

# THE MOVEMENT

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

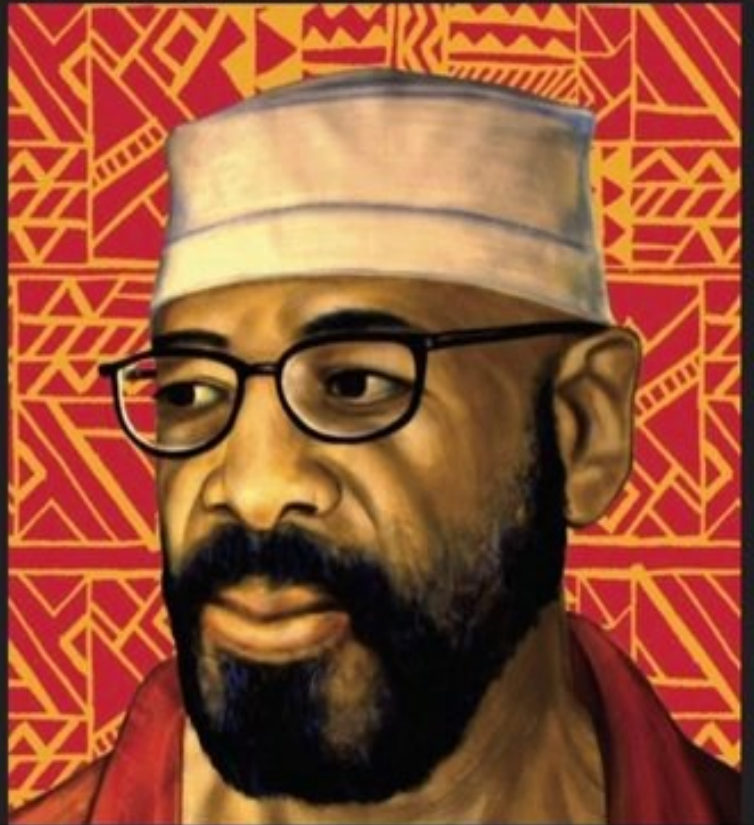
The Official News Magazine of the  
Human Rights Coalition for the union of Prisoners'  
Families



# REST IN POWER



REST IN POWER MAROON!



FOREWORD BY CHUCK D  
**MAROON  
THE IMPLACABLE**

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF  
RUSSELL MAROON SHOATZ

EDITED BY FRED HO AND QUINCY SAUL  
AFTERWORD BY MATT MEYER AND NOZIZWE MADLALA-ROUTLEDGE

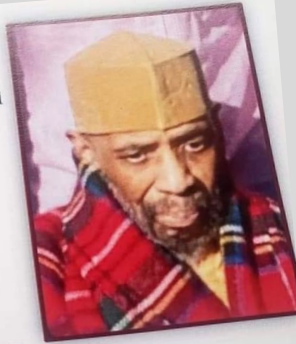


We regret to inform you of the passing of  
My Father, Grandfather and Brother  
**RUSSELL M. SHOATZ**  
Which occurred on: Friday, December 17, 2021

Janazah Prayer  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021  
Prayer: 1:00 PM  
at PHILADELPHIA MASJID  
4700 Wyalusing Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19131

Interment:  
FRIENDS SOUTHWESTERN  
BURIAL GROUND  
236 Powell Lane, Upper Darby, PA 19082

GARRIEST-CRAWLEY FUNERAL HOME  
Robert M. Garriest, Supervisor, Funeral Director  
Eugene E. Allen, Jr., Manager, Owner  
James E. Allen, Administrator  
Michael I. Allen, Administrator  
5816 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19139  
(215) 476-2133



Hours Sorrowfully,  
The Family

It is with overwhelming sadness, we join our communities in sharing this news.

Our beloved friend, comrade, mentor, client, and inspiration, Russell Maroon Shoatz transitioned from this life on earth today, December 17th, 2021. After 49 years in prison, Maroon was finally released on October 26th. He passed away at his sister's home 52 days later, surrounded by the love and care of his family.

There are few words, if any, that will do justice in describing Maroon, the impact he's had on all of us, the gigantic legacy he leaves behind. If you are reading this, chances are, at some point you came in contact with Maroon, either directly – or subliminally: many projects in the struggle for Black Liberation and abolition can be traced back to him, the contemporary Political Prisoners' rights movement in Pennsylvania beginning with him.

Some of us were lucky enough to know Maroon personally, and for that, we are infinitely grateful. We commemorate him by carrying out his life's work, by reaffirming our commitments to see the dissolution of Empire and advance absolute, unconditional liberation for Black people everywhere. Maroon reminds us, "history records the stories of multitudes who risked their lives to obtain or regain their freedom" (2012).

We are grieving for Maroon. He has left us physically on this plane, but his spirit and visions live on in the movements he inspired and animated from a prison cell, the countless hearts and minds he filled with hope and wonder when so many of us felt lost and helpless, the iconic essays he wrote that will continue to galvanize future generations of young people in the struggle.

In his own words,

"Rest easy fighting maroons. There are many now and to come who will derive inspiration from your valorous ex-

amples – inspiration that will 'arm their spirits' to fight the good fight. . . til victory or death!!!" (1995).

Rest easy, and in power. Long live Russell Maroon Shoatz.

S & T

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## Tribute to Maroon

by Sergio Hyland

"You say that you're ready to learn. Well, if that's the case, you must be ready to accept the fact that everything you learned from the 'heroes' you mentioned in your letter, was wrong! I'll have my daughter send you some books, and then your education can really begin." Those were some of the words that Maroon wrote to me in response to the first letter I ever wrote to him. I was 30 years old, and had already developed a deep admiration for the man. I never imagined that he - and the things he taught me - would go on to change my life. I didn't know what to expect from him, and once I'd read his letter, I wondered if I'd made a mistake by reaching out to him. I mean, the "heroes" whom he criticized and claimed were wrong, were men who my generation grew up idolizing - Malcolm X, George Jackson, Huey Newton, and more. So when he said that everything I'd learned from them was wrong, I was distressed. And I didn't hide my feelings when I responded to his letter. See, at that time, Maroon and I were both being held in solitary confinement at SCI Greene, which, back then, was the most restrictive and oppressive "hole" in the state of Pennsylvania. And though we were on the same block (G-Block), we were on different pods (I was on G-A and Maroon was on G-C). Sometimes we'd be in the yard together, whenever the weather was rough, and the guards decided to combine the pods. That's when we'd get to talk to each other. And all I did was listen. The brother was so intelligent, and I couldn't believe that a man like him was in prison. The way he spoke, the manner in which he carried himself, and the way that others - including prison guards - respected him, made me want to learn as much as I could from him. When he talked, WE ALL listened. Fortunately, Saleem Holbrook and I were already friends by then, so I was pretty much primed to learn as much as possible from "the Old Man". But what I learned from Maroon, was something nobody else had ever tried to teach me.

This tribute isn't the place to explain those lessons, because it gets too deep. But what I will say is that I loved Maroon. And in a letter to his son, I explained something that I'd never explained to anybody before: I grew up with my father in my life. I loved my father dearly, and even up until this day, my father is the greatest man I have ever known. But Maroon is the only other man who I have ever

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looked at in a similar way. The world suffered a tremendous loss when Maroon transitioned. My generation, and countless young men in prison, will all be touched by this loss. I have always vowed to carry on his teachings. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, some of which I had the pleasure of speaking with after Maroon was granted a compassionate release. I got to speak with him a couple of times, before he passed. It was difficult. I wasn't used to hearing him sound the way he did. But I made sure to remind him of the impact he continues to have on me and numerous others. Honestly, I'm finding it difficult to express the way I'm feeling in this moment. Maybe it has to set in. But I'm grateful for having the privilege of knowing Russell Maroon Shoatz. And I'm grateful that he wasn't like many other elders who have a disdain for the younger generations. He knew how to correct us without making us feel stupid. And he showed us what the real meanings of community, love, freedom, responsibility, and revolution were. I will miss him every day of my life - the same way that I miss my own father. And I will continue their legacies as best as I know how.

Sergio Hyland #FX1537 (SCI Chester)

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## Maroon

**Maroon** (noun) · **Maroons** (plural noun) - a member of any of various communities in parts of the Caribbean who were originally descended from escaped slaves. In the 18th century Jamaican Maroons fought two wars against the British settlers, both of which ended with treaties affirming the independence of the Maroons.

Origin: mid 17th century; from French marron 'feral', from Spanish cimarrón 'wild', (as a noun) 'runaway slave'.

Rest In Power to Russell Maroon Shoatz, the founder, the initiator, the seed that grew the Human Rights Coalition (HRC). Its co-founders, all mentored by Maroon, sustained the ideology that has carried HRC into its twentieth year of advocacy for the men and women in prisons across Pennsylvania.

Maroon will be remembered with love and respect by me, Mama Patt, for saving my son's life as I truly believe that I would have lost Shakaboona who was sentenced to LIFE in prison as a juvenile - a system that hasn't an ounce of humanity for the people it is supposed to protect. My life was changed as well, because of him I am Mama Patt. Maroon changed the destiny of my son and the lives of many through his mentorship within the prisons beneath the prison that many refer to as the hole. He brought to-

gether countless hearts and minds to fight for the lives, the humanity, the rights and dignity for all men, women, and children in prison.

Maroon is a legend that will live on, in the stories we tell, the books we read, and the testimonies of those who knew him personally. He is a part of our Black history along with memorable warriors like Nelson Mandela, As-sata Shakur, Malcom X, George Jackson, Huey Newton - just to name a few.

Russell Maroon Shoatz has a special place in my heart and the heart of my son Kerry Shakaboona Marshall who unfortunately could not participate in this tribute - he is being held in a COVID lockdown at Williamsburg Federal Prison.

With Deep Sympathy, Love, and Admiration to Maroon and his family.

Rest In Power!

Mama Patt, Shakaboona Marshall, & HRC

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Reprint from *The Metropole* (The Official Blog of the Urban History Association). Edited for *Rest In Power a Tribute to Russell Maroon Shoatz*.

## On Russell Maroon Shoatz's "Death By Regulation," 1997, With Robert Saleem Holbrook, Executive Director of The Abolitionist Law Center

By Charlotte Rosen

*"I am not under a court sentence of death. I have, however, been sentenced to 'death by regulation.'"*

These words were written by Russell Maroon Shoatz in 1997, while in solitary confinement in Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institution Greene. A founding member of Philadelphia's Black Unity Council, member of the Black Panther Party, and member of the Black Liberation Army, Russell Maroon Shoatz was a Black political prisoner who spent nearly 50 years in Pennsylvania and federal prisons until he was released this past October. He escaped twice from Pennsylvania state prisons, which serves as the origin of his name Maroon, which also

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serves to reference the thousands of escaped enslaved people who liberated themselves and built independent maroon communities across the United States colony. Throughout his imprisonment, and despite ongoing repression and torture from the Pennsylvania correctional administration, Shoatz continued to organize against state violence and mentored fellow imprisoned people through his writings on the prison industrial complex, the legacy of Black struggle, history of Black maroonage, and more. Over 30 years of his time in captivity was spent in solitary confinement.

After a long campaign for his release, Shoatz was recently granted compassionate release on October 25th, 2021 and is now able to enter hospice care surrounded by family and close friends. He is 78 years old and is suffering from life-threatening health conditions, most pressingly, Stage 4 cancer.

The life and writings of Russell Maroon Shoatz are not widely known. As Quincy Saul wrote in an introduction to Shoatz's collected writings, this "is no accident" – the suppression of "maroon ideas, maroon histories, and programs for maroon futures" is to be expected under a racial capitalist regime hellbent on criminalizing political dissent and forms of truth-telling that challenge the carceral status quo. But Shoatz's analyses of the US prison industrial complex, recollections and reassessments of the post-1960s era of the Black liberation movement, and insights on movement tactics and strategy, deserve the close attention of carceral state historians serious about listening when the "the pen is with the maroons."

For The Metropole's "Disciplining the Nation" series, I selected Russell Maroon Shoatz's piece "Death by Regulation: Pennsylvania Control Unit Abuses," written in 1995 and found here. Maroon's concept of "death by regulation" is a particularly clarifying concept for historians and activists alike. Shoatz describes death by regulation as the late-twentieth century practice of segregating imprisoned people deemed unruly or "troublemakers" in punitive control units – a "prison within a prison" or "high-tech isolation and torture holes." Despite appearing less cruel than the death penalty and being "governed by clearly defined rules," these control units ultimately brought about mass, racially disproportionate premature death through long-term solitary confinement, psychological and physical abuse, and social control.

The central topic of "Death by Regulation" is the late-20th century explosion of supermaximum security prisons that use long-term, punitive solitary confinement to cage individuals classified as "disruptive" or "violent." The first prison to contain a control unit was a federal one built in Marion, Illinois, where more than one hundred radical

Black, Native, Puerto Rican, and white antiracist prisoners were transferred in 1972. Mixing long term solitary confinement with invasive behavior modification experiments, indiscriminate punishment, and routine deprivation of communication with the outside world, prisoners in Marion suffered excruciating tortures. As Eddie G. Griffin, who was imprisoned in Marion's control unit, wrote "It is itself a Death Row for the living. Its creation added the ultimate dimension to the behavior modification systems. The subtle implication behind its meaning is made sharp and clear: Conform or Die."

Although radical collectives such as the Committee to End Marion Lockdown (CEML) fought boldly to prevent the spread of control units, prisons built with or entirely consisting of control units proliferated in the 1980s through the 1990s with the express purpose repressing political and politicized prisoners. In 1980, there were just two federal super-maximum or "supermax" prisons. By 2005, 44 states had supermax facilities. These supermax prisons are constructed to cage prisoners in single cells for 23 hours a day, for an indefinite period of time – a practice that the United Nations Human Rights Council now deems a form of torture. Beyond the expansion of supermax prisons, almost all prisons and jails now have control units used for solitary confinement of prisoners. Studies of specific state prisons also suggest that Black and Latinx prisoners are disproportionately confined and punished through long-term solitary confinement in control units.

Maroon wrote "Death by Regulation" while he was imprisoned in the control unit at Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institution Greene, where he was caged for 18 years. In addition to the light being left on in his cell 24 hours a day, he endured frigid temperatures, complete social isolation, nutritional violence (in the form of smaller portions of nutritionally deficient food), medical neglect, racist abuse from guards, little to no access to intellectual, educational, vocational, or therapeutic programming, censorship of mail and reading material, restricted property, non-contact visits, and more. In "Death by Regulation," Shoatz describes how control units operate using a form of "clean torture" that "break[s] your mind" and "will to resist" in order to "coopt you as a willing pawn in their war to pacify and exploit you for the service of capital." These units render their caged inhabitants civilly if not biologically dead – thus death by regulation. "Control unit facilities cannot be allowed to exist," he wrote, because "they serve no purpose other than to dehumanize their occupants." Prisons and their "supermaxification," Shoatz suggests, represent sites of genocide rooted in the history of US racial slavery, Indigenous dispossession, and imperialism. "I'm being housed in a 'death camp,'" Shoatz wrote in another piece in 1997, adding, "I mean that literally."

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To better contextualize “Death by Regulation: Pennsylvania Control Unit Abuses” and its impact at the time of its publication, I met with Robert Saleem Holbrook, the Executive Director of the Abolitionist Law Center, to discuss Shoatz’s writings and work. Holbrook speaks about his experience learning from and struggling alongside Shoatz in Pennsylvania prisons, the power of Shoatz’s concept of “death by regulation,” the importance of history for contemporary prison and police abolition movements, and much more.

The following is a transcript of my conversation with Holbrook on Shoatz’s work and organizing, which has been edited for length and clarity.

**CR:** To begin, do you mind introducing yourself?

**RSH:** My name is Robert Saleem Holbrook; I’m the Executive Director of the Abolitionist Law Center. I’m also a co-founder of the Human Rights Coalition. My pronouns are he/him. I did 27 years in prison for an offense that I was convicted of as a child, and when I was inside prison, I was very fortunate to make the acquaintance of and be mentored by political prisoners in Pennsylvania – that resulted in me becoming the person I am today.

**CR:** Jumping off from that, something I learned about Maroon, not only through reading his work but also through a lot of the events that have been happening around efforts to free him and get him proper care, has been his extensive organizing work inside – which was arguably a form of mutual aid, of political education – and so I was just wondering if you could share a little bit about what your experience learning from him was like.

**RSH:** Maroon has had one of the most major influences on my political development of any other living person – however, I only really met Maroon two times and there was a 26 year gap between those meetings. So powerful were our personal interactions that they resonated with me. For context, when I was 17 years old at State Correctional Institution (SCI) Camp Hill, I was placed in the hole. When Camp Hill had a riot [in 1989], Maroon and other prisoners who were in the holes across the state – particularly who were political prisoners, politicized prisoners, or prisoners who just gave the state of Pennsylvania problems – had been sent out of the state and into the federal system for a year and a half. When Maroon came back into the state, he was placed back in the hole at SCI Camp Hill, where I was also being caged. At 17 years old, I probably had been in prison for maybe a year by this point. So I met Maroon, but I didn’t actually have any conversation with Maroon. Maroon would come on the gate and talk about Black liberation history, he would talk about the 1960s and 1970s and the struggles that our communities went through, as well as like encouraging younger prisoners who were in the hole like myself to

read, to better yourself, to get yourself in shape. He opened our eyes to not just the injustices of the system, but why and how we should fight back. That was 1991.

Throughout my travels in the prison system, Maroon wrote a lot, and his articles would come to us through the prison grapevine as well as in published pieces – that was the only way he could communicate with us because he was locked down in solitary confinement; Maroon did close to 30 years in solitary confinement. So the way Maroon communicated to us was through articles. That was part of our political development, reading Maroon’s articles about prisons, about the struggle, about political development, reading Maroon’s critiques of democratic socialism, critiques of vertical versus horizontal leadership.

Fast forward to 2017, I’m coming up for resentencing so I have to be shipped to SCI Graterford and Maroon is at SCI Graterford. So this is my first time actually seeing Maroon in person, where I could touch him, feel him, and we could sit here and talk.

And that was a really great experience for me because I’m like, here is someone who has been a mentor for 26 years in prison for me, who mentored us in inside-outside organization, and on how to be a part of these liberation struggles and radical movements on the outside, how to have something to contribute. Our challenge was to connect prisons with the larger structural issues, the larger structural critiques of America so that we wouldn’t be fighting in a vacuum, we wouldn’t be in a silo.

After years of reading his letters and his articles about this, to have the opportunity to meet him and then have a really great candid conversation with him about – listen, we were thinking that the only ways many of us were gonna get out was by escaping, by going over the wall, so we did a lot of studying on that. It was a really challenging conversation with him because what he did was, he said “listen: we made a mistake along the way,” and it was like, “what? What do you mean we made mistakes!” And he was like, no listen – that’s one thing about Maroon, is he’s always ready to self-critique and do self-evaluation. He said that a lot of the material we were reading about the liberation movements of the ’60s, the ’70s, even ’80s was not going to translate to the society, to the world, that we were going out to today. He said listen, I want you to understand that you’re not going out in that era. There’s no National Liberation movements out there like that. A lot of the tactics and strategies that we studied in Latin America, Asia, even Northern Ireland, it’s not going to translate to that world. It translated in here for us to survive, but it’s not going to translate out there.

But he said what I do want you to do is take out there your politics, take out there your values that we developed in here, and then you translate that to the environment

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that's out there. For me, for a lot of us, that is an example of Maroon's leadership and how he raised us, and how he trained us – and when I say training, we trained in there. We didn't look at political development as reading a book, sitting around a visioning circle. We were cadres, we trained. And for him to have that self-critical, self-evaluation moment with us really defines Maroon's leadership and organizing style because, had he not had the credibility he had, I don't think he would have been able to pull that off with a lot of us, you feel me? But because he had that credibility and history, when he communicated that to us, we knew like, OK, we have to go back and reevaluate, and we did.

“Running Down The Walls 5k benefit for prisoners” by joepiette2 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

**CR:** Moving more towards Maroon's piece on control units, something that I think is really powerful about that piece is the framework that Maroon offers of “death by regulation.” I was wondering if you could talk about your reflections on that framework, what it brings up for you, or your reflections on the piece generally.

**RSH:** Just hearing that just brought me back, wow... I literally remember first reading the article when I was in the special management unit at SCI Greene, I believe it was 1997. Maroon was in the units maybe not even 50 yards from me but I never saw him for three years. So he was in a control unit, I was in special management unit. And when I first read that, it was really incredible because our civil death was codified by regulation and statutes. So when I was sentenced to life without parole, basically you were civilly dead, from a statutory standpoint. But then, when we were placed in prison, when I was sent into the special management unit, which was not just a hole within a hole, but a hole within a hole within a hole, reading [the phrase] death by regulation... I was like, that's what they doing, they basically put us in this unit and said “you're dead, you don't exist, and we really don't care. You're gonna be in this unit 23 hours a day, one hour out for exercise 5 days a week, 24 hours on the weekend.”

That's basically just death, just erasing you. So reading that article about control units and how your entire existence boils down to death, the administration having control over you and grinding you down, because that's what it's about. Maroon was defining long term solitary confinement and long term isolation as state violence – and see, a lot of people, when they look at solitary confinement, they don't look at it as state violence. You'll even hear things like, “it's torture” – but what is torture? It's state violence. When the state is doing it, when the state sanctions it, endorses it, that's state violence. And so that framing [of death by regulation] alone put the onus on something different; this isn't torture, this is about an

unjust state. And those were the leaps that Maroon made for us.

It would be very easy for us to fall into thinking “it's just these units, it's just these guards on the unit, it's this prison.” Maroon was always like, no, you're looking at it from a smaller level, you need to look at it from this larger level. These units will always exist, these guards will always exist, this oppression will always exist, this torture will always exist, as long as the state that sanctions it exists. And that for us was always like, eureka.

**CR:** As an historian, I often think about how learning about the history of policing and prisons is inherently radicalizing. The more you know about the history of the carceral state, the more it becomes clear to me at least that abolition is the only way forward. So I am curious what learning about the history of criminalization and imprisonment has been like for you or meant for you, or perhaps what kinds of historical lessons or ideas do you often return to from history?

**RSH:** One thing I have learned from history and that has always been important for me to articulate is that prisons and policing are not an anomaly within the United States. They're part of the same structure that must be abolished. And you can't separate them from capitalism, from racial capitalism.

Throughout my imprisonment, one thing I would do and still do, is I study my opponent. Whether it was boxing, whether it was prison, whatever it was, I always had to study my opponent. So my first couple years in prison I just immersed myself in reading books about the history of prisons in the United States, whether it was Eastern State Penitentiary, Sing Sing, the Auburn experiment, the development of the prison movement in California, Pennsylvania's prison movement... that was my world, because I was sentenced to die there.

So I wanted to see how my class resisted [the prison]. This approach always really helped me, because one, I looked at myself as part of an oppressed class, that was oppressed by a larger state, a larger system that was unjust and that created this class, and that created the conditions for social crime. So for me, piecing all of that together, and always returning to the fact that if we're going to talk about abolishing police, if we're going to talk about abolishing prisons, if we're going to talk about abolishing racial injustice – at the end of the day we're going to have to talk about abolishing the social contract that has governed the United States since its founding, and then we're also going to have to talk about the larger picture of abolishing global capitalism.

Once I was able to connect the fact that prisons and police are not anomalies within the United States – that the United States is the problem – I've always been able to connect to that the larger fight ahead of us and not just

# Maroon, Rest In Power

A few years ago, a man I'd heard so much about was transferred to Graterford after an unfortunate extremely long time in Solitary Confinement (RHU).

Despite being in the hole for so long, I heard nothing but positive things from the Brothers who spent time with him in there. Even more positive things from our comrades on the outside.

One day I walked into the auditorium and Ghani and a older gentleman were off to the side in deep conversation. As I walked pass and greeted them, Ghani looked up and called me back.

As I approached them the older man begin to stand. Ghani than said Saadiq this is Brother Maroon, Maroon greeted me while extended his hand. I shook his hand as we embraced.

I was taken aback by his size, he was a short and more like a grandfather than the towering figure people had told stories about. He spoke softly and directly.

We talked for a few minutes and we invented him to a R2R meeting and as we parted I said "I'll see you Monday night." Maroon, started attending our weekly meetings and by the second meeting. I understood why people held him in such high regard...

Even though he was about 5'6 his presence was that of a Giant! The knowledge and wisdom he blessed us with still resonates in all of us. "Believe in yourselves, Believe in your vision, Know your worth!"

Thank You Maroon for being a DRIVING FORCE of our Movement!!!!

We are truly grateful for the time we had with Brother Russell Maroon Shoatz, may he Rest in Power!

In Solidarity,

D. Saadiq Palmer

Right 2 Redemption (R2R)



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**I first met Maroon** in the solitary confinement chambers of SCI-Dallas (the hole), in the winter of 1992, as he had just returned back into PA state custody from Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary.

I was maybe 21 or 22 years-old, hyper-militant and narrow-minded. He would hold 'Political Education' classes (on the gate) several times a week. Those sessions would come to shape my worldview today. In fact, the classes were so powerful and enlightening that many of us young

brothas would get 'in trouble' just to go to the hole to learn from Maroon.

And it wasn't just the 'academic' lessons per se, but the fact that he was the embodiment of all that he imparted. And, as serious as many of these sessions were, he was humerus and easygoing about things many of us we're up in arms about. He was tactical in his thinking, and far-sighted. And this was admirable. Moreover, he was credible, which is important when trying to educate hardheaded know-it-all's like many of us was.

Also he was extremely protective of us against the racist jailers. He was a de facto father-figure. I was in his midst for only five months . . . and that five months changed my life forever.

I am 'Asafo' because of Maroon! Long Live The Implacable Spirit Of Maroon!

Robert 'Asafo' Williams

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## To HRC for Mr. Shoatz

Although I never personally met Mr. Russell Maroon Shoatz, I've gotten to know so much about him and his character through those who knew him personally and called him friend, mentor, and comrade. From what I gathered, he was a man of great wisdom and a soldier of righteousness. Here's a poem for you soldier, from all of us.

Love is a constant force without end, it's stronger than grief as broken hearts mend.

The spirit endures and never let's go, it touches us each with soft gentle glow.

It gives us the strength to begin to let go, because we feel your radiant glow.

It will give us the wisdom to know that you're at peace, in a beautiful place, no illness, no sadness, with a smile on your face.

You are a light, a light without end.

You're stronger than grief as our hearts mend.

The spirit is loyal and knows how to heal, and we know that you're with us... Your spirit is real!

Rest In Peace Soldier.

Sincerely,

Photo

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## In Remembrance

How do I muster the appropriate words to commemorate a revolutionary, warrior and general? I'm talking about Russell "Maroon" Shoatz, who all that knew him came to respect, revere, and love.

I know there are better writers in our community who've been impacted by Maroon's presence, intellect and dedication who would be honored to memorialize his life and struggle. I'm sure there will be others who'll describe exactly what he means to many of us.

But for me, I'm thinking of Ossie Davis' eulogy of Malcolm X which is descriptive of what Maroon meant to many of us captured in the "Belly of the Beast". Davis said Malcolm represented their Black manhood and was their Black shining Knight; Maroon was that for us and more. Because our circumstances not only try to strip us of our manhood, but it also attempts to dehumanize us.

In those dark man-made hells commonly called the Hole, RHU, or RRL it was brothers like Maroon who showed us how to resist the madness. What he taught was a form of rehabilitation that the Department of Corrections will never conceive and an education that the Department of Education will never provide to prisoners. We are the castaways, discarded individuals, who society have no hope for. Many of us harden by a life of crime and oppressive ideas made honorable because we suffer from a mental attack on our humanity.

Maroon gave us a revolutionary vision, freedom fighter spirit and put us on a trajectory to elevate ourselves to be family and community orientated. I'm personally grateful for the time I spent with him close to 30yrs ago. For me it was educational and transformational and it certainly changed the direction of my life. Some could point to the fact that I'm still in the same predicament, but wiser minds know a liberated mind and soul supersedes physical hardship. This is the Maroon ancestral way and he embodied it best.

So long live Maroon, long live the Freedom Fighter and may the Ancestors welcome you.

-by Changa Asa Ramu

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## Tribute to Russell "Maroon" Shoatz

It pains me to be writing this tribute right now. I can imagine that this must be how many felt at the time of the passing of Martin Luther King Jr. and Brother Malcolm X. This reminds me of the feeling I had as a child at the time of the passing of Tupac Shakar; it was like how could I feel such hurt for someone that I didn't even know personally. But much like Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Tupac Shakar, to know Maroon's writings, teachings, principles, and resistance was to know him to a certain degree. I don't mean to offend in anyway with these comparisons, but that's the magnitude of this loss to those who truly know the legend of "Maroon".

I remember when I first heard of 'Maroon' through an elder comrade who was unfortunately fortunate enough to have spent a couple decades in solitary confinement with giants such as Jojo, Maroon, and Cetawayo. He shared so many stories, and lessons with me that was shared with him from them all. I learned where the attribute "Maroon" derived from; the 'Maroon Tribe' a tribe of resistance, and resilience. For the sake of time just think of Nat Turner, a great descendant of the Maroon Tribe. The Maroons where bad for business during the slave trade, they had to be branded so that slave owners would know at auctions that they were Maroons. No slave owner in their right mind would bid on a Maroon because the Maroon Tribes reputation were well known. They refused to be slaves, continuously escaped, and would kill or be killed rather than be enslaved. They resisted from the cradles to the graves. This was the legacy of the Maroon Tribe. And if you knew the legacy of Russell "Maroon" Shoatz you'd know that he was, no question, a descendant of this great tribe.

Russell "Maroon" Shoatz escaped from numerous prisons, and even while serving a 30 year hole sentence was still so influential from solitary confinement that he was shipped to numerous Super-Max units in different states, and federal prisons all over the country. After a little over a quarter century (3 decades, 30 years) in solitary confinement, and a half century (5 decades, 50years) of incarceration, the 77-year-old living legend never stopped resisting. Russell "Maroon" Shoatz won a civil rights class action which got him released from solitary confinement, and recently was finally sent home (on a Medical Transfer) from prison all together.

Maroon fought for liberation, not only his own but that of the minds and bodies of those he's come in contact with

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along the way, and for all coming after. "From The Cradle to The Grave" he continued to resist, he continued to fight. As the ancestors receive you with open arms congratulating you on a job well done in celebration, admiration and praise, allow us on this side to do the same and continue to teach the lessons of your name "Maroon". Long live the legend of Maroon...

From Daniel Vincent (Bliz) #KH-7761  
and the men at SCI-Huntingdon

\*\*\*\*\*

**To all my comrades** trapped in these prison camps and to all young black boys alike weather in the streets or locked down; we have lost two brothers who are worthy of a pause for us to self reflect.

The life of Maroon and that of Omar Ali should be remembered for the redemption of dignity and self respect as BLACK-MEN which they claimed for themselves. Their lives were not about a rep or the worse deeds that may have placed them in the hands of the enemy; their lives were about the dignity reclaimed from our tormentors.

These brothers and other elders who are still with us are a shining example that we can be self made MEN despite our beginnings. Each life has a duty to live out its potential. We have it in us to be more than our hate and self pity; if we first have the courage to look inward and admit it is weakness. These brothers did not become the men they were as teachers and comforters to so my of us without first facing themselves and shedding the chains of this world.

My comrades, let's celebrate these MEN who left this life with an honorable discharge by reflecting on our own efforts to be the men we should. I will do so.

Peace!

Abdul-salaam,

Seifullah

\*\*\*\*\*

"The ameriklan Way"

The guillotine, the gallows  
The Black Lives they swallow

Legislative, Administrative  
And Judicial -Branches-, are subjugators

Check "their" archive on Black Lives  
All white lies, no Black sides

Look what "they" said in Missouri  
Allow no one to tell Our story

-  
Left-wing, or right-wing?  
Doesn't matter [its] a white thing

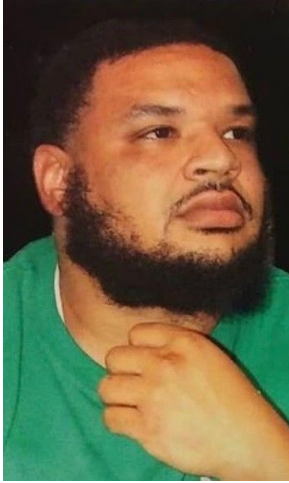
Hurricane, or Emmett Till  
It's all the same, We dying still

Courtrooms and prison cells  
Designed for the Black male

Designed for Black Women  
Designed for Black children

[Here] liberty is foreign to us  
We never met her, she never knew us

William Yem Case #DX9137  
SCI-Coal Township



Sergio Hyland  
@uptownserg

# The Editor Speaks

Greetings! Welcome to another jam-packed issue of THE MOVEMENT. There's so much going on, and so much to cover, but we start this issue with sad news. Two of our elders, brothers, and comrades, Russell "Maroon" Shoatz, and Omar Askia Ali, have transitioned. The news was sobering, and as I sat with other elders - and my own peers - listening to stories of Omar and Maroon, I couldn't help but wonder

what kind of impact they would've been able to make in society right now, especially with all that's happening. On 12.06.21, Larry Krasner came under fire for public statements that his political rivals claimed minimized the violence taking place in Philly right now. Those of us who understand politics and trends, knew what Krasner really meant. But politics is a dirty game. And no matter who is in office, until those elected officials stop focusing on the effects and start focusing on the causes, this crisis will unabatedly persist. Leaders need to stop ignoring that fact. The mainstream media is no better. Why the obsession with "the big lie", but not "the big liar"? Why prosecute a war on gun violence, but not a war on the causes of gun violence - poverty, lack of education, inadequate housing, lack of hope and opportunities? Why were two young Black men immediately charged with murdering 8 year-old Fanta Bility, while the cops who really shot her are still free? Gun buyback programs, harsher prison sentences, higher cash bail, aren't proper responses to this crisis. The problem isn't what many claim: too many guns in the hands of "the wrong people". Because, even if people chose to put the guns down, the causes which led them to pick the guns up in the first place, would still exist. What the city needs is REAL leadership; people who understand causation, and have the clout to be heard. Omar Askia Ali didn't have to pass away in prison. And while we're all grateful that Russell Shoatz is finally home, he should've been home a long time ago! Countless people inside of prison who are capable and ready to lead, languish with DBI sentences.

The answer may be complex, but the equation is simple: if you want people to make better decisions, you have to give people better options. Its the same in prison. Staff treat prisoners like trash, and then punish us when we protest this treatment. All of the violence going on in prison can be traced directly back to unfair, harsh, or overly-punitive

staff or PADOE policy. To SOME, the violence may seem senseless. But I can guarantee that it doesn't seem senseless to those doing it. How do I know? Because I used to be one of those young guys, and everything I did, was for a good reason - or so I thought. And the ONLY reason I think differently now, is because I was fortunate enough to cross paths with the same elders who politicians have made careers off of by trying to bury them under the prison. How do we get out of this situation? I'm glad that you asked. First, we have to understand and accept the fact that we have power! In or out of prison, poor Black, brown or white, educated or otherwise. We have power. But ALL POLITICS ARE LOCAL! And our objective must be to control the politics on OUR level, first! THE MOVEMENT Magazine is one of many tools for doing this. I know that politics isn't always a very welcoming topic in our community. But that's only because, for years, we've been excluded or discouraged from being involved. That has to change. There are countless brilliant thinkers in our community, and we need them all. Prison gerrymandering is over in Pennsylvania. Still, because of redistricting, Philly will likely lose at least one representative. We can work to reverse this trend, as long as we understand who IS and who ISN'T on our side. And the "local" mainstream media ISN'T on our side! They can't be trusted. Their job is to create fear and anxiety on the one hand, and on the other hand, convince you to spend money. Being more involved in politics doesn't mean standing on picket lines. It just means we have to realize that our voice matters.

As 2022 approaches, we must prepare to be more involved in the decision making process, as it relates to our communities and our circumstances. Covid-19 is still wreaking havoc, and its poor people who will continue to suffer the most. But it isn't only Covid-19 that we need to keep in mind. A major part of rebuilding our communities is our dedication to restoration. The criminal "justice" system in America - specifically Pennsylvania - seems focused only on a retributive approach to harm. For years, I've been a part of conversations involving people who wonder why America is so intent on punishment, rather than restoration. Its a good question, and I don't believe that we spend enough time examining it. Sometimes, we get so caught up in criticizing something, that we don't explain to people what the real issue is. So I'm grateful to my comrade, Kenjuan Congo, for his article in this issue, which opens up the discussion on the philosophy of punishment in America. Trust me when I tell you that you will definitely want to read his piece. And that's only the first part - more are coming. Anyway, I hope that you all enjoy this issue, where we shine a light on DBI sentences and their impact on families and communities. And I want to remind all of you that THE MOVEMENT Magazine is for YOU! All of us are en-

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gaged in the same struggle, and we need to grow to the point where we can cast away petty beefs and quarrels, because at the end of the day, it means nothing! It took me being in prison for over two decades to finally understand that the "gangsta life" is played out - and I don't care who criticizes me for saying that. When we fight each other, the enemy wins. When we struggle together, the people win. Therefore, take an account of yourself; do some real self-reflexion. What do you really want out of life? Liberation or Gangsterism? Freedom or Slavery? Strive to be better, always!

With loyalty and love... @uptownserg

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE

### Founders

*Kerry "Shakaboona" Marshall  
Patricia "Mama Patt" Vickers*

### Editor-In-Chief

*Sergio "Serg" Hyland*

### Co-Editor-In-Chief

*Patricia "Mama Patt" Vickers*

### Owner

*Kerry "Shakaboona" Marshall*

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# THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org



## One last Christmas in prison: Bobby Bostic’s 26-year journey to freedom.

by Damien Linnane

As I’m sure many of you know, Christmas is one of the hardest days in prison. Separated from loved ones and family, your cell feeling smaller than ever as you think about exactly what you’re missing out on. But for Bobby Bostic, Christmas in 2021 was at least bittersweet, with the knowledge that it would be his last in prison.

Bobby’s Christmases as a child weren’t all that happy either. Raised in one of the poorer neighbourhoods in St. Louis Missouri, along with his mother and siblings, he was often technically homeless and dependent on the goodwill of friends and relatives for survival. His father was in prison, and with no positive male role models, Bobby followed most of his peers into a lifestyle of drug use and crime. Frustrated with life and with limited prospects, at the age of 16, Bobby and his 18-year-old friend



Damien Linnane

Donald Hutson made a terrible on-the-spot decision that would change the rest of their lives.

Noticing a group of well-dressed people with a car full of goods, an unusual sight for their neighbourhood, Bobby and Donald approached. Unbeknownst to them, the group was donating Christmas gifts to another family in need. With guns drawn Bobby and Donald demanded money and items from the group. When they initially refused, Bobby fired a shot, grazing one of them. No part of their plan was well-thought through, and after fleeing the area, the pair carjacked, robbed and briefly detained a woman. The woman later testified that Donald groped her, and she was afraid she would be raped, until Bobby, who was driving, intervened and stopped him. The woman was released thereafter, and Bobby and Donald were arrested within the hour.

Donald was offered and accepted a plea-deal of 30 years in prison. Bobby, who was still a juvenile, was tried as an adult. Acting on the advice from his father, and partially due to his age and inexperience with the legal system, Bobby rejected the same 30-year deal and elected to go to trial, believing the sentence could not get any worse. Unfortunately for him, he would instead receive the longest sentence ever given to a child for non-homicide offenses in Missouri. 241 years. He would be only eligible for parole when he was 112 years old.

The judge, Evelyn Baker, stated part of her motivation for the sentence, which was reached by stacking the individual charges consecutively, rather than the traditional way of concurrently, was the lack of remorse Bobby displayed. Unfortunately for Bobby, his father wasn’t the only person to give him bad legal advice. The public defender encouraged Bobby to write letters to Judge Baker, though neglected to mention what to write. Displaying the arrogance typical of teenagers, Bobby wrote about how frustrated and angry he was at the prospect of his long sentence, probably cementing ideas Judge Baker was already starting to formulate about the lack of remorse he displayed in court. In later years, Judge Baker would publicly state the sentence she gave to Bobby was the only one she regretted during her 25 years as a judge.

“I now realize what I was dealing with was a 16-year-old child, trying to pretend that he was really, really tough. It was adolescent bravado,” she said, also adding in an opinion piece for *The Washington Post* in 2018 that she learned too late that young people’s brains are not only less capable of thinking about the consequences of their actions, but also more capable of rehabilitation. She supported his 2018 appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States, along with over 100 other former judges, pros-

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ecutors and law enforcement officers. I first read about Bobby's story via news coverage of that appeal. His appeal was denied, and as is customary, the court gave no reason for their decision.

Remembering how isolated I was in prison for 10 months for crimes I committed as an adult, I could only imagine what was going through Bobby's mind knowing he had no prospect of release for something he did as a child. But I did remember how much it could change your entire day in prison just by getting a letter, so I wrote him one. I wasn't surprised when he wrote back, but I was at the friendship that followed.

Bobby has made the most of his time in prison. He has published seven books of non-fiction and poetry. One is titled 'When Life Gives You Lemons, Make Lemonade.' He has completed over 50 educational and rehabilitation courses, including his GED, a business course from Missouri State University, and an associate degree from Adams State University. He is currently working towards a bachelor's degree. We discussed everything from books to politics, but he also wrote to me about his dreams of starting a charity that helps disadvantaged youth from making the same mistakes he did, and of publishing his remaining books on the outside. Despite the fact he had no viable options to be released, he never gave up hope.

With Bobby's permission, and inspired by the public support I'd seen around high-profile cases like Cyntoia Brown, I decided to do what I could to help. The first thing I did was pick up the pieces from people who had previously helped him over the last 20 years. A website, [FreeBobbyBostic.com](http://FreeBobbyBostic.com), existed, though had not been updated in years. I contacted the administrator, who hadn't had the time to maintain it, and offered to take it over. A [Change.org](http://Change.org) petition started by another supporter for his release had gained only 600 signatures before it timed out and shut down. I contacted the creator, took it over and reactivated it. It now has well over 10,000 signatures.

I created social media accounts advocating for his release.

Over three years I sent out over 1000 emails and messages on his behalf to journalists, lawmakers and influential people. The overwhelming majority were ignored. Some successfully arranged interviews with Bobby, others arranged interviews with myself advocating for him. I found prison newsletters willing to share his story. I wrote about him



Portrait of Bobby Bostic by Damien Linnane

myself for whoever would print it. I featured on podcasts in Seattle and Oregon, spoke to lawmakers in Missouri, and prison reform advocates in New York, all at stupid hours in the morning or night from where I live in Australia. As an artist, I also shared his story through the medium of artworks I created. One of my portraits of him (pictured) is currently on display at an exhibition in Newcastle, Australia.

Covering Bobby's story for *The Goshen News* in Indiana, Mary Sanchez summed up the campaign for him best. "Through the years Bostic has drawn a fair level of sup-

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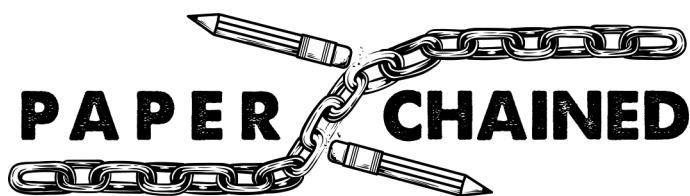
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port ... [but] somehow, the secret sauce of just the right amount of media attention, the building of political and social pressure has just never coalesced ... Kim Kardashian has not called. Nor has any number of celebrities who have attached themselves to the causes of people incarcerated who are believed to be innocent. Probably it's because he's a convict, a St. Louis man from a poor family with few resources ..."

I got plenty of support for Bobby over my three years campaigning for him, though I never got the overwhelming reaction I was hoping for. But we did get the change we needed. After much lobbying directed at lawmakers from myself, other supporters, and especially the ACLU, in mid 2021 an amendment inspired by Bobby was added to a bill in Missouri. It gives anyone who committed a crime other than murder as a child the possibility of parole after 15 years. The law went into effect that November. Bobby was arrested and taken into custody on December 12, 1995. Exactly 26 years and one day later, Bobby's parole was approved. He will be released just before Christmas in 2022. As per prison rules, Bobby was only allowed to have one person advocate on his behalf for the parole board. He chose former Judge Baker, who argued for his release.

I don't know how much of a difference I made. Right until the end I was encouraging people to write letters of support for Bobby's parole hearing. I'd like to think I helped accelerate his struggle for freedom, but it's possible he would have been granted parole completely without my help. All that really matters is Bobby now has a real chance at freedom. And one day, hopefully not too far in the future, we'll finally meet in person.

*Damien Linnane is a former Australian prisoner turned prison reform activist. He is the author of the novel Scarred, the illustrator of the book This Is Ear Hustle and the editor of the Australian prison magazine Paper Chained.*



*Rather than campaigning for individuals, Damien now focuses his efforts on Paper Chained, which prints writing and artworks from current and former incarcerated people. Written content can be in any style, including but not limited to poetry, short stories or calls for support. To*

submit content, please write to:

*Paper Chained  
PO Box 2073  
Dangar, NSW 2309  
Australia*

You can write letters of support to Bobby during his final year in prison, and also write to Missouri Governor Mike Parson, asking him to grant Bobby clemency. As Bobby's sentence was 241 years, without clemency he will still be on parole conditions for the rest of his life.

Bobby Bostic #526795  
Jefferson City Correctional Centre  
8200 NO More Victim's Road  
Jefferson City  
MO 65101

Office of Governor Michael L. Parson  
PO Box 720  
Jefferson City  
MO 65102

To find all the social media accounts, petitions and other links for Bobby, visit <https://linktr.ee/freebobbybostic>

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## Call for Contributors

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

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

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

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

**THE MOVEMENT**

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



## Oscar's Story

by Oscar Lugo

I am an incarcerated individual serving a 240 year sentence for a non-violent drug conviction. I was originally sentenced to serve 440 years, however that sentence was modified after it came to light that there had been a violation in my case of a restriction placed on "Mandatory Minimum" sentences. This sentence of 440, or even 240 years is an extraordinary amount of time for such a conviction. This is equivalent to three (3) life sentences.

At least, I have been trying to get my story out there to be heard, because surely when reviewed, it becomes plainly obvious just how unjust this case has been from its inception, and continuing on until the very present day.



Here is a brief overview of what I have been going through. On March 22, 2004 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I was charged with (63) counts of illegal delivery of a controlled substance, (30) counts of possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance, (1) count of corrupt organization, & (1) count of dealing in the proceeds of unlawful activities. On August 2nd, 2007, I was found guilty on all charges & was subsequently sentenced to 440 years, regardless of the case being about a non-violent drug offense. This would turn out to be the harshest and longest sentence given to a non-violent drug case in Pennsylvania "HISTORY".

I was convicted with the use of corrupt state troopers and district attorneys office. The lead investigator in my case, Kelly Cruz, a longtime narcotics investigator, was charged with violating the civil rights of Zachary Bare, 22, during a 2009 arrest in Chester County. He used false information, and perjured testimony from all of the witnesses who testified in my case. All of those witnesses recanted their trial testimonies and I have copies of their affidavits. On March 21, 2015 my superior court appeal was granted in part. I was given a new sentence as the court recognized the violation of the United States Supreme courts ruling on mandatory minimum sentence, decided in "Apprendi v. New Jersey " I was resentenced to serve 90 - 240 years. This of course still amounts to a life sentence. This would amount to an illegal sentence "AGAIN".

At this point, I have exhausted all of my state appeals, and I am in the federal court seeking relief through a 2254 habeas corpus petition. I believe that me being Hispanic in the court of West Chester, PA. caused me to be seen as a "HUB" or connection to others in the state, surrounding states, and as a result prompted the judge to make me and my case an example to others. My sentence is "not" proportional to the nature of the offense. Third degree murder carries a sentence of 20 to 40 in the state of Pennsylvania, New Jersey (30 to life), and New York (25 to life). Federal guidelines carries a sentence of about ten years.

The court's sentence as an example in my case sets the wrong message. This message carries with it the clear implication that there is no difference between murder and non-violent crimes such as trafficking. The sentence is particularly unfair, and unwarranted. The cornerstone of the conviction, and subsequent sentence is the testimony of witnesses who were coached, then lied to save themselves. This is very clear upon the review of my case.

The criminal justice system in Pennsylvania particularly is broken when a man can receive hundreds of years the equivalent of a life sentence after life sentence after life sentence (Et. Ali ) for a non-violent drug offense. Unfortunately Pennsylvania ranks (5th) fifth in the nation for corruption in the state court. Please join me in the fight to make right this wrong!! If you visit <https://www.change.org/p/ashley-lugo-oscar-lugo-is-sentenced->

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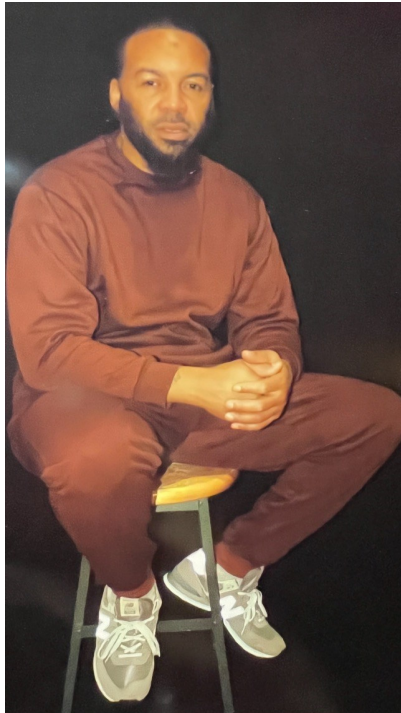
152-440-years-in-west-chester-pa you can see I have over 10,000 supporters willing to win this fight.. Thank you for taking your time in reading my story. Any other questions please contact my daughter Ashley Lugo at 609-350-5682.

Oscar Lugo #LL1010 (SCI Coal Township)

\*\*\*\*\*

## When does enough become enough?

My name is Kevin Andrews. I was born and raised in Philadelphia. I'm 43 years old, and I'm serving a 66-year sentence for a nonviolent offense. I was prosecuted in Blair county, Pa in 2015, under the administration of the former (and now convicted felon) Attorney General Kathleen Kane. Because of my sentence, I will be released if I live to reach the age of 103 (as they say, "the only thing you're guaranteed is your maximum date").



Kevin Andrews

Out of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania, the Kane administration chose Blair county, even though it was over 200 miles from my residence and support system. This is also a nearly all-white area, where young Black men such as myself can be easily violated. I was forced to represent myself during a time when I was experiencing severe mental health issues. I was even hauled into court while on suicide watch, incompetent to conduct my own defense. Despite the authorities knowing of my condition, I was still forced to proceed with representing myself. Court records show that the white prosecutor compared me to a little monkey during trial, while several NAACP representatives were present. In fact, it was the NAACP representatives who brought it to my attention after trial, though they did nothing to assist me. I was also convicted of crimes I couldn't have committed because I was in custody elsewhere (Dauphin County Prison) on unrelated charges when those

alleged crimes were committed. I was mentally unwell during my prosecution, so yes, there are claims that went undetected because I was incompetent to conduct a defense. The judge even asked me at one point, if I knew where I was? If a judge feels the need to inquire whether or not a litigant is mindful of his/her location, that, in itself, displays evidence that a competency evaluation is warranted.

The fact of the matter is, what happened to me isn't at all unique; it happens everyday, all around America. DBI sentences for any crime are inhumane. Nobody should have to spend the rest of their lives in prison because of a poor decision they made when they were at their worst. I marvel at those who support this ideology of retribution, when they themselves make poor decisions daily. Shouldn't the laws apply to all, equally? Is the fate/future of those in their communities the same as ours? Are those in-patient drug programs available time after time for Blacks as they are for whites?

I walk past brothers everyday who have 20, 30, 40 years in. I visited one of my elders in the infirmary just yesterday who's already served 32+ years, and can barely breathe; the left side of his body is paralyzed, he has diabetes, and suffered 2 strokes after catching Covid-19. And yet, the court denied his request for compassionate release. The only people who can deny such a person, in his condition, a compassionate release are those who lack compassion themselves. When the punishment no longer serves its purpose, because the individual has learned those basic tools to live a productive life, or whose deteriorating health has them on the verge of death, then that very same sentence becomes an act of torture and abuse, because the individual is no longer a danger to anybody, least of all, society. When does enough become enough?

Others have suffered the same fate. Eugene Cater—Swarty given DBI sentences for a nonviolent offense, 104 to 208 years. Rondale Geter—Black sentenced to 28 years for a nonviolent offense. Jessie Crawley—J-North given 40 years for a nonviolent offense. They think we don't matter; they think that nobody will care enough about us to fight for us, even when we can't fight for ourselves. But they know that we weren't meant to take our final breath behind these walls. Abolitionist Law Center, Amistad Law Project, Straight Ahead!, and the Human Rights Coalition, are all fighting for OUR freedom, OUR Liberation. They believe in second chances for everyone. And so should you!

Kevin Andrews #MR6832 (SCI Chester)

\*\*\*\*\*

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## Taking Steps to Reform Virtual Life Sentences: the Least Discussed Form of Death by Incarceration

by Frederick Page



Frederick Page

A Virtual Life Sentence is when people are eligible for parole but serving excessive sentences resulting in Death by Incarceration.

Women and men serving virtual life sentences are people eligible for parole but serving excessive sentences. Their chances of making parole is greatly reduced because as adults they are given sentences beyond the average span of one's life.

This form of punishment is a grossly unjust violation of the Eighth Amendment based on discrimination of sentencing one to a harsh punishment, without an early release mechanism, regardless of one's proven rehabilitation and quality of life achievements.

The disparity of harsh sentencing has long been in effect. Someone on Death Row is afforded an opportunity of having a lawyer throughout their sentence to either prove the sentence should be changed to Life Without Parole or to prove that they were wrongfully convicted. Many Death Row sentenced people have and continue to be resentenced to Life sentences and set free from the harsher sentence of death.

People serving Life Without Parole face many obstacles both in court and when filing for commutation. Since the “Get Tough on Crime” era, the door on commutation has been tightly closed. Before this particular tough stance on crime, in 1978, some 278 Lifers had their sentences commuted with a successful period of not recommitting any crimes. However tightly closed the door, some men serving Life Sentences were commuted between the early 1980s and the year 2017. Very few, but some Life Sentences were commuted. However, Virtual Life sentenced people have continually filed for commutation but denied every single time. **Not one Virtual Life sentence has been commuted over a forty year span.**

Women and men who are serving a Virtual Life sentence along with many Life Without Parole people, have demonstrated over a long period of time that they are rehabilitated. They are among those who give stability to the institutions they are in, as well as the counselors who embraced the mentally ill, the assaultive and behavioral residents in prison. Yet Virtual Life sentenced people are the least talked about in relation to Criminal Justice Reforms.

A Washington D.C. based organization known as the Sentencing Project released its report in May of 2017, titled, [“Still Life: America Increasing Use of Life and Long-Term Sentences.”](#) which analyzes the excessive number of people serving life sentences despite prison populations decreasing in the United States.

Prison Legal News (a prison publication dedicated to protecting human rights) published an [article by Derek Gilna](#) in its January 2018 ed., in which he cited: “In 2016, a staggering 161,957 prisoners were serving life sentences, both with and without parole, constituting one of every nine state and federal prisoners. **Further, an additional 44,311 prisoners in the U.S. were serving ‘Virtual’ or ‘Life Equivalent’ sentences of at least 50 years, for a total of 206,268 people or 13.9 percent of the prison population.**”

What most of the public is unaware of is that a majority of those serving Virtual Life or Life sentences have been convicted of violent crimes, **while a minority of those serving Virtual or Life Equivalent sentences have been convicted of non-violent crimes.** A very insightful question to ask is how can that be possible where someone convicted of non-violent crimes receives the same or sometimes greater sentence as someone convicted of a violent crime? Another question to ask is how much time is enough for both violent and non-violent crimes where there is visible rehabilitation and sincere remorse present?

Rare incidents of radically cruel violence cause alarm for the public's safety, leading to fear-based criminal policies and practices. Elected officials and public officials react to pressure of maintaining office and/or fear of careers being sullied, should an ex-offender or criminal recommit their crimes. This influence persuades the drive to act at times above or beyond the written laws. It too, causes many to turn a blind eye and deaf ear to reoccurring injustices. When the smoke clears, we are left to face the certain truth that a single violent incident or a single violent act, committed by a small percentage of people, sets the tone for over-incarcerating people who would in fact never commit

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such atrocious acts.

A Restorative Justice approach would be to sentence each individual on their own merit. Executing the law has become an act of vengeance, rather than an act of justice. It is true that the behavior of a small percentage of people sets the standard for criminal justice policies, void of forgiving the person for their acts, regardless of sincere remorse and certain rehabilitation.\*

The unforgiving practices in policy have been proven to be unrealistic to the realities of evidence-based research, which suggests that Virtual Life sentenced and Life sentenced people who are elderly senior citizens, have the lowest recidivism rates throughout the nation. Both groups of prisoners have individuals among them who are/have been over-incarcerated.

This assures the outcome that death by incarceration is the certain result where there are no viable release mechanisms for elderly rehabilitated women and men. The results are clear. The intended objective of Virtual Life sentences, which is to incapacitate and act as a deterrent, fails to recognize rehabilitation, losing its potential ability to return credible citizens back into society. Some judges and prosecutors even cleverly use to their advantage consecutive sentencing schemes to purposely give people sentences beyond their life span. (cf. [Steven L. Chanenson, \*The Next Era of Sentencing Reform\*, 54 Emory L.J. 377, 428 \(2005\)](#))

In the case of *Commonwealth vs. Timothy Dodge 957*, the Pennsylvania Superior Court ruled to vacate the Judge's aggregate sentence totaling 58½ to 124 year sentence, where “judge appeared to have fixed purpose of keeping defendant in jail for life, while impact of crimes on victims and community were addressed, gravity of offenses was not, court imposed minimum sentence of 52 years for 37 counts of receiving personal property, **many of which were not crimes against person, and two burglary convictions involved no violence involving person, and while recidivism was addressed, rehabilitative needs of defendants were not.**”

In the above statement, the Superior Court acknowledged that Timothy Dodge was given a death by incarceration sentence for property crimes. It should shock the conscience of society that someone who commits property crimes—and no violent crime against another person—could face a punishment that amounts to dying in prison.

**42 Pa. 9781(c)(1,2,3) is Pennsylvania's statute for Appellate Review of Sentence, which states:**

1. The sentencing court purported to sentence within the sentencing guidelines but applied the guidelines erroneously;
2. The sentencing court sentenced within the sentencing guidelines but the case involves circumstances where the application of the guidelines would be clearly unreasonable; or
3. The sentencing court sentenced outside the sentencing guidelines and the sentence is unreasonable. In all other cases the appellate court shall affirm the sentence imposed by the sentencing court.

The language of the law is clearly an objective resolve of some errors or abuse of discretion by judges and prosecutors. However, it is of no inherent power, when judges and prosecutors' reputation supersedes the written letter of the laws. The statute is of no inherent power, where clearly established miscarriages of justice claims are met with a certain inherited bias from a flawed criminal justice system. The horse that drives the carriage of abuse and injustice is huge enough for all to visibly see. We are presented with the question: how is it that most claims of excessive sentencing never get corrected, or never make it through the appellate review process.

As advocates of reform to the criminal justice system address some obvious elephants in the room, let us be mindful that people drive the vehicle by which there are flaws. All laws and policies are not as flawed as sometimes is the people's consciousness to the human narrative that we share. That is to say, at times the answer is in the already written law, but the perspective of the law is always a matter of interpretation which begins inside one's heart. The heart is the catalyst of injustice, just as it is and can be the catalyst for justice.

It is daylight, and while there remains a light of hope, why not restore justice to the law's administration and execution by way of true criminal justice reforms. We can do that today by Taking Steps to Reform Virtual Life Sentences. We can be found on the right side of history by standing up for those serving: The Least Discussed Form of Death by Incarceration. Let's execute a Restorative Justice approach, by using a just implementation of policy and laws that represent the power behind rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is more than just a word, it is a force in action/motion—which has been one of the critical missing ingredients from the criminal justice system.

\*For example, Mr. James (Muhammad) Taylor just turned 80 years old and has served over 50 years on a life sentence. Mr. Taylor's record and

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history is outstanding. Mr. Taylor's life transformed early in his incarceration. After he came into the realization of his purpose and humanity, he became the first president of Graterford Lifers and created PAR (originally People Against Recidivism and later changed to People Advancing Reintegration). Mr. Taylor has applied for commutation some nine times, and has been continually denied. Mr. Taylor is now awaiting another Merit Review Hearing and possible Public Hearing. The commutation process up until now has failed to acknowledge that Mr. Taylor has transformed himself, no longer presents a threat to society, and deserves to come home.

Frederick Page #BU2238 (SCI Phoenix)

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## **Death By Incarceration is morally ineffective**



Kenjuan Congo Jr.

Death By Incarceration (DBI) is when a person is sentenced to die in prison. Some proponents argue that DBI is needed as a precept to deter criminal behavior. An example of this could be if someone knowingly commits a crime. As a consequence for violating the law, this individual is sentenced to Life Without the possibility of Parole (LWOP). This penalty is given in order to deter other would-be offenders. In their opinion, when it

comes to an infringement, LWOP would most surely be a strong enough deterrent to catch the attention of even the most habitual of offenders.

The foundation of a civilized and just system of law should not be based on the heavy-handed use of preset sentencing guidelines, but rather on the merits of the proven offense. The use of deterrence has historical roots in 18th century Europe, where the wielding of public torture reigned during this era on the continent. Centuries later, the harshest of consequences have not stymied nor turned the tide of violent crime. Upon extensive analysis, Death By Incarceration is concluded to be given as a deterring tool. Proposers who remonstrate that DBI facilitates society's retribu-

tion for the committed offense, could easily be accused of supporting the use of vigilante tactics, which at glance, is a violation of the United State's criminal code.

For the argument of retribution, it is foundational that the law being broken is just. Therefore, when one violates the statute, there is something debilitating about that particular individual - be it cultural, social, psychological, etcetera. This fragmented state of the offender puts them in immediate need of support and assistance. When society inflicts pain and suffering on this impaired human, the morality and ethics of that nation is at stake. The United States' fixation on retribution has led to the defunding and termination of vital programs and services that were scientifically developed for the purposes of rehabilitation and reentry. This created conditions where people reintegrating into society have an inflated chance of reverting, as reflected in the current recidivism rate. The rehabilitation models practiced by France, Germany, and the U.K., have been analytically examined. In sharp contrast to the U.S. punitive system - which pales in comparison - the detailed conclusion shows a reduction in prison populations. The contention that DBI sentences advance retribution is feeble at best, when compared to its rehabilitation/utilitarian alternative. The two predominant ideologies in penal code sentencing are retributive and utilitarian. The philosophy of retribution is principled in punishing individuals who violate the law. Advocates give credence to punishment as a way to convey reproach against the committed offense. On the other hand, it is proffered that retributive "justice" can satisfy society's desire for vengeance, whose role is taken on by the state, eliminating the yearning of individuals to do so outside of the law.

The issue is, what happens when this vengeful impulse runs contrary to the well-being of society overall? This rationale also fails to meet the needs of the person who survived the crime. To what degree do we seek reprisal when its impact is harmful, including to those who were initially victimized? We can do better than a systemically arranged version of violence, especially considering that revenge does not produce the satisfaction we seek during moments of our greatest outrage. Retribution is more acceptable when one is persuaded that there is something inherently inferior about the person/people being punished. The model of retributive "justice" trades rehabilitation in exchange for inflicting pain and suffering, often on those who are considered "less than". The rehabilitation of prisoners is often referred to as the utilitarian approach. This ideology is principled in transforming people from criminals into law abiding citizens, by correcting their criminal defects. Rehabilitation is also seen as a moral undertaking

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in the effort to improve individual human beings. The utilitarian method considers ethical implications on how a society treats people who have deviated, while still acknowledging their potential to become productive citizens. The utilitarian approach puts forth the question of morality in regards to those suffering in pain within American prisons. 21st Century America is grappling over two penal code desires, retribution and rehabilitation, that are diametrically opposed. Should offenders be given a second chance, in order to become respectable members of society? Or should the transgressor be left in a prison cell, forgotten by their community? Inflicting further injury or facilitating renewal, is not only a question of social functioning, but one of morality and ethics.

The sentencing practices in America, shouldn't be based on any particular state being a facilitator of vengeance, but rather the restoration and rehabilitation of victim and offender. Adherents propose that Death By Incarceration is needed for incapacitation. Under the pretense that the transgression is against a just law, there is potential that the person can victimize others. Therefore, the purpose of incapacitation is to ensure the safety of society overall by separating the offender. However, once an individual is rehabilitated, transformed, and changed for the better, the threat of harm against society is dissipated. Thus, to hold an individual after they have gone through this critical transformative process, defeats the entire purpose of incapacitation. IPP is Imprisonment for Public Protection - a philosophy designed to protect the public from offenders whose crime "warrants" LWOP. Instead of Death By Incarceration, the individual receives an IPP sentence and applies for release to a commission, who would approve release if it was satisfied that the person was no longer a threat to public safety. Death By Incarceration has been thoroughly examined from heavily detailed vantage points. The conclusion, after painstaking analysis, deems Death By Incarceration to be a criminal justice failure. Death By Incarceration is morally ineffective.

Kenjuan Congo Jr # ND7568 (SCI-Chester)  
IG@kjcongo3

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## **Why isn't the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons a fail safe to prevent death by incarceration?**

by George Rahsaan Brooks



George Rahsaan Brooks

Although progress has been made in reducing the number of wrongful convictions by Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner's Conviction Integrity Unit, there is still a great need for the Board of Pardons to grant commutation in cases where the application presents innocence evidence and is precluded from doing so in the courts due to time bar provisions. There seems to be general agreement that the proper place to correct a miscarriage of justice is in the courts. However, no one should think that it is an easy thing to get the courts to reconsider its decision when a convicted person unearths exculpatory evidence and then tries to newly present it to the courts.

The right to federal habeas review has been restricted by the Antiterrorist And Effective Death Penalty Act ("AEDPA") for reasons of finality, comity and due diligence. AEDPA also gives deference to state court decisions and precludes federal courts from giving state cases de novo (a new) review of the entire case. Thus, the AEDPA has put up a formidable road block, nearly closing the door to many state prisoners. The Post-Conviction Rules Act ("PCRA") removed jurisdiction from judges to hear second or successive post conviction petitions unless the petitioner satisfies three very rigid exceptions. Because of the widespread view by our lawmakers that the law has become too uncertain because cases don't seem final, full and closed, procedural and jurisdictional blocks make it next to impossible to have cases opened once they become final or closed.

In our society it too often happens that people of color are wrongfully convicted of a crime and this is why the Board

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**“Knowledge is Power, ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!”**

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of Pardons needs to be a “fail safe” and use its power to protect this class of people from ignominious death by incarceration. Until our judicial system has achieved such a level of perfection that it either eliminates time bar provisions or makes no mistakes, the Board of Pardons must be the indispensable way to prevent death by incarceration. If blame becomes non-existent or reduced, punishment must also be non-existent or reduced.

People wrongfully convicted do not deserve punishment. Thus, their punishment should be discontinued. It is not only philosophers of a retributive bent who believe this. Lawmakers and judges believe it too. Since our judicial system is generally set up to protect people from an unjust punishment, when it malfunctions and its protection is imperfect, commutation becomes an important safeguard.

If the person didn't cause the injury or death, imprisonment has no legitimate purpose and thus cannot be justified. The framers granted this power to the Board of Pardons and Governor alone because they believed that, in their hands, that power would be the most effective tool for preventing injustice to endure and fundamental fairness to prevail.

George Rahsaan Brooks #AP4884 ( SCI-Coal Township)

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

Untitled

Desperation breeds contempt  
It makes a person see things differently  
It makes doing things you would never consider  
Suddenly become the only option

Eviction notices  
Hungry children  
Societal standards, mental health  
Drug addiction, domestic abuse

You find yourself wondering  
"How did I get here?"  
And it's not always easy  
Life's rarely kind

Crime is at an all time high  
The prisons overflow  
Yet no ones stopped to wonder  
Why this seems to be the way it goes

It's simple to take the high road  
Sitting in an ivory tower  
Because until you've really been there  
You can't really know

Quick to pass judgment  
To condemn and crucify  
But if it were you  
Wouldn't you want some consideration?

Wouldn't you want someone  
to understand your plight?  
To take the time to listen  
about what you had to fight?

So many people's lives are viewed  
through a dualistic lens  
But as anyone can tell you  
The world is hardly ever black and white  
Really, we all live in  
muddled shades of gray.

Sometimes we think we know  
How we would handle someone else's circumstance  
Unless you have felt the crushing weight  
of desperation sitting on your chest  
It's impossible for you to truly know  
The choices you may make.

By Krista Mader, PA-5787, SCI-Cambridge Springs

## “Healing Through Art”

by Sergio Hyland @uptownserg

Eliezer Perez has been in prison for 27 years, straight. But wisely, and against myriad obstacles, he's used his time to better himself and anybody else that he's come into contact with. He's a Certified Peer Support Specialist, Secretary of the Inmate Improvement Organization, and one of the most talented artists that you'll ever meet.

In all of those regards, Perez is unique. But there's an unfortunate reality that makes his situation sadly regular: he's one of 5,000 incarcerated men and women, sentenced to serve a life term in a Pennsylvania prison. In the Keystone State, the only way to complete a life sentence is to die behind bars. There's no chance for parole; there's no chance to show the world that you aren't the same person you were when you came to prison. For those reasons, Pennsylvania enjoys its own shameful uniqueness, as it is merely one of six states in America that continues to hand down this brutally inhumane form of punishment.

Convicted of murder when he was just 21 years old, Perez, now 48, never hesitates to share his own story of defeats and triumphs.

Struggling with mental health issues all his life, he began cutting himself at the age of nine. Though he couldn't have understood why he was struggling at the time, he now makes the connection between his mental health issues, and those of his father, whom he met for the first time this past year. A little-known fact about mental health issues, is that, in many cases, they're hereditary. And because poor communities are typically uneducated - or mis-educated - on mental health, self-medicating tends to be the most popular form of treatment.

Oftentimes, this leads to drug abuse, which only makes one's mental health struggles worse.

Eliezer Perez has an artistic drive that is fueled by his desire to heal. "As a kid, I knew I had talent, but the streets took me away", he says. "Prison really made me focus on my talent. I use art to cope, because painting heals."

And like many of us, he has a lot to heal from. In 2004, he suffered the loss of his brother. But no loss could prepare him for 2019, when, tragically, his daughter took her own life. Shawntell Perez was only 26 years old. Losses such as this can serve to cripple people, but Eliezer Perez used it as an opportunity to educate prisoners on the importance of mental wellness. He speaks openly and honestly about his life and the hardships he's had to endure, both in and out of prison.

Growing up in Long Island and the Bronx, he came to settle in Reading, Pa in 1987, at the age of 15. Perez is just another example of why the criminal "justice" system in Pennsylvania has it all wrong. Since the very beginning, he's accepted responsibility for his actions. He expressed remorse, and he works daily to restore the harm that he's caused. Moreover, an extraordinarily rare thing has hap-



Mural depicting the faces of the incarcerated elders who died from Covid-19 at SCI-Chester by Eliezer Perez.



**“Knowledge is Power, ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!”**

pened to him over the years: the family of the victim of his



Portrait by Eliezer Perez.

crime has reached out to him and created a relationship that has slowly grown into a bond. They've expressed their forgiveness, and their desire to see him leave prison one day and do some good in the community. But Pennsylvania is having none of it. Known for its harshness and unforgiving nature, when it comes to criminal "justice", Pennsylvania isn't focused on justice at all, but solely on punishment. True justice is rooted in restoration. But as long as greedy politicians remain in office, they will continue to benefit off of the fear that they instill within the average citizen who knows very little about the causes and effects of crime.

"When Barack Obama was running for election, he mentioned plans to reform the laws relating to habeas corpus, so that people such as myself would be able to have our sentences reviewed. But", Perez says, "republicans blocked the effort, vowing to make Obama a 'one-term' president." Knowing how issues like these are political "hot potatoes", Eliezer Perez isn't discouraged. "We have to keep organizing around abolishing DBI sentences. And the best thing that we can do on the inside of prison, is to continue work-

ing on ourselves and helping those who need it." None of us can predict when Pennsylvania will step into the 21st century, like every other state in the region, but there's no questioning whether Perez and other incarcerated men and women like him will continue on their path of healing and restoration - even if the politics get in their way.

Sergio Hyland #FX1537 (SCI Chester)

Contact Eliezer Perez at:  
Smart Communications/PADOC  
SCI Chester  
Eliezer Perez #cy-7366  
Po Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, Fl 33733

*To see more of Eliezer Perez's art, check out the inside back cover.*

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## **How to Obtain/Secure a Medical Release of Information For an Incarcerated Individual in PA State Prison**

Our current health crisis is one that impacts each of us in different ways; it brings to light so many questions and concerns. Often as nurse who is also a human rights activist, I am contacted by family members asking how one can obtain medical information about a loved one who is incarcerated. Typically, this need arrives when the loved one becomes ill. However, getting a **Release of Information** [ROI] when your loved one is not ill will make it easier to get information if the need occurs.

**IMPORTANT:** If you want someone from the PA Prison Society to address a medical problem, a ROI must be completed. Talk with the PPS volunteer for more specific guidelines.

For those incarcerated, who want to have someone from the outside to have access to your medical information, you too need initiate this process. This could be a lawyer, an Official Visitor from the Pennsylvania Prison Society, or a health care professional, for example.

The process has many steps; and, even if followed correctly, the DOC’s health services may present obstacles that need to be addressed. **Determination is crucial!!!**

### **Key Information**

The DOC ROI *only* applies to medical care provided by DOC Health Care Services. IF your loved one is hospitalized at an external hospital [overnight visit], that information will need to be requested and obtained from the hospital medical records department—the hospital’s ROI form will need to be completed. See #6 Section below.

Following is a step-by-step procedure for obtaining, completing and implementing a DOC-approved **Release of Information** [ROI] that will allow prison medical staff to provide information about an incarcerated person’s health status to those person[s] he/she has given signed consent.

- 1. It is vital that a ROI be on file at the prison at all times while the person is incarcerated.**
  - a. A copy of the ROI should be kept by the outside person who is designated to receive health care information.
  - b. If you wait until your loved one has a health care “situation” or crisis, it is likely that you will not have access to his or her current condition.
2. The DOC’s ROI is only valid for **180 days** from the date of the person’s signature. That means that a new ROI must be completed twice a year! The DOC states they changed this to once a year but so far, the forms don’t reflect this change.
3. More than one ROI can be completed so that more than one person can receive health information.
4. **The incarcerated person needs to initiate the ROI process**, not the outside family member, a loved one or requesting health care provider.
5. If you are the ROI “requester” [the person who will receive the information] and you request paper documentation from health services [for example, lab test results], there may a duplication cost associated with this request. Asking for a DVD version of medical records may reduce costs.
6. Note that the ROI form only allows the prison to release information but does not extend to an outside health care provider, UNLESS the test or procedure is now part of the prison’s health care record. A separate ROI must be completed at the health care location, where treatment is being provided. For example, if one is admitted to “Hospital X”, the hospital’s ROI form must be completed and submitted to “Hospital X” Medical Records Department. The “patient” [incarcerated person] must sign that Hospital’s ROI Form. It is better if this is done while the person is hospitalized, if possible.
7. A new ROI is needed if the individual is transferred to another prison.
8. The official version is available in English and Spanish.
9. If the person is unable to complete the form, someone else can assist in completing the form and then it can be signed by the incarcerated individual.

A DC-108 form is available on the block [counselor or unit manager] and in the health services area. IF you experience difficulty getting the form [this is a common complaint], feel free to contact me via email: [egs@elainegilda.com](mailto:egs@elainegilda.com) OR via snail-mail: P.O.Box 4654, Phila PA 19127.

Elaine G. Selan, RN, MSN

**“Knowledge is Power, ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!”**

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DC-108  
Revised 12/07

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION**  
(THE EMPLOYEE/INMATE SHALL COMPLETE, CHECK, AND INITIAL ALL BOXES THAT APPLY)

Name (print)	Inmate/Employee #	Date of Birth	Inmate Social Security #
Medical/Dental Records <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health Records <input type="checkbox"/>	Drug & Alcohol Treatment Records <input type="checkbox"/>	HIV Information <input type="checkbox"/>
			Records (General) <input type="checkbox"/>

I, the undersigned, hereby give my consent for: (name and address of facility/responder)

**Check any or all boxes**

To release information to: (name and address of requester)

Prison Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prison Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/address of person to receive information: \_\_\_\_\_

Date ending in 6 months, or less: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby authorize the above named source to release or disclose information related to the above referenced records/information to the requester during the period beginning \_\_\_\_\_ and ending \_\_\_\_\_  
The information being requested is: \_\_\_\_\_

**See Below for Examples** Authorization for disclosure is being given for the purpose of:

**Notification of my health condition[s], information about diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, and treatment planning for all known conditions.**

Disclosure of medical/dental information may contain all aspects of my treatment and hospitalization, including psychological and psychiatric information, drug and/or alcohol information, as well as information regarding Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and tests or treatment for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Disclosure for mental health records pertains to treatment, hospitalization, and/or outpatient care provided to me for the period listed above. I understand that my record may contain information regarding all aspects of my treatment and hospitalization, including psychological and psychiatric information, drug and/or alcohol information as well as information regarding Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and tests or treatment for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). *Authorizations for release of mental health records expire in 180 days.*

Disclosure of HIV related information is information about whether the patient has had a test for HIV, an HIV related illness or AIDS. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that may cause or indicate AIDS or HIV infection.

Disclosure of general information is information contained in an inmate's DC-15. Generally, any communications from the inmate to the Department of Corrections and responses thereto, misconducts, and grievances.

In authorizing this disclosure, I explicitly waive any and all rights I may have to the confidential maintenance of these records, including any such rights that exist under local, state, and federal statutory and/or constitutional law, rule or order, including those contained in the Pennsylvania Mental Health Procedures Act, (MHPA) 50 P.S. §7101 et seq., the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Control Act, 71 P.S. §1690.101 et seq. and the Confidentiality of HIV-Related Information Act, 35 P.S. §7601 et seq.

I understand that I have no obligation to permit disclosure of any information from my record and that I may revoke this authorization, except to the extent that action has already been taken, at any time by notifying the Medical Records Director/Technician, Health Care Administrator, or Facility Manager. In any event, this authorization will expire 180 days after the date signed, unless revoked prior to that time.

I understand that these records are the property of the Department of Corrections and that my authorization for their release does not require the Department of Corrections to release these records. It is understood by the above requester that if the requested information's confidentiality is protected by Federal Regulations that bar secondary dissemination or re-disclosure, the providing facility will provide a statement to that effect.

Furthermore, I will indemnify and hold harmless the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, and its employees and agents, for any losses, costs, damages, or expenses incurred because of releasing information in accordance with this authorization.

Employee/Inmate Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

White Copy – Responder                      Yellow Copy – Requester                      Pink Copy - Inmate



## Resident of Shame

by an anonymous incarcerated writer

I'm ashamed--  
I don't know his name  
I'm ashamed--  
It was given to me, but it wasn't retained.  
His face is faint, but his actions are thoroughly etched--  
Something I will never forget.

I had endured five months of solitary confinement at a Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution. I was mentally fatigued and physically drained. Another white prisoner was committed to the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU) for the twenty-three hours per day lockdown. He was placed in a cell across from mine. We made eye contact, but never spoke. In fact, he didn't speak to anyone except the psychologist to whom he told that he was "fine."

Three days passed—only seventy-two hours. It's nothing to a seasoned vet. A guard made his scheduled round. Everything was normal. It's quiet at 9am cause everyone is still sleeping from a late night of obnoxious clamor.

Fifteen minutes pass. The distant sound of keys jingling starts again. It grows louder until it passes by. CHAOS ERUPTS! Officers' radios blare indecipherable squawks. Keys clang. A heavy steel gate ferociously opens. It strikes more steel.

Inside the cell I see a slumped body; its flesh—purple. Immediately, my heart and soul sympathize. The former pauses; the latter prays.

I'm still ashamed...I don't know his name.

## Resident of Powerlessness

by an anonymous incarcerated writer

They are constantly watching. Devoted surveillance: authorities, cameras, and prison informants. Their lenses always following. With precision, they unmercifully focus.

The invasion of privacy penetrates thoughts; spies into souls. Psychoses of paranoia and inferiority develop. Power is forfeited internally—Institutionalization. It is diametric to the claimed purpose of rehabilitation.

False security is accepted as the norm. No one is safe when sanity is stolen.

## Correction by Oppression

by an anonymous incarcerated writer

"Look at this little N!@@\*R right here..." I was in shock. This is the first and only time this derogatory term was ever utilized to label me; namely, because I am white. But I was a resident in the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU)—solitary confinement—at Pennsylvania's most notorious penitentiary—Camp Hill—and the racist correctional officers there can act in any way they desire.

There was a massive riot there in 1989 and ever since then there has never been any checks and balances for the abuses of power there. The correctional staff have free reign to degrade every human that transitions through its classification process.

I remained silent as I absorbed the hateful slur from the mighty officer. If I responded, or fed into the antagonism, I assumed that I would not have been permitted to eat dinner. My tray was served with unnecessary force. I hurriedly stabilized it and readied myself for the bread and fruit air-delivery. I heard a tray hit the ground and splatter next door. I caught my smashed, boot-imprinted bread. I caught the orange too. My neighbor was not so lucky as he was the one that was not ready for his tray; then, while he was trying to salvage his last meal for the long evening, he was pelted with a ball of citrus. His bad luck was better than our other neighbor. The officers were not feeding him for days. He was surviving off of toilet paper, toothpaste and water.

I am traumatized by these memories. There are times when it does not even feel real. Did I really endure this brutality or was it a figment of my imagination? Why was I so cowardly; I did not speak up against our oppressors. I did not share my meal and I am troubled by the thought of whether or not I could have passed an item. I regret not

*(Continued on page 29)*

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even attempting to share.

My oppressors, in the confines of the industry of "corrections," turned me into a man that I never wanted to be. There is nothing correct about being a voiceless victim.

The prison industrial complex has to be monitored with extreme scrutiny so that abuse of power and human degradation from governmental employees are not carried out in America's criminal justice system.

The use of solitary confinement in America's prison system (s) should be abolished as it only exacerbates the symptoms of mental illness, if not causing mental illness in its entirety.

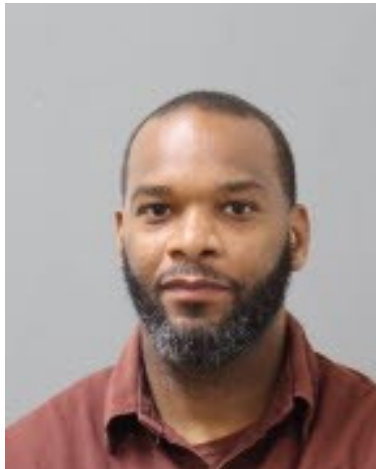
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## Behind the "Fuck you and Fuck that hole"

by Clinton Walker

The moment I spat the words "Fuck you and fuck that hole" some twenty plus years ago is when I realized that solitary confinement, by default, offered more nourishment than being in general prison population could ever offer.

It could not have been but a couple of days since leaving solitary confinement (the hole) when those words exploded from the pit of my gut. The verbal vitriol was a reaction to an overreacting guard who witnessed someone handing me food while leaving an area of prison that's the equivalent of a grocery store in the outside world. At some point a phrase was used by the guard that to this moment causes my heart to race, my swallow to drag and my ligaments to tense from the abuse and trauma it inflicts. The guard screamed that he was giving a "direct order" for me to hand over the food I was given or I would go to the hole. It never escapes me how whenever guards use this directive, it is done at an instant when they feel their power at a decline. And so, a demanding "direct order" is given to reclaim that



Clinton Walker

power and simultaneously declare direct ownership to all autonomy and agency.

"Fuck you and fuck that hole" was my humblest retort at the time. The question is what would make a person recently released from an agonizing crypt of keepers, react in such a way knowing the awaiting torture?

If you're not familiar with solitary confinement, it's a place where isolation serves as shelter for assaults. It's where the pains of hunger and gloomily painted cell walls become seduction for the fetal fixed body to slumber. Solitary confinement is a place where "direct orders" become obsolete and thereon replaced with unchecked retaliation such as speeding meal carts passing your cell door, the constant denial of showers and other hygienic essentials, or a team of tactical garbed prison guards rushing your person.

What is it that would cause a human being to be content with a suffering of that magnitude? Maybe it was a plea for help concealed in reckless behavior, a distress signal while in the midst of crisis. Maybe it was a lack of respect for unworthy authority, or knowing that something was amiss in the environment while struggling to make sense of it.

The bells of truth would ring loudly behind each of those reasons, but it would be a grave mistake to assume my actions came from no place of purpose. The reality behind it is that I never minded the hardships of solitary confinement when the return was growth and evolution. For me, the squeeze was worth the sweet juice.

It's important to understand that people in a war zone of privation will build tolerance and negate any short term harm if the end result is mental and emotional sustainability. Prison by nature is a battle between state power and people power, a battle between the resourced and the deprived, a battle between the criminalized and criminals. It's an arena of neglect where wars are fought between prisoners and prison guards, care and cruelty, torture and humanity, curiosity and convictions, religions and cliques, hunger and inedibility, sex and sexuality.

The adversarial strategies of this industrial complex have the cunning ability to cause dual reactions. It can cause weak rooted beliefs to be spit out like spoiled milk when challenged. It's also where mental sustenance can reinforce upright beliefs through rare moments of compassionate relationships. The unfortunate part is that access to those relationships provides the reason for desperate replies such as "Fuck you and fuck that hole."

It wasn't until I was sent to the hole of a maximum security prison that I got the opportunity to develop those kinds of

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caring relationships. In the interest of my educators, I'm sure they would insist I mention my difficult nature and how I was a walking, breathing migraine that didn't make those relationships any easier to cultivate.

My behavior was the consequence of being a victim of dope dealers' influence with their intent to deceive, to harm, to abuse, to frighten and to scapegoat my body. I vowed to never again be used in a way that would cause harm to myself or others and so, I became cynical of men. The thing is that I wasn't at all unique in my defenses.

These brothers were well aware of the PTSD that someone like myself harbored from broken trust. They had long mastered the skill of breakthrough and knew the relevance of building mutual respect and boundaries. Once established they could begin to challenge the ideas, behaviors, warped habits and cultural practices I held to be true. Deliberate trips to solitary confinement like the one I took after being ordered to hand over food was how I secured a nutrition of care, compassion and companionship through uncensored dialog with abolitionists like Man Riddick, Shabaka and Shakaboona. They, in turn, granted allowed me the wisdom of Maroon Shoatz and Cetewayo, which made it possible for me to drop safeguards with comrades like Saleem Holbrook.

It's through the insight of that ilk that how I came to be inspired by the gospels of many great freedom fighters like Malcolm X who expressed that he was for truth, no matter who tells it. He was for justice, no matter who it is for or against. Those words forged an allegiance with the struggles of migrant, Native, LGBTQ+ communities, Muslim communities and others who are oppressed, marginalized and devalued.

The fact is that when transformation is reached, it naturally becomes less about the individuals who are transformed and more about that which still needs to be transformed but lacks the support to do so. The conversion is a process of moving out of trauma that can be a constant light shining upon a person's face. The tragic light is blinding to the eyes initially but if one is able to see it from the other view, that blinding light illuminates. It's able to reveal other forms of interconnected violence and injustices that were unintended yet no less harmful. It shows how justice is accountability and accountability without action is no justice at all but merely an overvalued degree of guilt. I shudder at the thought of never learning these transformational lessons.

It's shameful that in a department where "Corrections" is a part of its moniker, a person's growth is predicated on their tolerance of injury. No one should have to endure

such dehumanization just to reap the reward of rehumanizing while precious resources are wasted on cruel and antiquated programs that have never spoken the people's language, therefore can never get to the root of the people's issues.

It's time for the DOC to recognize that in the case of rehabilitation, they have not enemies but allies in the people they deem expendable. It's time for honest investment in effective resources that encourage healing of our wounded communities. If it wasn't for the caring individuals whom I was fortunate to stumble across and later rigorously sought out, I would have never reached the degree of mental health I enjoy today. What they taught was transformative justice coded in an uncustomary formula. They taught self worth that encouraged the hard work of healing oneself and their community.

It would be to the great benefit of society when the day comes that whenever there is a flexing of authority by a prison guard, a prisoner's response would mask no hidden agendas. It would disguise no underlying therapeutic pursuit that welcomes solitary confinement, and only the pure intent of unadulterated disrespect would be behind a fervid "Fuck you and fuck that hole". This would allow an authentic path to redemption centered on the compassionate interest of incarcerated individuals.

Clinton Walker #EC4925 (SCI-Rockview)

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SOLITARY TALK! Is dedicated to the voices of prisoners who are either in solitary confinement, or who experienced it. Your stories of triumph and tragedy need to be heard and shared with those who don't know the real impact of this archaic, medieval practice.



This column is curated by Val Kieballa.

*Call for submissions:* if you would like to be considered for publication in the next issue's Solitary Talk! column, please send an essay between 500 and 1,200 words discussing how solitary confinement is used as a political tool. We are especially looking for essays that weave in firsthand experiences and please feel free to be creative with your writing.

You can send submissions to:

Human Rights Coalition  
Attn: Solitary Talk!  
PO Box 34580  
Philadelphia, PA 19101

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# Love Knows No Bars

## "My Special Wishes For You This Christmas"

Many blessings, love, and encouragement to our inside family members and friends. Never give up on us at CADBI, HRC, and other organizations, because we will never give up on you. The new year brings ..... new ideas for the fight.



Happy New Year  
AND Happy Birthday!

### January

Daniel Smith 1-1 (Benner)  
Amber Meidinger 1-12 (Muncy)  
Devon Stots 1-26 (Benner)

### February

Terrell Cater 2-4 (Phoenix)  
Stacey Newkirk 2-20 (Muncy)

### March

Rebecca Olenchock 3-12 (Muncy)  
Andre Vancliff 3-26 (Huntingdon)  
Kieth Campbell 3-28 (Houtzdale)

### April

Jamal Ball 4-1 (Forest)  
Randall Chumley 4-10 (Huntingdon)  
Aaron Rabold 4-23 (Waymart)

### May

Gary Bates 5/17 (Phoenix)  
Sid Berger 5/23 (Cambridge Springs)

### June

Frank Metzger 6-12 (Phoenix)  
Belated Birthday to Yvonne Cloud 12/31 (Muncy)

P.S. You are always in our thoughts and on our minds. If you have a friend and or loved one willing to fight...they are more than welcome to join HRC or CADBI (It's FREE). All are welcome, just look us up! From **Yvonne Newkirk**



Naturally, I hope Santa's good to you this Christmas. But I have some other wishes for you too, that can't be wrapped up in pretty package and tied with a matching bow. I wish you love in your life, hope in your heart, faith in your dreams, and encouragement enough to do whatever would make you happy, keep you healthy and assure you the prosperity you deserve. I wish you joy. I wish you peace. I wish you blessings in your life. I wish you

Phillip Ocampo answers to questions, resolve to change something that you want to change and the awareness and ability to accept something that perhaps you haven't been able to change. I wish you satisfaction in your work and all the other things that would make your day-to-day life more balanced, content and rewarding. I wish you happiness in your family, unconditional love for each other, and the understanding. I wish you the capacity and knowledge to embrace the gift of love that dwells in your heart and that is replenished when given away.

Everyone is unique and different. I hope you can appreciate your own uniqueness and realize that you're an angel in disguise to some and a member of a family with whom you have significance and importance beyond description.

Special people help us to change our lives, make us feel good about ourselves, and therefore enhance our potential to realize our dreams. They give us sense of community and belonging. They make us feel appreciated and accepted and move us toward our own emotional security, keeping our hopes alive and giving us the strength to continue to fight in our struggles.

If whatever you're wishing for this Christmas is not covered in these special wishes from my heart to yours, I wish you your heart's desire because you're a blessing to many. Count me as one of them. May God bless you and keep you this special season. "MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR"



~ Peace, Love & Blessings,

Phil •aka• Photo

# Love Knows No Bars

**I've been in prison 30 years** now, on a life sentence. The only way I've made it is with God and my children.

I have three daughters, one daughter-in-law and seven grandchildren. Where I went when I went to prison in 1992 my girls were Babe 16, Tisha 13, and Kim 12. So losing me at their age, they suffered a lot of childhood trauma; but, they always stuck by me.

I never have to worry about a visit. I talk to them everyday, twice a day. My grandchildren and I are very close because my girls made sure they know me. I always get pictures, but I also know their hurt and pain. I missed the birth of my grandchildren, the graduation of my girls, my daughter's wedding, and the girls medical and hospital stays. My oldest baby had COVID and was very sick. Babe and Kim suffer medical conditions. Tisha suffers from mental health illness and addiction.



L-R: Daughters Kim, Andrea, and Babe with bag.



Top L-R: Kim & Andrea  
Bottom L-R: Sylvia & Grandaughter, Faith

My case, I was charged with conspiracy. I have two male co-defendants. The police said I ordered the hit, which was a lie. I'd been drinking so it took me a long time to remember what really happened. I didn't kill anyone, nor did I order it. The guy, my co-defendants, who did the shooting filed an appeal and his life sentence was

vacated in 1998. I now have computation and I'm waiting for a merit review.

Thank God I have people who are helping me and I appreciate them so much. They are Dr. Jill and Meagan from Villanova University. My heart is not good and I am 63 years old now. I pray God grant my computation.

Sylvia Boykin , OC-3555, SCI-Muncy

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## Rest In Peace Sister Alice

Hello. My name is Paulette Carrington. I was one of the juveniles that was set free from Death by Incarceration. I was just told a couple of days ago that one of my comrades passed away which was Miss Alice Green, 91 years old.


She's now going to glory. No more pain. No more imprisonment. No more Death by Incarceration. She's free.

I had a lot of time with her. I enjoyed her. We used to laugh. One of the things she really loved was to eat; and so do I. She loved good food, as good as she could get under the circumstances. She was a wonderful soul. Bless her and her family. May she rest in peace. God Bless you Sister Alice. We love you and we're glad you're free from that bondage.

Paulette Carrington


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*A Celebration of Victory Through  
Jesus Christ*



*Alice Baker-Rhynne-Green  
Sunrise 8-31-1930 Sunset 12-24-2021*

*January 10, 2022*





**I stand on the shoulders of our heroes and roar!!**



**Families & Community Speak Out!**

## **Human Rights Coalition,**

I would like to open up this letter by saying this is the best magazine of the 21st Century. I applaud the men who designed a formal passage /portal to the incarcerated and the free world to the informed about the corruption of today's Justice System.

I am currently serving a 50-month sentence at FCI Sandstone, Minnesota. I was charged with felon in the possession of a firearm and, ironically, I'm being housed now for the second time Federally with my biological father. My name is Reginald Romello Walton and I am a 27-year-old African American. My father's name is Reginald Anthony Walton and he is serving a 15 year sentence for a drug conspiracy, in which he is falsely imprisoned. My father and I eventually want to publish our own manuscript about the laws and policies of the Federal System. The majority of our black men are left in the blind about the system on both state and federal levels.

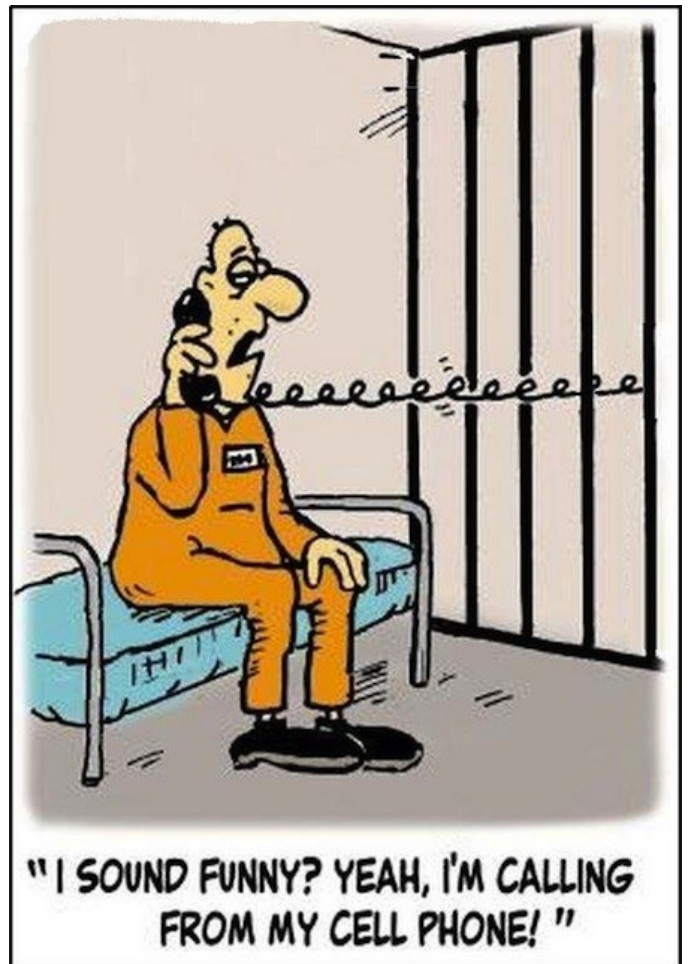
I am now a father of two and can no longer afford to be absent again in the lives of my beautiful children. I salute my brother Sergio Highland and the time he has spent to help put together a powerful source of guidance for the aware and the unaware.

Someone shared THE MOVEMENT, Issue #44 and I won't let it go. This was a gift from not only the Human Rights Coalition but from God!

Reginald Romello Walton,

Reginald R. Walton # 19469-026  
FCI SANDSTONE  
FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION  
P.O. BOX 1000  
SANDSTONE, MN 55072

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# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

## Legislative Trip to SCI Forest

by Rob Pezzeca

On Nov. 23, 2021, Sen. Amanda Cappelletti traveled to SCI Forest at my request. Amanda has become a friend & supporter and was eager to come. Accompanying her were her Legislative Director JT Gillen, Newly Licensed Attorney Danielle Phillips (Congratulations Dani), My friend & State Rep Rick Krajewski, Attorney & Prison Society Rep Anton Andrew, Ladies of CADBI Yvonne Newkirk & Ms. Martha Williams, my friend & mentor Yusef Jones, and my brother, Juvenile Lifer Jamar "Marbles" Sowell. Also in attendance were Diana Woodside Director of the DOC legislative liaisons office and the new regional deputy secretary for the central region, Robert Marsh. I hosted this event and I chose the men I thought would be best qualified to speak to the lawmakers. They are Lifers: Sidney Martin, Vincent Harp, Walter Cowfer, Anthony "Manny Strong" Harrell & Anthony "Tone" Brown. Representing NON Lifers was my reentry expert, Rob Dickey. I opened and closed the event out. I had a 15 min. speech written but I severely edited it so that other lifers would have more time to speak. This was an opportunity that most of them have never had before so they took full advantage of it and did a tremendous job.

All lifers spoke on different topics of criminal justice reform. I focused on mercy and compassion for rehabilitated lifers. I also spoke about our horrible mail system, the overpriced tablet system, and how we prisoners are in dire need of better-skilled and better-paying jobs. Manny Strong focused on the PCRA and current laws, Tone Brown spoke on elderly lifers, and Vincent Harp focused on the commutation process and system. Walter Cowfer focused on second chances and trauma in prison. Sidney Martin spoke on the lifers bills, laws, and even threw a few jokes in there which made everyone laugh. Rob Dickey spoke on reentry services and the parole system.

The event was scheduled for 3 hours but we always run into hiccups. Our prisons administration was very receptive to this, our own Superintendent Derek Oberlander (Husband of State Rep Donna Oberlander, House Republican WHIP) sat at the table with the lawmakers & guests alongside RDS Robert Marsh. I publicly called on Sen. Cappelletti to spearhead a legislative trip to SCI Muncy to meet the lady lifers. Amanda immediately said YES! My friend Heather Lavelle is the President of the lifers and the ladies deserve their time to shine. Lady lifers should reach out to Sen. Cappelletti in her Harrisburg office address. She does read her mail. I know her personally & she will

come. Amanda is very concerned about adequate healthcare & we all know the ladies do not get it! So please ladies, send her your letters, send your stories. She needs to hear them!

No one knew Jamar was a former lifer and he is also a brand-new father. Jamar has a baby boy I nicknamed lil Mar Mar (or Jamar Jr.). We all spoke from the heart & we did our best. I will be honest, I was disappointed with the turn out. I had high hopes but we couldn't get a good date. Two days before Thanksgiving...it was tough but I was very happy with it. I asked Amanda to tour the RHU and speak to the men. She did. She had two former prisoners there to answer her questions so now that she has seen the RHU, HRC should pick her brain on this experience.

But even though it wasn't as big as I would have liked, I put this together in a few weeks from a prison cell with my tablet. Imagine what I could do if I were allowed internet We have an uphill battle but nothing's impossible. Lifers, we are an army! We have 5,000+ strong men & women. We must band together. I personally met with Republican lawmakers on zoom in 2021 and some of them DO support second chances for rehabilitated lifers. It's far from over, but we have an army of people who love us on the outside. They fight for us. What I put together here, lifers in EVERY prison can do. But we must focus on the Republicans. Straight Ahead has laser focus on this issue.

I thank everyone in society who sheds their blood, sweat & tears fighting for lifers. I have a reason to live and fight. One day I will be home with my Kathleen. I will continue to remain a soldier loyal to our cause and a voice for the voiceless. I wish to thank my friend Amy McAndrews for support and inspiration. There is power in numbers. In the end, Unity = Freedom. All lifers need to work together to end this nightmare we all live. I am not done bringing lawmakers into prisons, we all need to fight. Thank you Mama Patt for all that you do for us, to HRC, Thank you. We WILL win this war. Love & Respect

Rob Pezzeca #DX1148 (SCI Forest)  
[robertpezzeca@gmail.com](mailto:robertpezzeca@gmail.com)

Addresses for Amanda Cappelletti:  
Senate Box 203017  
Harrisburg, Pa 17120

District office 221  
W. Main Street  
Norrstown, PA 19401

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**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

## “Don’t Forget We’re People:” Grassroots Coalition Urgently Calls on City to Release Loved Ones from Philadelphia Jails

by Val Kiebala

This year, the Christmas season was tainted with blood on the hands of the Philadelphia Department of Prisons (PDP). By the time of this article, 18 people had died in Philadelphia jails since the beginning of the year. Four of them died in the prior two weeks.

[According to the Philadelphia Inquirer](#), of the four men, 62-year-old Jerome Lyles, 52-year-old Bartholomew Gottshalk, and 42-year-old Angel Torres-Rosado were all facing nonviolent charges when they died at the jail. Another incarcerated man died at the hospital on Christmas Eve. The causes of death have not yet been released.

tering wind, nearly 40 people gathered in front of a mock solitary confinement cell to call on city leaders—specifically Mayor Jim Kenney, District Attorney Larry Krasner, and the First Judicial District leadership—to bring people home to their families.

JT, an organizer with the Abolitionist Law Center who spent 13 years in solitary confinement out of his 37 years in prison, emceed the event alongside Reuben Jones, the executive director of Frontline Dads who also spent 15 years in prison. “This is unacceptable in the City of Philadelphia,” JT proclaimed. “It’s getting ready to be Christmas time. But you have those brothers and sisters in [the jail] suffering. Can’t even make a phone call home to say Merry Christmas to their children.”

The #No215Jails Coalition, which includes the ACLU PA, Frontline Dads, Human Rights Coalition, Philadelphia Bail Fund, Philadelphia Community Bail Fund, and the Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project, [released their list of demands](#) for the city:



The Abolitionist Law Center’s John Thompson addresses the crowd outside City Hall.

Before word of the deaths had reached the community, the #No215Jails Coalition organized a rally and press conference at the Octavius Catto statue outside of City Hall in downtown Philadelphia. Despite the biting cold and blis-

1. End the use of cash bail
2. Immediate review hearings for every person in detention
3. Immediate release of every person serving a county sentence
4. Lift all detainers for people held on violations of probation and electronic monitoring
5. Remove all youth from the Philadelphia jails, bringing the city in compliance with federal Juvenile Justice Delinquency & Prevention Act (JJDP A)
6. Priority access to the COVID-19 vaccine for all those incarcerated
7. For people currently incarcerated:

*(Continued on page 36)*

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

(Continued from page 35)

- a. Opportunity to participate in beneficial programming
- b. End solitary confinement
- c. Unlimited free phone calls, video visits, regular visits, and mail supplies
- d. Unlimited access to cleaning supplies and PPE

2021 resulted in the city making a one-time payment of \$125,000 to the Philadelphia Bail Fund and the Philadelphia Community Bail Fund.

U.S. District Court Senior Judge Berle M. Schiller, who issued the consent orders, [set a deadline of January 22, 2022](#) for the jail to return to “pre-pandemic procedures,” including eight hours of out-of-cell time per day and re-



My Le is a youth organizer and healing futures facilitator with YASP who spent time in the jail.

- e. Timely access to necessary healthcare
- f. Eliminate mold, mildew, pests, and all hazardous conditions in the jails
- g. Unlimited access to counsel
- h. Unlimited out-of-cell time each day

In April 2020, a group of legal centers filed a federal civil rights class action lawsuit [Remick v. City of Philadelphia](#) on behalf of all incarcerated people in Philadelphia county jails. The lawsuit claims that the remarkably dire conditions in the jails violate the 8th Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment, the right to due process under the 14th Amendment, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. After the city failed to comply with the judge’s consent order mandating the PDP to provide adequate hygienic and sanitary measures as well as at least three hours of out-of-cell time per day, an unprecedented settlement in June

storing programs and visits.

Yet, the conditions remain dangerous, torturous, and fatal in the jails, as evidenced by the wave of recent deaths. The consent order sets the bar low, focusing on the severity of the conditions amid the coronavirus, while the jails have long bred a violent culture and deprived its residents of basic human rights.

Several women spoke up at the press conference. Adrian Perry, a Philadelphia Bail Fund organizing leader who spent time in the jail, described her experience as a lesbian woman forced to endure humiliating strip searches from other women, despite expressing that this violated her rights. She spoke about the constant denial of basic items, like pads and soap. “Don’t forget we’re people,” she said.

(Continued on page 37)

(Continued from page 36)

“And you are not only [affecting] the people who are behind the bars but you are affecting their families. So you are not just incarcerating one, you’re incarcerating a whole family.”

[Lucian Martin](#), another organizing leader with the Philadelphia Bail Fund, served four months in the county jail and asserted that the jail—as it operates now—inflames the public safety crisis in our communities. “The treatment that is going on in there is not conducive to positive [transformation],” he said. “I go in and I come right back out. I am your neighbor. I shop at the same stores you shop at. I eat at the same food stores you eat at. My kids probably go to school...with your kids...So it is imperative



Protest attendees were invited to sit in a replica of a solitary cell to gain some understanding of the reality of such conditions.

that we all know that the treatment that is happening is not making us better human beings when we come out. And you don’t want us to be angry. You don’t want us to



Over 40 protestors gathered outside the Octavius Catto statue outside of City Hall to demand that city officials release people from county jails.

commit crimes. So to combat that, it needs to start inside of the jail.”

In jails with freezing temperatures, extended lockdowns, raw sewage flowing through the block, brutal violence, broken cell locks, few functioning emergency buttons, rat and mice infestations, and [deprivation of showers for over 40 days](#)—the 4,600 people incarcerated in the jails not only do not receive any assistance to positively transform their lives, but face the threat of death, torture, insanity, and abuse on a daily basis.



A group of youth organizers with YASP (as well as Sarah Morris—the co-director of YASP—on the left) standing in front of the mock solitary cell.

“War has been declared upon our incarcerated men and women of Philadelphia,” Martin proclaimed. “As their friends and family, we are their only hope for survival. Their last reinforcements! So, every battle we fight must be fought with ferocious cohesiveness.”

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# What's The News!

## 13 Philly cops were pulled from street duty because of questions about their roles in gun arrests, officials say

*The department declined to identify the officers, the cases, or the nature of the internal review, other to say they involved "discrepancies" flagged after an audit of gun arrests.*

Dec 6, 2021

By Chris Palmer

Originally published in The Inquirer

Thirteen Philadelphia Police officers have been removed from street duty amid questions about their roles in gun arrests, officials said Monday.

The department declined to identify the officers, the cases, or detail the nature of

cases. Sgt. Eric Gripp, a department spokesperson, said its Internal Affairs bureau launched the audit in March to evaluate the quality of cases.

District Attorney Larry Krasner said he believed that in some of the arrests under review, video from an officer's body-worn camera appeared to conflict with the account they reported in police paperwork.

It was not immediately clear if any of the officers would be disciplined — Gripp acknowledged only that some cases require "further investigation." And Krasner declined to say if his office expected to file criminal charges against any of them.

But the decision to simultaneously pull multiple officers from the street is a relatively rarity for the department, which employs about 6,000 officers. Two years ago, 72 officers were placed on desk duty following a scandal over racist or offensive Facebook posts — the largest such action in modern memory. The majority ultimately kept their jobs.

city; commanders have frequently highlighted the record pace of such arrests as proof of their commitment to fighting crime. Philadelphia Police have arrested more than 1,900 people for illegal gun possession this year, according to a website maintained by the District Attorney's Office — by far the highest year-to-date total since at least 2015.

Gripp, the police spokesperson, would not say how many total cases were flagged. And he declined to say if any of the 13 officers who were benched were associated with more than one problematic case.

He also declined to discuss possible discipline because he said the investigation remains ongoing. He said it was possible that Internal Affairs could refer some cases to the District Attorney's Office for potential prosecution.

John McNesby, president of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 5, the officers' union, said the department had not told the union what the discrepancies were or how the investigation might play out. He believed the officers who'd been benched were demoralized and felt as if their dangerous street work was being unfairly second-guessed by people sitting behind a desk.

"They're not too happy, and hopefully these things can work themselves out in a quick manner," McNesby said.

Anthony Erace, executive director of the Police Advisory Commission, a watchdog group, said the agency earlier this year forwarded some complaints it had received from civilians who claimed police had inappropriately seized their firearms. Erace didn't know if those complaints were among the cases that Internal Affairs reviewed.

"We didn't get an overwhelming number, but it was enough to notice that it might be an issue," he said. "I'm glad the police department did this proactive work. It's a good sign."

Krasner also applauded Commissioner  
*(Continued on page 39)*



The Philadelphia Police Department's headquarters, known as "the Roundhouse," at Seventh and Race Streets in Center City. APRIL SAUL/Staff Photographer

the internal review, other than to say it involved "discrepancies" flagged after an audit this year of about 325 arrests in gun

Gun arrests have been a relative point of pride for the department during an otherwise-dismal year for violence across the

# What's The News!

(Continued from page 38)

Danielle Outlaw for initiating the audit, saying it shows “that she cares about integrity.” And he said the use of tools such as body-worn cameras — instead of relying largely on someone’s testimony — could help the system become more fair and accurate.

“Body-worn cameras are going to prove to be one of the more important checks on the criminal justice system and what happens in a courtroom,” he said.

Staff writer David Gambacorta contributed to this article.



Chris Palmer

I cover criminal justice and law enforcement in Philly, focusing on how it's evolving and impacting communities during a moment of reform.

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## Bipartisan bill aims to allow Pa. lifers a chance at parole

‘We are stronger communities with our elders and grandparents home,’ an advocate argued

Nov 15, 2021

By Ryan Deto

Originally published in Pennsylvania Capital-Star

In Pennsylvania, those convicted of life sentences will die in prison. Incarcerated individuals with life sentences have no opportunity for a parole hearing in the commonwealth. According to the state Department of Corrections, [Pennsylvania has the largest number](#) of incarcerated individuals currently serving life sentences as juveniles: about 500 people.

Last Friday, advocates, formerly incarcer-

ated individuals, and a bipartisan group of state lawmakers held a rally in Downtown Pittsburgh to advocate to alter those Pennsylvania requirements.

The group — which includes criminal justice advocates at groups like Straight Ahead, the Abolitionist Law Center, 1Hood Media, and the Alliance for Police Accountability — are calling for the passage of legislation ([SB835](#)) sponsored by state Sen. Sharif Street, D-Philadelphia, which would provide a path to parole eligibility for certain incarcerated individuals over 55 years old and those with chronic or terminal health conditions.

An individual who is at least 55 years of age who has served 25 years in prison or one half of the minimum term, whichever comes first, of their term would be parole eligible, if Street’s bill, which is [now before the Senate Judiciary Committee](#), becomes law. Parole eligibility does not guarantee release, it just means that incarcerated individuals have a chance to have their case heard by a parole board, which people with life sentences are not allowed to do currently.

“We are stronger communities with our elders and grandparents home,” Robert Saleem Holbrook, the executive director of [Straight Ahead](#), which works to end death by incarceration, said in a statement. “This is about public safety: we know that people over 55 have the lowest recidivism rates, and chances of re-offending decline with age. No one is guaranteed release under this bill. The people we see coming home are elders, mentors and leaders working to keep others on the right path.”

While the bill would provide some path to lifers in Pennsylvania’s prison system, another goal of the change is to help the state’s Department of Corrections deal with outbreaks of infectious diseases, like COVID-19, that can harm and even kill incarcerated individuals with underlying health conditions.

In a [January memo seeking co-sponsors for his bill](#), Street cited the high COVID case rates in state prisons, and the dozens of deaths that have occurred as a reason to

allow older individuals and those with health conditions to become eligible for parole. The vast majority of COVID deaths among incarcerated people were 50 years of age or older.

Street’s bill has garnered bipartisan support. State Sen. Camera Bartolotta, R-Washington, and Democratic Pittsburgh state Reps. Sara Innamorato and Summer Lee attended the rally.

At the rally, Bartolotta, a co-sponsor of the bill, called for its passage, not only because she believes it is compassionate, but also for fiscal reasons. She said the Department of Corrections has estimated the cost for personal care is nearly \$500 per day per person, and that most individuals under personal care are incapacitated and not threatening to society at all.

“Pennsylvania’s compassionate release program doesn’t work,” Bartolotta said. “By requiring someone to be both non ambulatory and have a terminal condition before being eligible for release, we have made this almost impossible to apply for. Not only is this current system not compassionate, it is extremely expensive.”

Innamorato noted that America is an outlier among nations in how much it incarcerates individuals for life, and that Pennsylvania is even worse than U.S. average. She said that needs to change.

“The United States is an outlier internationally for continuing to permit a system that permits death by incarceration,” Innamorato said. “Pennsylvania itself is an outlier in the United States with the second highest population of people serving death by incarceration. Let’s pass this bill and show Pennsylvania is ready to move away from a cruel and archaic system and move towards our shared values of compassion and redemption.”

Those convicted of first or second degree murder in Pennsylvania are given automatic life sentences, including juveniles. Thanks to a Supreme Court case, juveniles are eligible to apply for re sentencing, but the process is very cumbersome. Adults in Pennsylvania cannot. Second degree mur-

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der can mean a perpetrator was only present at the scene, and didn't complete the act of killing.

A well-known case of a young person sentenced to life out of Pittsburgh is [Avis Lee](#).

Lee served as the lookout for her brother and another man who were planning to rob someone outside of the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, an upscale gym in Oakland. Lee didn't anticipate that anyone would be hurt, but a scuffle between the robbers and the victim led to one of the robbers fatally shooting the victim. Lee was eventually convicted with second degree murder in 1981 for the event.

[Gov. Tom Wolf commuted Lee's sentence in February](#), but she still served over 40 years in prison. She also spoke at the rally in Downtown Pittsburgh.

"I am one of the women who was sentenced to die in [Pennsylvania]. I served 40 years, 6 months and 12 days before my sentence was commuted to life with parole," Lee said. "I met 2,000 people over my decades incarcerated. Many of whom I jogged around and played volleyball with and those same people later pushed them around the track in wheelchairs. Two of them died of breast cancer without compassionate release. This bill is so important for them to get the same opportunity for freedom I was given."

If Lee's sentence wasn't commuted, she would have had no opportunity to be released with commutation, which is extremely rare. For example, those who have been convicted, but claim innocence, such as [Pittsburgher William Daniels](#), usually struggle to get people to hear their cases. And usually having high profile support is necessary in receiving commutations.

Daniels, convicted of first degree murder in 1998, has served 23 years of his life sentence. He maintains his innocence to this day.

If Street's bill were to pass, Daniels would become eligible for, but not guaranteed, a parole hearing in 2023. He would be about 53 years old that year.

The state's geriatric prison population has quadrupled over the last 25 years and more than ten thousand incarcerated people in Pennsylvania are considered geriatric.

These high numbers are caused by an aging prison population, not higher crime rates among seniors.

"Freeing our elders and medically vulnerable people is one of the moral imperatives of our generation," community organizer Jennifer Black said in a statement. "We will either fulfill our mission, or betray it."

**Ryan Deto is a reporter for Pittsburgh City Paper, [where this story first appeared](#).**

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## Differing treatment of police and Delco teens shows culture of racial discrimination | Opinion

*After the death of 8-year-old Fanta Bility, the Delco DA is charging two teenagers with first-degree murder, while the cops who actually killed the child are out on paid leave.*

Nov. 15, 2021

By Bret Grote, Rupalee Rashatwar, and Nia Holston, For The Inquirer

Originally published in The Inquirer

Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer announced that he plans to charge two Black teenagers with first-degree murder for the killing of 8-year-old Fanta Bility, even though police shot her. Fanta was leaving a football game with her family in late August when she was killed.

According to Stollsteimer's own statement, neither of the boys is alleged to have shot Fanta; both were down the block from her at the time she was shot. The DA has stated that, with "near certainty," officers

shot Fanta. They fired 21 shots that struck four people, ultimately taking the life of Fanta — a daughter, sister, schoolmate, and friend.

But Stollsteimer has not charged police officers with anything in Fanta's death. Instead, he has leveled first-degree murder charges at the two teenagers who are alleged to have shot at each other down the street from where Fanta was killed, charges potentially carrying a life without parole sentence. This decision is a textbook illustration of how racial discrimination functions in the criminal punishment system: as a means to punish the powerless and protect the powerful.

How could Stollsteimer charge two teenagers with first-degree murder, and plan to transfer them to an adult jail without bail, while the cops who actually killed Fanta are out on paid leave? And what does their arrest mean for the grand jury that Stollsteimer plans to convene on Nov. 18, when jury members will decide whether to indict any of the officers in Fanta's murder?

Answering these questions requires an explanation of what a grand jury is, and why prosecutors use them when police kill, but not when charging Black and brown people.

In cases involving police, who prosecutors work with every day, grand juries are often used to put on a show behind closed doors, ultimately absolving the police of any wrongdoing. No defense attorney is present. The district attorney interprets the law without opposing counsel there to counteract their statements, and the general public may never be made aware of the witnesses' testimony. Convening a grand jury is part of the playbook for excusing police violence — indeed, we've seen it when prosecutors attempted to indict police officers in the murders of Mike Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, and Breonna Taylor.

Stollsteimer is not required to call a grand jury for the police. Doing so is a choice he made, and it allows the police the benefit

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**THE MOVEMENT**

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



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A relative holds up a cell phone with a photo of Fanta Bility. JESSICA GRIFFIN/Staff Photographer

of having community members decide whether they should be arrested and go through the legal process.

He could have made the same choice for the two teens in this case, showing them the same amount of carefulness he uses to indict police. Not doing so was also a choice.

By charging these two Black teens, Stollsteimer is likely seeking a scapegoat so he can stretch the legal theory of transferred intent to its breaking point.

In order to secure a first-degree murder conviction, the prosecution must employ the legal theory of “transferred intent”: the idea that when these two young men fired their guns, any intent to kill each other was “transferred” to the actual murder victim, Fanta.

To put it simply, the transferred intent doctrine normally applies in a criminal case when person A attempts to kill person B but accidentally kills person C. It does not apply in a case where person A (allegedly) attempts to kill person B, and then person C (who just happens to be a police officer) kills person D by discharging their weapon without knowing who

they were shooting at or why.

The prosecution will have to argue that the police killing of Fanta was a foreseeable and reasonable consequence that can be blamed on the actions of the two young boys.

Has Stollsteimer explained to the family of Fanta Bility what his charging decision means? That the two teens charged with murder can only be held liable if the police reaction — wildly firing into an uninvolved vehicle — was foreseeable and reasonable?

This is why we know the grand jury is unlikely to find these officers accountable. The DA is presenting evidence to this grand jury, and any finding that the police are to blame would undermine the charges against the teen boys. Stollsteimer’s scapegoat prosecution requires a legal conclusion that the police officers’ response was reasonable and therefore legally justified.

In making this charging decision, the DA is telling the community that it is reasonable for their police officers to shoot blindly into a crowd of Black children and families when there is a vague threat in the

area.

Stollsteimer’s decision to charge the teenagers with Fanta’s murder, and the likely non-prosecution of the cops, shows a contempt for Black life that should disqualify those responsible from holding public office. We owe it to Fanta and all victims of state violence to speak out against this travesty and call for real accountability.

Bret Grote is the legal director at the Abolitionist Law Center. Rupalee Rashatwar and Nia Holston are staff attorneys at the Abolitionist Law Center.

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## Seven Philly police dispatchers, one clerk charged with fleecing pandemic unemployment program

*The workers, all employed at the time they filed for benefits claiming they had lost their jobs because of the pandemic, stole a combined \$73,000 in benefits, prosecutors say.*

Nov 23, 2021

By Jeremy Roebuck

Originally published in The Inquirer

Federal authorities have accused seven Philadelphia police dispatchers and one department clerk of filing fraudulent emergency pandemic unemployment claims that netted them a combined \$88,000 in benefits before they were caught.

The dispatchers, all employed at the time they filed for benefits claiming they had lost their jobs, face charges of mail fraud and theft of public money outlined in separate indictments unsealed Monday.

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Their scheme, according to investigators, began as early as May 2020 and ended in some cases as late as August of this year.

During that period, they were receiving base salaries from their public positions that ranged from roughly \$35,000 to \$47,000 a year, according to city payroll records.

Those charged include Korey Kinard, 29; Shannon Reynolds, 25; Najah Harrell, 32; Yarelis Feliciano, 28; Monica Pelzer, 45; and Keeley Maude, 23 — all of Philadelphia — as well as Tashika White, 50, of Cheltenham. Prosecutors identified the clerk as Paulette Johnson, 55, of Philadelphia.

All turned themselves in and were released after an initial hearing in federal court Tuesday. Each could face prison time if convicted.

It was not immediately clear from court records whether any of those charged had retained attorneys.

“Thieves who attempt to take these funds are taking advantage of others’ misfortune — ripping them off while also ripping off all taxpayers who fund the program,” U.S. Attorney Jennifer Arbritter Williams said in a statement Tuesday. “As alleged, these eight defendants fraudulently obtained funds that could have helped struggling individuals.”

Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw announced she will suspend the eight employees for 30 days with the intent to dismiss.

“The Office of the Inspector General has been working with the FBI and [U.S. Attorney’s Office] on these prosecutions,” Kevin Lessard, the city’s director of communications, said. “The OIG and the City at-large are staunchly committed to holding accountable — whether through criminal, civil or administrative channels — any employee who engaged in this type of conduct.”

Since last year, millions of Pennsylvania residents have lost work because of coronavirus shutdown orders and the extended

economic impacts of the pandemic, forcing many to rely upon the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program until it ended in September.

The program offered broader benefits to self-employed people and others left out of traditional unemployment, providing hundreds of dollars a week in income.

But from the beginning, the program has been hard hit by fraudsters who took advantage of the chaos, and relaxed rules, including the ability, initially, for claimants to self-certify their eligibility without supporting documents.

Federal prosecutors across Pennsylvania have indicted at least 90 people with defrauding the program in recent months and the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office has charged an additional 48.

Several inmates in the Chester County prison are among those facing charges. All were incarcerated through the period in which they had claimed to be unemployed.

Nationally, the inspector general for the U.S. Department of Labor has estimated that at least \$87.3 billion in fraudulent and improper payments have been issued.

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## Man freed from prison 37 years after witness lied and took police bribe of drugs and sex

By Paulina Villegas

January 4, 2022 | Reprint from Washington Post

**CORRECTION** - An earlier version of this report misidentified Larry Krasner's office. He is the Philadelphia district attorney, not the Pennsylvania district attorney. This story has been corrected.

A Philadelphia man walked out of prison on Monday, 37 years after he was con-

victed of murdering a woman, an accusation he has vehemently denied, and after a federal court found prosecutors suppressed evidence of false testimony given by a key witness, the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office said.

Willie Stokes’s release comes after the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania vacated his murder conviction last week, concluding that the state violated Stokes’s constitutional rights by “withholding” crucial evidence about the false testimony of a key witness in the case, according to court documents.

The court ordered Stokes to be retried within 120 days or released, and the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office acknowledged that the suppressed evidence crumbled the legal basis of the prosecution and “fatally undermined confidence” in Stokes’s conviction.

Stokes is expected to appear in court Jan. 27, when the district attorney’s office will probably inform its final decision to dismiss the matter or retry him, his lawyer Michael Diamondstein said in an interview Monday.

“He took his first free breaths this afternoon after almost 40 years, and he is very happy and humbled,” Diamondstein said, and added that Stokes’s first wish after being released was to go “get a corned beef hoagie.”

On Monday, Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner acknowledged that Stokes’s “remarkable” case was part of police and prosecutorial malpractices that were pervasive “during the so-called tough-on-crime 1980s and 1990s, and unfortunately persist in far too many jurisdictions today,” he said in a news release.

“Prosecutors have an obligation to seek justice, and to redefine prosecutorial success — not by ‘wins’ in the form of convictions, but by accuracy and fairness in resolving criminal investigations and prosecutions,” the statement added.

Krasner noted that Stokes’s legal ordeal of nearly four decades — during which he filed numerous relief petitions and appeals

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to overturn his conviction, only to be rejected on procedural basis — underscored “the urgency of the criminal legal system seeking justice over finality.”

It was not until late November that the U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania agreed to hold a hearing. After reviewing the evidence, Judge Carol Sandra Moore Wells concluded that for 37 years prosecutors did not disclose to Stokes and his defense lawyers that Franklin Lee, the key witness who had accused him of murder, admitted that his testimony was a lie and that he had been convicted of perjury for it, and therefore Stokes was entitled to relief.

In 1984, Lee was in prison facing murder and rape charges when he was approached by two homicide detectives who offered him “sex, drugs, and a deal,” in exchange for framing Stokes, according to his testimony in November.

“They said I wouldn’t do no more than two to five, the most seven years,” he said.

Lee added that to help persuade him to testify against Stokes, the detectives allowed his girlfriend to meet with him in private at police headquarters. Another time, he said, the detectives provided condoms and a sex worker, he said.

The two detectives, Lawrence Gerrard and Ernest Gilbert, have faced allegations of using similar “coercive methods” to obtain false testimonies from witnesses in other cases, court documents show.

According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, the allegations first emerged more than 30 years ago, when a federal judge overturned the conviction of Arthur Lester, who said Gilbert and Gerrard used those tactics to coerce his confession. At least five other men are still in prison on convictions tainted by similar claims, the local newspaper reported.

During Stokes’s preliminary hearing in 1984, Lee claimed that Stokes was at his “house drinking, smoking, gambling,” and

that in his basement, he admitted to killing Leslie Campbell in North Philadelphia, according to court documents.

There was no other evidence linking Stokes directly to the crime. A second surviving victim of the shooting attack testified that Stokes was not the shooter. Only one eyewitness said he saw Stokes at the scene holding a gun — but not shooting.

But during Stokes’s murder trial, Lee surprisingly recanted his testimony — which prosecutors argued was not credible given his own criminal history.

Nevertheless, on Aug. 21, 1984, a jury convicted Stokes of first-degree murder and possession of an instrument of crime and sentenced him to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Soon after, they also charged Lee for perjury for his false hearing testimony. But that information was never disclosed to Stokes — who could have used it for his defense and appeals litigation.

It took decades for Stokes to discover that the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office had prosecuted Lee for falsely accusing him.

During the November hearing, Lee, 62, testified that his initial statement given to police and at the preliminary hearing implicating Stokes in Campbell’s murder was false.

“Mr. Lee, did Willie Stokes ever tell you that he killed Leslie Campbell?” Diamondstein, Stokes’s attorney, asked Lee at the November hearing.

“No,” he answered.

“Did Willie Stokes ever tell you he committed any murder?” the lawyer asked.

“No,” he replied.

After his testimony, Lee apologized to Stokes — who had been listening via teleconference from the State Correctional Institution in Chester.

“And I’d like to for the record, if I can, apologize to Mr. Stokes and the family for the problem I caused, sincerely,” he said.

Stokes’s lawyer advised him not to respond.

“Let the record reflect he’s crying,” Moore, the district court judge, pointed out. “I’m going to take his tears to indicate he’s accepting the apology.”

After the hearing, Moore recommended that Stokes’s conviction be overturned, finding “reasonable probability” that Stokes would have been acquitted without Lee’s testimony and concluded that the trial’s verdict was “therefore unreliable.”

“What happened here was an abomination,” Diamondstein said. “For too many years, law enforcement in Philadelphia have treated Black and Brown people like they are expendable and this case is a stark reminder it has to stop,” he added.

Stokes was released from the State Correctional Institution Monday afternoon.



Willie Stokes walks from a state prison in Chester, Pa., on Tuesday after his 1984 murder conviction was overturned because of perjured witness testimony.

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## Dear friends and family,

I am writing this letter to show gratitude to all those who supported my vision and allowed me to share my work. Because of you, I continue to succeed and share my voice inspiring others to speak their mind and address the issues they deal with day-to-day acknowledging their physical abuse, hate, harassment, torture, and psychological abuse. They suffer depression and other emotions that they deal with like suicide, self-harm, and doing drugs, or drinking alcohol.

I would like to acknowledge that people like you who support inmates and advocate against hate, discrimination, abuse, torture, and the death penalty give those like me behind bars hope, strength, encouragement, inspiration, power, comfort, and a voice to express their pain through pen and paper. You give them an outlook on others' pain and suffering, letting them know they are not alone. To those who supply grants and donations to inmates by supplying newsletters, magazines, books, etc., you allow those who don't have support on the outside some inspiration and peace of mind.

Now, as a transgender, I love sharing my experiences with my community and those who want to learn more and make a difference. As I'm writing this letter, I'm preparing to make parole and make something out of my life by helping spread the word about the abuse behind bars. Whether you're homosexual, straight, transgender, or mentally ill, you are subjected to abuse, unless you live by the Department of Corrections—aka Department of Corruption—code of ethics by snitching on inmates and lying on inmates. I am not one to beat around the bush about what is happening behind bars. The same abuse that cops are committing—killing Black people—the DOC is doing the same thing and judges, district attorneys, and others are allowing them to continue to do so by filing new charges against inmates on the lies of correctional guards and staff. I'm keeping it 100% real, no lies.

I fight for myself and others because of the injustice that me and my people have received behind bars like sexual harassment, sexual assaults, negligence, hate, torture, and so much more. Today, inmates have lost the strength to fight because the lies that the DOC comes up with like filing false misconducts when complaints are made against staff burning them for trays when they get into an altercation with staff. The DOC uses excessive force with the OC spray. which is more harmful than pepper spray. And they

murder people and lie about it, which is sad because some people just sit back and watch and say that they deserve what they got—or because they don't like the person, they don't speak up or they're afraid they might face consequences for helping the individual out.

I believe organizations who fight for inmates speaks values and I believe that inmates like myself going home should show up at meetings, giving their testimony about what they've been through or witnessed because no one can fight for us better than us, who live in the abuse, hate, and neglect day to day.

As a witness who has been through storms, trials, and pain at the hands of the Department of Corruption, I am here to say that I made it and will continue to fight the fight for liberation and abolition because it represents freedom and we all should want freedom or strive to get freedom and justice. We should all want to end this abuse of solitary confinement—like Restricted Release—and other things like the death penalty, life behind bars, or life without parole, and everything else that we and society suffer from. Families are traveling far for a few hours just to be harassed, abused, and victimized by correctional staff through strip searches.

In close, through these eight and a half years that I've been locked up, I thank you for lending your help and ears, letting me write the experiences I've been through or witnessed firsthand while I've been behind these prison walls.

Again, thank you.

Mrs. Juicy Queen Bee

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## One Nation Under God

Double concertina wire  
In rows of three  
Stacked four high  
Between two electrified fences  
Also topped with razor wire.

My Celly got four years  
For stealing thirty dollar's  
Worth of cologne.

God Forbid he escape.

An armory  
And shooting range  
sit atop the Hill.

My neighbor got ten years  
For a fistfight  
With his neighbor.

God have mercy On His Soul.

Batons and Shock Shields  
Grade seven OC spray  
Pepper spray, pellet guns.

A guy in the kitchen  
Got a life sentence  
For an accident.

God Forgive him.

A K-9 kennel full  
Of German Shepherds  
And snipers in the towers.

Mumia Abu Jamal  
Was sentenced to die  
For a crime he didn't commit.

God's only begotten Son  
Isn't the only one  
He's Forsaken.

Robert McCracken #LG8344 (SCI-Frackville)

## "Hey Society! Hear Me Out For A Second...."

By Hector Huertas

Congrats to the Abolitionist Law Center, especially Director Robert "Saleem" Holbrook, and all those who helped bring Russell "Maroon" Shoatz and Arthur "Cetewayo" Johnson home. Hopefully more are on their way.



Hector Huertas

My name is Hector 'Pica' Huertas, I am a juvenile lifer. I have been incarcerated for 24-years. My life leading up to the crimes I was convicted for was that of a lost empty 17-year old. I was born and raised in the dark hollow streets of North Philly, an area commonly referred to as the Badlands. A glimpse into the circumstances that molded the child I had been will reveal that I was the product of poor role models and some cold rough streets in the 1990's. When I came to prison in 1997, it was tough as a teenager around older convicts who took advantage of the weak. So I got into a lot of trouble because I wasn't going for it, plus I loved to fight. I ended up doing 12 straight years in the hole (SOLITARY CONFINEMENT), locked to a cell 23-hours a day.

Today, I earned my GED, earned my Paralegal degree, and have completed dozens of programs and certification courses. I worked as a Peer Assistant teaching Violence Prevention Curriculums that help guys recognize their red flags and prevent them from re-offending. I am also a mentor to several ex-offenders who achieved higher education and decent jobs. I am a Certified Treatment Specialist and look forward to helping people struggling with addiction when I return to society. Upon resentencing I was sentenced to 30-years to life and hope to be home when my minimum rolls around.

As you see I was the product of many poor examples. I committed crimes and hurt many people as a child in ways that I can't take back. However, I have accepted responsibility for my crimes, my actions, and behavior. I have educated myself, matured, helped a lot of people, and managed to get my life together. In my 24 years in prison I met many lifers, many old heads who feel terrible about the crimes they committed. They have bettered themselves, and although still in prison, they live responsible lives well-deserving of a second chance. These individuals will no doubt serve a better purpose or better example to the lost

*(Continued on page 46)*

younger generation than rotting away in prison waiting to die. I was able to turn my life around and I am constantly working with young guys and I will continue to help the younger generation to come once I am released due to the second chance I was given. This is an example that people do change just like many others sitting behind the wall who have achieved tremendous accomplishment, yet don't have a second chance to right their wrongs. These old timers, many who I have encountered, deserve at the minimum a review of their life, their growth and development in front of a parole board to determine if these individuals can return to society and be productive citizens.

As you see with Maroon and Cetewayo, a change gonna come. But we must continue to fight the good fight. Reach out to your legislators, state senators and get involved with these organizations fighting, struggling, to get Senate Bill 135 passed, and/or laws enacted that will level the field for those who deserve a chance can be reviewed and considered for release. We're living in a moment where the window of opportunity is open. It won't be long before that window shuts again and we don't see another opportunity like we're seeing today to get home for another few decades. So raise your voice and be heard so we can get more well deserving brothers home.

In struggle, In solidarity,

Hector 'Pica' Huertas #DZ5597 (SCI-Pine Grove)

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## In Case We Forgot

By Tyreem Rivers

IN CASE WE FORGOT!--- Prison is oftentimes a very petty place. Within such a place dwells a great existence of mediocrity! If not careful, one can easily become a part of the smallness in exchange for the bigger picture.

While in such a state, sanity suddenly is traded off for it's opposite, and goals of freedom become forgotten in exchange for pure relaxation in a world of small commissary snacks. Only the senseless become comfortable while the mindful stay diligent in working toward regain-



Tyreem Rivers

ing their freedom, and in the assistance of aiding the liberation of others ("WHO LIKE THEMSELVES") GENUINELY DESERVE A SECOND CHANCE "CONSIDERATION" TO BE FREE!?

Only the daily activities of the real world (beyond prison) remain infinite with respect to new all (communities) to benefit from in comparison to the countless mediocrities that are shackled, and hand cuffed to the daily modern day slave activities of prison life..... So please ask yourself,,, "What am I really doing to get free, and how would my loved ones really look at me if they honestly "knew" that I WASN'T REALLY TRYING TO COME HOME, OR STAY HOME, AND FAR AWAY FROM ANY AND EVERYTHING THAT COULD POTENTIALLY BRING ME BACK TO PRISON"?!

Or are you simply of those systematically developed content slaves (see 13th Amendment) who honestly love the involuntary servitude of low prison wages, strip searches, and the brutal forms of physical & mental punishment that we legally receive from some prison administrators 24/7/365? For surely, "Only the insane find comfort within insanity, and not even a dog finds comfort in a cage"! So as a reminder, LET US ALL STRIVE HARDER TO WANT BETTER, DO BETTER, AND MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE... BE BETTER AT NEVER LOSING SIGHT OF THE MUCH BIGGER, & BRIGHTER PICTURE THAT COVERS FAR BEYOND THESE COLD PRISON WALLS OF MEDIOCRITY!

Tyreem Rivers #DK2865 (SCI-Dallas)

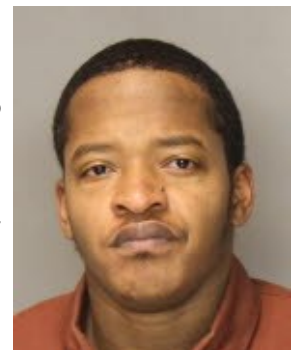
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## Dear Movement,

By Kendall Hudson

I was doing some serious thinking. We need to really reform medical conditions in the prison setting. We are being subjected to the bottom of the barrel treatment. If you take sick you would have to be on your deathbed to receive some type of proper treatment but that would still be at a bare minimum.

The DOC takes us in their care, custody, and control, which leaves them with the responsibil-



Kendall Hudson

(Continued on page 47)

ity of our medical and mental health needs, which they don't care about. I don't trust these people with my health needs. It's time to propose a bill regarding health care in the prison setting.

DOC can work out contracts with health care providers where they can take care of a percentage of healthcare costs and we take care of the rest affording us the right to purchase health insurance and be able to receive the same medical treatment we would if you were on the streets. They control their own medical department where they can make their own money within their entity. Right now this is a lot more serious than money and the DOC don't see it that way. We need to find a way to bring in real outside medical support and staffing because people are losing their lives that don't have to if it was proper medical care received in the facilities.

Being as though it's a prison setting the average inmate is not going to be able to afford health insurance so that bill can consist of payment plans where the DOC can take a percentage of all money coming in 10%. I would say \$1,500 should be the cost for the insurance and the DOC would cover the rest of the cost if any and they would receive any of the excess fees that insurance don't cover. In circumstances like that the DOC should receive federal funding to take care of any emergency needs.

I understand this is a whole different ball game when it comes to medical care in the DOC setting but the only way these environments is gonna become safer and more humane is if we receive proper and adequate medical and mental health treatment. It's time to start revising a bill on this topic. Bring it to light and get it out there. Our lives depend on it.

In Solidarity,

Kendall Hudson #HZ2808 (SCI-Frackville)

PS. Give me your input on this and let me know the right congressmen to take this issue to. Thank you so kindly in advance.

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## Still moving ahead!

by Brandon Moody

Regarding the solitary fight, I know you all have been working relentlessly and we appreciate it. I personally will never take it for granted and hope to ensure your efforts are not in vain. I'm not sure if appealing to the republican

lawmakers through a sympathy campaign affects them at all because everything to them is about the bottom dollar. Maybe it's best to tap into their constituents and lobbyists and convey how much taxpayer money is being wasted by having these trumped-up units and security statuses that cost more to house someone in than regular units. Plus the added physical and mental health risks from the effects of solitary increase the costs of the care needed to treat them during and upon release from solitary.

As for the alleged Democratic supporters, especially those on the oversight committees, maybe we can tap into them to hold DOC officials accountable to at least uphold the bare minimum standards they adopted in response to that DOJ investigation and DRNP settlement because things have seriously digressed. The overall conditions have reverted back to causing a destabilized environment and the more seriously mentally vulnerable of us are being penalized with harsher conditions in contravention of the settlement agreement. The progress that was made years ago is slowly eroding.

Please be mindful that although I'm currently on this unit I'm technically not required to be. Though per policy I have a condition that qualifies me to be classified to be on the unit, which the psychiatrist here attempted to have assigned to me, it was denied at central office. I'm repeatedly reminded that I'm on borrowed time, so relaying this puts me at risk of retaliation that I hope you all will help mitigate. The only difference being on this unit vs the regular RHU is that I have the opportunity to be out of the cell more hours. The avg of 3hrs Mon-Fri. & 2hrs per day on the weekends. This is better than what I experienced years ago. Nonetheless, the conditions are relatively the same and the process to gain access to these outside activities are strenuous because we are subjected to completely naked full body cavity searches every time we exit the cell, occurring at least 3 times daily. Though I have my tablet now, I had to serve 8 months idly in the cell before having access to it.

But those who are more unstable around me basically have no in-cell stimulation and have been deteriorating rapidly. Policy recommends that they have access to commissary, phone calls, tablets or a TV whether they're on DC or AC status to keep them stable, yet most are deprived of these amenities and are then being penalized with harsher conditions because they can't cope. This causes a hostile environment that results in the prisoners triggering one another's further destabilization. One prisoner in particular, Darryl Lyons, MM4417 has been repeatedly having suicidal ideations, going back and forth to the POC in the past few weeks, and now is sitting in a cell on this unit with no mattress, linen or property; and currently isn't eating (past 3 days). Dep. Sec. Marsh came through yesterday, ob-

*(Continued on page 48)*

served this & did nothing, so outside contacts are needed.

Brandon Moody #HQ9088 (SCI-Rockview)

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## Transfer to SCI Conducive to Needs and Programming

Dear Deputy Secretary's Complex Pennsylvania Department of Corrections,

Earlier this month of October 2021, or perhaps late September 2021, you conducted a tour of SCI-PINE GROVE in which we briefly spoke about the so-called "EMERGING ADULT" program and classification of this facility (in the presence of Supt. Estock and his Deputies Chism and Cree), and I had openly criticized and ridiculed the program, requesting a transfer to an SCI that is conducive to my needs and programming.

DOC records will show that I have been incarcerated for 37 -years or since September 24, 1984. Overall, I have been incarcerated since November 23, 1981 or for nearly 40-years. With that in mind, let's briefly look at the DC-ADM, 11.1.1, POPULATION MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE MANUAL at C. 1. (i. e. PERMANENT TRANSFER), which provides in part:

e. An inmate shall be assigned to a facility according to:

- (1) custody level;
- (2) PROGRAM NEEDS;
- (3) program codes;
- (4) separations;
- (5) psychological/medical needs;
- (6) behavior in the DOC;
- (7) death penalty detainee;
- (8) bed space availability; and
- (9) HOME REGION (West, Central, East).

DOC records will show also, that in July 2020, SCI-DALLAS initiated an administrative "PERMANENT" transfer, to separate me from staff (i. e. Collen McCoy, who alleged in misconduct I assaulted her). For some odd reason, the CDCC and MDCC of the OFFICE of POPULATION MANAGEMENT ("OPM") and/or the Chief Deputy Secretary/Regional Deputy Secretary (i. e. Ferguson and Wingard) approved me for transfer and permanent placement in SCI-PINE GROVE. Which is still classified as an "EMERGING ADULT" program/facility for the needs of

Juvenile/Youth Offenders (specifically between the ages of 18 to 25). Thus, there is absolutely no viable or meaningful programming available at SCI-PINE GROVE conducive to programming needs, for an inmate of my status and age. Which raises legitimate questions about the reasoning for my permanent placement at SCI-PINE GROVE, if it's not retaliatory? Also, August 2020, I was 59-years old (which makes a geriatric inmate). Moreover, I am (1) stability code A; (2) Z-Code; H-Code; and Y-Code. Therefore, if my transfer to SCI-PINE GROVE was not for retaliatory reasons, then why...was I transferred here?!

Furthermore, I am now 60-years old, after being at SCI-PINE GROVE for over a year. I have learned that my presence here is disruptive to the "EMERGING ADULT" programming here. Because (1) I am an "active member" of the NOI (classified as an FOI by the DOC, as well): (2) I fundamentally disagree with inmates between the ages 18 to 25 being subjected to programming designed for Juveniles/Youth Offenders ages 17 and under; and (3) Supt. Estock has made it very clear to me, that he "vehemently" disapproves of my objections to the treatment of inmates here, and efforts to undermine the "EMERGING ADULT" program. For Supt. Estock sincerely believes (I assume), that inmates between the ages 18 to 25 should be treated like Juveniles, and subjected to programming designed for inmates ages 17 and under. Consequently, Supt. Estock will not allow inmates of SCI-PINE GROVE access to programming commensurate with their age and legal adult classification status (including myself and similarly situated) equivalent to the programming, etc., provided to the thousands of adult inmates in SCI-Facilities throughout the DOC.

Lastly, Supt. Estock doesn't think too kindly about inmates serving life sentences (especially those lifers like myself, who openly disagree with his "EMERGING ADULT" program), and have made it abundantly clear, that there is no plans to accommodate or facilitate the programming needs of lifers (regardless of age) here at SCI-PINE GROVE, thus necessitating my transfer to an SCI where "LIFERS" needs and programming are being met and accommodated; to prepare them for either parole or commutation.

Sir, I thank you for your time, patience and earnest consideration of my concerns; and alacrity in addressing them.

Sincerely,

BRAY JIBRIL MURRAY #CG8958 (SCI- PINE GROVE)

*(Continued on page 49)*



(Continued from page 48)

CC: Acting Secretary George M. Little

[NOTE: KNUCKLE -VS- PRASSE, 302 F. Supp. 1036 (1969) "American Correctional Association, the Wardens and Correctional Administrators passed a unanimous resolution that "the Black Muslim Movement" and follows of Elijah Muhammad in a penal correctional setting was very definitely dangerous to the orderly operation of institutions"]. Bro. Jibril is an exceptional Pro Se Litigator [See, BRAY X. MURRAY -VS- TERRA, 1995 U. S. Dist. Lexis 21661 (1995)]. 27-years ago, Bro. Jibril challenged American Legislative Exchange Council members such as former Governor Tom Ridge as well as Secretary Martin Horn for unconstitutional policies. For example, the new policy, described in the Department of Corrections' Bulletin 819-1, provides that only outside religious leaders may conduct prison religious services, and these outside coordinators must be chosen by prison administrators. [See, AL SAMAD -VS- HORN, 913 F. Supp. 373 (1995)]. Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Security Units have a history of falsely designating prisoners as Muslim combatants with no evidence just to receive grants from the United States Department of Justice. Bro Jibril been fighting these negative stereotypes for over four decades in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

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## “Recognition, Understanding, and Transformation”

I was reading the Fall 2021 Issue #45 of The Movement, and I came across an article authored by Our Sister Sarita, titled, “What If.”

My immediate thought was about how Our African People endured; The African Diaspora, Chattel Slavery, Black Codes, Segregation, Social Discrimination, Imprisonment, Redlining, Gerrymandering, Gentrification, Physical, Judicial, and policing lynchings, and Economic Oppression (with its many forms).

After all these attempts to destroy Black People, we are still surviving. We have been stripped from Our indigent land, stripped from Our Language and History, and repeatedly denied Our basic human rights, which have now become an inveterate american tenet, established by her forefathers, and afforded no time to heal.

Moving forward, we must first understand that Our Black Women are the most important element in the Universe,

and when I hear Our Queens speak, I listen. Once Our brothers understand the importance of Our Women, and how Our freedom, and livelihood is directly connected to them, we can then move forward Collectively, and [then] build structured communities, fight together for Our liberty, and create a new reality, that benefits Us, and Our children.

This country has the largest prison population in the world, and Blacks, who are only 13% of the U.S. population, are 30% of the arrested, 35% of the imprisoned, (nearly half of them on death row), and nearly 60% serving life sentences. These numbers clearly display the fact that white supremacy is prevalent. It is abundantly obvious that the current model isn't working for Us. It's time to defund Our ignorance, and invest in Our Women, as well as Ourselves, which will create a transformed reality for Us, Our Communities, Our Children.

We have been under attack for centuries, if we aren't being lynched by their police, or their judicial system, we are lynching Ourselves, by way of: gun violence, physical abuse, or becoming a victim of Our Own ignorance, or indolence. We are a Beautiful Great People, who have been forcefully displaced, but we still have Our innovation, We still have Our ability, (to cogitate), We still have Our Existence, We still have Our Women, We still have Our Men, We still have Each Other.

In order to debilitate and subsequently destroy this hegemonic ideology that this nation has adopted, and one that is fueled by Black Oppression, We need to recognize the immeasurable value of Our Black Women, and understand exactly what true self-love is. Egalitarianism is Our goal, but we must free Ourselves mentally, in order to free Ourselves physically.

William Yem Case #DX9137 (SCI-Coal Township)

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## The Movement Magazine,

I pray this brief correspondence finds you all well. Peace to all of you in the struggle for Freedom, Justice and Equality and the upliftment of Humanity and the freeing of the elderly. I am writing to humbly ask to be put on your mailing list. Just read the latest edition of the “Movement” and I was just blown away. I will most definitely be forwarding a donation as I could not envision a

(Continued on page 50)

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

(Continued from page 49)

more worthy investment. Thank you all for uplifting my spirits especially during this time where I actually lost my brother to Covid-19 on November 1, 2021. This is the honest to God truth. I was feeling a bit down as I have been dealing with it internally and someone unknowing this gave me the latest magazine and asked me to read it. As I love to read, I did so and my spirit was just lifted, it really was. Facts/ coincidence? I don't know. What I do know is I was cognizant of my attitude and just smiled inwardly. When you been down as long as I, (37 years) you take what you get if you are able to recognize the signs. So I thank you all for each word written in your publication. Again, thank you.

Your Brother in Arms,

“Basil”

Timothy Wright #AY5811 (SCI Somerset)

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## Appreciation

I don't even know where to begin with my expression of gratitude for The Movement. With each publication I continue to grow, to learn and flourish. For me The Movement Magazine is so much more than a prison publication, it is a training tool, an instructional manual for blind eyes to be opened. This publication exposes the iniquities of our environments and shows no inhibitions in fighting against the injustices behind these gates. I know for a fact this is by far no easy feat to accomplish under these controlled conditions.

The impressive articulacy of the writers makes me rethink my whole existence as if I have just been awoken within a Matrix. First Sergio Hyland took off running as the editor for The Movement. Brother your auspicious spirit for change speaks volumes as you lead with courage. I also would like to send humongous repetitive congratulations to our brothers at SCI Chester on opening up the first Senior Life Center. Praise God, what an amazing conquest for these gentlemen. I loved the way the author expressed himself and I quote **THOUGH WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FORCE A CHANGE IN LAW RIGHT AWAY, THE SLEPC IS PROVING THAT WE CAN WORK TO CHANGE THE CONDITIONS ON THE INSIDE.** How encouraging this is. It makes many of us (woman incarcerated) think about the much-needed change inside of the facilities in which we are incarcerated.

Shamefully I must admit I never really gave much attention to politics nor did I understand the importance of voting, especially the black vote, as a child I would always hear older adults discuss how our votes (the black vote) didn't matter. I realize now that this is a lie engrained into people of color as an attempt to keep control over poor and disenfranchised communities.

Although the struggle is far from over. I see a strength coming out of our communities like never before as Derrick "Buck" Davis hit home in his article Knowledge is Power and let's not forget such an unprecedented victory for our brother Joel Caxton an inmate at a D.C jail who was elected for public office.

I could go on and on about the enlightenment The Movement brings into the lives of people incarcerated and beyond these gates THANK YOU. You all have given me so much to think about in my role and servant hood for change.

Much love and respect

Sarita Miller

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

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# The Babylon System -

**Bab.y.lon** - noun, Etymology: Babylon, ancient city of Babylonia, 14th century, a city devoted to materialism and sensual pleasure, many liken Babylon to the United States, see Revelations 17-18.

*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.*

## Show me the money: Tracking the companies that have a lock on sending funds to incarcerated people

*We looked at all fifty state departments of corrections to figure out which companies hold the contracts to provide money-transfer services and what the fees are to use these services.*

Nov 9, 2021

By Stephen Raher and Tiana Herring

Originally published by Prison Policy Initiative

As people in prison are increasingly expected to pay for everyday costs (food, hygiene items, correspondence, etc.), the mechanics of how people send money to incarcerated people assumes heightened importance. Family members used to mail a money order to a PO box, and a day or two later, the money would be in the recipient's trust account. In those days, the most common complaint from family members and incarcerated recipients used to be about delays in processing money orders. Quick to use consumer

psychology to turn a buck, a whole industry arose to provide faster--but vastly more expensive--electronic money transfers to incarcerated people.

This "correctional banking" industry includes specialized services like release cards, but at its core the industry makes money off the simple (but highly lucrative) business of facilitating transfers from friends and family members to incarcerated recipients. The industry relentlessly crows about the speed of electronic transfers, while conveniently glossing over the high fees that typically accompany these services. To get a better sense of the landscape, we looked at all fifty state departments of corrections and tried to figure out which companies (if any) hold the contract(s) to provide money-transfer services for each prison system. When possible, we tried to figure out what the fees are to use these services.

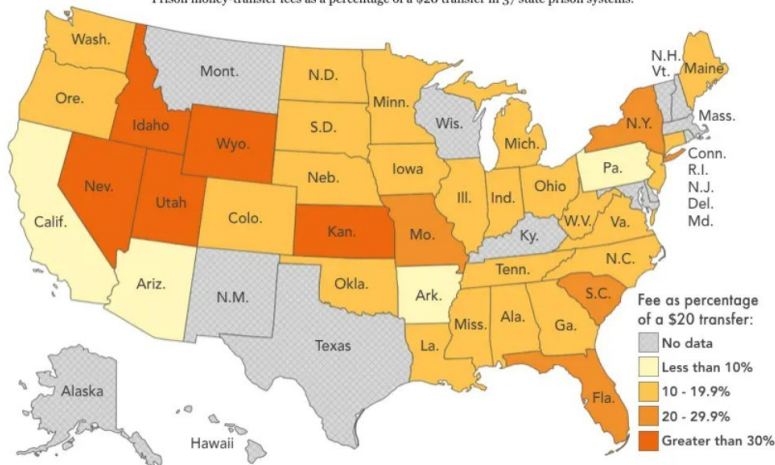
In a new report published today, called Show Me the Money, we provide the results of our review, identify notable trends in this realm, and highlight steps families of people who are incarcerated, regulators, procurement officials, and companies can take to make money transfers more convenient, affordable, and easy to understand. See the full version of this report for tables with state-by-state data, footnotes, and more analysis of the payment options in California.

Agency with link to policy	Money-Transfer Vendor(s)	Type of Vendor & Status of Competition	Mailed Payments Allowed?	Fee(s) for a \$20 online transfer	Fee(s) as percentage of amount transferred	Fee(s) for a \$50 online transfer	Fee(s) as percentage of amount transferred
<a href="#">Alabama Department of Corrections</a>	Access Corrections	Monopoly	Yes	\$2.95	15%	\$5.95	12%
<a href="#">Alaska Department of Corrections</a>	None--DOC accepts mailed payments only	N/A - handled in-house	Required (no online option)	N/A		N/A	
<a href="#">Arizona Department of Corrections Rehabilitation &amp; Reentry</a>	Securus (JPay), GTL, Keefe	Multiple options	No	\$0.95 (Keefe)/ \$0.95 (JPay)/ \$1.00 (GTL)	5% (all options)	\$5.95 (Keefe)/ \$5.95 (JPay)/ \$4.95 (GTL)	12% (Keefe)/ 12% (JPay)/ 10% (GTL)
<a href="#">Arkansas Department of Corrections</a>	In-house solution powered by Information Network of Arkansas ( <a href="https://ina.arkansas.gov/">https://ina.arkansas.gov/</a> ); Access Corrections	Multiple options (including in-house)	Yes	\$2.00 (in-house)/ \$1.75 (Access Corr)	10% (in-house)/ 9% (Access)	\$3.00 (in-house)/ \$2.75 (Access Corr)	6% (both)
↑ Show all states ↓							
<a href="#">Wyoming Department of Corrections</a>	Access Corrections	Monopoly	Unclear	\$5.95	30%	\$5.95	12%

Table 1: Shows the results of a survey of all fifty state departments of corrections. The table shows which companies (if any) hold the contract(s) to provide money-transfer services for the system. Each agency name links to its policy.

### Fees for prison money transfers are unreasonably high

Prison money-transfer fees as a percentage of a \$20 transfer in 37 state prison systems.



Data collected by Prison Policy Initiative from departments of corrections and vendor websites where rates are available.

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

A few smaller companies also appeared in our survey: a company called JailATM holds a couple of contracts (JailATM is also a minor player in the electronic messaging industry); commissary operator Keefe Group is one of three companies serving the Arizona prison system; and, a company called Cashless Systems, Inc., (a closely-held corporation operated out of a residence in Raleigh, North Carolina and doing business as Premier Services) holds the contract for Mississippi prisons.

### There's a little bit of competition

Most prisons pick one company that receives a monopoly on money-transfer services, but at least eleven states (22%) allow people to choose from two or more different companies. Prisons like to give monopoly contracts for things like phone service or operating the

commissary. Administrators often cite security concerns as a justification for using only one company as a contractor. But this doesn't seem to be the case when it comes to money transfers, even though a brief review of corrections department webpages reveals that prison officials have plenty of security concerns about money transfers. It's telling that when it comes to facilitating the flow of money into prison, many corrections departments are suddenly open to competition.

### It's unclear how much competition actually benefits consumers

We took a closer look at fees in states that offered more than one option, and found that those states had slightly lower money-transfer fees. For example, the 11 states with multiple options had an average fee of 16% for a \$20

### Notable trends

#### Fees for prison money transfers are really high

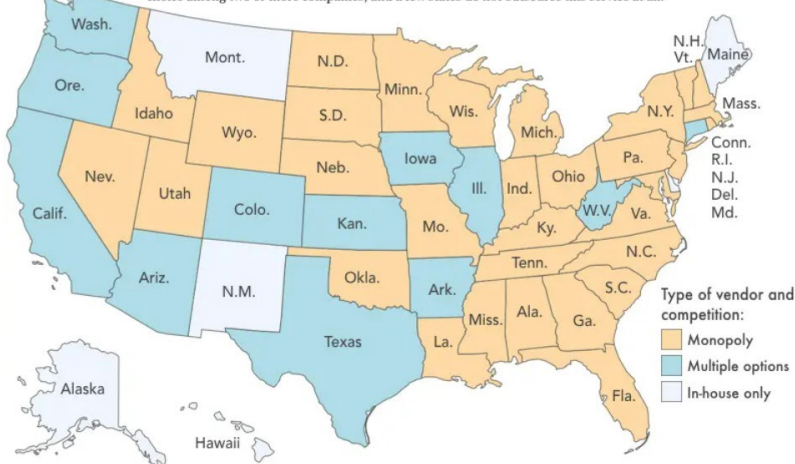
We live in an age of financial technology (known as "fintech"), where people are accustomed to digitally sending or receiving money from friends and family at little or no cost. A service like Venmo allows no-fee personal transfers from bank accounts or debit cards (payments from a credit card are subject to a 3% fee). Other companies providing similar services charge roughly equivalent fees. We looked at 33 state prison systems where fee information was available. We found rates ranging from 5% to 37% for online transfers. The average fee is 19% for a \$20 online transfer, with a slight decline for higher-dollar transfers (the average fee for a \$50 transfer is 12%). Fees for phone or in-person payments (options more likely to appeal to low-income people without a bank account) were generally higher than for online payments. There is no reasonable explanation why prison money transfers are so much more expensive than regular "free world" services like Venmo.

#### Three companies dominate the market

Three companies dominate the correctional money-transfer market, at least where prisons are concerned (it's likely that there are smaller "fringe" players that provide this type of service to jails). The three dominant companies are JPay (a Securus subsidiary that was recently fined \$6 million for improper practices in its release-card business), Global\*Tel Link (which sometimes uses the tradename "Touchpay"), and Access Corrections.

### Most people in prison have only one option for money transfers

Most prisons pick one company that receives a monopoly on money-transfer services, some states offer a choice among two or more companies, and a few states do not outsource this service at all.



Data collected by Prison Policy Initiative from departments of corrections and vendor websites.

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

State with link to policy	Money-Transfer Vendor(s)	Competition	Lowest available fee (\$20 deposit)	Fee as percentage of amount transferred	Lowest available fee (\$50 deposit)	Fee as percentage of amount transferred
<a href="#">Alabama</a>	Access Corrections	Monopoly	\$2.95	15%	\$5.95	12%
<a href="#">Arizona</a>	Securus (JPay), GTL, Keefe	Competitive	\$0.95	5%	\$4.95	10%
<a href="#">Arkansas</a>	In-house solution powered by Information Network of Arkansas ( <a href="https://ina.arkansas.gov/">https://ina.arkansas.gov/</a> ); Access Corrections	Competitive	\$1.75	9%	\$2.75	6%
<a href="#">California</a>	Securus (JPay), GTL, Access Corrections	Competitive	\$1.95	10%	\$5.95	12%
↑ Show all states ↓						
<a href="#">Wyoming</a>	Access Corrections	Monopoly	\$5.95	30%	\$5.95	12%

Table 2: Shows the lowest available online money-transfer fees in states that offered more than one option. When states had multiple vendors, we show the vendor with the lowest fee for \$20 and \$50 transfers. Each state name links to its policy.

(Continued from page 52)

transfer, as opposed to an average of 20% in 26 states that issued monopoly contracts. But this only tells a part of the story. In the states with more than one option, it can be extremely complicated for a consumer to figure out what the lowest-cost option is.

### Prisons don't have to outsource

Most prison systems appear to have outsourced money transfers, but there are still some that handle these transactions in-house. Several states still process money-order payments sent through the mail. We also identified four states (Arkansas, Maine, Montana, and Texas) that accept online payments through a general-purpose state-operated online payment platform.

Interestingly, Arkansas recently added Access Corrections as an alternative to the state-operated payment platform. Access Corrections' fees in Arkansas are 25¢ less than the fees for the state-operated system, and are by far the lowest fees we have seen Access Corrections charge in any prison system—thus suggesting that companies set rates based on what other options are available, and they can provide low-cost transfers when they're forced to.

### Mailed payments are still an option in many states

The vast majority of states (around 45) still allow people to mail a money order at no fee. Some states direct people to mail those money orders to the department of corrections' accounting office; other states outsource the processing to vendors like JPay and Access Corrections. But, just because there's no fee, doesn't mean there's no cost—between the cost of the money order itself, and a stamp, the sender will probably pay around \$2, but that's lower than most online fees. The issue, of

course, is speed. The vendors that hold correctional banking contracts earn their profits from fees charged for payments made online or over the phone. Do we trust them to promptly process money orders for which they receive no fee revenue? If their terms of service are any indication, the companies seem to reserve the right to deliberately delay money-order processing.

### Don't forget the fine print

People can't use these money-transfer services without agreeing to fine-print provisions (sometimes called "terms of use" or "terms and conditions"). These take-it-or-leave-it documents (known to lawyers as contracts of adhesion) are ubiquitous in modern life, but they take on a particularly sinister role in the context of prison money transfers. We all agree to boilerplate terms when we use services like Gmail, Netflix, or Amazon. Even though these giant corporations have the upper hand, there is a faint form of accountability: consumer advocates and journalists routinely scour terms and conditions for unfair surprises; when a particularly egregious term is exposed, companies can be shamed and consumers can "vote with their feet" by switching to other providers. None of these safeguards are applicable to correctional money-transfer services, where the company controls a critical service for incarcerated people.

Money-transfer vendor	\$20 transfer		\$50 transfer	
	Fee	Fee as percentage of amount transferred	Fee	Fee as percentage of amount transferred
Securus (JPay)	\$1.95	10%	\$7.95	16%
Access Corrections	\$3.50	18%	\$6.95	14%
GTL	\$3.95	20%	\$5.95	12%

Table 3: Selecting the least expensive money-transfer service is incredibly complex. In California, which has three vendors, JPay is the cheapest company to send \$20, but the most expensive to send \$50.

(Continued on page 54)

(Continued from page 53)

Terms imposed by the dominant money-transfer vendors are replete with objectionable, misleading, and unfair provisions. We've grouped some of the more problematic provisions into five categories, discussed below.

1. Failure to promise anything in return for consumer's money. Read a money-transfer website, and you'll understandably be left with the impression that you can pay the vendor a fee to transfer money to someone in prison. But read the fine print, it turns out the companies don't actually promise to do anything. All three of the leading companies disclaim "any warranty of any kind, express or implied." Advertising a certain service (like transferring money) and then using fine print to disclaim any responsibility to actually provide that service is considered a deceptive practice under many consumer-protection laws.
2. Companies seem to go out of their way to make money-order payments arduously slow and plagued by uncertainty. Seemingly intentional degradation of money-order payments. As noted above, sending a money order is obviously slower than making an online transfer, but in many cases it can be cheaper. But companies seem to go out of their way to make money-order payments arduously slow and plagued by uncertainty. JPay's terms, for example, promise that payments will be "transmitted" within 1 or 2 business days, except for money-orders, which "are generally processed within ten (10) business days" (most people would refer to 10 business days as two weeks, which is an inexcusably long amount of time for processing small-dollar consumer payments). Both JPay and Access Corrections disclaim any liability for money orders that they receive, but which are not credited to the recipient's account.
3. Privacy and consumer rights. Companies' terms of use and privacy policies are replete with confusing or troublesome provisions regarding use of customers' data. Some examples:
  - JPay requires customers to consent to a credit check, which makes no sense because JPay does not extend credit and it's unclear why the company needs that kind of private information.
  - Companies say that user information can be shared with law enforcement, which at first glance isn't terribly surprising. But many customers might be surprised that the terms of information sharing are so broad that they vitiate any kind of reasonable safeguards for consumers. Access Corrections, for example, says that it can share information with law enforcement, but it defines law enforcement as "personnel involved in the...investigative (public and private) or public safety purposes" (which, aside from being atrocious grammar, essentially means they can share your information with anyone who says they have a public safety purpose). GTL allows personal information to be shared with "law enforcement or correctional staff," but doesn't require that such staff have a proper job-related purpose for receiving such information.
4. Poorly designed services. Several miscellaneous provisions indicate how poorly these companies carry out their operations. For example, JPay terms state that the only cost to send money is the "service fee" that must be paid prior to making the transfer. But a different paragraph in JPay's terms state that if the company owes money to a customer (e.g., for a refund), and the customer does not claim the money, JPay will eat up the amount of the refund by levying a "monthly service fee" (this monthly fee is not mentioned on any of JPay's fee disclosure pages, nor do the terms of service specify how much the fee is). JPay also requires 2 weeks' advance notice before cancelling a recurring payment (this is probably not allowed under Visa's rules, which reference a 7-day maximum advance notice requirement and require a "simple" mechanism for cancelling recurring payments).
5. Dispute resolution. A lot of us are forced to agree to arbitration provisions buried in the fine print of consumer contracts. But these clauses, which prevent consumers from going to court to vindicate their legal rights, are especially troublesome when the company imposing the provision has a monopoly on an essential service. GTL allows customers to "opt out" of arbitration, but also states that the company can terminate the accounts of customers who exercise that right. JailATM, meanwhile, requires customers to consent to arbitration conducted by the National Arbitration Forum, a disgraced company that was forced to stop conducting consumer arbitrations in 2009 as part of a legal settlement (in fact, we pointed out this problem in our 2016 report on electronic messaging, but JailATM apparently has not bothered to update their terms in the intervening five years). Other troublesome terms that are unrelated to arbitration include one-sided indemnification provisions and limitations periods for disputes that are substantially

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shorter than most states' statutes of limitations for contract claims.

### *Suggestions for improvements*

The current system is complicated, inconvenient, and expensive. Different people have different opportunities to address these problems, as explained below.

### **Family members of incarcerated people**

It may seem like family members have no leverage in this unfair system, but there are some things they can do to advocate for change.

- Complain about high fees or poor service. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ("CFPB") has an easy-to-use online complaint system specifically designed for financial services like money transfers. Your state attorney general may also be able to investigate certain abusive or deceptive practices. If the relevant prison system has an ombuds or office of family support, send a copy of your complaint to them as well.
- Talk to legislators. Money-transfer vendors take advantage of the lack of regulatory oversight. It turns out that money-transfer vendors are subject to regulation in nearly all states as "money-transmitters;" however, money-transmitter regulations are focused on the fiscal health of the business (known as "prudential regulation"), not protecting consumers. But legislatures can close this loophole. Tell state legislators (or, in the case of jails, county commissioners) about the economic toll of money-transfer fees, and ask them to pass legislation requiring regulatory agencies to enact rules protecting customers of correctional money-transfer services.
- If possible, plan ahead and send a money order to avoid fees. If there are problems with money orders (slow processing, out of state mailing addresses), tell facility management and point out that "just send money online" isn't an adequate response, because the online option is so expensive.

### **Regulators**

- Federal law prohibits financial service providers from taking unreasonable advantage of a consumer's inability to protect their own interests in selecting or using a consumer financial service. Users of correctional money-transfer services are unable to protect their own interests because they must either use a monopoly provider selected by a correctional facility, or choose from 2 or 3 options, all of which appear to set exorbitant prices in relation to their competitors. The CFPB is tasked with enforcing this law, and it should use its

investigative and enforcement powers to crack down on unreasonably high money-transfer fees.

- The Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") is also empowered to issue rules prohibiting specific unfair trade practices that cause reasonably foreseeable injury to consumers. The FTC should use this authority, either by itself or in conjunction with the CFPB, to develop rules governing maximum allowable fees and what types of contractual terms vendors can (or can't) impose on customers.

### **Prison procurement officials**

- At least part of the high cost of money transfers comes from some prison systems demanding or accepting "commissions" (or kickbacks) from vendors. As with phone contracts, prisons can help lower costs by refusing commissions.
- Look for in-house alternatives from other parts of state government. Prison systems are departments within state governments. Other state agencies are accustomed to accepting online payments (for vehicle registrations, hunting licenses, tuition, or any number of purposes). Have any of them developed low-cost in-house solutions for processing these payments? And if so, can those solutions be adapted for use in prisons? Arkansas, Maine, Montana, and Texas have figured out how to do it--other states should follow suit.
- Sending a money order by mail is a no-fee option in most states, but the utility of this option is severely limited when vendors deliberately prolong the amount of time it takes to process money orders. States can make this better in a number of ways. If at all possible, keep the processing of money orders in-house. If money-order processing is outsourced, there are two requirements that the state should put into its contract with the money-transfer vendor. First, the vendor should be required to process money orders within one business day of delivery. Second, the vendor should provide an in-state mailing address for all money order payments.
- Post all fees on the DOC information page: as noted above, some states sign contracts with multiple vendors, but don't post the companies' respective fees in one location. Every DOC webpage about money transfers should include an easy-to-read disclosure of applicable fees so that all family members and all staff members are aware of these fees.
- Provide specific details about garnishments/mandatory deductions. Many prison systems deduct money from incoming transfers to pay for mandatory fines, child support, restitution, cost of confinement,

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or other fees. Money-transfer vendors, unsurprisingly, disclaim any liability for these deductions. It's true that these deductions are created by the state, so the state bears responsibility for explaining them. This is important information: if someone in prison needs \$20 to pay for hygiene items, then a relative sending money needs to know how much to send so that the recipient actually gets \$20 after mandatory deductions. Any webpage that includes information on how to send money should also include detailed information on how much is deducted and what deposits are subject to garnishment. This information should include what deductions apply to everyone, versus which deductions (like child support) only apply to a subset of recipients. Ideally, the webpage should also include a calculator so that users can type in a transfer amount and instantly see how much will be delivered to the recipient.

### Companies

Last but not least, money-transfer vendors themselves have the most power to address problems in the industry they have created. While it's probably unrealistic to expect these companies to voluntarily reduce fees, if companies are serious about their marketing puffery, there are other simple steps they could take to make customers' lives easier.

- To the extent that money-transfer fees are inflated in part due to commissions being paid to correctional facilities, vendors should offer a commission-free alternative in all bids.
- All vendors include vague provisions in their terms of use that transfers from a customer's credit card "may" be treated as a cash advance. While the vendor probably can't give a definitive answer (because the bank or entity that issues the credit card the consumer is using has some discretion in how to handle these transactions), the vendors are the ones who create the transaction record, so they know how it's coded. Vendors should provide customers with the precise transaction coding applicable to their payment so that customers can then be fully informed when they ask their own bank how the transaction will be treated.
- It costs very little to write fair and easy-to-understand contracts. Vendors should rewrite their terms and conditions and eliminate things like arbitration provisions, 2-week processing times for mailed payments, and disclaimers of any warranties whatsoever.

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# REST IN POWER



Omar and his wife, Karen Ali

## In Memoriam: Omar Askia Ali (1942-2021)

The Liberation Foundation mourns the passing of TLF client Mr. Omar Askia Ali. Mr. Ali was raised in Philadelphia, where he attended Thomas Edison High School. Mr. Ali, known to friends as Omar, was a pillar in his community, a kind soul, and a devout father and husband.

Mr. Ali was committed to making the world a better, kinder place. Wrongfully convicted, Mr. Ali spent each day supporting those around him. Mr. Ali was the founder of the Boxing Association of America, a nonprofit that uses boxing as a tool for community empowerment and transformation. He routinely served as a liaison for peace between inmates and prison administrations throughout his incarceration. Over the course of fifty years, Mr. Ali organized numerous voting drives for inmates and their families, held Walk-a-Thons and boxing matches for charity, helped create a community garden for those at SCI Graterford, and successfully led a campaign to support incarcerated families by making prison visitation better. He was a leader and a mentor to everyone around him. Through it all, Mr. Ali never stopped fighting for his freedom.

Omar will be remembered as a leader, mentor, and friend by many. Mr. Ali is survived by his wife, Mrs. Karen Ali and his children. He will be missed by all those who loved and supported him. If you are able to, please consider supporting his family during this difficult time.

## In Memory -

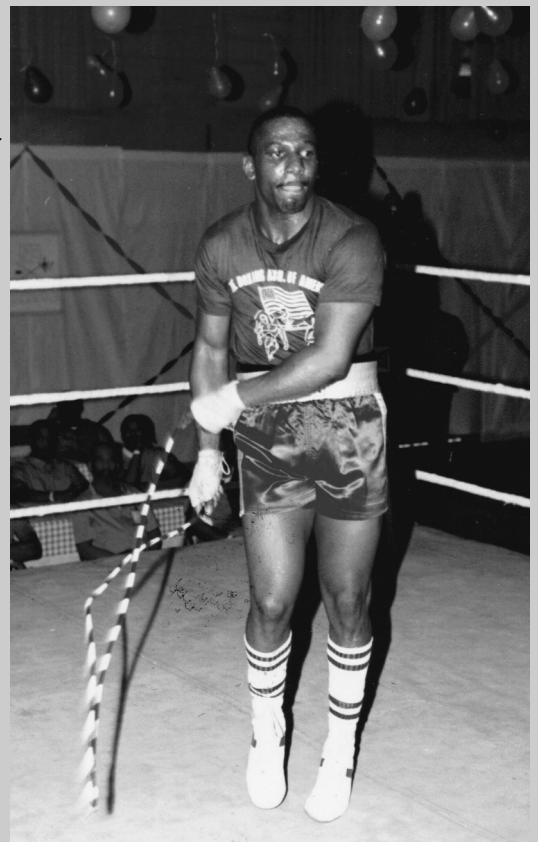
We mourn the passing of Omar Askia Ali on December 12th, 2021. His death was shocking to family and friends as he was athletic and health conscious during his 50 years of incarceration.

His was known for his fervor of cultivating a positive force in the community both inside and outside of the State correctional institution walls.

In the earlier days of Omar's incarceration, not excluding vehemently maintaining his innocence, he founded the Boxing Association of America (BAA) at Holmesburg prison and established it as a nonprofit organization. He made history as the

first incarcerated licensed boxing manager and organized outside boxing events at the Blue Horizon and Philadelphia Civic Center. In unprecedented fashion he was permitted escorted leave along with 17 other inmates to participate in these boxing events which occurred without incident.

Among Omar's many accomplish-



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ments in community work he established a new Septa bus route from Philadelphia to SCI-Graterford, organized fund-raising walk-a-thons for Philadelphia’s Children’s Hospital, Cancer Center, and Victims of Violent Crimes.

During his later years he continued his passion for being physically fit by becoming a certified Palates Instructor and helping men inside overcome physical disabilities through palates. Both Omar Ali and his wife Karen Ali were long standing members of the Human Rights Coalition fighting for the human rights of the men, women, and children in prison.

We grieve with and for Mrs. Karen Ali as she was Omar’s champion and wife fighting for his freedom; at every opportunity speaking of her husband’s innocence to news media, lawyers, the Philly DA’s Conviction Integrity Unit; visiting him twice a month or more throughout their entire marriage of twenty-five years; conversating with him every morning and/or evening as the opportunity permitted while incarcerated.

With Deepest Sympathy and Love,

Human Rights Coalition

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## In Memory: A Tale of two Giants!

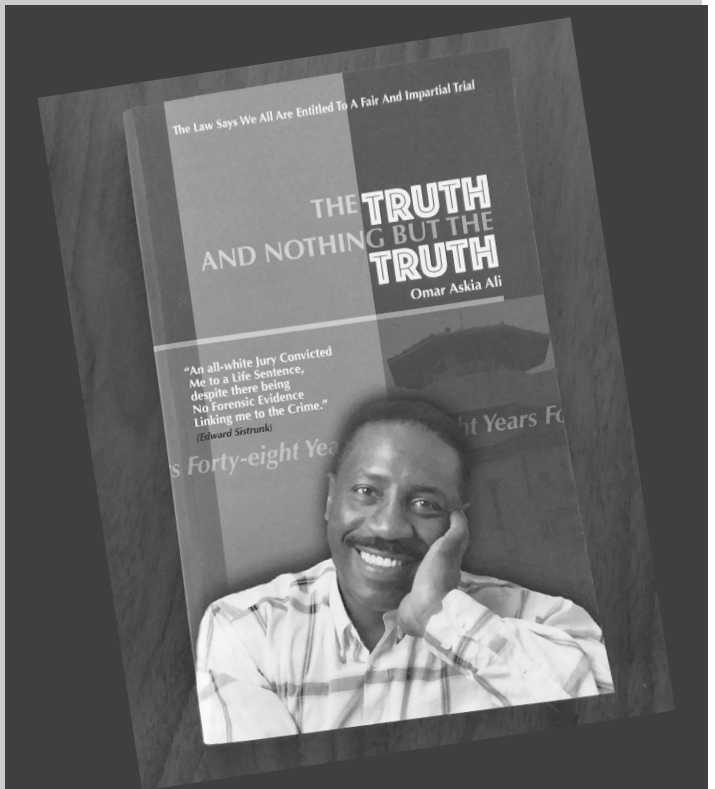
The times had tried their souls; but through it all they both remained true and strong soldiers until the end. They, kindred spirits, were influential to many who crossed their paths. Two Generals who fought against systemic racism and oppression. They taught generations of young men history and knowledge-of-self in the pursuit to find meaningful purpose in life. They were our Tookie William and George Jackson of the world. Both men left an undeniable impression on many of us; to them we owe a great depth of honor and gratitude. Their lessons live on inside of us; and WE hold the keys to the future. Let's not ever let up! The movement goes forward...

My love and condolences to the families of 'Maroon' and Askia.

In solidarity,  
Michael Glass.

The struggle goes on...

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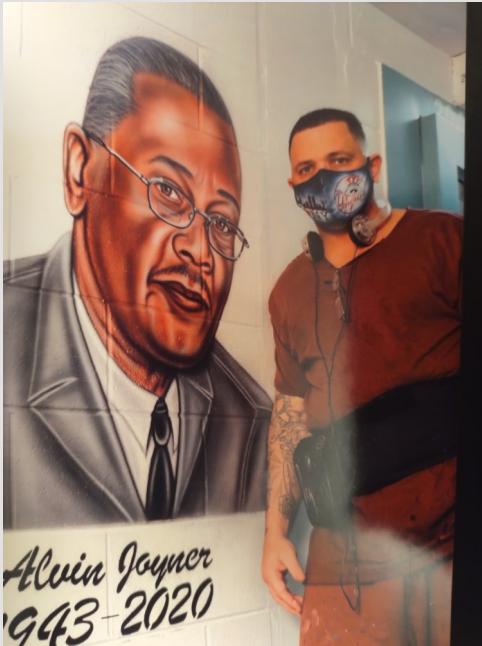
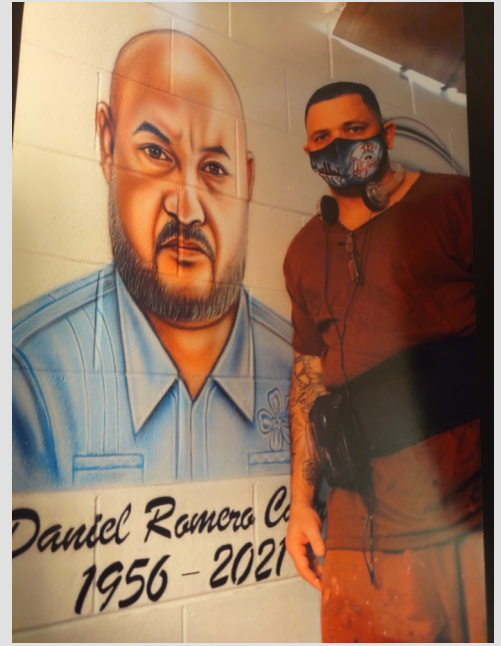
*In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

In his book, ‘The Truth and Nothing but the Truth’ Omar Askia Ali gives you just that the “TRUTH” from every direction—he even talks about a boxing club in prison.

During the 60’s & 70’s Omar Askia Ali, a.k.a., Edward Sistrunk was active in the Nation of Islam (N.O.I.); he and others endeavored to curb the drug trade in Philadelphia. William O’Brien, the head of the Narcotics [under indictment for drugs] . . . , informed others and Omar that the N.O.I. was a pain in the ass. Omar maintains his innocence and gives it all, from his work with the N.O.I., corrupt police, all white jury, and FBI cover up.

Sold on Amazon.com \$20.00

# Eliezer Perez—Healing Through Art



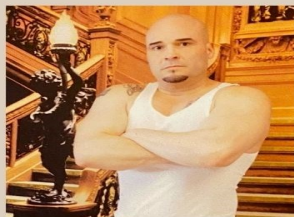
**Human Rights Coalition**

**PO Box 34580**

**Philadelphia, PA 19101**



**Bobby Bostic**  
241 YEAR SENTENCE



**Oscar Lugo**  
240 YEAR SENTENCE



**Kevin Andrews**  
84 YEAR SENTENCE



**Scott Sargent**  
355 YEAR SENTENCE



**Theodore Ridgeway**  
248 YEAR SENTENCE