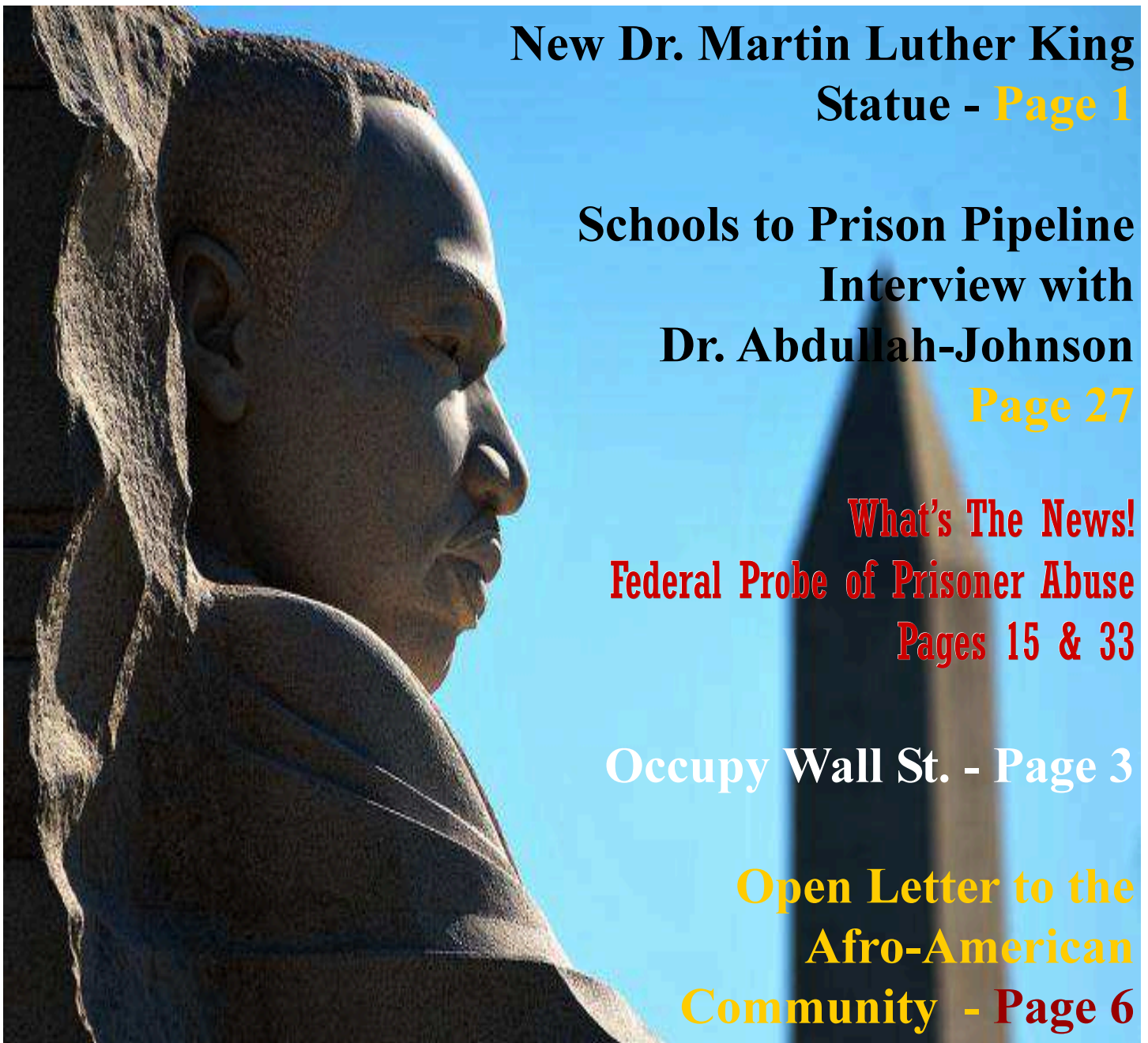


# THE MOVEMENT

WINTER 2011  
Issue # 13

The New and Official Newsletter of the Human Rights Coalition for the union of Prisoners' Families

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



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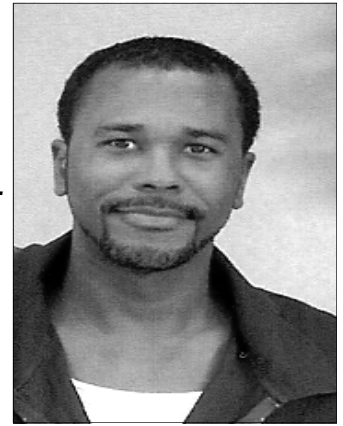
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**COVER:** The "Stone of Hope" sculpture of Martin Luther King by Chinese artist Lei Yixin is open to the public on August 22, 2011 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC. The memorial is the first on the National Mall to honor an African-American and the first to honor a person who did not serve as president. The George Washington Monument is seen in the background. (MANDEL NGAN/AFP/Getty Images)

## ***From The Desk of The Editor***

***"Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism." \****

***- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.***



***Welcome to The Movement,***

***The era of change is here. From the peoples takeover of Wisconsin's state capitol building to the Occupy Wall St. movement occurring in nearly every major city throughout America, the people are dissatisfied and demanding the restructure of this corporate-ruled political system and unsustainable capitalist economic system that is causing the global poverty, racism, and wars of aggression we are experiencing. Against the backdrop of America's crises of a Great Recession, dysfunctional government, and austerity cuts to social entitlements, a national memorial dedication for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was held on October 16th in Washington, DC at West Potomac Park enshrining him as one of the fathers of America.***

***It is ironic how things seem to always come full circle and making people believers in the process. I am speaking of Dr. King's prophetic messages and divine guidance to the people when he stated that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values, by shifting from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society. \* Dr. King eloquently explained that when machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered. \****

***The enlightenment of Dr. King showed us that a true revolution of values will cause us to question the fairness and justice of many past and present policies, and cause us to be eternal enemies to poverty, racism, and militarism. Are we now undergoing a prophetic revolution of values from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society and of questioning America's homeland and foreign policies? I think the Occupy Wall St. movement across the nation makes the answer to that question a resounding 'Yes'.***

***The American people are now discovering that it doesn't matter who is president of the United States, whether the president is an African-American or a woman our government will continue to be the greatest purveyors of domestic and foreign capitalist economic exploitation, racial oppression and injustice, and global violence. The American people have witnessed the first African-American U.S. President Barak Obama renege on his promise of change by bailing out big banks & corporations and not the working-poor, by representing the interests of 1% rich over 99% rest of us, by pursuing a racist secure communities federal immigration program against Latino/as that is fueling the for-profit private prison industry boom to over 250 immigration detention centers and by waging predatory and merciless wars upon struggling people in Africa, Asia and Latin America.***

***The American people are fed up with this dysfunctional government, Wall Street, and politicians who are ran by special interest groups. In response to this we are seeing the 99% people occupy America in their attempt to wrestle this country away from the clutches of the rich 1% and restructure the entire system to benefit the workers, the poor, and the oppressed peoples of America. Consequently, rescuing the world from self-annihilation.***

***Let us follow the example of Dr. King's life in these trying times by speaking for the weak, for the voiceless, and for the victims of our nation's violence. Let us have a revolution of values that we may conquer racism, materialism, and militarism. Let us change world.***

***All Power to the Oppressed Peoples!***

***Kerry 'Shakaboona' Marshall, Co-Editor In Chief  
Kerry.Shakaboona.Marshall@gmail.com***

***\*Martin Luther King, Jr., 'Beyond Vietnam', Riverside Church, New York, NY, 4 April 1967***

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# Occupy Wall Street...WHAT?

By: Mama Patt

For all you "late comers" like me who don't know what **Occupy Wall Street (OWS)** is all about, here's my summation.

Occupy Wall Street (OWS) is a **protest** that began September 17, 2011 in Zuccotti Park, in New York City's Wall Street financial district. It was initiated by the Canadian activist group Adbusters. The protests are against social and economic inequality, high unemployment, greed, corruption, and the undue influence of corporations on government. The protesters' slogan 'We are the 99%' refers to the growing difference in wealth in the United States between the wealthiest 1% and the rest of the population.

The Canadian-based Adbusters Foundation proposed to peacefully occupy Wall Street, in a July 13, 2011 blog post to protest the corporate influence on democracy, the absence of legal repercussions for the bankers (behind the recent financial crisis), and a growing disparity in wealth. Adbusters' said they'd suggested the protest via their email list and it "was spontaneously taken up by all the people of the world."

Anonymous, a internet group, encouraged its readers to take part in the protests (Maybe it's me, but this sounds a lot like a Philly's "flash mob". Didn't Mayor Nutter put a curfew in place to stop this type of gathering in Philly?), calling protesters to "flood lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street." An Occupy Wall Street Facebook page began on September 19 with a YouTube video of the early protests, and by September 22, it had reached a significant amount.

Some think that the protestors aren't clear on a unified aim for the movement. Some say that the movement is not in complete agreement on its message or goals. I personally, am envious that Occupy Wall Street has had such an impact on the world, while other grassroots organizations (a few off the top of my head would be: Human Rights Coalition, ACT UP, Pennsylvania Innocence Project, Reconstruction, Inc., Parent United for Public Change, Pennsylvania Alternatives to the Death Penalty, or Youth United for Change, just to name a few) can't seem to stir up a smidgen of that enthusiasm for clearly defined goals. But according to Douglas Rushkoff, a writer for CNN ...

Anyone who says he has no idea what these

(Continued on page 4)

## Occupy Amsterdam



## Occupy London



## Occupy Toronto



**THE MOVEMENT**

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(Continued from page 3)

folks are protesting is not being truthful. Whether we agree with them or not, we all know what they are upset about, and we all know that there are investment bankers working on Wall Street getting richer while things for most of the rest of us are getting tougher.

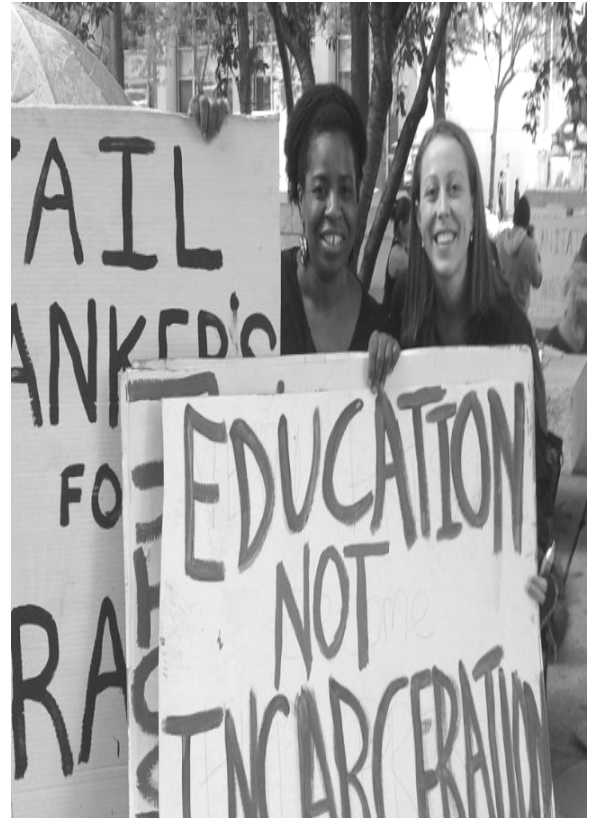
I think that maybe the demographics of this movement is the key to it's power. A study based on survey responses at OccupyWallStreet.org reported 81.2% White, 7.6% Other, 6.8% Hispanic, 2.8% Asian, and 1.6% Black. So from where I stand the majority of protestors are White, and we all know that the authorities are a lot more lenient with White people which means they can get away with stuff that people of color cannot get away with. And by October 9, the initial protests in New York City had sparked similar protests around the world. The Occupy Movement spread through cities across the US; for example: Occupy New York, 30,000 protestors costing the city \$7 million; Occupy Atlanta costing the city \$652,000; Occupy Portland costing their city \$785,000; Occupy Boston costing their city \$575,000; there's even an Occupy Alaska and I can go on and on with examples.

With these statistics even I can get on board with the 99%; and of course we did. Occupy Philadelphia began on September 29, 2011 costing our city \$492,000. HRC-Philly and several other groups used Occupy to spread the word about our dissatisfaction with social issues such as the torture and abuse of prisoners; the schools to prisons pipeline; Juveniles serving Life in prison; the building of more prisons instead of schools. Theresa Shoatz, HRC member, reported:

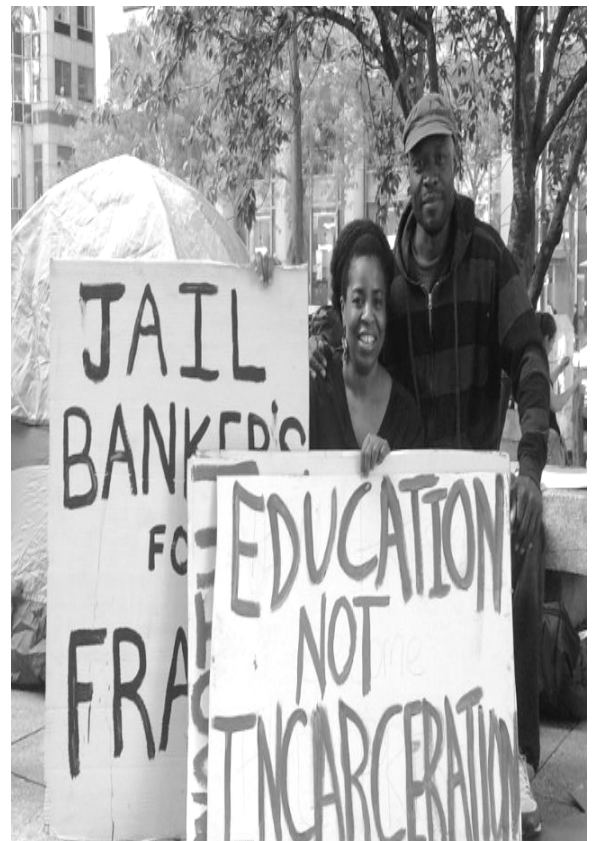
10/8/11 We will win. I'm approached by black youth everyday during my stay at the Philly occupy, therefore this evening orgs are planning a phone conference call to bring the black community to the table. One of my suggestions outside of many are to pressure congress as well as the Pa prison system, Define whose on our side, and its a must to grow in numbers.

11/4/11 ...though haven't been this week, I

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Theresa Shoatz & Supporters at Occupy Philly



(Continued from page 4)

have the flu, while at Occupy I'm talking to our people, handing out literature holding signs that display my radical voice in the midst of every area of racial, financial war and prison injustices. I'm always on the outskirts of Occupy, you can find me crossing market street at least 5-6 hours a day.

In reading this summary of Occupy Wall Street you may have sensed that I'm feeling a bit irritated. If so your instincts are sharp. But first let me say that I am excited about Occupy because it demonstrates strength in numbers and confirms my belief that if you don't push for change, there will be no change. Occupy shows us that you don't need an agenda to make a point, that the squeaky wheel gets the oil, and that a good protest will get the media's attention and your voices heard.

But it rattles me to know that a **blog** got this whole movement started, and when I compare it to HRC's Prison Reports, emails, website, Facebook, phone calls, correspondence with prisoners and their families and legislators, I'm annoyed that all of our hard work has never given us such a response. When I look at the demographics of occupy and see that only 1.6% of Occupy are Black, I have to ask do we not know our own power? If we - people of color - would get angry and protest our issues ... what would happen? I have to ask have we grown accustomed to our pain; because we've been financially deprived a lot longer than the majority of Occupy, we've been unemployed a lot longer than the majority of Occupy, we've had a mortgage crisis a lot longer than the majority of Occupy, and we have social issues that the majority of Occupy don't have. Don't we know that we can demonstrate our strength in a way that surpasses Occupy. How?

We can unite and show our strength in who and what we choose to buy. As of September 22, 2011 a report by 'The State of the African-American Consumer Report' collaboratively with Nielsen ([www.nielsen.com/africanamerican](http://www.nielsen.com/africanamerican)) says that African-Americans' buying power is expected to reach \$1.1 trillion by 2015. And that when consumers are more aware of their buying power, it can help them make informed decisions about the companies they choose to support. Consumer trends in the report include facts such as: a) with a buying power of nearly \$1 trillion annually, if African-Americans were a country, they'd be the 16th largest country in the world; b) there were 23.9 million active African-American Internet users in July 2011 - 76% of whom visited a social networking/blog site; c) 33% of all African-Americans own a smartphone; d) African-Americans use more than double the amount of mobile phone voice minutes compared to Whites - 1,298 minutes a month vs. 606; e) the statistics on television use is eye-opening where in November 2010, African-Americans used their TVs an average of 7 hours 12 minutes each day - far above the total U.S. average of 5 hours 11 minutes; f) African-Americans also used DVD players and video game consoles more than **average**. I personally believe that the oil companies have too much power; and I believe we can, for example, put BP out of business within a year by purchasing our gas from other gas companies.

We can unite and show our strength through our vote where we support or don't support a particular person running for office - from the President to the judges. If we don't want more prisons built, then we shouldn't vote for anyone who supports building more prisons. In 2012 there is a major election, for this reason the HRC has launched a Political Action Committee (PAC) whose purpose is to unify our members to support the persons we believe will back up our "human rights" issues. HRC knows that when we unite, we hold the trump card, we can make or break any candidate running for office. No need to camp out in tents, for months. We only need to show our strength one day - Election Day.

People of color let us OCCUPY by uniting our efforts. Prisoners, if it only took a "blog" to start the Occupy Movement, I'm sure a kind word would encourage your family to support HRC. Check out HRC's website, Facebook page and email us. We are the 99%. Let's show them who runs this county.

# Must Show a Photo ID Before Voting...

## Are You Kidding Me?

Research by Human Rights Coalition Political Action Committee

### New Voter ID Proposals

These 20 states did not have laws requiring voter ID at the polls at the beginning of 2011, but saw legislation proposing it this year. So far, three states have enacted new voter ID requirements--Kansas, Rhode Island and Wisconsin. Governors in Minnesota, New Hampshire and North Carolina vetoed voter ID bills in 2011. In Minnesota, supporters have vowed to pass a new bill in next year's session that would bypass the governor and go to the voters for approval instead. This strategy is similar to what the Oklahoma legislature did in 2009 and 2010. Mississippi voters approved a citizen initiative proposing voter ID in November 2011; that constitutional amendment will require the passage of implementing legislation before it can take effect.

**California**--AB 663 and 945: *failed*

**Illinois**--HB 3058 and SB 2035: *adjourned; carried over to 2012 session*

**Iowa**--HF 8, HF 95, SF 142: *adjourned; carried over to 2012 session*

**Kansas**--HB 2067: **enacted**

**Maine**--LD 199: *adjourned; carried over to 2012 session*

**Maryland**--HB 288 and 701: *failed*

**Massachusetts**--multiple bills: all pending in joint committee

**Minnesota**--SB 509: **vetoed**

**Mississippi**--multiple bills: all failed; however, voters **approved** a citizen initiative on the Nov. 8 ballot

**Nebraska**--LB 239 and 605: *adjourned; carried over to 2012 session*

**Nevada**--SB 373 *failed*

**New Hampshire**--SB 129: **vetoed**

**New Jersey**--A 1725: pending in assembly

**New Mexico**--HB 308, HB 577, SB 363: *failed*

**New York**--multiple bills: *carried over to 2012 session*

**North Carolina**--HB 351: **vetoed**

**Pennsylvania**--HB 934: **passed house; pending in senate\*\***

**Rhode Island**--SB 400/HB 5680: **enacted**

**West Virginia**--HB 3219: *failed*

**Wisconsin**--AB 7: **enacted**

### Strengthening Existing Voter ID Laws

At the beginning of 2011, 27 states had non-photo voter ID laws. Fourteen of these 27 considered legislation this year to require *photo* ID at the polls. So far, three states--South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas--have enacted strict photo ID requirements, and Alabama has enacted a new voter ID law that is somewhat less strict than the new laws in SC, TN and TX, yet stricter than the old law it replaces. The new laws in Alabama, South Carolina and Texas can't take effect until they receive pre-clearance from the U.S. Department of Justice. Governors in Missouri and Montana vetoed stricter voter ID laws in 2011.

**Alabama**--HB 19: **enacted**

**Alaska**--HB 162: *adjourned; carried over to 2012*

**Arkansas**--HB 1797: *failed*

**Colorado**--HB 1003: *failed*

**Connecticut**--HB 5231, SB 604 and 647: *failed*

(Continued on page 7)

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**Delaware**--HB 199 and HB 200; *adjourned; carried over to 2012*

**Hawaii**--HB 1359: *adjourned; carried over to 2012*

**Missouri**--SB 3: *vetoed* and SJR 2: *approved* (must be approved by voters in November 2012 before it takes effect)

**Montana**--HB 152: *vetoed*

**Ohio**--HB 159: passed house; pending in senate

**South Carolina**--HB 3003: *enacted*

**Tennessee**--SB 16: *enacted*

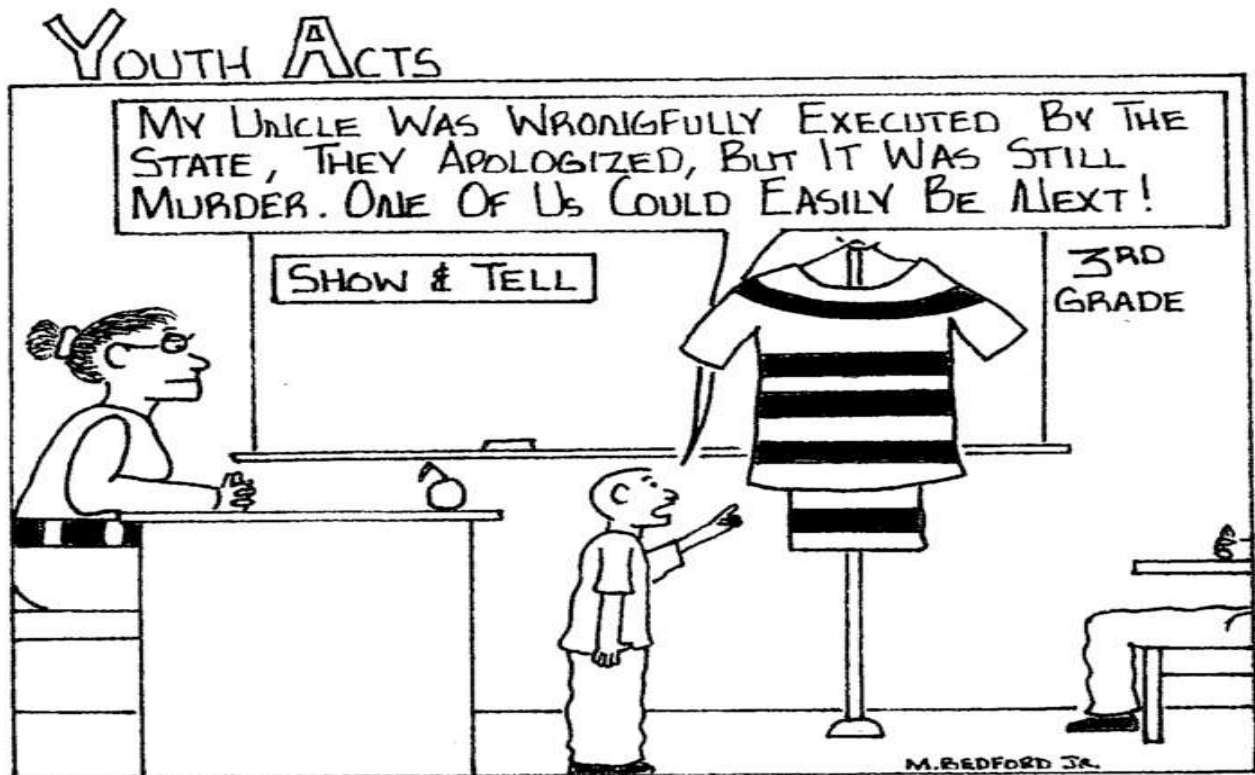
**Texas**--SB 14: *enacted*

**Virginia**--multiple bills: *failed*

National Conference of State Legislatures,  
Dec 9, 2011

## ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

PA Citizens, lets not take a step backwards, Photo ID is just another hoop we're forced to jump through, it's meant to discourage us and designed to suppress our right to vote. Call, write, or email your Senator - tell him do not vote for HB 934.



By: M. Bedford, Jr.

**THE MOVEMENT**

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## Ellison introduces bills to erase photo ID voting requirements

Posted by: Jeremy Herb under 5th District, November 2011

Rep. Keith Ellison introduced two voter ID bills Wednesday, including one that would undo photo ID voting laws in 14 states and would have stopped legislation vetoed by Gov. Mark Dayton earlier this year.

Ellison's bills would prohibit states from requiring photo ID to vote and require states to allow same-day voter registration. They both are unlikely to get any traction in the Republican-led House.

Voter ID has been a heated topic in Minnesota and states across the nation this year, as legislatures have strengthened voter ID laws. Fourteen states have passed laws requiring photo ID to vote, and another 16 require some form of identification, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

In Minnesota, Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed a voter ID bill in May that would have required photo ID.

Ellison said his bills would counteract state laws that have disenfranchised voters. "These laws add up to the greatest attack on voting rights since the Jim Crow era," the Minnesota Democrat said in a House floor speech.

Republicans have fought for tougher voter ID laws, arguing that they are needed to curb voter fraud. Minnesota Senate Majority Leader Amy Koch, R-Buffalo, said in May that the state's voter ID bill would "dramatically improve the public confidence in the integrity of Minnesota's election system."

Voter ID laws have long been a contentious issue in Minnesota, even before the 2008 razor-thin Senate recount between Al Franken and Norm Coleman that sparked accusations of voter fraud.

Ellison and state Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer, R-Big Lake, a former Secretary of State who sponsored the Minnesota voter ID bill, have both testified at congressional hearings on the subject. Ellison filed a brief with the Congressional Black Caucus when the Supreme Court found Indiana's photo ID law constitutional in 2008.

After Dayton's May veto, [Kiffmeyer said](#) she will introduce a photo ID bill in next year's legislative session before moving to get a constitutional amendment on the 2012 ballot.



Member of the [U.S. House of Representatives](#)  
from [Minnesota's 5th](#) district

## Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

Read Debra White Plume's oral history of her November trip to NYC, the Tour of Resistance and the "occupy" movement. Of course, in our way, we listen to our elders and leaders. Owe Aku (Bring Back the Way) and Owe Aku International Justice Project are both blessed to have her insight and sharing to guide us. Soon we will also be releasing the text of one of her talks during the tour; an excellent description of the Lakota way of life and all our relations.

# Worship Greed

by Debra White Plume, November 2011

During a visit to New York City, my friend and I rode the train downtown and spent two days walking around. We went to Wall Street on the day that is only celebrated by America and Americans, known as Thanksgiving. We went to Zuccotti Park, now called Liberty Park, since it has been Occupied for the past two months by the Occupiers. There is one entrance/exit. It is manned by the NYPD. There are chest high metal barricades all around the park, along with yellow police tape. As we enter, it feels eerie. I see a lot of people, but no other Natives. There are men playing chess, a guy is twisting balloons into shapes and handing them to others. There are young women passing out turkey dinners in Styrofoam containers. People are saying Happy Thanksgiving. We walk along, and hear drums. We follow the sound, and see about ten young white men, all pounding their drums, it doesn't sound like a song to me, but I am prejudiced. I grew up hearing only the Lakota drum, which is significant to its purpose. I tend to judge all other drum beats against our own. The NYPD begin to come in to the park and gather around the drummers. The Occupiers form a circle around the NYPD and the drummers and function as a human microphone, which states "Cameras out, cameras on the police". I glance around and see the NYPD Guard Tower high up in the corner of the park, plastic and temporary. Can't see the uniforms, but can see the weapons. The plastic windows up there are smoked. Nearby there is a guy with a huge poster that says something about hospitals killing people in New Jersey. There are a dozen protestors with big signs that say the 1% wear furs from animals they killed. Yikes, I realize I am wearing a leather jacket.

There are conversations going on all around, in small groups. I hear about capitalism, the 1%, see young faces chanting "This Is What Democracy Looks Like". I don't hear anything about Mother Earth and how desecration is the source of the riches of the 1% at the cost of the Native Nations. I wonder if the Occupiers know they are Occupying an Occupied land. I wonder if they know we Native Nations are older than America? I notice cop cars parked all around the area, and NYPD everywhere. The circle of cop cars is outside the circle of barricades, which is outside the yellow police tape. I see this as a trap and wonder if anyone else feels this way. I see folks that look homeless, dressed in ten layers of clothes that have not been washed in months. They snuggle into the few benches, sprinkled around here and there. There is a group of people forming, getting bigger by the minute, singing Christian songs. I see the Wikki Leaks Top Secret Media Van. There are several unmarked plain white cargo vans parked around the streets, some with those little satellite thingy's on the roof. The Christian song is getting louder, drowning out the human microphone over there trying to protect the drummers. Seeing Democracy, Capitalism, and Christianity all in one place--when I know all three all work against each other to create chaos--I want to leave, I can't stand the singing. I know who com-

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mitted genocide against my people and it was just as much the Christian Religion as it was the American government and its settlers. It is in my lifetime that the churches took little Lakota children to boarding school to brainwash and beat. I was there. I was one of them. My friend and I notice the NYPD notice us as we leave Liberty Park. The banks and money houses are everywhere down here, they form a circle around the cop cars that form a circle around the barricades and yellow tape, all around the Occupiers.

We walk around the Wall Street area. I think of the invaders of long ago who built the actual wall as a defensive structure to keep out the Indians, of the Stock Market that was named for the selling and buying of live stock, that is, the black people who were to become the slaves of the people with the money and mindset to buy them, I think of the Indians who were beheaded here, to teach them a lesson. The buildings are tall and glass, and even look rich. The air is quiet, like in a church. I guess this is kind of like a church, where the congregation worships greed. Looking at the names on the banks, I recall the headlines a few years ago when a great spin was pulled like wool over the eyes of most of America, and billions of taxpayer dollars were given, with no questions asked, by elected officials to these banks and money houses, to bail them out of the problems they got themselves into. I remembered how I thought at that time that America was now openly governed by Wall Street. I am happy to leave this place, it feels heavy.

We ride the A Train, there are musicians on there who make lonely-sounding music, they say they are Gypsies. I give them all my change. I think about discussions I heard at Liberty Park, talk about changing the system, like it is broken. Me, *I think this system was created to be exactly the way it is*, but I have the 143 years since the 1868 Ft Laramie Treaty between our Nation and America to measure it by. The folks in Liberty Park never talked about that, when I was there. Then my friend and I saw a movie star get on our train and that's all we talked about till we got home. Neither of us could think of her name, but we remembered movies she was in.

The second day we walked around NYC was Black Friday, another day peculiar to America. Seeing the stores with recognizable names, all lined up in rows along these narrow, old streets, like they are soldiers in the front line. People of all colors, but mostly white, moving in and out of the stores, carrying shopping bags decorated with logos that even I recognize, coming from one of the poorest counties in America. Faces smiling, chatting into costly cell phones of lovely purchases just made. Cloudy gray sky, dark and chilly in these canyons of the city, buildings so tall the sun shines only a few hours a day here. Smells of water, the East River nearby, the ocean a little further. Sidewalks are litter-free, yellow cabs parked here and there, black shiny town cars everywhere. No peanut vendors down here!

Seeing the store names creates nausea deep in my stomach, they represent the casually luxurious lifestyle of the families that own these corporations, and I think their lust for wealth is never going to be satisfied, no matter how much they accumulate, it will never be enough. Nausea rising from seeing working people pull out credit cards of corporations owned by the same wealthy people who own the stores that accept the credit cards who own the banks that finance the credit cards. To shop in there, they will pay for years for the purchases made today. More interest money paid to the same banks that these very same taxpayers bailed out a few years ago! The shoppers just keep making the rich people richer, while they burrow deeper into their own debt. This Black Friday concept blows my mind, a day created to increase the wealth of the richest, gained by the non-existing dollars of the people shopping with plastic, much of the items purchased on time are created and marketed by those who are the owners of the plastic, who have created this way for people with no money to make the purchase with plastic. What a system! Celebrate Christmas In Style, say the BLACK FRIDAY SALE signs hanging everywhere.

(Continued on page 11)

Plastic shoppers seem so happy, but I see a small frown pop up, only for a second, is there a worry about where the money will come from to pay off these purchases? Maybe there is a doubt that the 50 inch flat screen TV might not REALLY be necessary, that maybe it is, after all the interest rates, not going to really cost \$200. Young women oh-ing over the fabulous pair of designer shoes that will look SOOO good on them when they go out to that designer club over there. Doesn't sound like a necessary purchase to me, I mean it's not like they are talking about spending their non-existent dollars on food, shelter, medicine, tuition. But that purchase makes them happy, to indulge their desire, after all, that lady said she hadn't been waxed for a month.

As we are shuffled along in the crowd of people moving from store to store, my thoughts go to nonessential products and services being part of the problem, such consumers prop up the rich while they continue to complain about the rich. Or maybe it's just me that considers them non-essential items and services? Could the reason behind this come here-go away kind of thinking be that the consumers just want for a few minutes to be MORE LIKE THE RICH, in that they do not have to just admire something, they can actually possess it?

In my experience, the lack of choices is one of the hardest parts of being without money. Choices have to be made based on the amount of money available. When that amount is very small, the choices become very limited as well. The lack of choices feels like confinement, and I think it is a natural response to resist confinement. Maybe some peoples' resistance is to get a credit card and charge it to the max? That outcome is brilliantly capitalist and was probably thought of by the very rich. Had enough of watching shoppers in this huge mecca of the capitalists, we leave the area.

Wandering now to the East Village, Greenwich Village, Little Italy. Lots of mom and pop shops, and vendors up and down the streets. Famous coffee shops on every corner, the strong odor tempting, but we move on, determined on principle, to not spend a precious \$7.50 on a cup of coffee. See folks paying with credit cards, smiley faces, but some people have a glazed look in their eyes. Maybe wondering where they can get the cash to pay for something they charged because they didn't have the cash to purchase it?

Here, items are handmade from other countries, each unique and very expensive. Liked that one handbag, but the price is comparable to that registered paint horse I admired a few auctions ago. Didn't get the handbag, didn't get the paint horse either!

We wander into another neighborhood. It is kind of dark in these city canyons, but not so much here, the buildings are not so tall around here, the sun gets in a few more minutes a day. Litter on the streets, just enough so it looks out of place. We stop and I pay cash for a pair of sunglasses, a gift. Street prices are very good, about a fourth of what I would spend back home. A few blocks later, we turn a corner, and stumble over folks sitting on the sidewalk. They shook little cups, a woman's voice chanted, "help me, have not eaten for days, no job, no home, help me, please". I put money in the crumbled paper cup that she is shaking like a rattle. Her old eyes say thank you, her skin is wrinkled, her hand is thin, she looks like she might have an illness, it's in her eyes and the grimace of her jaw. As we walked away, the sound of her old voice began to fade, but I still hear it now, it is there in the back of my mind.

Finding the right subway entrance, we go down, down, five flights of stairs, deep underground. As the train stops and goes, leaving downtown and moving toward the neighborhood where I stay, folks get on and off, I notice they have a different appearance the further we move away from the rich part of town, less designer bags and shoes and signature perfumes. More folks getting on the train who wear uniforms, a few wearing hospital scrubs, utility maintenance men, teenagers wearing knock-off designer clothes purchased in

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(Continued from page 11)

the alleys from guys who catch the items that fell off the trucks. Baby strollers look normal, not like the fancy ones on Wall Street that probably cost as much as my 21 year old car.

During the past two days, I somewhat walked through three lifestyles. I saw where the rich live and work, I saw their kitchen where they cook up their riches. I saw the parts of town where plastic is king and folks fool themselves that they are above the “down-trodden”, a term I heard a lot at Liberty Park. I saw the streets where the homeless beg for money and food. I noticed also that those were the streets where there was litter everywhere, but rarely a yellow cab, and not a single black shiny town car.

We got back to my friends apartment and I burned sage, sending smoke to clear away anything bad. We made a pot of coffee, the whole can cost less than one cup of designer coffee. I washed up, got comfortable in house clothes. We drank that pot of good coffee, I smoked roll-your-own cigarettes. We talked about the past days and how most Americans don't have a clue about real history, how this country and its rich people made their wealth from stealing Native Nations' land and its bounty, to this day even. How the land theft had to be prefaced with killing off whole Nations. We talked about Decolonization, a personal experience that can only begin with a paradigm shift. We talked about what we will do next summer, about pow-wows, Sun Dance, horse races, give-aways, and films to use for upcoming Film Forums.

I told my friend all about that registered paint horse that I admired, how his price was the same as that handbag the young lady purchased downtown. That was some horse! My husband and are I are saving up to get one just like him. Sometime, somewhere, I will find another horse that catches my eye, maybe we will have the money to take the horse home, to live on the land with our family. You see, we all want something, to indulge our desires. Mine is another paint horse. I will pay cash, no bankster is going to hold me hostage. I have to fight the confinement within the limits of my chains, because, you see, none of us are free. As the saying goes, none of us will be free until all of us are free. The first step to that freedom is knowing that you wear chains. The problem with that is, you can't really feel the chains until you try to move.

Sudoku mp12 Medium

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

# Book Review by: George Rahsaan Brooks-Bey

## How to Get Out of Your Own Way

They say the economy's getting better; they say things are looking up, that business is starting to recover. But they couldn't prove it by you. For months now, you've been spinning your wheels in the sand, your dreams on hold along with your life. You're wondering if the economy is the blame of it there's something else... In the new book "How to Get Out of Your Own Way" by Tyrese Gibson, you'll see that your problems may be attributed to something much closer.

Growing up in a rough area, South son had plenty of opportunities to over, but — despite that his father alcoholic — Gibson somehow his stepfather guided him, and that also had a goal: to make music.

He loved to sing and perform, test and which opened the doors to usually known by only his first sic.

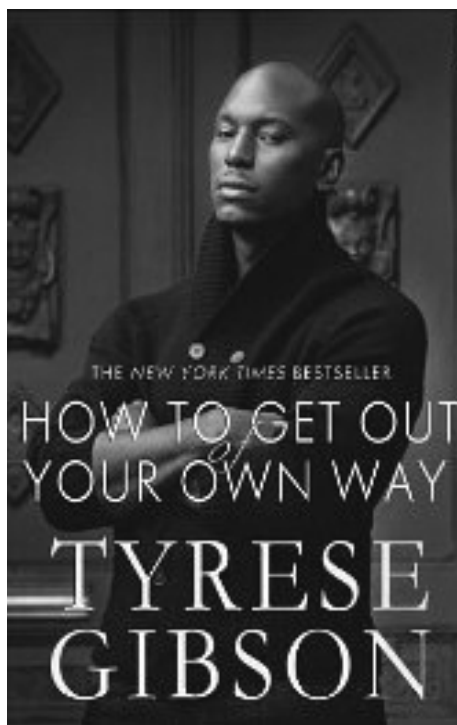
But "over the last decade, he came him was to reach out to people; he want better for themselves. His

The first step is to "know that there be in." Learning to love yourself getting out of your own way."

He says, we must learn how to spirit, stop living negatively and become a role model, especially for your children. Wisely choose your "circle of five" and don't hang out with anyone who doesn't deserve your time. Share your ideas with the world. Understand that "selfish" isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Tired of going nowhere fast? How to get Out of Your Own Way" may help motivate you. Or, maybe not. There's no doubt that this book will help readers to stop sabotaging themselves and their careers. Gibson's book offers sound advice mixed in with personal anecdotes that well-illustrate his points, and his words will resonate with today's youth. "How to Get Out of Your Own Way" seems geared more toward younger readers in need of a boost. Gibson, in fact, devotes several pages to teens and an entire segment to dating/mating issues.

If you've been in business for awhile, "How to Get Out of Your Own Way" probably isn't a good fit for you. But for new grads or someone who's landed that first important job, you'll have a hard time finding something better to read.



of L.A.'s Watts neighborhood, Gib-get in trouble. Gangs were all was absent and his mother was an avoided the worst. It helped that he had a regular church life. He

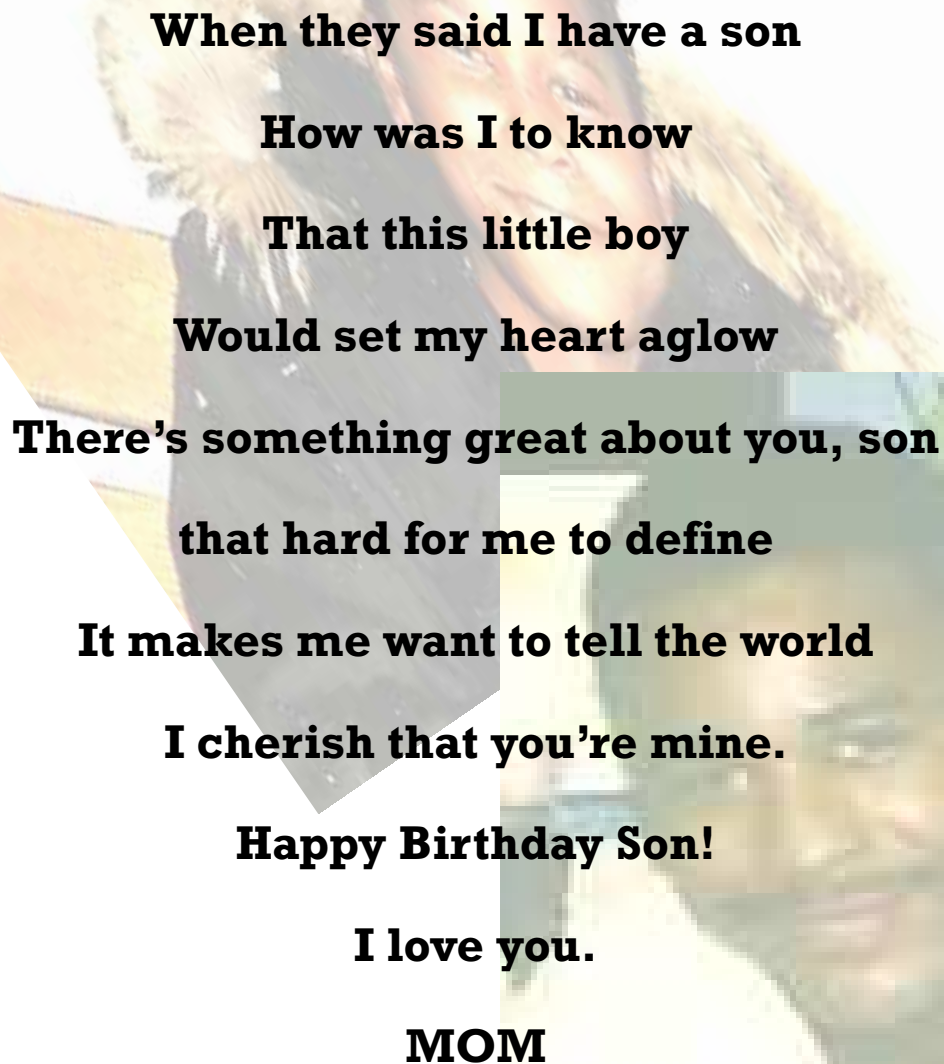
which led him to win a talent con-a multifaceted career. Gibson is name to fans of his movies and mu-

to realize that God's purpose for wants to give people permission to book, is the result.

are better circumstances you can enough to find them is "technically

think differently. Find a positive clean up your surroundings. Be-

**Happy Birthday to all December Babies  
And a very special birthday to  
Shakaboona Marshall**



**When they said I have a son  
How was I to know  
That this little boy  
Would set my heart aglow  
There's something great about you, son  
that hard for me to define  
It makes me want to tell the world  
I cherish that you're mine.  
Happy Birthday Son!  
I love you.  
MOM**

## The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

### Pennsylvania Prisoner Abuse Scandal Triggers Federal Probe



**By: John Rudolf**  
**Huffington Post, December 1, 2011**

A Pennsylvania state prison where a group of corrections officers stand accused of tormenting and brutalizing inmates will face a federal civil investigation into alleged systematic civil rights abuses, the Justice Department said Thursday.

Seven guards from State Correctional Institution Pittsburgh, a medium-security facility, have been arrested since September and face state criminal charges including rape, assault, witness intimidation and official oppression. The most serious charges were brought against Harry Nicoletti, 59, a guard indicted on 92 felony and misdemeanor counts, including 10 counts of institutional rape.

An investigator's report from the Allegheny County district attorney's office details pervasive and unchecked abuse of prisoners by Nicoletti, who allegedly targeted gay or transsexual inmates and those convicted of sex offenses against children. The other guards are charged with assaulting inmates and using intimidation to keep the abuse secret.

Nicoletti and the other indicted guards have maintained their innocence.

The federal probe will examine whether officers at the Pittsburgh facility "systematically targeted prisoners for violence and other abuse" and whether administrators failed to protect inmates from violence and sexual abuse by both guards and other prisoners, the Justice Department said in a statement.

Federal investigators will also examine whether mentally ill inmates at another Pennsylvania prison were provided substandard medical care and subjected to "excessively prolonged periods of isolation."

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# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

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Bret Grote, an investigator and organizer with the Human Rights Coalition, an activist group that documents abuse in the Pennsylvania prisons system, called the federal civil rights investigation a long overdue step.

"This is a human rights atrocity that's been going on," Grote said. "It is absolutely unconscionable."

"Hopefully the investigation will be expanded beyond these two facilities. These types of abuses they're investigating are, to various degrees, happening in facilities all over the state," he said.

A federal civil suit could result in a court order placing the prisons under the control of an outside monitor and requiring the facilities to institute significant reforms.

A spokeswoman for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections did not respond to a request for comment. The Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association previously released a statement declaring that the seven indicted guards are entitled to "due process under the law."

The Pittsburgh prison's senior administrators, including superintendent Melvin Lockett, have already been pushed out in the wake of the inmate abuse scandal. But those administrators are not suspected of criminal activity, according to Stephen A. Zappala Jr., the Allegheny County district attorney.

Corrections department officials are also investigating a report that guards and administrators at a third Pennsylvania prison ran a clandestine "fight club" pitting inmate against inmate. The allegations were detailed in an anonymous letter purportedly written by a corrections officer at the facility in Fayette, a city south of Pittsburgh. The letter was sent to prison officials and the Human Rights Coalition, which shared it with local media in early November.

"The 'fight club octagon' is what they call it," the letter states. "This is assault and was permitted to go on with at time severe injuries involved."

"I saw missing teeth, swollen eyes, broken knuckles, broken hands and other things," it continued.

The letter added that there was a "severe cover-up" underway at the prison that was "no different" than the abuse at the Pittsburgh facility.

A corrections department spokeswoman told the Associated Press that the allegations were being taken seriously.

In the statement announcing its investigation into prison abuses, the Justice Department urged community members with information regarding other civil rights violations at Pennsylvania facilities to write to the agency at [pennsylvaniaprisoncommunity@usdoj.gov](mailto:pennsylvaniaprisoncommunity@usdoj.gov).

## The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

### Conference Against Torture Held in Harrisburg:

On October 28th & 29th, 2011 in Harrisburg, PA. *The Pennsylvania Conference Against Torture* was held through an unusual snow storm - unusual since we don't usually see snow in this part of Pennsylvania before Halloween. The conference was sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, the American Civil Liberties Union PA, the PA Council of Churches and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and was well attended despite the snow, which is a demonstration of the determination of activist against the torture of prisoners. The conference focused on:

1. Ending U.S. Sponsored torture and rendition,
2. Ending torture in our domestic prisons, with a special action planning session to prepare legislation addressing solitary confinement in Pennsylvania,
3. Training for professionals and volunteers who support survivors of torture, trauma, and solitary confinement.

The meeting of great minds was open to the public and brought together allies and activists from around the state to share their ideas, experiences, and expertise concerning U.S. sponsored torture with the primary focus of building a wide network for effective political action and community education. The agenda was structured around three workshops and topics. One workshop, led by Kate Porterfield of New York University, focused on working with survivors of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and chronic complex trauma with a focus on Guantanamo Bay prisoners. Another led by John Humphries of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) focused on U.S. participation in state sponsored torture during the war in Iraq. The third, led by King Downing of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), was a brainstorming session of action steps that people could take to organize

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Mr. King Downing



Ms. Kate Porterfield



Richard "Tut" Carter and King Downing

# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

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and do work against torture; many of the action steps mirrored work that the Human Rights Coalition is currently participating in.

Members of the Human Rights Coalition (HRC-Philly, HRC FedUp!, and HRC-Chester) attended and brought to the event their unique organizational leadership by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and survivors of torture. HRC plans to work with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and AFSC in the next few months, revising draft legislation to abolish or reduce the practice of prolonged solitary confinement in Pennsylvania prisons, with the next steps of holding a legislative hearing to introduce the need for this legislation with members of the Human Rights Coalition's Political Action Committee (HRC-PAC).

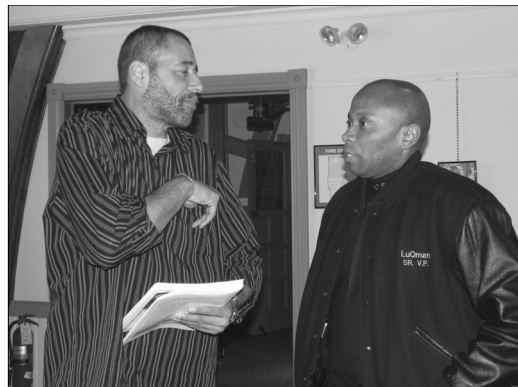
One question remains on my mind: Why aren't there more religious leaders and congregations engaged in anti-torture efforts? Why aren't prisoners in the U.S. just as important as prisoners in Iraq? Give this question to your minister, rabbi, or imam and forward their answer to HRC, 4134 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, PA. **ATTENTION:** Patricia M. Vickers

Written By: Patricia M. Vickers

Photos By: Patricia M. Vickers



**HRC-Philly Members (Bro. LuQman, Bro. Tut, Bro. Sayantan)**



**Bro. LuQman Abdullah and Mr. King Downing**



**HRC-FedUp! Members (Amanda Johnson and Bret Grote)**

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# **December 10th Human Rights Day**

## **"Occupy For Human Rights": The U.S. Government Should Protect the Human Rights of *All* People**

Posted: 12/ 8/11

by Chandra Bhatnagar

December 10th is Human Rights Day, a day when people and governments around the world will celebrate the 63rd anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recommit to protecting and promoting human rights.

This day and the rest of the month also mark the end of the International Year for People of African Descent, an occasion proclaimed by the international community to recognize that "people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected." Events being organized today in the United States and all over the world give us the opportunity to call attention to racial discrimination and the ongoing challenge in "bringing human rights home."

Despite the real progress that has been made in the United States towards eliminating the legacy of Jim Crow, as the ACLU and other civil rights/human rights organizations have documented, racial and ethnic minorities -- and especially peoples of African descent (i.e., black Americans) -- "continue to face intentional, structural, and *de facto* forms of discrimination which manifest in unequal access to quality education, housing, health services, and employment, as well as electoral disfranchisement and discrimination in the criminal justice system." For example, recent U.S. Census Bureau statistics show that 36 percent of black children are living in poverty, the highest rates of any racial group (by comparison, 33 percent of Hispanic children and 12 percent of white children are living in poverty).

So how do we assess the Obama administration's progress in protecting and promoting the human rights of people of African descent?

One measure of evaluation is examining the U.S. government's compliance in implementing its legal obligations under international human rights treaties. The United States Constitution requires our government to treat ratified treaties as the "supreme law of the land" and as a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) -- the most comprehensive anti-discrimination legal instrument in the world-- the United States government is legally bound to fight racism and "take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists."

In the past few years, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (the committee that assesses adherence to ICERD) and other U.N. human rights experts have provided specific and

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# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

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detailed recommendations advising the U.S. government to implement human rights obligations domestically in order to address systemic forms of racism and discrimination.

While there has been real progress in enforcing some anti-discrimination laws in recent years due to the important work of the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, much more needs to be done in order to bring U.S. laws and policies in line with international human rights norms.

So what are some simple steps that the Obama administration could take to better protect the human rights of all people, including people of African descent?

One way the Obama administration can show leadership is by taking concrete measures to fully implement the ICERD and creating a special task force to develop a plan of action to implement ICERD at all government levels.

A second step that the Obama administration can take is to issue an Executive Order to fully implement U.S. treaty obligations and create an accountable and transparent mechanism to integrate international human rights into domestic policy. By taking this action, the administration would ensure the effective implementation and follow-up on recommendations made by U.N. human rights bodies and demonstrate its commitment to protecting and promoting human rights both at home and abroad.

As an architect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt famously stated:

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home -- so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

In a recent statement, the United States government claimed to be:

"Profoundly committed to ending racism and racial discrimination. We remain fully and firmly committed to upholding the human rights of all people and to combating racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance, anti-Semitism and bigotry, including through enhanced implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination."

The Occupy Wall Street movement has shown the world that concerned citizens are rising up to demand dignity, respect, and basic rights. While these popular protests and growing efforts are crucially important in building a domestic movement for justice and equality, it is time for our government to do more to protect equality and opportunity for all. Now is the time for our government to match its noble rhetoric with tangible action by creating a national plan of action for ICERD implementation and by demonstrating a renewed commitment to implementing human rights domestically.

# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

## December 10th, Human Rights Day - Test your knowledge...

From: [Www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsdays/2010/test.asp](http://Www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsdays/2010/test.asp)

Take this quiz to test your knowledge and to celebrate the human rights defenders who have fought for the rights of others. Recognize how YOU can become a human rights defender and act to end discrimination.

- 1) Before being arrested in 1962 in South Africa for his fight against apartheid, Nelson Mandela became the leader of the:  
☐ A) Lord's Resistance Army  
☐ B) African National Congress  
☐ C) US Senate  
☐ D) South African military
- 2) Led by Cesar Chavez, the Mexican-American Farmers Association participated in the \_\_\_\_\_ demanding wages equal to the federal minimum wage?  
☐ A) Delano grape strike  
☐ B) Montgomery bus boycott  
☐ C) Professional Football Player's Strike  
☐ D) New York City transit strike
- 3) Gandhi's method of resistance during the Indian independence movement involved:  
☐ A) Total non-violence  
☐ B) Mass civil disobedience  
☐ C) Peace  
☐ D) All of the above
- 4) Rosa Parks is best known for:  
☐ A) Drinking out of "White Only" drinking fountains  
☐ B) Her work towards the abolishment of slavery  
☐ C) Refusing to give up her seat to a white person on a bus  
☐ D) Being the inspiration for an Outkast song
- 5) Martin Luther King Jr. is the youngest person to receive the \_\_\_\_\_ for his work to end racial segregation and racial discrimination through civil disobedience and other non-violent tactics.  
☐ A) Civil Rights Award  
☐ B) Nobel Peace Prize  
☐ C) Gandhi Peace Award  
☐ D) Pulitzer Prize
- 6) During her time at the United Nations, Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the Commission that drafted and approved what famous document?  
☐ A) Declaration of Independence  
☐ B) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
☐ C) Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
☐ D) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

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# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

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7) Desmond Tutu has fought against:

- ☐ A) Apartheid
- ☐ B) Racism
- ☐ C) Homophobia
- ☐ D) All of the above

8) Why was Raul Hernandez imprisoned for more than two years?

- ☐ A) For his fight for indigenous rights
- ☐ B) His religion
- ☐ C) The alleged murder of Alejandro Feliciano Garcia
- ☐ D) Violent protesting and rioting

9) Human rights activist Shirin Ebadi was the first woman in Iran:

- ☐ A) To graduate from law school
- ☐ B) To receive a Nobel Peace Prize
- ☐ C) To serve as a judge
- ☐ D) Both B and C

10) The possibility of an anti-homosexuality bill in Uganda that would sentence some homosexuals to life in prison or death, spurred this human rights activist to speak up:

- ☐ A) Val Kalende
- ☐ B) Graça Machel
- ☐ C) Angelina Jolie
- ☐ D) Wangari Maathai

11) Juan Carlos Gonzalez Levia suffers from what disability, yet still continues in his fight for the rights of people with disabilities and other human rights violations?

- ☐ A) Blindness
- ☐ B) Paralysis
- ☐ C) Asperger Syndrome
- ☐ D) Learning disabilities

12) As a child, Nkosi Johnson made a powerful impact on public perceptions of the \_\_\_\_\_ pandemic.

- ☐ A) Flu
- ☐ B) Malaria
- ☐ C) Leprosy
- ☐ D) HIV/AIDS

13) Patricia Troncoso maintained a 112-day hunger strike, demanding what?

- ☐ A) Rights of prisoners and detainees
- ☐ B) Indigenous rights
- ☐ C) Women's rights
- ☐ D) A and B

## The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

### Answers to: Test your knowledge:

- 1) **B.** Before he was arrested in 1962 and sentenced to life in prison, Nelson Mandela became the leader of the African National Congress and was an anti-apartheid activist. After serving 27 years in prison, Mandela became the first South African President to be elected in a fully representative democratic election.
- 2) **A.** On 8 September 1965, Filipino American farm workers initiated the Delano grape strike, protesting for higher wages. Six months later, Cesar Chavez led a march of California grape pickers from Delano, California to the State Capitol in Sacramento, to demonstrate their solidarity in the fight for equal rights and fair pay.
- 3) **D.** Although Gandhi was not the creator of non-violent resistance, he was the first to exercise it in the political field on a mass scale. He pioneered satyagraha, which is defined as resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience yet total non-violence.
- 4) **C.** On 1 December 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refused to obey a bus driver who demanded she give up her seat to make room for a white passenger. Her actions sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a political and social protest to oppose the city's policy of racial segregation on public transit. The boycott lasted until 20 December 1955, when the United States Supreme Court declared Alabama and Montgomery laws requiring segregated buses as unconstitutional.
- 5) **B.** Martin Luther King Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 at the age of 35. Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent leader in the African-American civil rights movement. He followed the teachings of Gandhi, using non-violent methods to promote racial equality. He was a leading figure in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the March on Washington in 1963, where he delivered the infamous "I Have a Dream" speech.
- 6) **C.** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. Eleanor Roosevelt played a key role in the drafting of the Declaration within the UN's Commission on Human Rights.
- 7) **D.** Desmond Tutu is a South African activist widely known as an opponent of apartheid. Tutu has been very active in the defense of human rights including his crusade to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, homophobia, poverty and racism. He has received the Nobel Peace Prize (1984), the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism (1986) and the Gandhi Peace Prize (2005).
- 8) **C.** Raul Hernandez, a member of the Me'phaa Indigenous People's Organization (OPIM) and a strong defender of indigenous rights, was arrested and accused of the murder of Alejandro Feliciano Garcia on 1 January 2008. It is widely believed that Hernandez did not commit this crime, but was wrongfully accused based on questionable eyewitness evidence. It is believed that these charges were brought against Hernandez in reprisal for his activities promoting the rights of the

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# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

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Me'phaa indigenous community and exposing abuses by a local political boss and local authorities. On 27 August 2010, he was acquitted of these charges and released from prison.

**9) D.** Shirin Ebadi was the first person from Iran and the first Muslim woman to receive a Nobel Peace Prize. She is also the first woman in the history of Iranian justice to have served as a judge. Ebadi is an Iranian human rights activist recognized for her efforts working for democracy and women's, children's and refugee rights.

**10) A.** Val Kalende is a Ugandan activist who has worked with gay rights organizations such as Freedom and Roam Uganda. She has come out to the Ugandan and international community as a lesbian and strongly opposes the passing of an anti-homosexuality bill. With the possibility of experiencing isolation, insults, threats and violence, Val Kalende is a courageous woman who should be admired for her fight against discrimination.

**11) A.** Juan Carlos Gonzalez Levia, who is blind and currently serving a four-year sentence under house arrest, is President of the Cuban Foundation for Human Rights and has been a vigorous human rights advocate, lending support to other activists and journalists who have come under attack. He also established and heads the Independent Fraternity for the Blind in Cuba, which advocates for the rights of the physically disabled.

**12) D.** Nkosi Johnson was a South African child born HIV-positive who made a profound impact on public perceptions of HIV and AIDS before his untimely death at the age of 12. At the time of his death, he was the longest surviving HIV-positive born child. Nkosi was the keynote speaker at the 13th International AIDS Conference, where he encouraged people with HIV/AIDS to be open about the disease and fight for equality. Nelson Mandela referred to Nkosi as an "icon for the struggle of life."

**13) D.** Patricia Troncoso is an indigenous rights activist who staged a 112 day hunger strike in Chile to bring awareness to the rights of the Mapuche people and also protesting the inhuman conditions which Mapuche prisoners are subjected to in the Chilean jail where they are detained. Several Mapuche Indians have been in jail since 2001, convicted of burning forest lands, but they have always maintained their innocence. Although not Mapuche herself, as a human rights activist, Troncoso supports the Mapuche in their fight to recover land taken from them.

## Is Innocence Irrelevant?

*As you read, ask yourself if justice is being served by the judicial system when it criminally tries and convicts individuals while knowing of their innocence, while prosecutors are not held accountable for their illegal misconduct at individuals trials, and while the courts and intentionally deny fair trials to others.*

# TIME-BARRED, JUSTICE DENIED

Over the last two decades exonerations of the wrongfully convicted have become commonplace. Thanks to attorneys like Barry Scheck of the Innocence Project and O.J. Simpson trial fame, there has been a parade of prisoners in the news being liberated from unjust convictions. Recently, Pennsylvania had its eleventh exoneration using DNA and numerous others have been exonerated by other means. Indeed, it was reported on July 27, 2010, in the Philadelphia Inquirer that Kenneth Granger was exonerated from his wrongful conviction after thirty years of professing his innocence.

What these exonerations have done is expose the broken spokes in the wheels of justice. No longer is it debatable whether the North American Criminal justice system routinely imprisons the innocent. It is a cold hard fact. The question we must ask is what happens to the wrongfully convicted who cannot afford an attorney of Barry Scheck's caliber? In a bygone era they could have called upon that great Philly icon of justice, Cecil B. Moore, Esquire. But he is long gone, and attorneys of his pedigree are few and far between.

So they go to trial with an attorney, likely court appointed, who has a masters in mediocrity. As such, ineffectiveness abounds and they are needlessly convicted. Now, their only option to recover their freedom is the appellate system. However, from the first day after their conviction, "time" has become their arch nemeses. Every tic, toc of the clock matters. One wasted minute could mean the difference between justice received or justice denied. But, why?

In 1993, the PA General Assembly, purportedly to make a fairer, more effective appellate process; replaced the Post Conviction "Hearing" Act with the Post Conviction "Relief" Act (or PCRA). The PCRA subsumed all common law writs including the state writ of habeas corpus. In other words, all roads to freedom has to go through the PCRA. A few years later the General Assembly amended the PCRA, recodifying its statutory rules. As a result, instead of creating a fairer and more effective system, what the amendment did was create a series of tolls which now prevents legitimate claims of innocence from review and relief.

The most expensive of these tolls is the PCRA one year statute of limitations, A.K.A. "the PCRA Time-Bar." Under this rule a defendant has exactly one year after their conviction becomes final to come up with proof of their innocence, that they were denied of a fair trial, or that a miscarriage of justice has occurred. However, the second that year is up, an invisible deadbolt slides into place to seal the doors of redress. Unless you can pay a late fee by meeting one of the three extremely expensive exceptions, you are done. Most times game over.

To put these exceptions into their proper context. Meeting one of them would be the equivalence of an African American ex felon, with no job, a North Philly address, and bad credit qualifying for a bank loan to start his own business: possible but not probable. Thus, this rule has proved devastating to thousands of Pennsylvania prisoners attempting to prove their innocence.

Most notable among these prisoners is freedom writer and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Everybody knows his case. Though what's not known is that it is not a lack evidence to prove his innocence that has

*(Continued on page 26)*

## Is Innocence Irrelevant?

*As you read, ask yourself if justice is being served by the judicial system when it criminally tries and convicts individuals while knowing of their innocence, while prosecutors are not held accountable for their illegal misconduct at individuals trials, and while the courts and intentionally deny fair trials to others.*

(Continued from page 25)

kept him in prison. Rather, it is that the PCRA 1-year time-bar has prevented his evidence from being considered by the keepers of justice that has kept him imprisoned. Remove the time-bar, and Mumia would likely go free.

Lesser known is Carmen Woods. He has been in prison almost 30 years for a murder he did not commit based solely on testimony of an unbelievable witness named Homer Lane. A witness who was a fugitive from Florida authorities with a criminal record for rape and auto theft. From day one Carmen has maintained his innocence and that Homer lane had lied. Well, last year Carmen finally uncovered proof positive that Homer had lied and that Philly police and D.A. made a secrete deal with Homer that he could keep the spoils from his crimes in Florida for his testimony against Carmen. Normally this kind of provocative new evidence would trigger a new trial. Not here. Carmen was time-barred. (To read more about Carmen Wood #AK-8474, write him at 301 Morea Rd, Frackville, PA 17932; or go to [freecarmenwoods@verizon.com](mailto:freecarmenwoods@verizon.com), or go to [freecarmenwoods.com](http://freecarmenwoods.com)).

Ironically, residing one cell block over from Carmen another example is Michael Holmes. He uncovered a witness who saw the actual perpetrator in a murder for which he was convicted. This witness confirms his innocence. In most case this evidence would trigger a new trial. Instead, he is time-barred. Following suit, on the same cell block, is Michael Baroni. At his trial for murder the trial court failed to instruct the jury on the concept of "beyond a reasonable doubt". This is known as a "structural error". This type of trial error is strictly prohibited under both the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions and usually means an automatic new trial. Not here. Time-barred. In the case of both Michaels the PA courts have simply given a wink and a nod to the injustices caused by the PA 1-year time-bar. Instead of facilitating justice, this rule is impeding it.

All three of these men are serving Life without the possibility of parole. Therefore, the harsh reality is that they will die in prison if this is not changed. For the innocent and those denied of a fair trial, this is not the way the justice system is supposed to work. Those who are innocent or have received constitutionally infirm trials must have a way to obtain redress. Rules that block innocent men/women from obtaining their freedom needlessly cost taxpayers and are sins against humanity. For this reason the public must support the repeal of the 1995 Amendments to the PCRA.

By: Lee A. Horton, #CN-2067  
SCI-Mahanoy, 301 Morea Rd.  
Frackville, PA 17932

# Interview with Dr. Umar Abdullah-Johnson

By Patricia M. Vickers, Human Rights Coalition

*At 37 years old, Dr. Umar Abdullah-Johnson is a guiding light in the fields of Black Psychology and Black Education. He is a blood relative of Fredrick Douglass, the great Black abolitionist and orator. Dr. Abdullah-Johnson specializes in working with at-risk, violent, suicidal and depressed African-American boys and girls. He's been featured on various Black talk shows, college campuses, workshops, conferences and panels in the United States and is considered an authority on the education of African-American children and on mental health in the Black community. He is the president and founder of the National Movement to Save Black Boys, an organization based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

*After reading Dr. Abdullah-Johnson's comments on reported cases (in Chicago, New York, and New Orleans) concerning the handcuffing of six and seven year old Black boys in the schools who were "out of control", I was eager to talk to him one-on-one. I personally have seen so many of our youth (smart little guys that I've known since they were toddlers) drop out of school and go to prison and each time I've asked myself, WHY? What happened between 1<sup>st</sup> Grade and High School? I contacted Dr. Abdullah-Johnson asking for interview and was delighted when he agreed. Maybe our unanswered questions will be answered. Maybe we can bring an end to the "Schools to Prisons Pipeline".*



**Human Rights Coalition: Greetings Dr. Abdullah-Johnson. We appreciate that you've agreed to grant the Human Rights Coalition a personal interview. For our readers who are not familiar with your work, could you give us a synopsis of the 'National Movement to Save Black Boys' and what you meant when you said; The school system has been transformed into nothing more than a prison preparation industry?**

*(Continued on page 28)*

## Human Rights Coalition Report

(Continued from page 27)

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** I have discovered, as one of the only African-American male Nationally Certified School Psychologists in the U.S., that there is a five stage process, Racism's Rites of Passage for Black Boys, that encompasses the life of nearly all African-American males in this country. These five stages are different but yet they are all related, and operate with such efficiency that only 1:4 Black boys in the U.S. will earn a high school diploma. The five stages include 1) Mis-Education, 2) Psychiatric Medication, 3) Juvenile Incarceration, 4) Psychological Frustration/Alienation, 5) Pre-mature Extermination. The goal of the National Movement to Save Black Boys (NMSBB) is two-fold: A) to educate parents and concerned citizens on the mis-education/special education/psychotropic medication trap, and B) to advocate and assist parents and organizations who are fighting to prevent economic exploitation by way of academic & mental health abuse. Education and Advocacy is our aim.

**Human Rights Coalition:** Can you explain exactly what is the "Schools to Prisons Pipeline", who is responsible for creating it and why, and how is this implemented through out the nation?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** Public education has always been designed to ensure that there would be an elite, and a servant class to perpetuate the capitalist structure of society. Black children coming from a legacy of enslavement naturally fell within the servant class. However, even the servant class had to be given a basic skills education to ensure there labor could be properly exploited by the corporate structure. However, in the post-Civil Rights era, jobs have been sold off to 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, and at the same time illegal street drugs have given birth to a bolstering Crime Industry, fueled by mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug related activity, which has rendered the original purpose of public education irrelevant. Since public education is longer needed by the industrial sector to ensure that Black males are functionally literate, the goal of public education has reversed, with the new goal being to ensure that Black males are Functionally Illiterate. With crime as an industry, the Black male is no longer needed as a laborer, but has become the commodity itself. The concept of a School-to-Prison pipeline speaks to their being a direct relationship between these two industries and, more specifically, to the point that the school's sole job is to prepare the Black male for prison.

**Human Rights Coalition:** For five years you served as a school psychologist in the 5<sup>th</sup> largest public school district in America – the school district of Philadelphia. How does the "Schools to Prisons Pipeline" work in Philly schools to prep poor children for incarceration?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** Blacks in Philadelphia are 10% of the states population but comprise 50% of the prison population. Less than half of all 4<sup>th</sup> grade Black boys in Pennsylvania can read on grade level. Less than half of all 8<sup>th</sup> grade Black boys in Pennsylvania can do math on grade level. Pennsylvania has one of the highest achievement and per pupil expenditure gaps in the country.

**Human Rights Coalition:** Who is it that stands to benefit from the "Schools to Prisons Pipeline" and the criminalization of our children at public schools? Would you say that this is a new issue? If so why is this occurring today? If not approximately when was the Pipeline set in motion?

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## Human Rights Coalition Report

*(Continued from page 28)*

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** No, this is not a new issue. The American Social Order has always sought to keep Black males “in their place” by imposing socially accepted strategies designed to ensure that their chance at a high quality lifestyle is made minimal. An entire industry of Black Male Failure has blossomed as a result of the Psycho-Academic War. I know psychiatrists, therapists, psychiatric nurses, probation officers, police officers, parole officers, judges, attorneys, politicians, so-called not-for-profit organizations who have made fortunes simply by working with, or investing in, the failure of Black men. The question is no longer who stands to benefit from the Psycho-Academic War, but rather who doesn’t benefit, directly or indirectly?

**Human Rights Coalition:** We know of the collateral impact the so-called “war on drugs” against people of color has had on Caucasian Americans. Will the “schools to prisons pipeline” have a collateral impact on Caucasian children the same? Should poor Caucasian parents be concerned, as well, about the “schools to prison pipeline”?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** Yes, the de-industrialization of American cities will leave many Caucasian males unable to provide for themselves or their children. However, the difference is that the White male is a victim of capitalism, which never ensures that the needs of all can be met, and thrives off the existence of a freely exploitable cheap source of labor. Thusly, a White male can improve his chances of advancing through upward mobility by infiltrating and accommodating the capitalist structure of American financial processes. In other words, he can get a hair cut, assume middle-class cultural dispositions, earn an MBA, and work his way to the top. The Black male, irrespective of class or education will still find himself oppressed by the invisible glass ceiling that prevents him from finding a backdoor to success despite his personal accomplishments.

**Human Rights Coalition:** What are the schools’ policies and/or procedures that criminalize our children and are they a violation of the human rights of children?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** Schools love to put Black boys in special education for behavioral challenges, which is illegal. Once these boys are put in special education they are subject to an inferior education, which puts them at-risk for future marginalization in the society. Many teachers are giving professional psychological & psychiatric advice to parents, which is totally illegal and unacceptable, as they are operating outside their realm of expertise and training. However, many poor parents assume that teachers are trained in mental health, which they are not. A significant proportion of Black boys prescribed psychiatric medicine are done so solely through the constant complaints and exaggerated symptomatology of classroom teachers who have been spoiled by psychiatric drug company propaganda into believing that every Black boy in America needs to be medicated. The interesting fact is that behavioral modification strategies are just as effective as medication towards eradicating inattentive and/or hyperactive behavior. The difference is that behavioral modification teaches a child how to act whereas drugs simply suppress behavioral symptoms and are accompanied by all types of life altering side effects. Still further, what is often described as ADHD, Conduct Disorder & Oppositional Defiant Disorder is nothing more than the natural reactions of children to mistreatment by school personnel, emotional challenges stemming from personal or social challenges, behavioral reactions to family issues such as domestic violence or fatherlessness, daydreaming that tends to accompany a lack of relevant instruction in the classroom, carelessness result-

*(Continued on page 30)*

## Human Rights Coalition Report

*(Continued from page 29)*

ing from a lack of academic motivation, and/or daydreaming as a result of trauma and abuse. I have found that much of what is being labeled as symptoms of ADHD is really resulting from internal emotional issues that can be successfully treated had schools only been more interested in how Black children feel, as opposed to only how they behave. Behavioral conformity is more important than emotional health.

**Human Rights Coalition:** Will you elaborate for us, if you will, on the decreased funding for education and increased funding for prisons and the interconnection of the two.

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** The State controls both the school and the prison. There is a natural conflict of interest that results because of these circumstances. Because Black men are no longer needed in the job sector they become prison fodder through which other people are given jobs. The great contradiction of the prison movement lies in the fact that it costs more to incarcerate than to educate. Clearly, education would be a better use of funds. However, since there is no room for the Black male at the table of America Capitalism, his sole use is as a commodity to fuel the private prison for profit industry.

**Human Rights Coalition:** Would it be logical for the opponents of social ous to education and opponents of the prison industrial complex to combine into a coalition force to end budget cuts to education and prevent budget increases to prisons for expansions?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** Yes, it is logical but not likely. The prison lobbyists and propaganda machine that has everyone thinking that the Black male is what's wrong with society have effectively created an atmosphere of fear towards the Black male, where many feel their families are made safer with every Black man removed from society. Still further, the amount of money that is available to pay-off opposition remains quite high and many who enter into the prison abolition movement are often railroaded by offers they feel they cannot refuse. Finding those who can retain their integrity despite lucrative financial offers to do otherwise is a difficult task.

**Human Rights Coalition:** Is there something we as parents, as a people, as advocates for human rights can do to for our youth, personally or legally.

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** Yes, 1) organize parents to use their collective force, on the state and federal levels, to bring about a change in education policies and law that allows the "refer-test-diagnose-drug" model of education to be disbanded. 2) Educate parents about school and mental health laws so their children can stop being exploited by the Psychotropic Drug Industry & Public Mis-Education System, 3) Encourage funding for recruitment projects for the emergency training and hiring of Black men to come into the school system as many Black boys are simply in need of effective mentorship by someone who looks like them and has experienced their struggles.

**Human Rights Coalition:** What is the impact of the "schools to prisons pipeline" on our families and communities? And what are things we should be doing to stop this?

*(Continued on page 31)*

## Human Rights Coalition Report

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** The schools to prison pipeline is turning Black people into a permanent underclass right before our eyes. The mass incarceration process is actually responsible for the rise in juvenile crime, as many Black boys are left without their incarcerated fathers which often leads to hopelessness and delinquent behavior, and the cycle is reborn in yet another generation. Ultimately, the Black community has to organize and mobilize as we did during the “60s to bring about an immediate halt to this most inhumane system.

**Human Rights Coalition:** Would you be willing to elaborate on juveniles on trial as adults and serving a Life sentence in prison without parole?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** The rise in Black male juveniles being tried and incarcerated as adults is the direct result of the influence of the 1980 Federal Anti-Violence Initiative which sought to “prove” that Black males were biologically disposed to engage in violent crime. Despite not being able to prove its assertions, the American public was still left with the belief that Black men were natural born killers. This collective belief system infected the political thinking of politicians and others who began to see Black male crime as an irreversible curse of nature. Thusly, whereas juvenile intervention historically sought to repair and rehabilitate young men, in the case of Black male juveniles, there was no longer an interest in rehabilitating but rather permanently incarcerating these youth who were deemed to be natural born killers and committers of crime. As you can see, historical beliefs and notions about Black men criminality, born during the days of slavery, still factors significantly in discussions of race and crime.

**Human Rights Coalition:** How can you be reached for interviews and bookings?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** I can be reached at [DrUmarJohnson@Yahoo.Com](mailto:DrUmarJohnson@Yahoo.Com) or (215) 989-9858. I provide free special education consultation to parents and motivational talks to prison inmates and juvenile detention centers. Although my work is primarily aimed at the African-American community, I am willing to help anyone who is in need.

**Human Rights Coalition:** The HRC’s newsletter (The Movement) is distributed to primarily prisoners, the family members of prisoners, and supporters who oppose the Criminal Industrial Complex, the U.S. Injustice System, and all tactics used in the oppression of the poor. Is there anything additional you would like to communicate to our readers?

**Dr. Abdullah-Johnson:** Just to say that we all need to politically educate ourselves and participate in the war against our human rights. As my ancestor Frederick Douglass used to say, “IF THERE IS NO STRUGGLE, THERE IS NO PROGRESS!”

## **What is the history of solitary confinement in the United States?**

The Quakers first instituted solitary confinement at Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia, believing that total isolation and silence would lead to penitence (hence, the term 'penitentiary' was coined). The use of solitary confinement greatly diminished by the early 20th century. However, due to prisoner violence against guards, Marion prison in Illinois adopted a "permanent lockdown" policy in 1983, in which prisoners were held in isolation for 23 hours per day. Other prisons began to follow suit and in 1989, California built Pelican Bay Prison sole to house prisoners in isolation (the first "Supermax" prison). Today, more than 40 states operate Supermax facilities.

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE  
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# THE MOVEMENT

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## September 28, 2011 Abuse Allegations Mount At SCI Pittsburgh



**Harry Nicoletti**  
**Age: 60**  
**Charges:** sexual assault, indecent assault, terroristic threats and related charges

**Credit: KDKA**  
**From Robert Mangino**  
**Heard On NEWSRADIO 1020 KDKA**

PITTSBURGH (NEWSRADIO 1020 KDKA) — The investigation into claims of abuse at SCI Pittsburgh is ramping up after the Tuesday arrest of Harry Nicoletti, a correctional officer at the prison.

Nicoletti is facing 92 counts related to the alleged sexual and physical abuse of prisoners under his care.

Allegheny County District Attorney Stephen Zapala, Jr. indicated Wednesday that more arrests are on the way, with up to 11 other SCI Pittsburgh employees facing additional charges.

NewsRadio 1020 KDKA's Robert Mangino talks with Bret Grote, an organizer with the Human Rights Coalition, about how widespread abuses like the ones alleged in Nicoletti's case are in the prison system, and whether convicted criminals could be seen as deserving such abuse from the corrections officers who oversee them.

## HRC PA Prison Report - November 21, 2011

**6 More arrested in Abu Ghraib on the Allegheny scandal:** The District Attorney of Allegheny County and the Department of Corrections filed charges this week against six guards employed at SCI Pittsburgh, for assault, official oppression, conspiracy and terroristic threats. The charges are part of a larger grand jury investigation that has led to the firing of 8 administrators and 92 counts of abuse against guard, Harry Nicoletti. The following are summaries of the six criminal complaints filed with the police last week on behalf of the commonwealth:



**Sean Thomas Storey**  
**Age: 26**  
**Charges:** official oppression, simple assault and terroristic threats

Sean Thomas Storey of Mount Washington surrendered November 15 on charges following a grand jury investigation into the physical and sexual abuse of prisoners at

State Correction Institution Pittsburgh. Storey was first named in connection to the charges against Harry Nicoletti by Inmate Casey Oliver, who witnessed the sexual and physical abuse at SCI Pittsburgh, and was also ordered to contaminate the food of the targeted prisoners on a daily basis.

During the course of the investigation, prisoner Michael Beck was interviewed. Beck was convicted of a sexual offense with a female under the age of sixteen. Beck reported that he was assaulted on two occasions by prison guards. These assaults consisted of slaps to the face, body punches, and having his head flushed down the toilet. On one occasion, a guard came to his cell and harassed him for his crime. When Beck re-

## What's The News!

sponded, he reported that the guard entered his cell, pushed him into his sink and punched him in the chest with both fists, while verbally threatening him. During the interview, Beck identified Storey out of a photo lineup as possibly the guard that assaulted him. In another interview, Beck's abuser was confirmed as Storey by Casey Oliver. Oliver said he observed Storey take his shirt off, go into the cell, and come out sweating with some blood on him, matching the incident described by Beck.



### **Jerome Lynch**

**Age: 35**

**Charges: official oppression, simple assault, conspiracy, intimidation of a witness, criminal solicitation and terroristic threats**

Jerome Lynch of the Northside of Pittsburgh surrendered on November 15 on charges following the grand jury investigation of sexual and physical assault taking place late last year at SCI Pittsburgh. Lynch was charged with five counts of official oppression, two counts of simple assault, three counts of conspiracy, two counts of intimidation of witnesses, one count of criminal solicitation, and one count terroristic threats. In the affidavit of the criminal investigator in charge of the grand jury investigation several inmate accounts described Lynch accompanying prison guard Harry Nicoletti to verbally, sexually, and physically assault prisoners on the F block of SCI Pittsburgh over the course of two years. The affidavit includes accounts of Lynch ordering prisoners to steal from other prisoners and deprive them of food, and bribing inmates interviewed by the criminal investigators.

One of the prisoners interviewed by the criminal investigator was William Zuschlag, who gave an account of Lynch being led into his cell by fellow guard Kelly, who told him to, "do what you have to

do." Kelly had repeatedly verbally and physically harassed Zuschlag since he arrived on the block. After Kelly left, Lynch proceeded to punch, kick, and choke Zuschlag while threatening to kill him and give him a "lead enema".



### **Tory Kelley**

**Age: 40**

**Charges: simple assault, official oppression, intimidation of a witness, conspiracy, terroristic threats and stalking**

Tory D. Kelly of Aliquippa, PA was charged with multiple counts of assault, causing bodily injury, official

oppression, and terrorizing prisoners at SCI-Pittsburgh last week. He was also charged with conspiring with Harry Nicoletti, Kevin Freiss, and Jerome Lynch to commit these crimes. Prisoners Turner, Zuschlag, Jones, Friend, Frederick, Walters, Shoemaker, and Vanwy all swore affidavits that they were assaulted by Tory Kelly, most of them on a regular basis. Multiple witnesses testified they frequently saw Kelly enter into targeted prisoners' cells with no shirt, wearing black leather, fingerless gloves, and come out sweaty and splattered with blood. He reportedly assaulted some prisoners on a daily basis, sometimes twice a day. He frequently threatened to kill his victims, and was reported to say "If you say anything to anybody about this, I'll splatter your blood all over your cell" to several of his victims.

Prisoner Zuschlag stated on his third day on F block, Kelly entered his cell while an unidentified guard stayed outside the cell acting as a lookout. Kelly punched him in the side of the head, threw him against the wall then to the floor. He then pulled Zuschlag to his feet and punched him in the ribs and smacked him several times. Kelly hit Zuschlag approximately a dozen times. Kelly wore

## What's The News!

the usual black leather, fingerless gloves, and threatened further physical violence if Zuschlag told anyone about the incident. Kelly came to his cell to assault him twice a day on most days, and usually had a lookout. The lookout was usually Freiss. This account is very similar to all of his victims' accounts.

Tory Kelly didn't only target sex offenders for abuse. Frederick is a Caucasian drug offender. He was choked by prison guard Freiss sometime between late December 2010 and early January 2011 after he was seen passing a cigarette to a black prisoner who was held in an isolation cell for new inmates. Nicoletti then entered his cell and threatened to beat Frederick's face in with a pair of handcuffs because he "shared a cigarette with a n-word." Later, Frederick was called to the control bubble by Nicoletti. When inmate Frederick reached the doorway, Kelly grabbed him by the back of his neck and started squeezing hard. Kelly said, "I can break his f-ing neck right now if you want me to." Nicoletti said, "Don't do that." Frederick was then sent back to his cell after the guards were done talking to him. Nicoletti, Freiss, and Kelly are all Caucasian males.



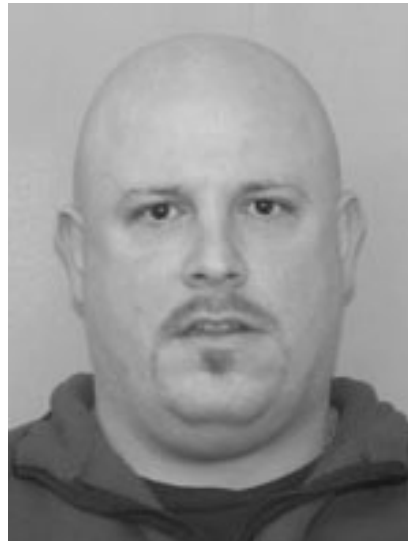
**Kevin Friess**  
**Age:31**  
**Charges: simple assault, official oppression, conspiracy and witness intimidation**

Kevin Friess, a thirty-one-year-old white male was arrested on 20 counts for his role in abusing prisoners at SCI Pittsburgh. He was charged with six counts of simple as-

sault; seven counts of official oppression, six counts of criminal conspiracy; and one count of intimidation of a witness.

The criminal complaint asserts that Friess perpe-

trated simple assault against Thomas Frederick, Steven Friend, Jessy Newsome, James Turner, Randy Jones, and Melvin Nicklow. Simple assault is attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing bodily injury, or attempting to physically menace a person by putting them in fear of imminent bodily injury. The complaint does not provide specifics as to the role of Friess in committing these acts, though he is alleged to have conspired with Harry Nicoletti to abuse prisoners and suppress facts of the abuse.



**Bruce Lowther**  
**Age:33**  
**Charges: official oppression, simple assault and conspiracy**

On December 1, 2010 Jerry Newsome was brought into SCI Pittsburgh's receiving and intake block where he was

housed for 7 days. Newsome informed investigators that as soon as he got on the block Guard Nicoletti began harassing him, asking him what crime he had been accused of, and slapping him across the face. Another prisoner on the block witnessed two guards, one identified by Newsome as Nicoletti, and one later identified by Newsome as Bruce Lowther, remove Newsome's cellmate from his cell, so that they could shove his head into the toilet.

Newsome told investigators that Bruce Lowther held his head down in the toilet for 40 seconds and then flushed it. Following the incident, Newsome was asked by guards why his head was put in the toilet and he responded, "Because I was ordered to." Guards then informed Newsome that this was the wrong answer, and he should respond to their question of why he put his head in the toilet with, "Because I am a worthless piece of shit." Later that week, Newsome passed guard Bruce Lowther

## What's The News!

while walking with another prisoner. Lowther asked Newsome why he put his head in the toilet, if he was scared, and informed him that once he was transferred, "They will f-k you up at Camp Hill."

The police complaint of probable cause to arrest Bruce Lowther was based on Lowther being assigned to the specific duties and time shifts that Jerry Newsome was on the intake block and additional statements from eye witnesses. Prisoners who worked on the block informed investigators that they were recruited by many guards, including Lowther, to harass, assault, and contaminate the food of new prisoners on a regular basis. Lowther is being charged with simple assault and participating in illegal activity in an official capacity as a correctional officer.



**Brian Olinger**  
**Age:32**  
**Charges: official oppression**

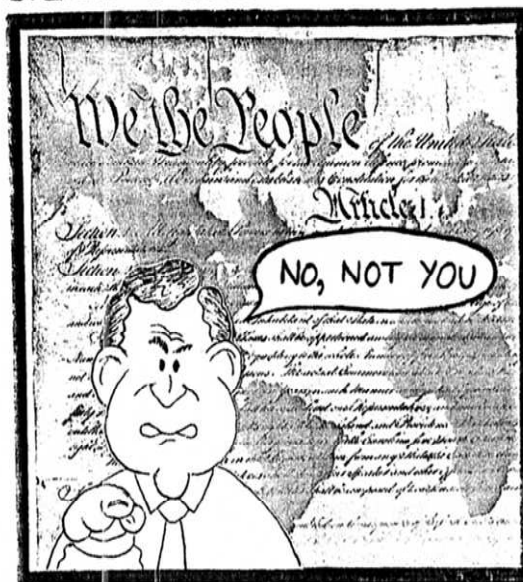
Brian Olinger, 32, is also among the correctional officers who were charged with physical and sexual crimes against prisoners at SCI-

Pittsburgh. Although Olinger was not charged with assault, in the criminal complaint written by investigators, it was documented that Olinger did engage in perverse acts. Prisoner Casey Oliver, who worked on F Block from March 2009 through February 2011, reported that Olinger urinated and possibly defecated on mentally challenged prisoner Kenneth Vanwy's bed, covered it with a sheet, and forced Vanwy to lie down on the bed. In a separate incident, prisoner Patrick Hogan witnessed Olinger enter Vanwy's cell. After leaving the cell, Olinger admitted to Hogan that he had urinated on Vanwy's mattress.

**Business as Usual:** The six prison guards who surrendered last week have been charged due to

their participation in a two year long reign of terror led by Harry Nicoletti, who had 92 counts brought against him two months ago for raping and abusing prisoners. Though the accounts in the affidavits from this criminal investigation are gruesome, the Human Rights Coalition has received accounts from across Pennsylvania that show that the acts carried out by these officers are only slight extremes of business as usual in the Department of Corrections. Racism, sexual violence, physical and psychological abuse, and the warehousing of prisoners in long-term solitary confinement are all features of a pervasive pattern of torture and human rights violations occurring throughout PA prisons.

### GLEE CLUB



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## THE MOVEMENT

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# 31 Witnesses Set To Testify During Hearing For Suspended Prison Guard

December 7, 2011



(Photo Credit: KDKA)

PITTSBURGH (KDKA) — A preliminary hearing got underway today for the suspended State Correctional Institution-Pittsburgh prison guard who is facing more than 90 counts in connection with the alleged sexual and physical abuse of inmates.

The hearing for Harry Nicoletti could last up to three days with 31 witnesses scheduled to testify, many of them still incarcerated.

Allegheny County Assistant District Attorney John Pittman filed two additional charges, bringing the total against Nicoletti to 94 counts. More could be added later.

A former inmate, who is now out on parole, was one of the witnesses who testified during today's hearing. He said he was an inmate worker in the area where Nicoletti was as-

ing to the former inmate testimony, one prisoner was forced to strip while Nicoletti allegedly poked him with a room stick.

This month, the Justice Department announced that it will be investigating the claims of prisoner abuse at the SCI Pittsburgh facility.

The investigation will be looking into possible violations of amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Last month, six guards turned themselves in on charges resulting from the abuse investigation.

*Stay with KDKA for the latest on this developing story.*

*Listen to Robert Mangino every weekday from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on NewsRadio 1020 KDKA!*

# New rules slashing crack cocaine sentences go into effect

By Carol Cratty, CNN

Wed November 2, 2011

Washington (CNN) -- For thousands of prison inmates convicted of crack cocaine charges, the prison doors will be opening early, thanks to sentencing changes easing the disparity between the penalties for possessing or distributing crack vs. powder cocaine.

Congress passed the Fair Sentencing Act in August 2010, changing the 100-to-1 disparity between minimum sentences for crack and powder cocaine to 18 to 1. The U.S. Sentencing Commission voted this summer to make the reduced crack penalties retroactive, which means more than 12,000 current inmates are eligible to request reduced sentences.

The retroactivity took effect Tuesday. The Sentencing Commission estimates that inmates will have an average of three years chopped off their sentences. An estimated 1,800 inmates became eligible for release immediately because they had already served enough time, and prosecutors did not object to their release.

## What's The News!

Critics of the old sentencing system say it was unfair to African-Americans, who make up the majority of those convicted of possessing and distributing crack.

"This really has been one of the great stains on our federal criminal justice system for 20 years or more," said Michael Nachmanoff, the federal public defender for the Eastern District of Virginia. "This disparity between the punishment for crack cocaine and powder was really unjustified."

Nachmanoff noted under the old guidelines someone who had just 5 grams of crack cocaine would receive a mandatory minimum sentence of five years. But someone would have to have 500 grams of powdered cocaine to receive a similar sentence.

Nachmanoff's district is believed to have the largest number of people in the country -- between 800 and 900 people -- who might benefit from the reduced sentencing guidelines on crack. He said 75 of his clients were expected to be released on the first day of retroactivity.

"A lot of people have been sitting in jail for a long time not because they didn't commit crimes, but because the punishment they faced was too harsh and unjustified compared to other people who had committed similar crimes in similar ways," Nachmanoff told CNN. He said reduced sentences will not be automatic. Judges must review the cases and determine whether an early release of an inmate represents a danger to the community.

William Johnson, a Virginia man convicted of conspiracy to distribute cocaine in 1997, was one of those released Tuesday. "It's unbelievable. I'm ecstatic," Johnson told CNN. "The 39-year-old father of four said he only found out Monday he would be released the next day.

Under the terms of his original sentence, he would have been eligible for release in October 2018, and that sentence was reduced a few years ago so that his revised release date was June 2014.

Johnson, who identified himself as an African-American, said there seemed to be a racial component to the different sentences given out in the past for crack and powder cocaine, but he said he wouldn't describe himself as bitter.

"I don't have time for it," said Johnson. He said he's concentrating on catching up with family members and making plans to go into business cleaning office buildings.

Families Against Mandatory Minimums has fought for changes in mandatory cocaine penalties for years.

"Most mandatory sentences are so high and so rigid that judges can't get around them, so people are going to prison for extraordinarily long times, way beyond what they need to learn their lessons," said FAMM spokeswoman Julie Stewart.

But even with the changes, there is still an 18-to-1 disparity in sentences for crack and powder cocaine offenses. Nachmanoff said now a person with crack will have to have 28 grams before triggering a mandatory five-year minimum sentence. But the person with powder cocaine still must have a much larger amount -- at least 500 grams.

"Ultimately the right answer is 1 to 1, and people in the law enforcement community and the criminal justice system recognize that," said Nachmanoff. "But that just means that there's still more work to do."

### GLEE CLUB



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## **Philadelphia DA will not seek death penalty against Mumia Abu-Jamal, supporters gather at the Constitution Center in Philly on 30th anniversary of his incarceration:**

On December 7, Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams announced that his office would not seek the death penalty in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Pennsylvania political prisoner who was framed in the killing of police officer Daniel Faulkner. Williams said that continuing to seek the death penalty could lead to “an unknowable number of years” of appeals, and that some witnesses have died or are unavailable after nearly three decades.

Amnesty International, which maintains that Abu-Jamal’s trial was “manifestly unfair and failed to meet international fair trial standards,” said the district attorney’s decision does not go far enough. Abu-Jamal still has an appeal pending before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court over the validity of ballistics evidence.

“Amnesty International continues to believe that justice would best be served by granting Mumia Abu-Jamal a new trial,” said Laura Moye, director of the human rights group’s Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty.

Investigative journalists Dave Lindorff, Linn Washington, and J. Patrick O’Connor, along with Hans Bennett and German scholar Michael Schiffman have all documented the police, prosecutorial, and judicial misconduct which led to Abu-Jamal’s conviction. Violations of Abu-Jamal’s constitutional rights at his original trial include:

Police coercion of witnesses to commit perjury, a common practice by Philadelphia cops during this time period as shown in several federal investigations; The police, in collaboration with the prosecuting attorney McGill, conspired to fabricate a “confession” by Mumia two months after its allegedly happened; Police tampered with crime scene evidence and failed to follow routine tests to determine if Mumia had fired a gun, or—more likely—had conducted such tests and not liked the results; Police refused to pursue evidence pointing to the likelihood that another man (Kenneth Freeman) was the actual shooter; Ballistics evidence makes the prosecution’s theory of the shooting of Officer Faulkner impossible; The prosecutor, Joseph McGill, withheld critical evidence from the defense in violation of law; Blacks were purged from the jury and Mumia was denied a trial by his peers; Extreme judicial bias prevented Mumia from receiving a fair trial, including Judge Sabo being overheard telling someone prior to the trial that he “was going to help them fry the nigger.”

Mumia had his right to self-representation arbitrarily stripped and was provided with deliberately underfunded and ineffective counsel.

The widow of the slain police officer, Maureen Faulkner, stated “I am heartened that he will be taken from the protective cloister he has been living in all these years and begin living among his own kind — the thugs and common criminals that infest our prisons.” The “protective cloister” she is referring to is Pennsylvania’s death row, where Mumia has been held in 22-24 hour solitary confinement for nearly thirty years while fighting an unconstitutional conviction. The Center for Constitutional Rights recently released a position paper on death row prisoners in the United States titled: **The United**

**States Tortures Before It Kills.** The paper argues “that the course of conduct employed by the United States, from sentence, to just before execution, constitutes torture.”

The decision not to pursue the death penalty was announced two days before a historic gathering at Philadelphia’s Constitution Center that saw a capacity crowd of 900 come together to plan the next steps in the campaign to free Mumia and fight back against all forms of oppression. Speakers included author of *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander, co-author with Abu-Jamal of a recently-released book, *The Classroom and the Cell*, Marc Lamont Hill, MOVE Minister of Information Ramona Africa, Dr. Johanna Fernandez, hip-hop artist Immortal Technique, Princeton professor Cornell West, and more.

Nobel Peace laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, spoke to the crowd through a recorded message, stating: “Now that it is clear that Mumia should never have been on death row in the first place, justice will not be served by relegating him to prison for the rest of his life—yet another form of death sentence. Based on even a minimal following of international human rights standards, Mumia must now be released. I therefore join the call, and ask others to follow, asking District Attorney Seth Williams to rise to the challenge of reconciliation, human rights, and justice: drop this case now, and allow Mumia Abu-Jamal to be immediately released, with full time served.”

Plans are being developed to intensify the campaign to free Mumia, including renewed efforts to push the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the case.



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# Voters' Frequently Asked Questions

### **I've misplaced my voter registration card. Can I still vote?**

Certainly! Your name will be on the voter list at your local polling place. Most polling places will require some form of photo ID, such as a Driver's License. Even if they can't find your name on the statewide voter registration list, you will be allowed to vote on what is called a *provisional ballot*. This paper ballot will be collected and, once your voter registration status is verified, counted in the election results.

### **I can't remember when I last voted - am I still registered?**

If you registered sometime in or since June 1993, you are still registered, whether or not you have voted. If you registered prior to June 1993, however, and have not voted for 5 years, you may have been removed from the state registration list and will need to re-register. Call your county Board of Elections to find out your status if you are uncertain.

### **Where do I vote?**

You must vote at the polling place assigned to the election district in which you reside and are registered to vote. It can be found listed on your voter's identification card. The easiest place to find this information if you don't have it is on the PA State Web Site - [Find Your Polling Place](#). Local polling places are also printed in major newspapers around the area on the Tuesday before the election. Some county Web sites, such as [Allegheny County](#), [Butler County](#), [Washington County](#), and [Westmoreland County](#) have the polling places listed online. You can also call your local League of Women Voters or your local municipal authority for assistance.

### **How do I vote?**

Prior to 2006, voting systems in Pennsylvania varied greatly from county to county, and included lever voting machines, optical scan voting systems, punch card voting systems and touch screen electronic voting systems. Beginning with the 2006 election, however, all Western Pennsylvania counties upgraded to electronic voting -- either direct record or optical scan -- in response to new federal requirements under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

### **I'm new to the area, how do I register to vote?**

The deadline to register to vote in a primary or general election is generally 30 days prior to the election date. It is easy to register either in person or by mail. See [How to Become a Registered Voter in Pennsylvania](#) for further details.

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## Your Legal Corner

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

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### I will be away from home or am otherwise unable to make it to the polls on election day. How do I vote?

You can call and request an absentee ballot from your county Board of Elections. The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is generally one week prior to election day, and the ballot must be returned to the County Elections office by 5:00pm on the Friday before election day.

### How do I know which candidates I will be voting for?

The first thing you need to do is to determine which ward and district you live in. Complete information on all candidates is available about one month prior to the primary or general election in the [Election Guide - League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh](#). A great Web site called [SmartVoter.org](#) allows you to type in your street address and zip code and pull up a sample ballot, including local contests.

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# 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.*

**TO: THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK COMMUNITY  
AND ITS POLITICAL ACTIVISTS**

**FROM: THE FORGOTTEN, ABANDONED, AND NEGLECTED  
GENERATION OF INCARCERATED BLACK MEN**

**DATE: DECEMBER 1, 2007**

**RE: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK COMMUNITY  
AND ITS POLITICAL ACTIVISTS  
ADDRESSING VARIOUS ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

## PART I

This "open letter" is addressed to the entire African-American/Black Community in America and its political activists from its forgotten, abandoned, and neglected generation of incarcerated black men. Many of us are currently serving life sentences, which in the state of California is a death sentence, inside concrete slave ships that dot the rural AMERICAN LANDSCAPE. The knowledge expressed in this letter echoes the sentiments of many imprisoned black men in the California State Prison System. We also stand in solidarity with those adversely affected by the Prison Industrial Complex (P.I.C.) and oppressed peoples everywhere.

The goal of this letter is simple. One is to promote unity and engage in open dialogue with honest discussions between the African-American/Black community and its prisoners. Two is to illuminate and educate those in the community on key issues regarding the complex relationship between yourselves, us, and the impact "The System" has on all of us. And lastly, to establish outreach and network with socially-conscious members of the black community open to collaborating with us to share knowledge, ideas, and wisdom for projects that give something back to our communities.

The majority of black men serving "hard time" realize their mistakes and would like the opportunity to help others recognize certain pitfalls and obstacles which will lead many to these places. Some of us would very much like to give back as much support as humanly possible under these circumstances. Despite everything, we still care about the struggles of our communities and for some of us, being able to give something back before we pass from this earth gives us hope beyond measure.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the contributions of those dedicated individuals involved in the movement to save black people. From pioneers like MLK and Malcolm X (R.I.P.), Doctor's Cornel West, Michael Eric Dyson, and Bill Cosby; to local advocates like Earl Ofari Hutchinson, Connie Rice, and

*(Continued on page 44)*

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

Najee Ali; and all those involved at the grass roots level on behalf of oppressed people, including victims of the Criminal Injustice System. Your courage, strength, and sacrifice does not go unappreciated by those who are forever in your debt. Thank you.

As a man with great concerns, the current state of affairs of the African-American/Black community alarms me to the point of taking such drastic actions. Being a keen observer of our plight from afar, I have sat inside of a prison cell for the past decade plus gaining insight most people will never achieve in their lifetime. But there are two things that stand out the most to me and it is there where I will begin. The first is the African-American/Black community's overall lack of understanding the "connectedness" of everything as it relates to one another. For instance, how governments incarceration expenditures rank second to Iraq war spending and how that impacts the average citizens quality of life because funding for public schools, hospitals, and programs is outpaced by prison spending.

And two is the fact that the African-American/Black community is in a perpetual state of WAR. It is a war against itself (self-destruction), its at war from external forces trying to exterminate our culture/race (the brown/black race war), and is at war against the very same "system" the black community conspires with to help decimate an entire generation of black people (the survival/existence war).

Despite the obvious, other "cultures/races" offer immense levels of support of its prisoners. At the same time, I have watched the steady moral decline of the African-American/Black community's overall support and solidarity of its own black men, women, and children adversely impacted by "the system", especially the Criminal Injustice System. I'm constantly shocked, appalled, and dismayed by the black community's seemingly callous disregard and deliberate indifference regarding the atrocities being committed on your behalf, and often times with your approval, by the system. I say "your behalf" because of the African-American/Black community's active or passive participation, either physically, economically, or politically by aiding and abetting an ideology determined to condemn entire generations of black people to death, by incarceration. My generation's legacy will run second only to the holocaust in its impact on a culture.

In these modern times, self-righteous and virtuous black people look upon what happened in Rwanda, and most recently in Darfur, and think how unfortunate that must be for them. The sad and undeniable truth is that in the grand scheme of things, your hands are just as bloody as racist white peoples hands, for there is no fundamental difference between those horrific events and the African-American/Black community's contributions and wide-spread acceptance of a more humane method of euthanizing the "undesirables" of my generation. But don't think for an instance that allowing the system to do your dirty work will morally absolve you of any responsibility for your actions/inactions. Genocide is genocide and those who are directly or indirectly involved should be prosecuted for war crimes ranging from crimes against humanity to high treason. For those who missed man's judgment, the wrath of the Almighty awaits them.

At this point, I'm sure most people think I have some nerve blaming the African-American/Black community when it was our actions as individuals that caused these problems. The fact of the matter is that we were always part of the community and were never "individuals", at least we were never supposed to be. It was incumbent upon the black community to police itself if the parents failed. But it was the community itself that has failed my generation and was instrumental in its destruction. "My generation" refers to the twenty to thirty somethings born in the 70's and 80's. Alone, we compromise the ma-

(Continued on page 45)

majority of young black men currently serving long prison sentences and life terms. Ironically, it was the “baby boomer” generation before us that was most influential in getting those “tough on crime” laws passed that have decimated my generation. These laws, voted on and ratified by the black community, began in the 70’s to neutralize the Black Liberation Movement (Black Panthers, etc.) and to discourage future organizations. The crack cocaine epidemic of the 80’s saw the advent of “mandatory sentencing laws” which increased prison terms, paving the way for the draconian “three strikes law” of the 90’s. Mine and future generations were sacrificed for capitalism, imperialism, retirement pensions, and job security.

Don’t misunderstand me because I’ll be the first person to admit that some people truly belong in prison, while others got less or more time than they should have, and some got “caught up” and don’t belong here at all. What the African-American/Black community need to understand is that in its dealings with the black people, especially black men, the Criminal Injustice System has always been completely unjust at every single level. While I am a firm believer in personal responsibility and being held accountable, to accept total blame for the actions leading to our demises would be disingenuous in light of the larger dynamics in play. Once you begin to understand that judicial railroading is inseparable from poverty, from receiving a poor education, from lack of opportunities, from criminalization, from racism and white supremacy, from societal emasculation, from failed government policies, from bad parenting, and from a dysfunctional black community, the resulting complications from those conditions become clear.

My point is that the system has been constantly shown to be effective only in destroying the lives of people of color and enhancing the lives of those who benefit from those demises. Yet despite that awareness, the African-American/Black community continues to be in denial and steadfastly upholds the ideas and de-bunked ideologies of the corrupted system. This “us against them” mentality continues to permeate our relationship with the black community and further separates us from you, when in reality we “are” you. We are not some nameless/faceless individuals comprising these statistics, but are black people. We are your fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, nephews, cousins, etc. We came from your communities and will return to them one day. The real question is, what type of people will return and what will their mental states be.

In fact, 122,000 men parole annually back to California’s communities along with so-called violent offenders every decade. So, why should you care? Simply consider that the majority of black men entered prison initially hating and despising both the white man and his de facto system. Some even committed their crimes solely against white people.

Now as human beings, we all seek validation and self-worth through personal contact and communication with the outside world. It both preserves our humanity and prevents us from becoming institutionalized. That emotional support system is vital to maintaining the mental balance necessary to remain healthy and alive. The strength gained from letters, phone conversations, and visitation serve the need to demonstrate love is still intact. Now try to comprehend the pressures of not having anyone to communicate with and the toll that takes on the human psyche. Emotional and spiritual growth will be denied and one’s heart will become hardened to society.

But as we fight to maintain relevance in a world that denies us our humanity, combined with being disowned, ostracized, ignored, and shunned by the whole of the African-American/Black community, it is

(Continued on page 46)

this discourse which leaves most excon's with an intense hatred and distain towards black people. Because the community shows antipathy, resentment, animosity, and utter contempt for often poor and hostile black men coming home from prison, most with strikes and nothing to lose, they will conceivably victimize your communities, this time with a vengeance.

I'm also aware of the fact that black men have long since prayed upon the black community before contact with the system. However, they were allowed to run rampant because the communities internal system of checks and balances has failed for a myriad of reasons including gang violence, drug abuse, bad parenting, etc. The system itself played its role in undermining our internal system because it needs bodies to sustain its economic windfalls. It easily convinced the black community of the necessity of initially incarcerating bad people only. Quite naturally, the African-American/Black community agreed with the system's assessment, leading to the wholesale sacrificing of my entire generation. Even the corporate-owned media outlets continue to perpetuate the negative myths that an individuals propensity for criminality, or that prison life itself, was solely responsible for making prisoners worst. They never took into account that it is largely an unsympathetic and callous black community's lack of compassion that is the root cause.

And in 2007, it keeps on happening. Case in point, that whole "Jena 6" fiasco. A lot of us were highly upset and offended by the fact that California's black community could come together with their limited resources to march in the streets protesting the mistreatment of 6 people and another state's corrupt system. Are you serious? Give me a break and keep it real! The exact same things are occurring in your own back yard and in broad daylight. "Killa Cali's" system is infinitely more egregious than any of those other states combined. We have the most horrific and harshest laws purely designed to imprison poor, underclass people of color for profit under the guise of "public safety", and all with the express consent of the African-American/Black community. This betrayal by the community smacks of hypocrisy and perfectly symbolizes man's inhumanity to man.

But I keep forgetting, who cares about us, right? I mean people actually still believe that the Criminal Justice System works, that the Constitution applies to us, and that we received a fair trial with first-rate representation, right? Surely there was no corruption or "trumpt-up" charges to insure the longest possible sentences because they can get away with convicting poor people, right? We must have been innocent before being proven guilty by a jury of our peers, seeing as how a black defendant had an all-white jury with a white victim, right? Did we have an overzealous prosecutor more interested in bolstering his conviction rates than being morally just, because being tough on crime is the criteria for running for a higher office, right? Or how about a public defender with a conflict of interest because not only will he not upset the "status quo" but he also gets paid by the same entity that pays the prosecutor, right? And how about those Court of Appeal justices, who cover up fellow judges mistakes because they "were" those judges at one time, right? Could all those things be reality? Right! In a perfect Utopian society this could not happen. But this is reality and all that occurs more than you'd think.

***Due to length of the above open letter, PART II will be printed in the next issue of The Movement.***

***Take note that this open letter was written in the year 2007 before Michelle Alexander's book 'The New Jim Crow' and well before Occupy America.***

***Written by: Mr. Courtney Williams, CDC# H-98875 D1-132L, Ironwood State Prison, P.O. Box 2199, Blythe, California 92226***

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**START A HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION (HRC) CHAPTER OR BRANCH IN YOUR AREA.** Each Chapter or Branch must comply with eight requirements. These eight are:

- 1.) Respond to inquiries in a timely manner as resources permit.
- 2.) Update membership to HRC-Philly at least quarterly.
- 3.) Incorporate as a non-profit organization.
- 4.) Publish a newsletter at least semi annually as resources permit.
- 5.) Send minutes of chapter meetings to HRC-Philly.
- 6.) Establish internet video conferencing for statewide chapter meetings.
- 7.) Create a cooperative business to finance your chapter or branch to be financially independent.

