programs they may be eligible for. The other challenges of life on the outside they will have to figure out for themselves. Pace, for one, is navigating a new phase of a romantic relationship that was long-distance for the last eight years. "She said, 'You were so sweet when you were in there!' I said, 'Well, you're around me every day now.'"

Family relationships can be similarly problematic. "You are always going to have a strained relationship with your family and friends, because you don't see things from the same perspective," Thompson said. "You can't explain it to them. If your leg's never been broken, you really don't know how it feels to have your leg broken."

For many, the only people who know just how they feel are other lifers. "I consider them my brothers, my extended family," Baynes said. Baynes left prison in May after 43 years. He's now working as a line cook, and living at a halfway house.

Life outside may be complicated, but his approach to it is simple, almost foolproof: "You got to give back. You got to be grateful. You got to thank God you got a second opportunity, and you got to do the right thing."

FROM: http://www.philly.com/philly/news/crime/___trashed-30-20170906.html

(Continued from page 36)

and other hate groups.

The coalition's stated purpose includes providing a voice for anyone who believes that racism, violence, and any type of discrimination degrades the quality of life for all community members. The purpose of the FRHRC is also to help diminish conflict and enhance cooperation between cultural groups, to promote community acceptance of the multi-cultural nature of the Flathead Reservation community, and to celebrate the positive benefits of living together here.

It's important to keep the glowing light of the Flathead Reservation Human Rights Coalition shining fearlessly, with determination. It's important for that flame to hold steady, gleaming into the murky shadows of fear and hatred.

If anything, it's time for that light to shine even brighter.

FRHRC became a 501c3 nonprofit organization in 1998; contact them or make a donation at P.O. Box 111, Ronan MT 59864, or leave a phone message at 406-261-9489 or 406-745-3303. Their blog is found at frhrc2.wordpress.com and the group's Facebook page is [facebook.com/frhrc2](https://www.facebook.com/frhrc2).

What's The News!



Former Chicago police Sgt. Ronald Watts, center, leaves the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in 2013 after being sentenced to 22 months in prison. (Phil Velasquez / Chicago Tribune)

State's attorney to dismiss 18 convictions tied to former Chicago police sergeant

By [Jason Meisner](#) [Contact Reporter](#),
[Chicago Tribune](#)

In what is believed to be the first mass exoneration in Cook County history, prosecutors on Thursday plan to drop all charges against 15 men who alleged they were framed by corrupt former Chicago police Sgt. Ronald Watts and his crew.

The announcement to vacate the convictions will be made during a morning hearing before Chief Criminal Court Judge LeRoy Martin Jr., according to a statement from Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx's office.

It comes two months after lawyers for the 15 men filed a joint petition seeking to overturn a total of 18 criminal drug convictions, alleging that Watts and his crew framed all of them between 2003 and 2008. Watts and an officer under his command were sent to federal prison in 2013 for stealing money from a drug courier who'd been working as an [FBI](#) informant.

A review of the cases by the state's attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit "has shown a pattern of narcotics arrests that raise serious concerns about the validity of the resulting convictions," a spokesman for Foxx said in a written statement.

"Therefore, the State's Attorney's Office is vacating the convictions."

Reached by phone Wednesday, Joshua Tepfer, the lead attorney for the 15 men, praised the "unprecedented" action by Foxx's office but said the cases were "the tip of the iceberg" when it comes to cases tainted by Watts.

"It's a remarkable effort by the state's attorney's office to recognize the significance of this horrendous injustice and to do their part to start correcting it," Tepfer said. "But there are still more than 400 convictions (by Watts' team) that are unaccounted for ... it's no doubt the tip of the iceberg."

A state's attorney spokesman said nobody in the prosecutors' office could recall ever dropping so many convictions at one time.

Since last year, the Chicago Tribune has written several front-page stories detailing the scandal over Watts' nearly decadelong run of corruption. Five people have already had their convictions thrown out, so Thursday's move will bring the total to 20. Also, two officers who alleged they were blackballed for trying to expose Watts' corruption years ago won a \$2 million settlement to their whistleblower lawsuit.

Watts has repeatedly been accused of forcing residents and drug dealers alike to

pay a "protection" tax and putting bogus cases on those who refused to play ball. In case after case, when Watts' targets complained – either to the Police Department or in court – judges, prosecutors and internal affairs investigators all believed the testimony of Watts and his fellow officers over their accusers, records show.

In addition to the alleged frame-ups by Watts, the petition filed in September also highlighted a broken system of police discipline that allegedly protects bad officers and punishes those who tried to blow the whistle on his corruption.

Despite mounting allegations, Watts continued to operate for years amid a lengthy police internal affairs division probe as well as investigations by the Cook County state's attorney's office and the FBI, according to court records. When Watts was finally caught, it was on relatively minor federal charges, and he was given a break at sentencing by a federal judge who talked tough but in the end handed him only 22 months behind bars.

Meanwhile, at least seven other officers who were part of Watts' team are still on the force, including one who has since been promoted to sergeant and another who was found by a jury earlier this year to have shot a teen in the back without justification.

Among the petitioners whose case will be overturned Thursday is Leonard Gipson, who filed a complaint with the Chicago Police Department in 2003 alleging the sergeant had framed him on a drug charge because he'd refused to pay "protection" money.

Gipson's complaint went nowhere. Four months later, with his drug case pending, Gipson was visiting his girlfriend in the Ida B. Wells public housing complex when he again ran into Watts, who had been notified of the complaint against him.

"Let me see if you can bond off on this," Watts said to Gipson before handcuffing and planting 28 grams of heroin on him, Gipson alleged in the petition. After two years in jail awaiting trial, he pleaded guilty on the advice of his attorney, who noted it was his word against the police's.

Another man, Taurus Smith was 17 years old at the time he claimed Watts had

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him falsely arrested on a narcotics charge. Shortly after he bonded out, Smith's mother took him to file a complaint with the now-defunct Office of Professional Standards. The next day, Watts and two other officers confronted Smith outside a building at Ida B. Wells, where Watts made it clear that he knew the teen had dared complain, according to Smith's sworn statement in the petition.

"Watts had his service weapon on his waist and another gun in his hand," Smith said in the statement. "He said to me, 'This is grown-man s---.' ... He then threatened he would plant the gun on me if I didn't leave it alone."

Smith said he again reported the incident to his mother, who told him they were going to have to move. Weeks later, they packed up and left the Ida B. Wells complex for good, he said.

Gipson, now 36, said in his sworn statement that everyone in the neighborhood knew of Watts' reputation as a crooked police officer. Watts had personally warned him that if he didn't pay his street tax, Gipson said, "I would go to jail every time he ran into me."

Gipson tried to fight his drug charges in court, but after a Cook County judge sided with the officers and denied his motion to suppress evidence, he had little option but to cut a deal. He pleaded guilty to both counts in exchange for four months in boot camp.

But it wasn't over for Gipson. In August 2007, two years after his release from custody, he was leaving his girlfriend's house in Ida B. Wells when Watts spotted him and asked, "Do you have something for me?" according to Gipson's affidavit.

Gipson left the building, but when he came back a short time later, Watts and several members of his team surrounded him, he said. Watts took a bag of drugs out of his pocket and said, "These are your drugs, hard-ass," then handcuffed Gipson and took him to the station, according to Gipson's statement.

Court records show Gipson pleaded

guilty to heroin possession and received four years in prison. His only criminal convictions are the three cases involving Watts, according to the records.

Time names Tarana Burke's Philly-inspired #MeToo movement as 'Person of the Year'

DECEMBER 6, 2017
by Nick Vadala

The "Silence Breakers" of the #MeToo movement, which onetime Philly activist Tarana Burke started a decade ago, have been named Time magazine's Person of the Year, NBC's Today show announced this morning.

Time's so-called Silence Breakers refueled Burke's #MeToo movement, which she first started as a campaign from an organization called Just Be Inc. Burke founded the organization in 2003, as she told Inquirer columnist Elizabeth Wellington earlier this year. The Me Too campaign began in 2007. However, the campaign picked up popularity in October in the wake of the sexual misconduct allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein.

Around that time, actress Alyssa Milano asked followers to write "me too" as a reply to a now-viral tweet on Twitter if they had ever been sexually assaulted or harassed. The tweet resulted in a number of women sharing via social media stories of sexual assault and harassment. Accord-

PHOTO: DAMIAN DOVARGANES / AP

Tarana Burke (center) originated the Me Too movement a decade ago. The Silence Breakers of the #MeToo movement have been named Time's person of the year. Tarana Burke, center, joins participants marching against sexual assault and harassment, Los Angeles, Sunday, Nov. 12, 2017

ing to CBS, the #MeToo hashtag generating 1.7 million tweets as of last month.



Alyssa Milano

[@Alyssa_Milano](#)

If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet.

3:21 PM - Oct 15, 2017

Milano later acknowledged that Burke originated the #MeToo movement, calling its origins "equal parts heartbreaking and inspiring." Burke is a three-time survivor of sexual violence.

Alyssa Milano

[@Alyssa_Milano](#)

I was just made aware of an earlier #MeToo movement, and the origin story is equal parts heartbreaking and inspiring <https://goo.gl/mh79ff>

6:24 PM - Oct 16, 2017

"I want the women I work with to find the entry point to where their healing is," Burke told the Inquirer in October. "Violence is violence. Trauma is trauma. And we are taught to downplay it, even think about it as child's play." Time also spoke with Burke for the magazine's story on the Silence Breakers, asking her what she thought of the movement going viral a decade after she created it.

"Sexual harassment does bring shame," she told the magazine. "And I think it's really powerful that this transfer is happening, that these women are able not just to share their shame, but to put the shame where it belongs: On the perpetrator."



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THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

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Among the women on the cover representing the movement is Taylor Swift, who won a symbolic \$1 in a civil court case after a jury found that a DJ had groped her. Actress Ashley Judd, who came forward with allegations about Hollywood executive Harvey Weinstein's sexual harassment, is also on the cover. Susan Fowler, Adama Iwu and Isabel Pascual also represent the movement on the cover.

"For giving voice to open secrets, for moving whisper networks onto social networks, for pushing us all to stop accepting the unacceptable, the Silence Breakers are the 2017 Person of the Year," Time's Editor-in-Chief, Edward Felsenthal, wrote of the decision.

Time has chosen a group rather than a person for the title in years past. In 2014 it was the Ebola fighters.

NBC's *Today* show, which recently fired longtime host Matt Lauer (who hosted a show in Philly in the 1980s) following allegations of sexual misconduct, announced Time's pick, with host Savannah Guthrie noting that the choice is "close to home." Other finalists for Time's Person of the Year included Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and President Trump. Trump earlier had claimed that he "took a pass" on the honor this year, which Time later denied, saying that the magazine's doesn't comment on its choice until its announcement.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Flathead Reservation Human Rights Coalition: a beam of light

Last Updated: 12/26/2017 | Maggie Plummer, FRHRC supporter, Polson

For 28 years, the Flathead Reservation Human Rights Coalition (FRHRC) has been shedding a calm, steady light into the shadows cast by hate groups and others.

Like a strong candle flame, the human rights coalition keeps the light of awareness shining on the issues.

Groups like the FRHRC are needed now more than ever, with the wild pendulum swings of national politics and the deepening divisiveness in our communities. It takes plenty of courage to keep shining that light into the face of hatred and fear. Through the years, the coalition's focus has widened to include not only racism but also gender stereotypes, bullying, suicide prevention, discrimination against gay people, and much, much more.

The FRHRC began in 1989, in the face of intensely anti-Indian groups setting up shop on the reservation. The idea has always been to celebrate diversity on the Flathead Reservation, and to support tribal sovereignty. Because the human rights folks were here to counter racist anti-Indian and white supremacist rhetoric with positive presentations on diversity, various hate groups have had short lives on the reservation. Through the years, the local coalition has worked closely as an affiliate of the Helena-based Montana Human Rights Network.

In those early years, Tribal member Lucille Otter faced significant opposition to her efforts to register tribal members to vote. That just made her dig in and work harder. She set up voter registration tables everywhere, and carried extra registration cards in her car. The story goes that once Lucille was out fishing, and registered a young woman on horseback. Over time, Lucille Roullier Otter registered more than 1,000 voters on the reservation. Lucille was a beacon of light for those who organized for human rights here on the reservation.

The local human rights coalition has seen a series of racist groups set up shop on the reservation. According to Cathy Billie, key FRHRC organizer, while some new groups have formed on the reservation, it's been the same old players with a few new ones thrown in. "We've had pipe bombers, gun-wearing racists, creationists and radical constitutionalists show up at our pro-diversity events," she says, "but we try to remain pro-active and educate."

That they do. The network sponsors workshops on everything from "Sex-Role Stereotyping of Women and Men" to "Creating Inclusive Communities." They offer a free annual Native American Film

Series as well as Montana Humanities Speakers and the Hate-Free Zone Project in the reservation's schools.

There are FRHRC presentations on domestic abuse, alcohol/drug use, risky behaviors, meth use on the reservation, and how to live a healthy and fit lifestyle. Local teens have attended coalition meetings and formed a group focused on LGBT and other youth issues. Last year FRHRC sponsored a "Pre-New Year's Eve Resolution Party" for youth on the reservation. Forty youth and 16 adults showed up for inclusivity training, art projects, hip hop, and lots of food.

Over many years, the coalition has sponsored Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations and art/essay contests as well as cultural fairs. Recent informational events have included one on "Sex Trafficking and Sexual Assault in Montana" and "Perspectives on Islam." In the summer, the FRHRC has tables at local powwows and festivals up and down the Mission Valley, where they give away Hate-Free Zone wristbands and stickers, make Peace kites with kids, and talk to folks about human rights issues. The coalition responded to a 2016 incident at Polson High School, as well as one at Frenchtown High in 2017, and stands ready to help those who feel marginalized from society.

Shining the light of awareness takes a real network. The FRHRC works with community and tribal organizations such as Safe Harbor, SKC, Your Life Matters, Project Hope, Empower MT, the Ronan High School Human Rights Club, Sunburst Mental Health and Summit Independent Living. Moving forward, the coalition plans to bring a racial equity workshop to the reservation. Some define racial equity as the state when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes, when everyone has what they need to thrive. The idea is that everyone benefits from a more just, equitable system.

This winter, the FRHRC is sponsoring speakers on Immigration and Refugee Law and Policy, and A Conversation Among Faiths. The group will offer classes for youth in "Inclusiveness" and "Being Yourself," as well as an update on White Supremacy, White Nationalism,

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THE MOVEMENT

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36-Years of Torture by The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

By Jerome 'Hoagie' Coffey, 11/29/2017

Sunday, October 22, 2017 approximately at 7p.m. I was watching 60-Minutes on CBS network and Oprah Winfrey did a segment in regards to California's Supermax prison Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit (a/k/a "solitary confinement"), opened in December of 1989. It was to be a prototypical Supermax prison for future prisons within United States. While watching this segment by Oprah Winfrey it brought to mind the nightmarish trauma I experienced in solitary confinement (the hell hole) for 12-years at the hands of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (D.O.C.).

It also brought to mind that Joseph 'Joe-Joe' Bowen (a/k/a "The Old-Man") was just recently release to general population at SCI-Coal Township after serving **36-years in solitary confinement**; thirty-six [I must add] tortuous years in solitary confinement at the hands of Pennsylvania D.O.C. cunning officials. Not to mention they sent him to Marion, Illinois Federal Penitentiary *twice* under the pretense of a "Thought-Reform-Program". To all the young brothers imprisoned in Pennsylvania D.O.C. that don't know The Old-Man's history allow me to briefly introduce him. For starters, The Old-Man exposed human rights abuses - institutional racism and draconian policies - within the Pennsylvania Prison System in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's and established Friday Jumu'ah congregational prayer, and so forth.

[1865] Amendment XIII Section 1. "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Pelican Bay solitary confinement was built for a purpose just like the 13th Amendment was established for a purpose, in a nutshell - to control African-American men, period. What Oprah Winfrey don't know is on August 21, 1971

California's Prison Officials murdered George Jackson because he confronted institutional racism, draconian policies, and prison conditions in conjunction with The Old-Man in the Pennsylvania Prison System. Furthermore social scientist, such as Professor Edgar Schein, teach officials how to control prisoners through thought reform programs (e.g. the brain wash of prisoners & divide and conquer techniques). The program was called Asklepieion and was conducted at Marion, Illinois by another Social Scientist, Dr. Alan W. Schefflin. Now let me remind you that before Pelican Bay you had Alcatraz which is the first Supermax prison in United States and was closed down after the escape contributed to our Elder Ellsworth 'Bumpy' Johnson, then you had Marion Illinois Federal Penitentiary and now you have ADX which is the highest security federal prison located in Florence, Colorado; it opened in 1995. The old saying goes "nothing new under the sun"; whether it's a local, state, or federal prisons solitary confinement is wrong, period. It's degrading and inhumane and has its roots in institutional of slavery. It is there to control African-American men, in particular, who don't conform to white supremacy policies.

In conclusion, The Old Man is a hero and young brothers should take advantage of his knowledge and learn what really happen down Holmesburg.

A special thanks to Theresa Shoatz a Human Rights Activist for visiting The Old-Man and first contact visit in 36-years.

In Struggle, Jerome 'Hoagie' Coffey



Joe-Joe Bowen (The Old-Man) and Theresa Shoatz, Human Rights Activist; first contact visit in 36 years.

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

Note recorded on the top right-hand corner of the letter: Home Now Released.

Equality-Justice and Hypocrisy

Victor Scott

#AY-6871
P.O. Box 9999
LaBelle, PA 15450

Thursday, October 05, 2017

To: The MOVEMENT, Editor in Chief

With the closing of the SCI-Pittsburg and talks of other state prisons being closed, for reasons of saving millions of tax-dollars it is hypocritical in practice for the Department of Corrections to pursue, via trial by jury, three civil action suits. The civil action suits are for violations of the Mohammad Temple of Islam and Nation of Islam members who follow the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad by denying the MTI and NOI members, for over a decade, the December Fast, Halal diets and the fast-meals.

The DOC have conceded to violating the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, pursuant to the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, and the Religion Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 in a deliberate and discriminatory nature. See Robinson v. Morris, et al, C.A. no. 1:16-CV-00117 (M.D.Pa.2016); Johnson v. Wireman, et al, C.A. no. 1:15-CV-2254 (M.D.Pa.2015).

Interesting enough prison officials have willfully, issued false disciplinary report charges in the Robinson v. Morris case in retaliation for Robinson engaging in his constitutionally protected right to engage in civil litigations as a discouragement tactic. Pennsylvania tax payers should be outraged by the DOC's mockery of their tax dollars and the justice system.

Jerome L. Jones
SCI-Mahanoy

I saw the article pertaining to the updates concerning the Juvenile lifers. I also read the article in reference to my resentencing. Let me give you an update. The hearing on July 18, 2017 went better than I had expected. Judge Minehart showed me no resistance. My character witnesses did an excellent job as well as my attorney William Rielly from the Defenders Assoc. I used a character witness as a "*factual witness*". This was a person who had testified against me at trial and later signed an affidavit indicating that he gave false testimony about my "*role*" during trial. The ADA, Laurie Moore, went off with her objections, however, the Judge let him get on the stand and testify. Her objections basically indicated that she didn't know what this "eye" witness was going to testify to and when she found out, she was not pleased. We acknowledged that this was not a trial but rather this procedure was in line with "re-sentencing". The judge allowed it. During her cross examination, she created a bigger hole for herself by opening up "PANDORA'S BOX" with her line of questioning. Prior "actual innocent" claims that I had submitted previously on several occasions, became magnified so much so, that the Judge said, "I want to hear this". It was revealed how ADA Roger King had threatened him and why he agreed to testify and the mention of the deal that he made.

This was a very eventful day, one that I will not forget. However, I still have work to do. I was taken out of one illegal sentence and put back into another one (33- lwp). My focus was on preserving "ALL", of my issues and my actual innocence claim is bolstered by the remarks of the Judge when he said, "I BELIEVE HIM".

My advice to all of you, is have your support team go at "Krasner" immediately and ask him what is he going to do about Juvenile lifers that either accepted their illegal sentence or was "given" their illegal sentence. You have to remember that the jurisdiction that the District Attorney has is only "procedural", meaning i.e., what he can't do is change the law, however, he can mandate to his assistant D.A.'s "how" to resentence all Juvenile lifer's, "past and present" because of the wide discretion given to him by the Pa. Supreme Court, coming out of Batt's. We all have

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

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to remember that eventually we will win this argument. In light of what the Federal court already said in "Songster", we can't get their relief until "we" get there but it's promising.

I want to thank all of the people that I don't know, who were present in the courtroom that day. We all have to continue to be mindful that upon our release, all eyes are on us ! We have to remember that there are many behind us that haven't gotten to this point yet. We can't mess this up for them.

Michael Drawbaugh #GZ-8636

SCI-Camp Hill
PO Box 200
Camp Hill, PA 17001-0200

Dear Human Rights Coalition,

I Michael Drawbaugh #GZ- 8636 am writing in regards to the new solitary confinement bill—House Bill 1581.

I saw in my 'The Movement' magazine that I could request a copy of the HB1581. Would you please forward a copy of the bill to the above address? I will be sure to make copies for my fellow inmates here at SCI-Camp Hill.

Thank you very much for your time at hand and look forward to receiving a copy in the mail. If a fee is required for the bill please let me know.

Sincerely,

Michael Drawbaugh

Editor's Note: HB-1581 is a total of thirteen pages. We are happy to forward a limited number of copies. Please know that HB-1581 may be viewed and copied from the internet at www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/BillInfo.cfm?year=2017&sind=0&body=H&type=B&bn=1581.

Also remember that the we intend for the bill to change (for the better) as noted in the 'Human Rights Report' section of this issue.

Arrest Made in Series of Sexual Assaults

DECEMBER 18, 2017, BY NIKKI KRIZE

MILTON -- State police investigators have announced an arrest in a series of sexual assaults and attempted sexual assaults in Columbia and Northumberland counties.

John Kurtz, 43, of Shamokin, was arrested Monday.

According to state police, Kurtz confessed to the rape or attempted rape and kidnapping of three women in Northumberland County. He was arrested Monday morning where he works at the **state prison in Coal Township**.

Kurtz was arraigned Monday afternoon in Milton.

He faces around 30 charges including rape, aggravated sexual assault, and kidnapping.

State police tell Newswatch 16 Kurtz confessed to three crimes that happened in Northumberland County over the past five years, including the most recent, which was this past April near Herndon.

He admitted to breaking into women's homes, kidnapping them, taking them to another location and raping them.

Kurtz was identified through DNA evidence and forensic evidence.

"Hopefully, the citizens of Northumberland County can rest assured tonight knowing a serial rapist has been removed from their streets," said Lt. Sherman Shadle, Pennsylvania State Police

Bail is set at \$1.5 million cash and Kurtz was taken to the Centre County jail.

State police want to add, while this case is closed, there are potentially other victims. If you believe you were victimized by John Kurtz, you are encouraged to come forward.

Authorities made the investigation public over the summer, asking for help and advising people in the area to be on alert and to keep their homes locked up.

From: <http://wnep.com/2017/12/18/arrest-made-in-series-of-sexual-assaults/>

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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.

1993 Interview of Sharon 'Peachie' Wiggins

By Howard Zehr

Sharon Wiggins was sentenced to a mandatory life in prison without the possibility of parole for a crime she committed when she was 17. She was the longest-serving female lifer in Pennsylvania, a state accredited for sentencing more children and youth to life without the possibility of parole in the nation – and indeed, the world. Sharon died of heart failure in prison on March 24th, 2013 at the age of 62.

"Rather than obsessing about whether 'offenders' get what they deserve, restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm of crime and engaging individuals and community members in the process."

Howard J. Zehr is an American criminologist, considered to be a pioneer of the modern concept of restorative justice.

Editor's Note: The content of this interview has edited.

[...]

HOWARD: Here's the hard question, if you were going to describe a life sentence to somebody who doesn't know anything about it, how would you do it?

SHARON: I guess if, because we don't have a lot of time, if I was going to equate it with something I guess it would be, like the feeling of, it is sort of like being in a real dark room with blind fold on.

HOWARD: So the room is dark and you have a blind fold on too?

SHARON: Right.

HOWARD: So is there any light, I mean, does any light get through that, that, blind fold and that dark room?

SHARON: Um, not visual light, but I think what happens is that after a time your imagination or your mind creates light for you. And so its more of a what you're thinking that creates, you know, the kind of atmosphere that you have. And I think its like being blind in a lot of ways. The sensation of it.

HOWARD: Talk about that more.

SHARON: Like I said, the only, I don't know because I've never been blind. But I think what happens is that your sense of smell and sense of taste and touch and the way you create hope in your mind, sheds light on a situation that is very difficult to deal with, because basically serving a life sentence means that you don't know what's going to happen to you. You might spend virtually the rest of your life in prison; and so, I think we all need an outlet or a release from that type of frustration and loneliness so we create our own sense of light through our hopes and our dreams and the way we envision things to be in the future.

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HOWARD: Can you talk about this, you don't have to answer any of this if you don't want to, but could you talk a little bit about those hopes and dreams for you personally?

SHARON: Right. I mean like everybody else I think you go through stages. For me coming to prison at such a young age, I think it served as an advantage because I was still open to a lot of things and still real curious about life, and so naive in that, um, you don't even realize that you have a life sentence. I don't think that being 17 [years old] you can envision the end. So like I said, it's a growing process and in that process and maybe the first 6 or 7 years you try to, usually, just deal with your surroundings and the things that are happening to you and trying to, literally, avoid the things that pain you or hurt you. From that transition I think you're going to a period where you [begin] to realize the seriousness of the situation, and you begin to try to find ways to confront that kind of pain. That period, lasts for, I guess depending upon the person, for me it was probably a eight year period where I tried to find out exactly who I was and where I belonged and how I fitted in my surroundings. Once I was able to, you know, face the pain of being in prison and the consequences of my actions, I was able to get a better grip on myself. Because in this situation of serving a life sentence its like a total sense of not having any control over the things that happen to you; you know, that's frightening and it's difficult to overcome. I think you have to mature some in order to realize that the outward physical control is not as important as the emotional control that you can't have over your life; and, for me, once I accepted those facts about myself, then it made it much easier for me to deal with serving a life sentence, and the consequences of my actions. . . At the same time we had a problem with growing up in prison. On the one hand not a lot of guidance, but on the other hand a great amount of discipline; the difference in that situation is that you get the discipline without the explanation and you have to learn to deal with that, along with all of the other problems that you originally came in prison with, immaturity, aggression, things like that. So for me it took about 10 years to get in touch with myself and my surroundings, the painful feelings that you have about being incarcerated realizing that the mistake that you made is one that is irreversible and then realizing that it's really painful to get in touch with because you know it's not like you [can] do something. You can't say your sorry, and it goes away. When you reach the reality that . . . you can never make it better, you have to come to some type of resolve about how you want to deal with that situation and in dealing with that part of the incarceration, it's real hard. There are no set rules or set guidelines, as to how you to deal with that type of information and so it's sort of like, you have to experiment and find ways that will not really compensate but atone for the past . . .

HOWARD: When you look back 24 years, it must be like a dream. Are you like a different person, can you connect to that person that you were then or...

SHARON: No. It's really strange because when I look back it doesn't seem like I was involved in the physical; I mean physically involved in the growth of Sharon Wiggins. It's more like I'm looking back on a child and watching em grow and develop. I mean there are some stages in that growth that I feel some kinship to; but, basically the person who came to prison almost 25 years ago, I have a hard time believing that I'm that same person. Because the attitudes are so different, but when I think about it I realize now that probably if it were not for those experiences I would probably not be the person that I am today. So, I hold on to that part of my past in order to make me recognize this part of me now.

HOWARD: If you were the judge in your case knowing what you know now, would you, what would you do? I've never asked anybody else that question, but it just occurs to me here...

SHARON: Um, I guess I would've done what the law required. I'm not so sure that all judges are aware even in Pennsylvania, that a life sentence means life.

HOWARD: If you had a choice if you didn't have to impose a life sentence and you were the judge in your case knowing what you know about your life, what would do?! Maybe that's not a fair question!

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SHARON: Well, it probably is; I guess I can be the best judge because I know me from the beginning to the end. You know I believe that incarceration was necessary for me, that I was out of control, you know as a teenager. But as a judge I think that I would have been hopeful that this individual could have changed. And I think that if baring, the life sentence that I would have tried taking an active role in finding out just what happened to this person after certain amount of years, you know, maybe every five years. I would have gotten in touch with some one who, from the institution, could have shed some light on this person's ability to mature and change.

I don't know; I look at the situations that are happening today and the incident in Florida where there's three teenage kids, I think the youngest is 13 and the oldest is 16 and I watched the media's attitude and the generally public's attitude about those three young men and I would hope that nobody gives up on em. I mean, to lock them away forever probably validates what is already in their minds that things are hopeless for them. And until somebody encourages those 3 young individuals and allows them to see that a change can be made and there are some people who do care about them, you know, would probably be the best punishment for them. But to just throw them away. What are we saying about children. That you can be 13 [years old] and just shut down and never be open to anything again. I can't believe that. I can't believe that because of my own experience.

And because in the 25 years that I have been incarcerated I know that there are individuals who when they come to prison at very young ages are, I don't like to use the word rehabilitative, but who mature into a different type of individual. I believe that this is the norm, rather than you might get two percent of them that'll change. I don't believe that. I believe the norm is that when people are in bad situations, and have to face themselves, that you find a way to incorporate your emotions and your feelings into acceptable behavior. I think that we all want acceptable behavior. I think it's just that some of us are just unable [to] because of other situations, and to even articulate the situation . . . it's a problem. They know its chaos, they know that they are out of control, but at 13 or 16 [years old] how can you articulate that to any real degree? I mean for most teenagers whether its acne or child abuse, it's pain. Its painful. And I don't think they think it out, in adult terms. And so they tend to act out.

[. . .]

HOWARD: If you had a magic lantern, and rubbed it and genie came out what, and give you one wish what would you wish?

SHARON: Hmph, I think I would change the day of my arrest.

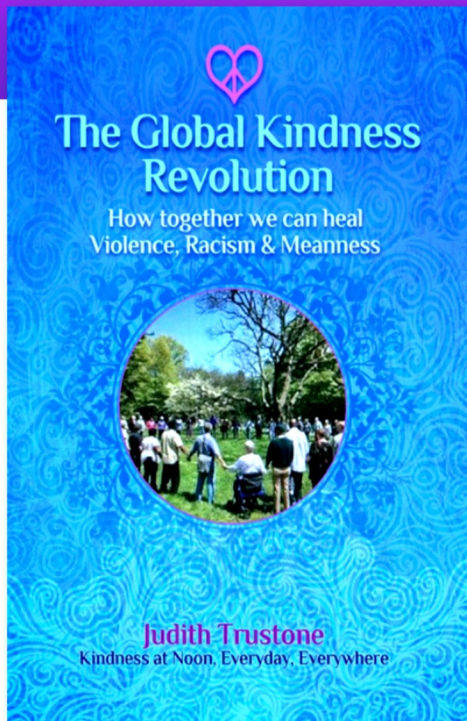
HOWARD: What would you do?

SHARON: I think that I would have me going to school instead of, and then when I think about it, maybe I wouldn't have changed the events, it might have just changed the time. Maybe it would be better if I said a better solution to that problem would, probably be, I'd have gotten some help; before the day that my crime occurred. And probably the likelihood of that situation, probably, wouldn't have occurred.

HOWARD: Is there anything else you'd like to add here...

SHARON: No! It does it.

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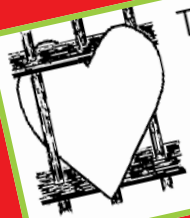
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