

THE MOVEMENT

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

Fall Issue #52

The Official News Magazine of the
Human Rights Coalition for the union of Pris-
oners' Families



This Issue features "Artist from the Inside"

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Cover Art by: Suave Gonzalez
"Artist From the Inside"



Artist From the Inside
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Artist From the Inside
"Ramen Noodles" by Mark Loughney

The Editor Speaks



Hello Readers,

Every day there's movement and a renewed call for change across social, political, and criminal justice lines. As such, I question myself as to if I'm doing enough to be a lasting factor in solutions, and I assure you that I implore myself to

do more. We all individually define what "more and lasting" means, and yet I still believe we all want the same in the end... peace, truth, and justice.

In this issue, I planned to highlight some art from my comrades and continue on the path of recognition and acknowledgement I want for the incarcerated women of Pennsylvania to elevate. Of course, at the mercy of the DOC and the USPS something had to go wrong. The piece I was given, "Stitched Different" got lost in the mail, yet the sight of it brought inspiration for some featured writings. I am grateful to the ladies who shared a piece of themselves, that piece that will not get spotlighted through no fault of ours, and I apologize for the letdown.

What art that does appear — "Artist in Prison" and on our cover — is significant to the artist, as a symbol of growth, understanding and freedom, and I wholeheartedly appreciate their time, talent and contribution.

So . . . Amidst the unrest, misrepresentations and full on biases, we are tasked with educating ourselves and everyone who is a support to us, the cause, bills, memos and changes to our laws and constitution. We are also being asked repeatedly to adjust to the most inhumane aspects of incarceration . . . horrible healthcare, unstable correction officers, diminished programming and less focus on people's core issues and solutions for overcoming those things that led to those significant damages caused by and before our crime (s) and incarceration.

Let's face it, abuse by its definition is: a corrupt practice, improper or excessive treatment and language that condemns or vilifies, usually unjustly, and it's also physical maltreatment. It may stem from a number of problems and issues within the person one's family and/or one's culture, but it will never be anything but universally UNACCEPTABLE! It's on everyone to be mindful that what is

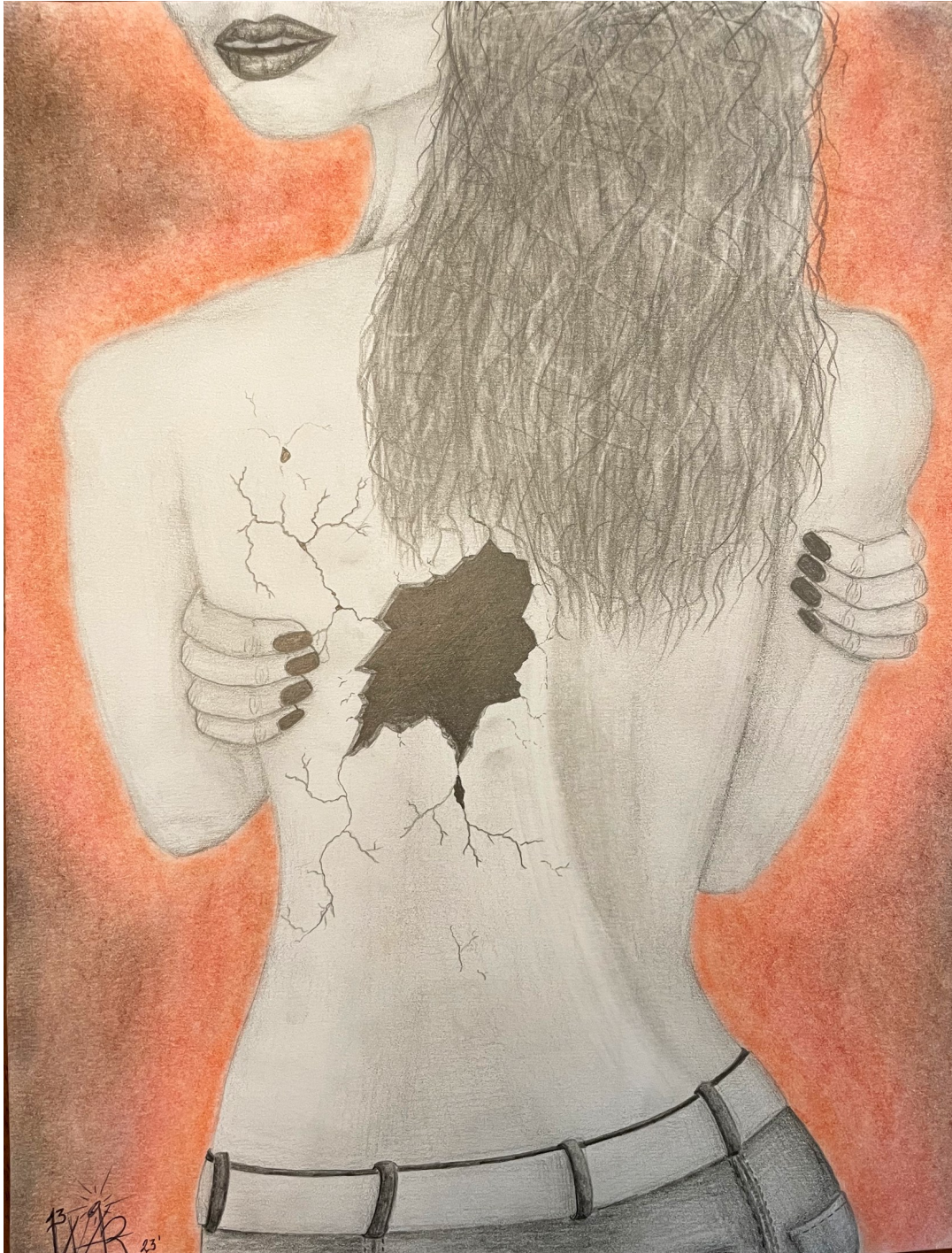
brushed off at home, work, school or within any particular social setting as small or harmless, may be highly offensive to the masses or just to your closest neighbor. I want to specifically address the institutional verbal's that offend me and my sisters. Being called "moron, dumbass, idiot and liar" out loud is appalling, but it's the "bitch, crack-head, whore" and worst that's said supposedly out of ear-shot, that churns my disgust. Being a Correctional Officer (C.O.) brings on the expectation of professionalism. I don't expect perfection, I expect human simplicity, respect and one not set out to do harm, but rather to be that buffer between the past that clearly didn't fit and the future that's a pathway to lasting freedom, service, advocacy and the She or He you're meant to be. No one deserves the name calling, shaming or labelling, and definitely not the constant chastisement and punishments as a group. Most importantly, we don't deserve to be made invisible or silenced by fear of support for commutation/parole. The verbal abuses often send inmates into tailspins when they respond to comments, insults and other disrespectful encounters, but it's the confrontations that read as physical threats and put entire units on their guard that cannot continue to be ignored or swept under. Security is for safety, not intimidation, unreasonable stress, oppression or dehumanization. Despite every rationale or excuse, we persevere and teach ourselves to cope with the negatives of our environment and inadvertently lead our peers by examples of leadership, calm and respect. We just have a responsibility to control what we say AND what we do. We've been judged and deal with the punishment daily, but are not a reflection of the disappearing humanity inside or outside these walls.

Last but not least, I wanted you all to know that a delegation of humanitarians and freedom fighters: Saleem Holbrook, Abolitionist Law Center; Mam Patt, HRC and CADBI; Nikki Grant, Amistad Law Project; and Val Kiebala, Solitary Watch were invited by the United Nations, and spent 9 days in Geneva, Switzerland discussing the inhumanity of DBI. Our esteemed delegation from PA made a safe return home to continue leading the charge for human rights for us all. Thank you to all for what you imparted on the U.N. and the world. Bravo!

We are marked inmate through crime, but we're marked Human by God! There's room for us All!

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Artist from the Inside



Sometimes how we view ourselves can change our whole perspective. It took me a long time to learn that just because something is looked at as broken doesn't mean it isn't beautiful. Sometimes things are most beautiful because they're broken.

Self-Portrait by **Amanda Wayda**

Artist from the Inside



Evasion

Lost bones of our elders

Sharp teeth of starved youth

Impossible to silence

Futile to elude

“Policy states . . .” There our appeal fails to land. Authority scurries back to desiccated words as our elders pale to bleach-bone-gone and youth spirals down against itself. When our answers flee back into darkness, is there a time when we will arrest them?

If we catch the tip of evasion between our teeth, we can consume it whole. Lies going soft in our bellies we can cloak ourselves in living skin and greet the tender soil that is wet with our drowned visions. We can dredge them, and find the world that is impossible to silence, the world that is futile to elude.

By **Elena House-Hay** #PA-4953

Artist from the Inside

Mark Loughney, Interview

by Patricia (Mama Patt) Vickers.

People are saying that prison-art is gaining popularity. When I hear this I immediately think of James “Yaya” Harbough whose artwork appears in Philadelphia’s DA, Larry Krasner’s office. And Suave Gonzalez who is most recognized for his podcast that won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize; however he’s also known for his art such as “Graterford Big House Noodle Soup” displayed on cover page of this issue. I think of Todd Tarsellis and others whose art has been a part of THE MOVEMENT magazine over the years. And then there is Mark Loughney who is known for his portraits of the men in prison he’s encountered and whose art is featured on the cover and inside of the book entitled “Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration” by Nicole R. Fleetwood.



Marking Time by Nicole R. Fleetwood

I’ve definitely seen stunning, emotional, and meaningful prison-art at exhibits, rallies, and in books. But I’m curious about this gaining popularity chatter. Are the doors really opening for prison artists? Is the money coming in? Is it enough to pay the rent? Is it worth pursuing?

I was fortunate in gaining an interview with artist Mark Loughney, released from prison in July 2022, who, as I mentioned previously, has his art of the cover a book titled “Marking Time” and who I “hear” has also gained popularity among prison-art followers. In this interview I asked

Mark to comment on prison-art popularity and the ups and downs of being a prison artist.

Mark Loughney:

So there are two parts to that question. To answer the first part - the art world is starting to realize that Prison art per se isn't really just prison art, it's art. And people in prison who are making art aren't just prison artists, they're actually people who are making art and labels are starting to become a little less important. I think as a whole incredible things are happening right now in the art world for people like myself and for artists who are incarcerated or formally incarcerated. There's greater notice to it now that there are valuable, cultural, and important relevant things coming from people like us. I, personally, have been received very well and I'm very fortunate to have gotten support and attention for my work.

And if I could give any advice to somebody who enters into or making art right now, I would say don't let surroundings and limitations be a barrier. Use it to your advantage. If it requires drawing on napkin with the #2 pencil, document your surroundings, do it daily, mark this time in away that you can take with you to help you when you get released. And don't give up.

To your second question, there are a lot more downs than there are ups. But I think pushing through those downs is so worth it. Art making was my reason to wake up most days, and I knew that as long as I just kept putting one foot in front of the next, and trusting that my process took time and required a lot of suffering, I was able to benefit from those ups that I received. I think that sometimes it takes a while to see the benefits of something. That sometimes, and most of the time, the benefits are along the journey; you don't see them until you look back.

Just in and of itself, drawing is so meditative and calming that it's beneficial at the end of your day, on a daily basis, even if you're not selling your work and you're not getting your work published. So I think that the personal wins that aren't recorded on paper or in your bank account or on resume, those are the biggest ups that I've ever seen.

Mama Patt:

That's some strong advice. Thank you. What are you working on now? Can you tell us about it?

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Mark Loughney:

This current project that I'm working on is a continuation of the Portrait Project I did while I was in prison. It's called *Parrhic Defeat: A Visual Study of Mass Incarceration*. I'm now drawing people who are in support of prison reforms, criminal justice reforms, and the abolition amendment. I'm shooting for 800 portraits of people in support of this. This will match the initial 800 that I drew while I was incarcerated, that I've been using as the backdrop to convey the message that our country is in a serious, serious, situation with mass incarceration. I hope to draw attention to the possibility that we can change this, that we have the power to change this. If people become aware of what's going on and mobilize they can legislate to make changes.

Mama Patt:

Thank you Mark. I would like to finish this interview by saying you are the humblest person that I've met in a long time. No need to toot your own horn or shout to the masses, your art is your gift and speaks volumes loud and clear. It has been an honor to talk with you and I'm sure this interview is inspirational to all who are artist in prison and outside of prison.

Also, as Mark mentioned, in his current project entitled "Pure Defeat" he is sketching portraits of 800 advocates, outside of prison, to complement his portraits of 800 men inside of prisons. Mark would love for you to participate in this project by allowing him to draw your portrait. If you are interested, simply make your request via, Instagramh@Loughneyart. For computer savvy folks scan the CRL code below.



Above Mark Loughney holds his art, titled 'Coming Home' that represents how out of place he feels being recently released from prison.

For you who are interested, 'Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration' by Nicole R. Fleetwood is available for purchase at **Bookshop.org** for \$39.95.

The aging prison population: Causes, costs, and consequences

New Census Bureau data show the US population is getting older and at the same time our prison populations are aging even faster in this briefing we examined the inhumane costly and counterproductive practice of locking up older adults.

By Terri Harper, original article by Emily Widra,

... older people make up five times as much of the prison population as they did three decades ago from 1991 to 2021, the percentage of the state and federal prison population nationwide aged 55 or older swelled from 3% to a whopping 15%. This growth is seen even more acutely when looking at people serving life sentences: by 30% of people serving life sentences were at least 55 years old, with more than 61,400 older adults sentenced to die in prison.

The dangers of aging in prison

Prisons are unhealthy places for anyone of any age, but keeping older adults locked up in is particularly dangerous. A robust body of research shows that incarceration itself accelerates aging: people face more chronic and life-threatening illnesses earlier than we would expect outside of prison, and psychological signs of aging occur in people younger than expected. In addition, a conservative estimate of more than 44,000 people 45 and older experience solitary confinement in state prisons each year, in conditions that shorten lives and can be detrimental to physical, mental, and emotional health.

Low risk of rear rest and reincarceration for older adults

The older someone is the less likely they are to be arrested following release from prison according to the most recent government study of recidivism. In fact people released at age 65 or older are the least likely of any age group to be rearrested in the five years following release

Policing

The criminalization of mental illness among older adults is significant as well one in nine people aged 65 and older have Alzheimer's dementia one of the many kinds of dementia the most recent national data available indicates that people with cognitive disabilities are overrepresented in jails and prisons 31% of people in jails in 2012 and 24% of people in state prisons in 2016 reported a cognitive disability. As greater number of older adults with cog-

nitive disabilities encounter police all the prison populations are likely to grow.

Sentencing

Longer and harsher sentences topped the list of the most obvious mechanisms by which the national prison population exploded in the 1990s and 2000s but they also created the problem of today's aging prison population: many of the people who received these sentences are still behind bars now that they are 20 or 30 years older.

Tools to reduce the aging prison population remain underutilized

While attention to this crisis has grown in recent years many of the available tools - such as parole and compassionate release - have been underutilized the failure to release older adults from prison has deadly repercussions from 2001 to 2018 over 30,500 people aged 55 or older died in prison and almost all of these deaths (97%) were due to illnesses.

Compassionate release

Decisions about medical eligibility for release are often filtered through state parole boards whose membership often include former correction officers officials former parole or probation officers and former prosecutors. These are not vocations particularly invested in release much less promoting individual health and well-being outside of the partial system. Parole boards lack of knowledge about serious and terminal illnesses as well as the general aging process can create significant barriers to release. Physician reluctance to offer a prognosis, parole board rejections of medical recommendations, offence carve outs, and barriers to discharge planning also factor into the underutilization of compassionate release some states (like Iowa) do not even have such a release program.

Reducing the aging population

To reduce the number of already incarcerated older adults state and federal governments can make use of presumptive parole, second look sentencing, and the retroactive application of sentence reduction reforms, as well as the many other mechanisms to shorten excessive prison sentences outlined in our 2018 report, '8 Keys to Mercy: How to Shorten Excessive Prison Sentences'.

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Conclusion

The crisis of our aging prison population is not an accident but the result of policy choices that hurt incarcerated people their loved ones families and communities fortunately we can address these policy missteps.

States should follow the lead of advocates who are fighting to reduce police encounters, in draconian sentencing like life without parole, and expand release mechanism mechanisms like elder parole reducing barriers to enrollment in Medicare Medicaid Social Security and ensuring people have safe places to live in our communities can expand the safety net for older adults leaving prison ultimately the benefits of such change will not be recognized only by older adults in the system but the broader population as well.

LWOP and a Cage/Cell Mate

In Pennsylvania's prisons "Life Means Life". and Lifers are made to double cage/cell unless they're: mentally ill, super assaultive, escape risk, high security threat, aggressive homosexuals, transgender, handicapped or just know somebody of authority. This makes it a problem for Lifers who are none of those things, such as myself.

I've got forty-three (43) years served and counting. I've seen the good, bad, indifferent, and ugly when it comes to sharing a cage with another person. It's frustrating and, even more, *dangerous* to say the least. Such has been the case just yesterday when a Lifer and a Short-Termer were cage mates, and the Lifer beat the Short-Termer so badly, the Short-Termer died the next day.

Lifers forced to occupy a cage built for one is far beyond cruel and unusual punishment. Granted some Lifers (and Non-Lifers) who have accepted being carried out of these hellholes in body bags welcome cage mates, for obvious reasons, but let's not go there.

I just know double caging isn't for Lifers in the sense of the psychological impact of sharing a cage with someone doing short time and/or long time is cruel. It's torture, especially since the A-Code for Lifers (or Long Termers) has been ignored under the guise of prison overcrowding which is total bullsh_t! Oh yeah, A-Code is a level where

the DOC let Lifers or Long-Termers occupy a cage until they [DOC] need a bed which seems to be all the time.

Lifers occupying cages with others who have different perspectives about many things limits what they have in common, save for prison garb and skin color in most cases. For example, my former cage mate was a slob, smoked, snored like a hibernating bear, farted, and was outright obnoxious. He wouldn't use headphones and he was a caged-hugger, meaning he never left the cage.

Me, I was always neat and clean. I was and am out of the cage a lot, but it would have been nice to have a little solitude, just five minutes would have been enough for some much needed relief, other than the shower. Oh yeah, he was inconsiderate like that and disrespectful. This fool got sick and purposely tried to share his sickness with me, which only added to my already stressed situation and made me wanna holler, scream, shout, and eventually eviscerate the b**tard with a sharpened plastic piece of my overpriced Magnavox television. That's how maddening occupying a cage was/is for Lifers and myself.

But, for Lifers who refuse to be carried out of these hell holes in body bags, there is a much larger objective for us to cultivate, which is GETTING FREE, BEING FREE, and STAYING FREE in all aspects of FREEDOM, to be FREE INDEED. Amen!!! Thus, we must tolerate a lot of shit from fellow convicts, inmates, prisoners, and residents, along with guards/C.O.'s.

Of course, in my case, my objectives along with my prayers give me the strength to control my decadent urges to break those silly mindless former and present cage mates backs and/or necks, because I didn't know my overall objectives and prayers were going to hold me back, or if God was listening to the prayers I sent Him daily through Jesus Christ because my prior cage mate kept right on with this despicable shit!

So, I finally I got to that point where I was finally going to break his ass down! But before I did I was called to see the psychologist, where I expressed my desire to be Z-Coded/single cage/cell. But this dame literally laughed at my request which, added to my frustration, so I softly let her know that I was either going to have a Z-Code in General Population, or on Death Row, then slammed the door as I left out.

Twenty minutes later the Goon Squad (which is nothing more than a group of guards) came and took me to the Restricted Housing Unit/RHU/The Hole where I did fifty

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days, and was let out and given a Z-Code cage/cell. CRAZY. Right?

Anyway, as Lifers in Pennsylvania and across this great nation we should be given a choice of having a cage mate. But the bureaucrats/prisoncrats see dollar signs and refuse to adhere to reason when it comes to Lifers' request of not having a cage mate.

So, what's left for us to do, especially when bureaucrats vehemently state that, "LIFE MEANS LIFE" and our options are few and getting less by the second?

What happens when us Lifers truly get fed up with the cage mates and bureaucrats' / prisoncrats' bullshit and hope and hope is no longer "Springing Eternal", or in any other way, shape, or form?

I can hear thousands of LETHAL INJECTIONS beckoning, and though I now have /Single Cell, my lethal injection is still beckoning the loudest, which simply means I'm still halfway (between a happy meal and a homicide).

Ronald Smith AKA Baye/SCI-Fayette

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force during the arrest, and using the families of detainees as hostages.

The occupation perpetrates these crimes openly, with continued support from the international powers, without the slightest regard for the voices of the free world, and for all those who still believe in the international covenants and conventions that have enriched the world for decades.

Our message today to the free people of the world who still believe that it is the right of the Palestinian to struggle for his freedom and the freedom of his land, is for them to stand together in putting an end to these atrocities, which remind us of the chapters witnessed by the world in prisons like Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.

Soul on E's

At the sight of the green light they on go, 24-7-365 they're chasing the smoke. They want the deuce, and the sub's, but its the E's that they need. A state raised monkey on their back that they gotta feed! Old & young electrified lungs, charred black with nicotine laced chemical scum. . . From morning 2 night chasing the jack, pestering their ppl 2 send a \$15 cash app! \$25 for something that costs a nickel, paying so much 4 something that's worth so little! It costs the maker 23¢ to produce, and they turn around and charge the lames \$5.62!!! Couldn't make that profit on Wall Street, A 4,000% profit margin and no one 2 compete! And they call us criminals with morals worthy of the street? . . Played the game and became the game, hustlers mutated in2 customers. . . Hopelessly hooked, bought 8 E's, but don't have 8 soups! Selling all of their food & trays, haven't had a real meal in days. That sh#t ain't right, -- but E's suppress the appetite. . . 2 for 1 pro's, owe their whole bag 2 the men that run the stores! Walking around with that dumb@%s hungry look on their face, looking 4 someone new 2 beg . . . U know you're a friend when U'll smoke an empty, talking about, "nah, that jawn still juicy"!!! For every 500 puffs of an e-cig, its the equivalent of 4,050 real cigarettes, the state gave em 20 years, the e's sentence them 2 death! A decade from now the prisons will be cancer KKKamps, once vital & healthy men who cannot breath without oxygen tanks! And the saddest sadness of the sh%t, Is that the men don't think that they're addicted. . . BIG HOUSE junkies, U got it, they wit it! Gonna leave prison and still be chasin, thinking they doing better BC they only be poppin perks and vappin. . . Wondering why they're still losing, BC whatever is self destructive they be doing it! Our wise Ancestors warned, " if U betray your body, your body will betray U back", Listen 2 what share PLEASE: Recognize that U can commit suicide by degrees. This sh#t is deeper physical, YOUR SOUL ON THEM E's!!!

By Mtegenezi

Amidst the Genocide in Gaza, Israeli Occupying Forces Intensify Crimes Against Palestinian Prisons.

At a press conference for accredited news agencies at the United Nations, ADDAMEER informed journalists about the crimes committed by the occupying forces against prisoners and detainees.

On Friday, November 3, 2023, a press conference was held via Zoom platform for representatives of accredited international media at the United Nations. The conference was addressed by both ADDAMEER for Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association and the Independent Commission for Human Rights.

ADDAMEER discussed the daily arrest campaigns carried out by the occupying forces in an unprecedented manner in various areas of the West Bank. The number of detainees from the West Bank and Jerusalem has reached around 2000 since October 7th, in addition to about 4000 detainees from the Gaza Strip. The number of administrative detainees [people in solitary confinement] without charge or trial has significantly increased and has reached 2070 administrative detainees. ADDAMEER also addressed the violations of the occupation against detainees and their families during the arrest process, including brutal beatings, threats of murder, and the use of families as hostages.

The punitive measures implemented by the Israeli prison services against the prisoners after the declaration of emergency were outlined, including the closure of sections, cutting off electricity and water, prohibiting visits from lawyers and family members, shutting down the canteen, providing poor quality and quantity of food, closing clinics in the prisons, and preventing the transfer of sick prisoners to external clinics and hospitals. The International Committee of the Red Cross was also prohibited from visiting.

Dr. Ammar Dweik, the Director General of the Independent Commission for Human Rights, emphasized that what the Israeli occupation forces have been doing in the Gaza Strip since October 7th amounts to genocide. He stated that there can be no protection for civilians in Gaza without a cessation of the war. Any talk of protecting civilians and respecting international humanitarian law without a

clear call for an end to the war is hypocrisy and provides cover for Israel in its war against civilians in Gaza.

Dweik pointed out that what the Israeli occupation forces commit in the Gaza Strip constitutes genocide according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as well as according to the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The incitement carried out by senior Israeli officials against the Gaza Strip, describing Palestinians in Gaza as "human animals", cutting off water, electricity, and fuel, hindering and preventing the entry of aid, and the continuous indiscriminate shelling and massacres all confirm that what is happening in the Gaza Strip is nothing but genocide. This is what we have been hearing from the voices of the international community that are increasingly warning of genocide in Gaza.

A STATEMENT ISSUED BY PALESTINIANS PRISONERS' ORGANIZATIONS (11/1/23)

In light of the comprehensive aggression that the Israeli occupation continues to wage against Palestinians, and the ongoing genocide in Gaza, which is taking place in full view of the world and with the support of international powers, we, as specialized organizations in monitoring the issues of prisoners and detainees, have received shocking scenes through video footage. This footage includes soldiers from the Israeli occupation army torturing a group of defenseless civilian Palestinians in conditions that strip them of their human dignity after being stripped of their clothes.

This video is part of a collection of other recorded clips, filmed by the occupation soldiers of Palestinians after their arrest in degrading conditions. The soldiers intentionally put the occupation flag on the detainees while they are blindfolded and bound.

The organizations affirm that, based on all the information and testimonies we have obtained from the detainees who were released shortly after their arrest during the past period, as well as the testimonies of their families, they reflect horrifying details of systematic and intensified crimes, which are continuously escalating, reaching the point of direct threats to open fire, in addition to the use of brutal beatings, field interrogations, threats of killing and rape, the use of police dogs, and using Palestinians as human shields. This also includes destruction in homes, assaults on the families of detainees before their arrest, excessive

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An Abolitionist Environmentalism

Human freedom and the liberation of the land are inextricably linked. Russell "Maroon" Shoatz taught me that. The vision of freedom that maroons provide for us is of free people - escaped from the bonds of captivity, torture and forced labor - living in interdependent communities in the swamps, remote islands, mountains and deep forests. The enclosure of indigenous lands - fenced in and converted to plantations and parcels of property - is also an enclosure of our physical freedom. Monocrops of cotton, rice and tobacco - planted for profit, maintained by enslaved peoples - erase the biodiversity and complex reciprocal relationships of a balanced ecosystem. In order to be truly free, maroons had to find spaces within which to enact their freedom. Maroons needed land to forage and hunt and grow their crops. Maroons needed dense underbrush and wide rivers and thick forests to hide in and gather in safety. Maroons needed constellations of stars to navigate through open waters and escape in the dark of night. Maroons needed natural material with which to build their dwellings and shelter from the elements and fashion their weapons. Maroons needed physical spaces of freedom where they could gather and plan their raids on the colonial towns and plantations and armed fortresses of slavery and genocide.

The first lie they told us was that we are separate from nature. This lie is as fundamental to the development of white supremacy and patriarchy as it is to the development of Western capitalist civilization. If humans are separate from nature, then we are given license to dominate it. We can fence in a herd of sheep or cattle and slaughter them for meat, and we can blast open the earth to mine for iron ore and coal. The ordering of life according to classifications of higher and lower becomes a subconscious fact of life in 'civilization'. Humans above nature. Men above women. White people above all other races. Anything outside of this new hierarchical order becomes uncivilized and barbaric. The Vatican declared that Indigenous people practicing ecological land stewardship with no conception of private property lived on 'terra nullius' - nobody's land - land waiting to be seized, subjugated and claimed by a colonial state. Patriarchal men claimed that widows making plant medicine and assisting young women with abortions were witches that

needed to be burned alive. All animistic and nature-centered religions were deemed pagan and evil. All pleasurable sexual practices for women, queer, trans and non-conforming bodies become deviant, perverse and unnatural. Any human who dared to run off the plantation was called 'maroon' or 'cimarron' - meaning 'wild' or 'unbroken' - the same word for a tame pig or domesticated horse that ran into the bush and refused to be worked or farmed for meat. The Wild, the Natural, becomes everything that is not civilization. This means for us - the untamed - that if we wish to break the model of Western colonial civilization - we must become and reclaim our wildness.

We are nature. Our bodies are living organisms, teeming with biological life - your body has roughly 30 trillion human cells, and 39 trillion 'non-human' microbial cells including bacteria, fungus and viruses that live on and in us. We are not one individual at all - we are a micro-biome with a consciousness living in a harmonious interplay with all the other cells and peoples and species and ecosystems around us. The food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the environment we inhabit - becomes us. The waste we create does not disappear. It becomes the environment around us. The cycles, and seasons and rhythms of nature occur in our bodies - in our reproductive cycles, in our maturing and aging processes, in our daily waking and sleeping rhythms. You are Nature. Never forget this.

The cages they build are specifically designed to destroy life. The prison cells with their walls and bars and locks and doors restrict free movement. Movement is our birthright and one of the foundational principles of all life. Life MOVES! John Africa taught me that. The prison grounds are devoid of non-human life. No flowers or trees or animals are allowed to live or flourish. Even blades of grass are cut and weeded and sprayed with pesticides. The food on prison trays is dead. Processed meats, wrapped in plastic and cured with chemicals. White bread with no complex carbohydrates or whole grains. Molding and rotting and limp and lifeless vegetables and fruits. The water quality in prisons is some of the worst in the world. Often brown and full of particulates and chemicals, streaming through old corroded lead pipes, coming from rivers and water sources that have long been polluted by toxic industries. They build these prisons on the most degraded, lifeless, polluted lands they can find! The cheapest land is land that has already been stripped of trees, and farmed

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with monocrops, mined for minerals, and dumped on with chemicals. It is land that is no longer suitable for life. Then they come with their bulldozers and earth movers and lay asphalt and build cinder block walls with razor wire and fences to create a space designed to kill the animal in you.

The movement we are building, the world we are fighting for - is for free people to live in free communities in harmony with all life on this beautiful planet.

Some environmentalists miss the point - and fight narrowly for "natural spaces" - conservation land where no people can live, but "nature" can flourish. Some criminal justice 'reformers' fail to see the irony in claiming that prisons are "inhumane" because prison guards "treat people like animals". We need an abolitionist environmentalism - a vision of a world without prisons, or strip mines, or exploited workers, or factory farms. We need an environmental justice movement that understands that we will never stop the climate crisis or the thieving oil companies, as long as a militarized police force will beat us and imprison us for marching against their capitalist profits. We need a movement for human freedom and the liberation of the land, so that there will be a liveable Earth - a stretch of wild forest, a clean river to drink from - where we can build our maroon communities. This is what we mean when we talk about human rights for people held in solitary confinement and toxic prisons. The only "humane" prison, the only "non-toxic" prison is the prison that has no locked doors, that has been emptied of people, abandoned, and allowed to grow wild with weeds and trees and animals and insects - a prison that is no longer a prison. And when that prison is no longer a prison, and our bodies are returned to us as wild and free, life itself can flourish, and we can weather any storm - together.

By: Jackson Kusiak

Spoken Vision

To wake up in captivity is true cognitive dissonance at face value, testing one's will to not just survive in such an inhumane and unnatural milieu. But, being expected to actually thrive and bloom cause time ain't waiting, while simultaneously being held to the standards of a saint yet treated like the spawn of Satan. Objectified by your past, crucified psychologically by those guilty of worse acts, and still they judge you from afar. While raising the status quo bar and attempting to hide who they really are. Testing every facet of you mostly due to your hue pass or fail there's no choice but to continue, while praying to be in a more relatable venue. But the sinuous will within you refuses to break, knowing it's your resilient adaptability they enviously hate...despite all the shit they put you through, you still stand tall, looking good and smelling great. It's GOD'S grace which motivates your gait, HIS love which orchestrates your speech...walking the talk of those righteous sinners who live not like they preach. I'm from the mud so I know there is peace inside the struggles, she being the soliloquy of soulful solace... bringing with her good troubles. But we be racing down the up escalators as if it's part of the grind, knowing you'll never win the race when they keep moving the finish line. Just as you start to realize every part of your life is traumatized with intended hate, hidden by a smile that don't match the handshake...they're bending my spirit to see if my soul will break, killing me slow and deliberate while I am still awake. All the while I am trying to escape from this emotional earthquake, but my thoughts and my conduct don't always cooperate. Cognitive dissonance served on a stagnant dinner plate, running late but still I must patiently wait. For the immediate moment I'm just property of the state .

By: Spilled from the soul of, Aaron Major

The Right to Vote

A while ago, I read Kenjuan Congo Jr.'s article "Acquiring Political Power" and "Delaware Midterms 2022: A National Blueprint" which I thoroughly enjoyed. It is always satisfying and enlightening to read articles reminding people of the necessity to be politically active in this country, and the importance of grassroots movements to achieve change. Though, one thing I hardly ever see in many of the periodicals I read regarding our criminal legal system--as so phrased because I do not see "justice" done within our system--is the importance morally, socially, and strategically, of returning to the currently incarcerated, their right to vote.

The idea of enabling incarcerated citizens the right to vote is a radical move to completely upend our legal system for the betterment of all citizens. Who better to change the system, than those most oppressed by it? The incarcerated individual truly innocent or guilty knows well the series of events that led to their incarceration. The incarcerated individual becomes aware of the systematic and environmental situations that lead to the chains that bind them, physically and metaphorically. Therefore, the incarcerated individual becomes the canary in the coal mine, the people who experienced the worst of their nation before the atrocities start to engulf the rest of society. Who, I must ask, could be more grassroots for criminal legal reform than the incarcerated?

In addition, as an incarcerated citizen, I am given the three most basic necessities to survive as a human being: food, clothing, and shelter. Granted in an incarcerated setting those necessities could be considered inadequate, especially considering the institution one is housed in. Nonetheless, barring interference from one institution, incarcerated people are in the best situation to be politically active enough to demand and achieve concrete and consistent change within the criminal legal system. Yet, why aren't they?

The general public does not have the attention span to concentrate on criminal legal affairs that do not directly concern them. With every tragedy and even every success: every Rodney King, every George Floyd, every convicted innocent man or woman freed, every injustice, and every "Just Mercy" and Brian Stevenson there is a national wave of desire for reform. And then it is over. More immediate and direct issues occupy the general public's interests: a

pandemic, inflation, an Eastern European war, the stock market, et cetera. There are though, those that benefit from our criminal legal system the way that it is, and as such, their senses are always attuned to tremors in the system.

Our criminal legal system has long been tilted toward the forces of law enforcement and prosecutors who pursue tough on crime policies and activities. Law enforcement unions bring hundreds of thousands of determined and focused voters to the ballot box every year, in addition to millions of dollars in the campaign contributions. The Bar Association does not do enough to deter misconduct and for members who focus on criminal legal affairs, especially from the side of the of a prosecutor. What tangible benefit would there be to do so? These are jobs that feed people and their families. You do not have to want to be on the "right" side of the law to need a paycheck.

That is why it is time to rebalance our criminal legal system with an appropriate counterweight. There are hundreds of thousands of law enforcement officers and lawyers at any given time. There are millions of incarcerated citizens at any given time. If both sides - those who are incarcerated and those directly and indirectly work for and support the incarcerated system - were placed against each other at the ballot box, all individuals enfranchise to vote, who would see their vision of the world succeed? Do the math.

Such a change to our voting system would not lead to dystopia, such as incarcerated citizens legalizing all manner of harm. On the contrary, those few individuals seeking such an outcome would be beaten back at the ballot box by not only the general public, but their fellow incarcerated siblings. Instead, as workers for the current criminal legal apparatus incessantly beat the drum against logical and pragmatic reform; they will finally have a match, as those harmed by this system beat a different drum, for that reform.

Now, one might ask, how do we allow people to vote while incarcerated? The fact of the matter is Main, Vermont, Washington DC, and the territory of Puerto Rico already allow incarcerated citizens to vote regardless of their place of incarceration. These localities should be studied and considered blueprints for amending state constitutions across the country, to ensure that all incarcerated citizens have their voices heard. This is in addition to ensuring that every state return the right to vote to previously

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incarcerated people immediately upon the day of their release. Their voices will also bring much needed support to politicians, progressive and reform minded prosecutors, and those wishing to hold office with the intention to reform the criminal legal system. Let's not forget that this change would bring much needed trepidation to those politicians seeking to retain the status quo.

And this is where the power of the grassroots movement, as described by Mr. Congo, comes into play. The incarcerated must rely on the free. The family, friends, allies, and communities of the caged must advocate for our rights. This involves contacting our local, state, and national representatives and demanding of them a return of these rights through legislation, legislation such as Illinois State House Bill 989 that does exactly what is needed for the criminal reform movement. It is also important to tell our politicians when they are doing the right thing, to support them in these endeavors, and to tell them when they are doing wrong reminding them that when the next election comes we will find someone who wants to do what's right.

This involves the organizing and gathering of those free of the system towards this goal. This requires a herculean amount of effort by those indirectly affected by the system - in comparison to the incarcerated - but only for a moment, only until the incarcerated can speak for themselves via the ballot box. Those who wish to see the change from without, have to chase power for those within. Once the incarcerated control the melody, everyone else, only needs to join, in harmony.

By Feddy University

The Prison Artist

1.

The prison artist works away
in her cell on her latest creation,
intensity identical to any artist
wherever she may be working:
home, studio, even out
in the open air.

For to the artist it matters not, we know,
where she may find herself in space
so long as the mind is free to wander
among the shapes and the colors.

(Her brush shifts a line here
a bit to the left, the tint
of the area that it borders
just a hair more
toward the violet end
of the spectrum.)

Wherever she finds herself in space:
out in the open air, in a studio, or at home—
but especially when home is
the inside of a prison cell—
every artist, working on her latest
is, you see, painting the gateway
to freedom.

2.

The prison artist
coats a square of glazed bricks
in the wall of her cell with black paint,
hangs a sign:
“I have painted the gateway to Hell,”
it reads
“Do not open.”

Poet Unknown



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The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!



Saleem Holbrook

Last month, [October 2023] as I sat facing the members of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) in Geneva, Switzerland, my mind drifted to moments during my 27 years in prison when I was told I would die behind bars. I was sentenced to life without parole in 1991 when I was 16 years old. I beat the odds and made it home in 2018. Now, five years later, I had the implausible opportunity to speak before

the UNHRC members on behalf of all those in the U.S. facing the racially discriminatory and cruel practice of death by incarceration (DBI), commonly known as life imprisonment.

I traveled to the United Nations as a member of a delegation of civil society organizations to expose the human rights violations that the United States commits on a daily basis. In 2009, my sister Anita Colon joined a similar delegation to Geneva to advocate for my release from prison and an end to the mandatory life without parole sentences for children in Pennsylvania. By the early 2000's, the United States had over 2,500 prisoners serving DBI sentences for offenses they were convicted of as children. Pennsylvania had over 400, the most in the world.

This year, I returned in the footsteps of my sister but my mind was also on the legacy of the Black activists who submitted the historic We Charge Genocide petition to the UN in 1951 against the United States for its treatment of Black Americans. Our delegation demanded the UN assert that the United States abolish the practice of death by incarceration entirely—for children and adults alike. As I told the UNHRC, “It’s not a coincidence the majority of the people serving death by incarceration sentences in the United States are people of color because mass incarceration has its roots in slavery and settler colonialism that treats Black, Brown, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, immigrant and poor people as disposable.” Across the U.S., there are 200,000 people sentenced to die in prison, and in Pennsylvania alone, over 5,300 people remain oppressed by the torturous sentence to die a slow, gradual death behind bars.

On November 3, 2023, the UNHRC released their recommendations for the United States. In them, they call for an end to life without parole sentencing and call for accessible parole eligibility for *all* incarcerated people. This is the first time the United Nations has acknowledged that the

practice of death by incarceration violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a treaty that the United States has ratified.

In the weeks before the Geneva convening, the United Nations also released a report through the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in the Context of Law Enforcement, calling for urgent reform of the United State’s criminal legal system. In their own words, the mechanism “was deeply alarmed” at the “disproportionate, excessive, and discriminatory sentencing beyond life expectancy” in the United States. Among the mechanism’s findings was that the sentence held a particularly “disparate impact on people of African descent and other racial and ethnic minorities” ‘and children, as 62% of juveniles serving life without parole in the U.S. are of African descent.

These acknowledgements from the United Nations are momentous. Decades ago, no one had even heard the term “death by incarceration.” And today, the United Nations condemned the widespread practice and called on the United States to abolish it.

This cumulative victory arose from decades of work from people in prison and family members, such as my sister. Over twenty years ago, around a dozen men—including myself—held in solitary confinement and sentenced to die in Pennsylvania prison joined with our families to start the Human Rights Coalition which gave rise to the Abolitionist Law Center of which I am the executive director today. We chose these names to assert our dignity and self-determination in the face of a criminal legal system that aimed to dehumanize us into disposable stereotypes.

The international pressure condemning the United States contributed to the U.S. Supreme Court finding the death sentence unconstitutional for juveniles in 2005; and in 2012, it found mandatory DBI for children unconstitutional. As a global leader that claims human rights underpins its democracy, pressure exposing the human rights violations of the United States can and has been found to make a difference. The United Nations has called for an end to death by incarceration. Now the onus is on state legislators, governors, and courts to implement these recommendations by ruling DBI sentences unconstitutional, commuting people with DBI sentences, and passing legislation to provide parole eligibility to people serving DBI in their states.

By Robert Saleem Holbrook

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WE WENT TO THE UN AND CONFRONTED THE US IN FRONT OF THE WORLD



Above: Delegates from across the US who turn their backs on US Ambassador in protest. Left: Saleem Holbrook testifying at UN. Below Left: Nikki Grant leading DBI side panel. Below Center: Patricia Vickers, Saleem, and Nikki who were delegates from Philly. Below Right, from L-R: Lesette Nieves from NY, Demetricy Moore from New Orleans, Val Kiebala delegate from Philly, Patricia, and Nikki.



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The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

DEATH BY INCARCERATION: ABOLITIONISTS AT UN CALL FOR END TO "THE OTHER DEATH PENALTY"

Geneva, Switzerland - The United Nations often focuses on capital punishment when assessing countries' human rights records, but this year's Human Rights Committee review of the US shone a light on "the other death penalty" – death by incarceration.



Stanley Jamel Bellamy, a community organizer with the Releasing Aging People in Prison Campaign, traveled to the United Nations in Geneva to share his personal story of surviving a death by incarceration sentence. © Screenshot/Twitter/AbolitionistLLC

By [Kaitlyn Kennedy](#), October 2023

Death by incarceration (DBI) refers to extreme sentencing practices, including life without parole, life with parole, "virtual life" sentences that exceed life expectancy, and other lengthy and indeterminate sentences.

Typically viewed as an alternative to executions, these punitive measures are just another form of death sentence, advocates argued during the recently concluded United Nations Human Rights Committee review of the US.

One of the organizers on the ground in Switzerland was Stanley Jamel Bellamy of the Releasing Aging People in Prison (RAPP) Campaign in New York. He was just 23 years old when he was given a 62.5-year minimum sentence in 1987 and didn't expect to go before the parole

board until he was 85 – that is, if he managed to live that long.

"Because of my lifestyle, the health conditions, there was no way I was going to get to 85, so it was important for me to recognize I was serving a death sentence," Bellamy said during a panel event in Geneva last week.

What is unique about Bellamy's experience is not the excessive prison time he received as a young man, but rather that he got out. After more than 37 years behind bars, New York Governor Kathy Hochul commuted his sentence in December 2022.

"The United States should be ashamed of themselves because we are the only country that talks about disposable people," Bellamy said. "On an international level, we must pressure the United States and get the United States to understand that people change."

"We are human beings, and we need to be recognized as human beings," he continued. "We have rights, and one of them is not to be tortured because that is a torture sentence."

The racist legacy of death by incarceration

DBI is a pervasive problem that advocates say violates the right to life and right to be free from torture guarantees in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the US in 1992.

These extreme sentences are not doled out equally across the board.

Over 200,000 people around the country – nearly one of out of every seven people behind bars – are serving some form of life sentence. Of those, around 46% are Black, although Black people make up only 13.6% of the total US population.

Once inside, incarcerated people are often required to perform back-breaking labor for little or no compensation and subjected to torturous punishments if they resist – practices many view as a direct continuation of the US' legacy of settler colonialism and enslavement.

For Anthony Hingle of the Visiting Room Project, those locked up on life sentences are the "walking dead." He knows firsthand what that feels like, having spent 32 years

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behind bars in the Louisiana State Penitentiary (aka Angola) – the site of a former slave plantation.

"You actually have a death sentence, it's just a slow death. While you're serving it, they're going to benefit from it because they are going to slave you for decades," Hingle said.

"We're doing same work our ancestors were doing decades ago," he added. "These DBI sentences, they were created from tough-on-crime plat-forms and also to keep the slave trade going."

Organizing for freedom from the inside out

Surviving the injustice of DBI is what motivated several of the advocates at the UN to push for change.

"We're never getting out unless we are all fighting together. We're all doing a death sentence if we don't change it with each other," explained Kelly Savage-Rodriguez, who did 23 years on a life without parole sentence before getting released in 2018.

While Savage-Rodriguez and the California Coalition for Women Prisoners were taking on institutional violence in the Golden State, similar efforts were underway in other prisons all around the country.

Robert Saleem Holbrook, executive director of the Pennsylvania-based Abolitionist Law Center, was a teenager when he was given a life sentence for involvement in a 1990 drug-related murder, even though he didn't pull the trigger. When he got to prison and saw hundreds of people who looked like him, he came to believe the problem was by design. Meeting Black political prisoners who had been organizing to better their communities when they were incarcerated only cemented his resolve to fight back.



Anthony Hingle (r.) did 32 years at Louisiana State Penitentiary before his conviction was amended and he was released in 2021. He was among the formerly incarcerated advocates invited to share his story at the United Nations. © Screenshot/Twitter/AbolitionistLCA



Robert Saleem Holbrook (c.) of the Abolitionist Law Center awaits his turn to testify on death by incarceration before the United Nations Human Rights Committee. © Screenshot/Twitter/AbolitionistLC

"We realized we needed someone to speak for us, but the prison and non-profit industry weren't going to do it," Holbrook determined. That understanding kick-started his journey to study law as a tool to advocate for himself and others locked up on unjust sentences.

"When you go to prison at 16 years and 124 pounds, you have to learn to punch above your weight," he said.

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Demanding an end to death by incarceration on the world stage

Though once unimaginable, release from prison was not the end of the journey for Bellamy, Hingle, Savage-Rodriguez, or Holbrook.

All four former lifers shared their personal stories in Geneva to elevate the dire conditions facing tens of thousands of currently incarcerated people in the US today.

UN Human Rights Committee members were clearly moved by the testimonies, directly referencing death by incarceration in their remarks and requesting the US government delegation explain the overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous people in imprisoned populations.

On top of that, Biden administration officials were asked to share what steps they are taking to reduce the use of solitary confinement in prisons, including for juveniles, and to ensure such punishments are limited to a maximum of 15 days.

Civil society representatives from NGOs around the country expressed frustration with the US responses to crises facing their communities, which came across to many as overly general and scripted. Nevertheless, they were pleased that UN committee members heard their demands for a comprehensive transformation of the US carceral system and pressed the issue during questioning.

The Human Rights Committee could provide further momentum to the abolitionist cause by calling for an end to death by incarceration in their concluding observations and recommendations, scheduled for release on November 3.



Civil society representatives turn their backs on US government officials in silent protest at the end of the United Nations Human Rights Committee's two-day review. © Screenshot/Twitter/AbolitionistLC



From l. to r.: Anthony Hingle, Kelly Savage-Rodriguez, Stanley Jamel Bellamy, Patricia Vickers, Nikki Grant, and Robert Saleem Holbrook lead a discussion on death by incarceration during the 139th session of the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva, Switzerland. © Screenshot/Twitter/AbolitionistLC

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

Prison advocates, citing recent deaths, lobby for oversight legislation

Reprint from Metro, 10/2/2023

Story by Jack Tomczuk

A group of organizations dedicated to advocating for inmates is pushing lawmakers to advance a measure aimed at enhancing oversight of Philadelphia's jails.

Activists, during a rally Thursday outside City Hall, cited recent deaths – two in September – and mentioned rodent infestations, small food portions and the use of solitary confinement.

"It's about time that somebody looks behind those walls to see exactly what's going on," said John Thompson, a formerly incarcerated man who works for the Abolitionist Law Center.

The ALC is leading a coalition that is calling on City Council to pass legislation establishing a prison oversight board and office. Following the demonstration, they headed inside to lobby elected officials and their staff.



John Thompson, of the Abolitionist Law Center, speaks Thursday, Sept. 28, at a rally outside City Hall supporting legislation aimed at enhancing prison oversight. Jack Tomczuk© Provided by Metro US

"We're not asking for them to have big-screen TVs in every cell," Thompson added. "We're asking them to be in a living condition that's conducive to a human being."

Councilmember Isaiah Thomas introduced the resolution, which would create a nine-person board, with the council president appointing five members and the mayor selecting four. Its exact powers and duties would be detailed in a future ordinance, and lawmakers may decide to change how members are appointed.

Funding to staff an Office of Prison Oversight would be tied to the jail system's budget.

Thompson said ALC wants the board to include at least two formerly incarcerated people, mental health experts and members of the community. No former correctional officers should be appointed, he told those who attended the rally.

A hearing to consider the oversight legislation is expected in November. To become law, it would need to be approved by a two-thirds majority vote in council before being placed on the ballot as a question in the spring 2024 primary.

Currently, there is a Prison Advisory Board that some advocates have characterized as having little power to act. Former board member Sara Jacobson, in a 2022 *Inquirer* op-ed she penned shortly after resigning, described the body as a "farce."

Minister Rodney Muhammad, the board's chair, agreed that the group has little formal authority. Powers once delegated to it, such as ratifying contracts, have been stripped away over the years, he told Metro.

"A lot of what the board had was taken away from it," Muhammad said. "It didn't start out as just an advisory board."

Still, members, who generally meet quarterly, have still been tackling serious issues, Muhammad said, including the length of time people are incarcerated pre-trial.

"Frankly, some of the people sit too long," he said.

Tinika Hogan, of Sankofa Healing Services, who works with women inside the jails, echoed that concern during Thursday's rally.

"I know some women who are in there for retail theft who've been in there for nine months waiting for a court date," Hogan said. "And after nine months, the court date is again postponed."

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Reports from a court-mandated monitor – a result of federal litigation – and the Pennsylvania Prison Society have described poor conditions inside the city’s jails since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

Nearly 50 people have died since 2020 in the custody of the Philadelphia Department of Prisons, which operates multiple facilities on State Road in Northeast Philadelphia. The fatalities included five homicides, eight suicides and 12 drug overdoses, according to a death registry ALC acquired through a public records request and shared with Metro.



Inmate advocates rally Thursday, Sept. 28, outside City Hall in support of legislation aimed at enhancing prison oversight. Jack Tomczuk© Provided by Metro US

Most recently, on Sept. 13, Jimmy Phan, 26, was found unresponsive with bedding around his neck inside his cell at the Philadelphia Industrial Correctional Center as prison employees distributed morning meals, according to PDP. A spokesperson said an investigation is ongoing.

A day earlier, 63-year-old Brian Miraglia died at Jefferson Torresdale Hospital, prison officials said. He had been held at Riverside Correctional Facility before being hospitalized Sept. 7 due to underlying health conditions, the department added.

“We take seriously and grieve any death that occurs in any of our facilities, and we work constantly to improve prison conditions while working through severe staffing shortages,” PDP Communications Director John Mitchell said in a statement.

In 2022, 10 inmates died in custody – the lowest number since 2010 – and 11 fatalities have been reported this year, Mitchell said.

PDP has averaged 11.6 deaths a year since Blanche Carney became prisons commissioner in 2017, compared to 15.2 in the five years prior to her tenure, Mitchell told Metro.

This post, “Prison advocates, citing recent deaths, lobby for oversight legislation” appeared first on Metro Philadelphia.

Call for Contributors

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

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

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

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

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The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

Welcome to *The Movement's War Report*

By Shakaboona Marshall

So much great work is happening within our human rights and prison abolitionist movement in Pennsylvania, that we're now beginning to see the fruits of our labor as it relates to the changing of minds, laws, policies, and practices, that are keeping Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated People under death sentences, inhumane conditions, and cruel treatment.

Let's make no mistakes about it folks, our Families are responsible for the vast majority of success we're now seeing, but I don't want to fail in recognizing the impact that recently released Juvenile Lifers & the Wrongly Convicted Innocent people have had on *The Movement* in Pennsylvania. Beginning in 2017, many of those formerly incarcerated Juvenile Lifers & Wrongly Convicted people did *what their preceding generations of parole released prisoners refused to do* – and that is, **THEY HAVE RETURNED TO AID OUR INCARCERATED COMRADES TO GET FREE TOO!**

Hopefully, this War Report reduces some of the ill-informed discussions & critiques of what Formerly Incarcerated People/Activists and The Movement are doing or not doing. For inquiring minds who want to know, you now can get the actual facts from the source, as opposed to conjecture or gossip from non-sources and third parties.

At the forefront of our struggle for human rights/prison abolition/freedom is a few of our many hard working formerly incarcerated people - Robert "Saleem" Holbrook; John "JT" Thompson; Kevin "Hicks" Butler; Sergio "Uptown Serge" Hyland; and myself, Kerry "Shakaboona" Marshall. **My apologies to the many more men & women I cannot name here.**

Robert Saleem Holbrook, Executive Director of the Abolitionist Law Center (ALC), has gotten many serving decades in solitary confinement released, through exonerations from PCRAs and PA's version of a Compassion Release law has gotten many Incarcerated People free; has had newly elected Governor Josh Shapiro come to West Philly for a press release and community conversation around Criminal Justice with our organizations; and has been appointed by Governor Shapiro to be a member on his gubernatorial transition team.

In October 2023, Saleem organized & led a delegation of human rights activists from Philadelphia to Switzerland to

attend the United Nations' hearings on human rights, to make known the United States' human rights violations (e.g., Death By Incarceration/LWOP) against its Incarcerated Citizens. As the U.S. Ambassador began to speak to the UN Assembly, Saleem and the U.S. delegation to the UN turned their backs on the U.S. Ambassador in radical protest over the United States' blatant domestic human rights violations towards its incarcerated citizens. This spectacular event made international news. As a result of their trip to the UN, the United Nations Human Rights Committee gave its report & recommendation to the United States that it placed a Moratorium on the use of LWOP/DBI sentences in the United States, a major victory for The Movement of human rights & prison abolition.

John "JT" Thompson is a mover and a shaker in Philly, a lead organizer of political action for Abolitionist Law Center, leads many of the campaigns & lobbying efforts for our legislative bills in *The Movement*. JT has lead the election campaign to get Caroline Turner elected as one of our many new Common Pleas Judge of Philadelphia.

Kevin "Hicks" Butler, President of the Grey Panthers organization in Philadelphia, is a dynamic force to be reckoned with for incarcerated elderly people. For Kevin has nearly single-handedly drafted Geriatric bill HB 587 with State Rep. Stephen Kinsey, and lobbied HB 587 in the state legislature to have the bill given a hearing within the Judiciary Committee. HB 587 was successfully voted out of the Judiciary Committee and will soon make its way to the floor for a House vote. House Speaker Joanna McCClinton, state representatives, and our community groups celebrated Kevin Butler's success in having the geriatric bill be the first to come up for and pass from out of the Judiciary Committee.

Kevin Butler also influenced PA House Speaker Joanne McCClinton to introduce a bill HB 410, which restores commutation back to 3-2 Vote, and if enacted as law it would make it easier for Incarcerated People serving LWOP/DBI to get their sentences commuted. HB 410 was also successfully voted out of the Judiciary Committee and will soon make its way to the floor for a House vote. Kevin Butler established the Grey Panthers organization in Philadelphia and is leading it to do community programs and voting campaigns in Philadelphia.

Sergio "Uptown Serge" Highland, former editor of the Human Rights Coalition's *"THE MOVEMENT"* magazine,
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has been in the struggle doing work as an organizer for the Workers Family Party (WFP), and now works for the Abolitionist Law Center. Serge led a protest campaign against Philadelphia Judge Genece Brinkley, demanding she resign from office for her pervasive corruption within the courtroom, which resulted in Judge Genece Brinkley recently resigning from office. Serge, as public commentator “The Hood Abolitionist”, is advancing Incarcerated People/Formerly Incarcerated People’s human rights, civil rights, and freedom with his critical thought & analysis of social issues relative to so-called criminal justice. Currently, Serge also co-hosts ‘The Hydra Podcast’ with Shaka-boona from the Human Rights Coalition.

Shakaboona, since his release from prison in May 2022, has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Human Rights Coalition (HRC); has helped as a volunteer campaign worker/poll watcher for PA State Representative Rick Krajewski’s and Philly’s District Attorney Lawrence Krasner’s re-election bids; has attended the Formerly Incarcerated People and Families Movement (FIPFM) Conference 2022 in Atlanta, GA and made several connections with other formerly incarcerated people and families across the nation; has, along with Eric “Man-Shariff” Riddick, created & widely distributed a rebuttal “Second Chance For Formerly Incarcerated People” commercial ads for recently elected US Senator John Fetterman and Governor Josh Shapiro; has, along with Eric “Man-Shariff” Riddick and Terrell “Rell” Woolfolk organized the Formerly Incarcerated People and Families’ Banquet & Awards Ceremony in January 2023; has organized Judicial/City Council/and Mayoral Community forums in Philadelphia to get our political candidates into public office; has, along with several founding members, formed the Formerly Incarcerated People and Families Union (FIPFU) in Philadelphia; has worked to end gun violence in Philadelphia by convening a Public Safety Community Conversation at the historic Mother African Zoar United Methodist Church, and by partnering with Jamal Robinson’s SKU (Stop Killing Us) and Mazzie Casher’s Philly Truce’s Operation Hug The Block, where we conducted Peace Patrols in the most violence impacted neighborhoods in Philly.

We are part of organizations that’s fighting for the freedom of our many loved ones in prison. Our “coalition” of organizations, consisting of the Human Rights Coalition, Abolitionist Law Center, CADBI, Amistad Law Project, Free The Ballot, Reclaim, YASP, #No215Jail Coalition, Decarcerate-Pa, Healing Communities, PennFranchise Project, FIPFU, Frontline Dads, Let’s Get Free, Grey Panthers, and FAMM are leading the charge as always to get

men, women and children free from the belly of the beast that we call prison.

WE are fighting the political powers of government to get parole eligibility for Incarcerated People who have LWOP/DBI sentences; to “End Toxic Prisons” in Pennsylvania; to abolish the use of Solitary Confinement; to establish an “Independent Prison Oversight Board”; to protect the Voting Rights of Incarcerated Citizens detained in county jail systems; to provide commutation support for release from death by incarceration sentences; to get geriatric elder incarcerated people compassionate release from prison; to provide court support to Incarcerated People returning to PCRA Court; and to get progressive politicians elected into public office that will support our cause.

WE recently helped PA Governor Shapiro get elected, U.S. Senator John Fetterman elected, D.A. Lawrence Krasner re-elected, several City Council Members in Philly elected, and several Common Pleas Court Judges in Philly elected, and we got three progressive Judges elected in Pittsburgh.

WE, *The Movement*, are making things happen. And WE are doing this by our collective organizations’ work of educating, organizing, agitating, getting out to vote campaigns, as well as introducing the legislative bills within in the PA Legislature, and pushing it forward with constant press conferences, rallies, meetings, and lobbying in Harrisburg at the State Capitol Building Complex. WE, which includes the nonprofit groups we belong to, are principled & committed, and receive very little salaries, funding, help from formerly incarcerated people and their families, or recognition for the work we’re doing on behalf of the 80,000 Incarcerated People in Pennsylvania. However, we’re still making things happen!

The steadily growing, the abundant education, the organization/agitation, and the incremental victories of *The Movement* (such as Geriatric Bill) show and prove *The Movement*’s strategy and tactics are correct. And as the military genius General Vo Nguyen Giap, eminent army commander of the North Vietnamese Army, once said in response to U.S. Generals who boasted to have won every battle against the NVA in the U.S.’s war against Vietnam:

“When Strategy is right, and Tactics are wrong, the Battle will be lost, but the War will be won.”

We may lose some battles, but we are going to win the war of changing these racist laws, removing bad politicians, abolishing systems, winning hearts & minds, and of freeing many people from prison who’d otherwise die behind prison walls.

(Continued on page 26)

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrccoalition.org

(Continued from page 25)



L-R: JT, Shakaboona, Kevin Butler, & State Rep. Kinsley (and others) at passing of Geriatric Bill HB 587 at state capital building complex, Harrisburg, PA.



Photo to right, from L-R: Ruben Jones (FrontLine Dads), Saleem Holbrook (ALC), and Shakaboona (HRC), and JT (ALC) mayoral press conference at Miles Playground during Primary elections.

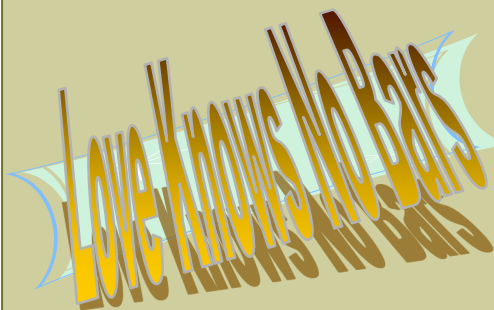


Photo to the left; from L-R; Shaka-boona, Jeff, Attila, Basym, and Sergio Highland at HRC's film screening of documentary "I Can't Breathe".

"The Movement" continues.

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcalition.org



10/4	Jennifer Vinsek	Muncy
10/8	Kevin Cannady	Dallas
10/8	Shakour Brown	Fayette
10/10	Eric Cox	Forest
10/29	Christopher Adams	Albion*
10/30	Heather Lavell	Muncy*

Oct 7th, In Loving Memory of my brother, **Edward (Sunni Sakim) Ball**, "No one knows how much I miss my brother", from Yvonne.



Happy Birthday!

Many special thoughts and happy wishes. too. This greeting comes to say how very much you're thought of today and every-day. Happy Birthday/Happy anniversary.

August

8/1	Mike Cook	Camp Hill
8/5	Gaye Morley	Muncy
8/12	Bray Murray	Dallas
8/15	Jacqueline White	Muncy
8/17	Antonio Bundy	Huntingdon
8/21	Derel Britton	Camp Hill
8/22	Celeste Coles	Muncy *
8/25	Darrell McKelvie	Benner*
8/25	Mariam White	Muncy

September

9/5	Samuel Major	Phoenix*
9/11	Tracey Shaw	Muncy*
9/18	Howard Miller	Houtzdale
9/20	Tran Loc	Smithfield *
9/24	Melanie Vicheck	Muncy

October

10/2	James Lloyd	Benner*
10/2	Brandon Moody	Phoenix*
10/3	Robert Willams	Phoenix*

November

11/4	Stratton Peay	Phoenix
11/11	Matthew Garcia	Chester
11/12	Cynthia Gonzalez	Muncy*
11/12	Nicole Newell	Muncy*
11/26	Brittany Williams	Muncy*
11/30	Tyree Williams	Phoenix*

December

12/3	Robert Furgess	Green
12/4	Sheena King	Muncy*
12/7	Melvin White	Mahanoy*
12/7	Tequilla Fields	Muncy*
12/9	Christopher Berry	Phoenix*
12/17	Brian Charles	Phoenix
12/21	Denise Crump	Cambridge Springs*
12/29	Dwayne Hill	Phoenix
12/30	Mark Taylor	Forrest

Special belated birthday wishes **Christopher Adams** from your devoted and loving Mom. We are here to welcome you all with open arms.



From **Yvonne Newkirk**
Portrait by Mark Loughney

To the class of 2023

I was able to attend the graduation of Muncy's Class of 2023. Yes, I teared up! It was a delightful and heartfelt day of joy.

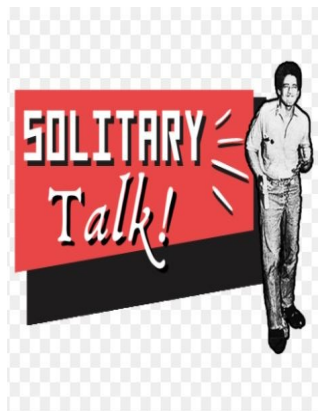
NLT . . . "Bring me out of prison so I can thank you. The godly will crowd around me, for you are good to me."

With much love in my heart for the women who did not let the wall stop them, I salute you! We need you home.

Sheena King, Brenda Smith, Elena House-Hay, Kara Young, Carol Hann, Terri Harper, Ashley Young, Taylor Griffith, Morgan Mengel , Stacey Newkirk ,Tianna Bigush , Elizabeth Evans, Kia Feflie , Keyarra Frisby, Ashley May, Chalette Maro, Jennifer Morrissey, Carmen Ramirez, Tynette Joynes, Claire Miller, Nacola Franklin, Rachel Kozloff, Synclare Little, Amanda Vernitsky, Megan Bornman, Jayelyn Reed, Jamie Silvonek, Shinda Walter, Charlooa Abbott, Kristy Carroll, Molly Cleveland, Kristina Gold, Monica Graves, Naija Greo, Mercedes Hall, Dominique Jones, Tia Jones, April Miles, Marchelle Pinkney, Nicole Reece, Sabrina Whitsel, and Kelce Struble.

Fighting for all of you,

Yvonne Newkirk



Freedom of Movement

This piece was originally published on Solitary Watch. Timothy James Young, currently 53 years old, has been incarcerated for 24 years, and has lived on San Quentin State Prison's Death Row for 17 of them. Young has maintained his innocence since his arrest, and be-

lieves that false testimony against him only arose from a deal with a jail informant. Living on Death Row, according to Young, entails frequent lockdowns, strip searches, and handcuffing every time a person leaves their cell. "On paper, we're supposed to average 14 hours of yard per week. In reality, we often spend up to 24 hours a day inside the cell," Young wrote. There is minimal movement in the unit and no opportunity for jobs, vocations, or programming.

Young is a published writer, poet, artist, and activist. He coordinates with Solitary Gardens, a collaborative artistic project in which people held in solitary confinement work with community members on the outside to plant seeds—literally in an urban garden, and metaphorically in society towards an abolitionist future. Readers can follow Timothy Young on Instagram, check out his website, write to him at: Timothy Young F23374, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, California, 94964, or add him as a contact on the GettingOut email system using his prison number: F23374. —Valerie Kiebala

Movement? What is movement to a man who is forced to spend the majority of his time cooped up in a four-and-a-half-by-ten-foot cell on San Quentin's Death Row? The answer to that question came to me one day when a pigeon flew in through one of the building's broken windows and swooped down onto the 4th tier, where I am housed. It landed, took a few awkward, apprehensive steps, and stopped right in front of my cell. Once it spotted me, it perked up and looked at me in the most perplexing, peculiar way. It seemed to be saying, "Wow, even I have more freedom of movement than you!"

That got me thinking and sent me down a rabbit hole of thoughts. It is certainly true that COVID and long-term incarceration have robbed me of some of my mobility. My bones and my body certainly don't move the way they used to. But I wonder, if not for other forms of "movement," would I even have breath to breathe? Would I have lived to see my 50s?

As a Black man in America, "movement" is my DNA. My family tree not only leads back to 1619, but there is a continual line of struggle from the fight to abolish slavery, to the civil rights era, to Black Lives Matter, to the uprising that took place after the police murder of George Floyd. These struggles...these movements...are silhouettes of Blackness. They are inherited. They are bequeathed. They are a daily part of life.

With a plethora of "movements" to pull from, perhaps there is none more important than my own.

I am a wrongfully convicted prisoner. I have been incarcerated since 1999. If you were to Google me right now, you would probably be impressed with the imagery and information that your search engine spits out. You would probably think to yourself, "Wow, this guy not only has a legitimate innocence claim, but he has the force of a full-blown freedom campaign at his back." Those findings would be true, but they don't account for the fact that before there was a movement on my case, cause, or appeal—there was nothing! Absolutely nothing!

I had to make my own movement happen. And in my case, trying to make it happen is equivalent to the concept of making something out of nothing. It is akin to pulling a rabbit out of a hat. It's an act of magic.

To say that I started at the bottom is an understatement. In 1999, I was a young Black male, falsely accused, charged with murder and facing the death penalty. I was placed in the Hole. I had no contacts, no resources, no money, and no help. All I had was hope. I clung to it like a climber on the edge of a cliff. But what I quickly learned is that hope, faith, et cetera, without action, are dead.

Since hope does not compel movement, or carry favor in a court of law, I decided to educate myself, better myself, and study up on the law while I was waiting on the wheels of justice to turn. Having done that, and having fought as hard as I could, I was still wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death.

Upon arriving to Death Row in 2006, I found myself in the same motionless boat: no money, no resources, no support, and no momentum. I didn't let that stop me, though. Instead, I hit the ground running. I was not going to allow the criminal (in)justice system to render me moribund. No one would have the pleasure of saying that I, Timothy James Young, was either broken or tabescent.

I went to work! When the other guys were watching TMZ—I was reading. When they were doing pushups—I was composing poetry. That was my mind state. I tried to

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stay busy, positive, and productive. I reached out to every church, politician, organization, and group that I could think of until I got a little traction. Finally, because of my writing, activism, and advocacy work, people began to take notice. It took two decades—but they noticed!

In 2019, the stars and the universe aligned when author, activist, and award winning artist Jackie Sumell asked me to become a collaborator in Solitary Gardens. I accepted. My role in the public art sculpture and participatory garden project was to get people to imagine a landscape without prisons. That's what I do. Apparently, I'm good at it. Because of this, many doors and opportunities have opened up for me. I have become the Solitary Gardener at UC Santa Cruz, a contributor to the EXPOSED Project, a collaborator and exhibited artist at the San José Museum of Art, a collaborator with Reasonable Doubt(s), a participant and client in Making an Exonerée, and, lastly, a fellow at the Institute of the Arts and Sciences at UC Santa Cruz.

Even though I had less freedom of movement than that little gray, speckled pigeon that had looked at me all cock-eyed—I still managed to make things happen. I still managed to create. Not by luck—but through blood, sweat, tears, and sacrifice. In the end, movement is not necessarily a matter of the mind, but rather, a matter of action. And although I am not yet free—I am not static!

PENNSYLVANIA SOLITARY UNIT PUSHES PEOPLE TO SUICIDE, LAWSUIT ALLEGES

Within months of entering the Security Threat Group Management Unit at SCI Fayette, one man says he smeared, "Kill me, I'm ready to go," on the cell in his own blood.

Originally published in the Appeal on October 3, 2023, written by: Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg

When T. Montana Bell arrived at SCI Fayette, a Pennsylvania state prison, he says he stepped off the bus and announced that he was going to kill himself. And, according to a legal complaint filed Friday in federal court, a prison official told him to do it.

According to the lawsuit—filed by multiple civil rights groups against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) and others—Bell says he attempted suicide several times that night.

Although DOC had identified Bell as a person with a mental illness, officials transferred him in November 2021 to an indefinite solitary confinement unit at SCI Fayette called the Security Threat Group Management Unit (STGMU). The suit states Bell had previously been told that he'd been recommended for a unit where he would receive counseling. Instead, he was locked up alone.

During his almost two years in the STGMU, Bell says he attempted suicide at least ten times.

Bell's experience is just one of the harrowing accounts detailed in an amended complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania by the Abolitionist Law Center, Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, and the law firm Dechert LLP. The plaintiffs seek a meaningful, transparent way out of solitary for everyone currently in the STGMU—and for anyone sent from the STGMU to a different solitary unit.

Alexandra Morgan-Kurtz, Deputy Director of the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, said the DOC should shut the unit down.

"There's not an element of how the unit is run or conceived that is operating by constitutional standards," they told The Appeal. "When you have something that to its bare fundamental building blocks is unconstitutional, there's no way to improve the unit."

The lawsuit began almost a year ago when Bell and other men incarcerated in the unit filed the case without attorneys in a hand-written pro se complaint. The law firms joined the case later.

Solitary confinement "deteriorated me into a shell of who I used to be," Bell said in a press release.

"We filed this lawsuit because we are suffering immensely and believe no one should experience this," he said. "This is torture in its highest form, and it must end now."

The DOC declined to answer questions emailed by The Appeal, stating that it could not comment on pending litigation.

Per the complaint, the STGMU is supposed to house "groups of individuals who have been identified as a possible threat to the security, safety, and/or operation of the facility." The state refers to such people as a Security Threat Group (STG). Some plaintiffs stated they don't know why they were sent to the unit. The DOC does not allow people to see evidence—if any—against them or respond to accusations, according to the complaint.

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“The policy governing the STGMU has always been secret, as has the protocol, rationale, and evidentiary basis for how the DOC determines somebody is a member of an STG,” the complaint reads.

The lawsuit states that people in the STGMU are trapped in cells that measure about 80 square feet for at least 22 hours a day. Lights are on at all times. Guards slide food through a small slot in the steel cell doors. On weekdays, imprisoned people get one hour per day to exercise in an outdoor cage.

Prisoners in the STGMU are allegedly not allowed to participate in religious services, therapeutic programs, or educational groups or activities—a ban that can negatively impact their chances at parole.

The plaintiffs say the cells typically have steel and concrete beds, thin mattresses without pillows, combination sink-toilets, and small desks and chairs. Guards strip-search and handcuff people on the rare occasions people are permitted to leave their cells.

The complaint also says a person can be held in the STGMU indefinitely—and it can seem impossible to leave.

The suit stated that those on the highest tier—or “phase”—of discipline cannot access phones, radio, television, commissary, or reading material. Bell says the DOC kept him at that stage for 18 consecutive months. The plaintiffs allege that arbitrary rules and the whims of staff govern a person’s progress from one phase to another.

“Phase changes can be based on almost anything at all without any concrete benchmarks for advancing through or being set back in the program,” reads the complaint.

As people move from one stage to another, they gain access to more essential items, including reading materials and tablet computers.

The complaint says that if a person fails the program, they’re sent to another solitary confinement unit. The suit alleges that many plaintiffs were housed in other solitary confinement units before and after their stints in STGMU.

The conditions have predictably devastating consequences. The suit alleges that people in the unit self-harm, attempt suicide, and smear feces on themselves and their cells.

The plaintiffs say that even those with no history of mental illness before entering the STGMU developed severe psychological problems due to the unit’s extreme isolation. However, the lawsuit says therapeutic services are scant. Mental health staff allegedly speak with people for just a

few seconds, often through cracks or food slots in the cell doors.

Before prison officials sent plaintiff Angel Maldonado to the STGMU, he says he had been in other solitary confinement units for more than a year but had no history of mental health issues. Within months of arriving at the STGMU in 2022, he began to punch walls and spelled out in his blood, “Kill me, I’m ready to go.”

“The STGMU was draconian,” Maldonado said in a press release. “I’m a strong person, but it broke me down.”

Through his cell door, Maldonado says he told a prison psychiatrist that he was suicidal. After the psychiatrist left, other incarcerated people on the unit allegedly screamed at Maldonado for 10 hours, telling him he was weak and broken and should kill himself.

Less than six months later, he attempted suicide.

Call for Submissions: *For the next issue, I am calling for submissions of writings in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners held in administrative detention, which is the Israeli military practice of incarcerating an individual without trial or charge, “alleging that a person plans to commit a future offense,” according to B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. “The person is detained without legal proceedings, by order of the regional military commander, based on classified evidence that is not revealed to them. This leaves the detainees helpless—facing unknown allegations with no way to disprove them, not knowing when they will be released, and without being charged, tried, or convicted.” There is no time limit, and administrative detainees are most often subjected to solitary confinement, as well as arbitrary beatings, limited family visits, and medical negligence. Along with this most recent genocidal massacre in Gaza has come heightened repression against all Palestinians for any forms of organizing, political free speech, or just existing. According to the Palestinian prisoners’ organization Addameer, there are currently 7,000 Palestinian political prisoners, including 2,070 administrative detainees, 200 child prisoners, and 63 female prisoners.*

The most compelling submissions will be published in the next issue of the Movement magazine and all of the submissions, as long as they are appropriate and supportive, will be sent to the Palestinian prisoners’ organization Addameer.

"Is Innocence Irrelevant?"

The following state cases represent the "faces of HRC". As you read, ask yourself if justice is being served by the judicial system when it criminally tries and convicts individuals knowing of their innocence, and intentionally denies fair trials to others.

Innocence of Michael Purvis

In Philadelphia, one sunny afternoon about 9 years ago a young man was debarking from a public bus when another young man, Black, with no tattoos nor facial hair and wearing sleeveless, white athletic t-shirt as described by eyewitnesses, approached the other man and proceeded to shoot him to death. As the shooter ran he bumped into another eyewitness who corroborated the descriptions of the other witnesses. The crime went unsolved until nearly one year later, when a man named Dirrick Williams, was arrested and in trouble for a parole violation. He (Williams) had another person contact the Philadelphia Homicide Department to relay information that he knew the shooter. Williams proceeded to tell the Homicide Detectives that Michael Purvis was the shooter. He claimed that after the shooting, Purvis who was wearing a blue t-shirt with orange writing on its front, ran directly into Williams' home stating that he had just been in a shoot-out and needed Williams to hide the murder weapon. Williams stated the next day Purvis gave him money for hiding the gun and stated that he had a "beef" with the victim. On the day of the murder, Williams' mother and a neighbor were sitting on the neighbor's front porch when Ms. Williams was advised that "John John's little brother" had just run into her home. Ms. Williams replied, "I know." John John's little brother was not Michael Purvis!

Purvis was arrested and in the county jail when William's girlfriend who did not know Purvis, went to the jail for a visit. She proceeded to say that Williams was lying and often used her for similar situations. Whenever he got into trouble, Williams would contact the Homicide Department and help them solve up to five to six unrelated murder cases. His girlfriend explained that she knew Purvis was innocent!

Purvis was put on trial for murder. The first jury voted 11-1 in favor of acquittal. Purvis, by the way, is a Muslim and had facial hair and had tattoos on both arms from shoulder to wrist that utterly did not match the eyewitness' description. Recall, one of the eyewitnesses was within six inches of the shooter as he bumped into her making his escape.

The second jury voted 6 to 6 in a split decision.

The third jury finally returned a unanimous verdict of guilty. In this trial, a new judge would not allow Purvis to show the jury his tattoos and the Assistant District Attorney entered a Driver License photo of Purvis showing that he was clean shaven. Purvis argued to the judge for over fifteen minutes that the photo was taken for identification purposes when he was eighteen years old, some years before the murder. The judge refused to suppress the photo evidence. The lawyer never investigated the matter until after trial.

Purvis was sentenced to life in prison for a murder he did not commit.

In recent times, Derrick Williams has come forward and conceded that he lied in nearly all of the cases. The authorities were giving him money, a hotel and keeping him out of prison, when he should have been in prison. Purvis has appealed his case to the federal judiciary and an Innocent Project has come on board to file an Amicus Brief raging against an indifferent legal system that had to realize Williams could not have been on so many different homicide scenes. Also, evidence has been certified as to the photo of Purvis being taken when he was eighteen years old. Just another case where obvious innocence was indeed *irrelevant*! Free Michael Purvis!

Sincerely,

Steve Heiser

Michael is a good friend of mine. He is in SCI Somerset. I'm in prison too serving a Life sentence. I have been assisting him in his legal endeavors for some years now.

Smart Communications/ PA DOC
Steve Heiser, AP4426, SCI-Laurel Highlands
PO Box 33028
St Petersburg, FL 33733



The Forgotten Dash

Lately there has been many deaths here in Muncy.

Senseless! Here one day, gone the next.

We walked amongst these women every day, for years. Some of us have lived with them for years, like family; but we are not able to grieve for them as one.

They pass and we have a memorial service for one hour. People who know them, and some who don't, come and speak. Once we leave we are supposed to just continue on with our prison life.

So, allow me to speak of the forgotten:

Dolores Gardner, 1934 to 1999, age 65, known as Sugar Mama

Velma Thompson, 1960 to 2000, age 40

Dorothy Finley, 1932 to 2000, age 68, known as Miss Dot

Eileen Long, 1936 to 2002, age 64

Kimberly Bryant, 1959 to 2001, age 42, known for her happiness

Phyllis Viola Kraut, 1939 to 2005, age 66, known as a mother to a lot of people

Zelma Flor Lindsey, 1969 to 2005, age 39

Sherry Yvette Robinson, 1964 to 2008, age 44, known for her spirit to live

Edith Virtue, 1947 to 2008, age 61

Ruby Jean Bell, 1964 to 2008, age 44

Wanda Denise Moore, 1958 to 2012, age 54

Sharon Margarret Wiggins, 1951 to 2013, age 62, known as Peaches

Tonya Potter, 1967 to 2014, age 47

Geraldine Lucas, 1932 to 2015, age 83, Loved by All

Lois Farguharson, 1925 to 2017, age 92, Loved by All

Theresa Battles, 1960 to 2017, age 57, known as Jamlah

Awilda Suarez, 1959 to 2017, age 58

Kathleen Foley, 1961 to 2017, age 56, known as Katie

Alice Allen, 1950 to 2017, age 67, known as Angel Free Spirit

Amanda Place, 1983 to 2017, age 34

Joanne Burler, 1954 to 2019, age 65, known as Jo

Shavonne Robbins, 1976 to 2019, age 43, known as Silk

Percy Gulley, 2022

Alice Green, 1930 to 2021, age 91

Delores Rivers, 1953 to 2022, age 69, known as Precious

Meagan Fay Saunder, 1991 to 2022, age 31

Beth Shirey, 1953 to 2022, age 69, known as Old Lady

Euisoon Cho, 1954 to 2023, age 69

Deidre Owens and **Susan Fitzgerald**

By Karen Ann Phillips

Breast Awareness Walk

Did you know the females at Muncy did a breast cancer awareness walk?

Wow. Proceeds from this walk will be donated to "The Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition". What a positive and noble act of humanity, making less than thirty cents per hour and willing to donate part of that for a worthy cause, I am beyond impressed! Let me remind you, *males as well as females* can get breast cancer, as in the case of Richard Roundtree, Peter Criss and others males.

Get a physical, and if you are over the age of 45 get a coloscopy, mammogram, lab work, dental work, and x-rays. We want you to be healthy when you come home.

Also, I contacted the PA Breast cancer office at, 1-800-377-8828, I will give you an update in the next MOVEMENT magazine.

Yvonne Newkirk

Your Legal Corner

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

PENNSYLVANIA RESENTENCED FIRST “OFFICIAL” ADULT TO 40- TO-LIFE FOR FIRST DEGREE HOMICIDE

This is an important legal notice to all adult lifers in Pennsylvania not eligible to be resentenced as a juvenile lifer with the possibility of parole under Miller v. Alabama 567 U.S. 460 (2012).

On August 10, 2023 Todd “Hyung Rae” Tarselli, a Korean adoptee whose official US birth certificate cites his date of birth as “November 14, 1973” was sentenced under Miller to 40 years-to-life for a first degree homicide that occurred on January 24, 1992 when he was officially 18 years, two months and 9 days old at the date of the offence (Com v. Tarselli 295 of 1992, Luzerne County, PA).

Tarselli was born in South Korea. Korea considers a child one year old on the day of his birth, in contrast the US counts a child one day old. Thus if a Korean child states he is “6 years old”, he is actually only five years old chronologically. This culture difference was not properly accounted for when Tarselli was adopted by an American family and his US birth certificate recorded his official date of birth as November 14, 1973.

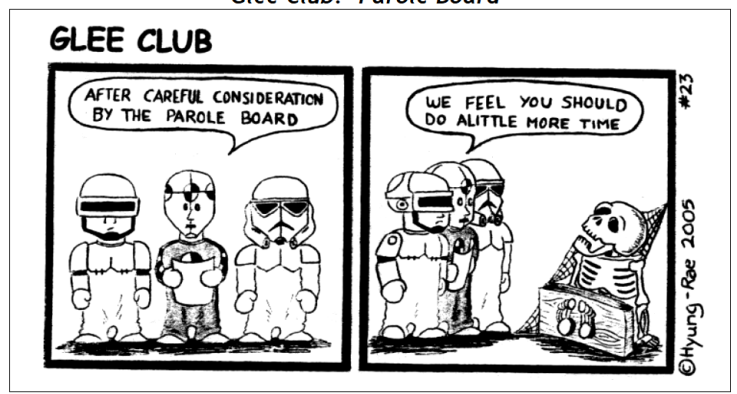
When the US Supreme Court ruled in Miller that children cannot be sentenced to mandatory life without parole, Tarselli filed an appeal claiming his US birth certificate was recorded incorrectly and is actually one year younger and was a juvenile at the time of his offense.

While his PCRA was pending Tarselli attempted to correct his official birth certificate in the Orphan’s Court, the court with jurisdiction over birth certificates. This petition was denied due to Tarselli unable to provide a Korean birth certificate. Thus November 14, 1973 is still his official date of birth.

In July, 2021, the PA Superior Court ruled Tarselli was “more likely than not a juvenile at the time of his offense” and ordered him to be resentenced in accordance with Miller. Com v. Tarselli 260 A .3d 111 (PA Super 2021). Tarselli’s official vital statistics, however, still cite him as 18 years, 2 months and 9 days old at the time of his offence.

All adult lifers in Pennsylvania should file an appeal citing Equal Protection. Tarselli, whose official vital statistics cite him as an adult at the time of his offense and was resentenced to 40 years-to-life with the possibility of parole; therefore, Equal Protection under the law should allow other adult lifers in Pennsylvania to be resentenced with the possibility of parole.

Glee Club: “Parole Board”



Above: art by Todd “Hyung-Rae” Tarselli. Pic on right—Three day court support for Tarselli. L-R: Mama Patt, Liz, Ms. Yvonne, Attila, Iris, Theresa Shoatz, Kaj, and etta. Those who attended but did not make it into the picture were Saleem, Shakaboona, Serg, Bro. Yusef and others who we were unable to name.



Your Legal Corner

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

This memo was sent out by the SCI-Mahanoy Administration (not by Central Office) to the inmates at SCI-Mahanoy. It requires the men to sign a DC-155 form saying that failure to do so "may" result in not receiving and sending money.

The DC-155 gives the prison "broad" power to handle your property without advance notice or approval by you, throughout your lifetime. It also allows DOC the control of 1. your personal possessions, 2. possessions in any one of the DOC facilities, and 3. money in any account in DOC.

To people inside of DOC prisons, seriously think about this. Let's use stimulus dollars received during the COVID Pandemic as an example: if you receive a \$1,500 stimulus check into your account the prison can choose to give it to you or not; if you die, the prison can also choose to keep that \$1,500 or send it to your loved one outside of the prison. If you have nothing, then you have nothing to lose.

To our **LAWYERS** out there in the movement, is it legal to threaten a person into signing a Power of Attorney that gives them control of everything you own? Please reply to THE MOVEMENT, PO Box 34580, Phila, PA 19101.



TO: Inmate Population
RE: DC-155 Power of Attorney and Designation of Guardian of Property
FROM: Major C. Griffin
DATE: September 1, 2023

In the upcoming weeks, staff will be meeting with you in order to complete the DC-155 form as pictured below. This form is completed during your reception and classification process and has two purposes: **Power of Attorney** allows the Department of Corrections to receive and send money on your behalf, **Designation of Guardian of Property** designates the person who will be responsible for the disposition of your property if you should become unable to make those decisions on your own. This person may or may not be your Emergency Contact person.

We will be completing this form for all inmates. Failure to comply with this process may result in the loss of ability to receive/send money. Please reach out to your family members if needed to discuss any changes you may need.

DC-155 Rev. 7/11	LEGAL DISPOSITIONS (Facility)	COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA Department of Corrections
1. POWER OF ATTORNEY THE PURPOSE OF THIS POWER OF ATTORNEY IS TO GIVE THE PERSON YOU DESIGNATE (YOUR "AGENT") BROAD POWERS TO HANDLE YOUR PROPERTY, WHICH MAY INCLUDE POWERS TO SELL OR OTHERWISE DISPOSE OF ANY REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE TO YOU OR APPROVAL BY YOU. THIS POWER OF ATTORNEY DOES NOT IMPOSE A DUTY ON YOUR AGENT TO EXERCISE GRANTED POWERS, BUT WHEN POWERS ARE EXERCISED, YOUR AGENT MUST USE DUE CARE TO ACT FOR YOUR BENEFIT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POWERS OF ATTORNEY. YOUR AGENT MAY EXERCISE THE POWERS GIVEN HERE THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, EVEN AFTER YOU BECOME INCAPACITATED, UNLESS YOU EXPRESSLY LIMIT THE DURATION OF THESE POWERS OR YOU REVOKE THESE POWERS OR A COURT ACTING ON YOUR BEHALF TERMINATES YOUR AGENT'S AUTHORITY. YOUR AGENT MUST KEEP YOUR FUNDS SEPARATE FROM YOUR AGENT'S FUNDS. A COURT CAN TAKE AWAY THE POWERS OF YOUR AGENT IF IT FINDS YOUR AGENT IS NOT ACTING PROPERLY. THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF AN AGENT UNDER A POWER OF ATTORNEY ARE EXPLAINED MORE FULLY IN 20 PA C.S. CH. 56. IF THERE IS ANYTHING ABOUT THIS FORM THAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, YOU SHOULD ASK A LAWYER OF YOUR OWN CHOICE TO EXPLAIN IT TO YOU. I HAVE READ OR HAD EXPLAINED TO ME THIS NOTICE AND I UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS. Date: _____ Inmate's Signature: _____ I (print inmate's name and number) # _____, do make, constitute, and appoint the Facility Manager/Director, or his/her authorized representative, of any facility or center within the Department of Corrections to which I am then confined my true and lawful attorney for me and in my name to sign my name as endorsement of any checks, money orders, or bank drafts for deposit to my credit or for withdrawal of funds held in my name in the Inmate General Welfare Fund Cash Account or Resident Wage Account. This power shall continue as long as I am an inmate of any facility or center within the Department of Corrections and shall not be affected by my subsequent disability or incapacity while confined therein, unless sooner revoked. I understand that if this Power of Attorney is revoked, I will not be able to enter into any transactions to receive, transfer or send funds to or from my account if such transaction would require my signed endorsement. This power shall be for the doing of all lawful acts necessary to carry out the purposes set forth above. I hereby ratify, confirm, and intend to be bound by any and all acts, as described in the previous sentence, which these attorneys or substitutes shall commit pursuant to this power of attorney. Witnessed by _____ Date _____ Inmate's Signature _____ Date _____ Witnessed by _____ Date _____ Two witnesses are required if inmate refuses to sign or if inmate signs with a mark or requires another individual to sign on his/her behalf. ACKNOWLEDGMENT I have read the attached power of attorney and am the person identified as the agent for the principal. I hereby acknowledge that in the absence of a specific provision to the contrary in the power of attorney or in 20 Pa.C.S. when I act as agent: I shall exercise the powers for the benefit of the principal. I shall keep the assets of the principal separate from my assets. I shall exercise reasonable caution and prudence. I shall keep a full and accurate record of all actions, receipts and disbursements on behalf of the principal. Facility Manager/Designer: _____ Date: _____ Note: Records Staff at the facility where the DC-155 is executed shall sign the "Acknowledgment" as the Department/Facility Manager's designated representative. The signature will bind all other authorized representatives of the Department to act as agents for the principal at any facility or center within the Department of Corrections where the inmate is held. 11.5.1 Records Office Operations Procedures Manual Section 1 - Processing of Receptions Attachment 1-E		
2. DESIGNATION OF GUARDIAN OF PROPERTY I (print inmate's name and number) # _____, hereby designate (print guardian's name) _____ who lives at (print street address) _____ (print city or town) _____ (print state) _____ (postal zip code) _____ telephone (_____) _____ as the guardian of all property to which I hold lawful title at the time of my death which is either in my personal possession or in one of the facilities or an account of the Department of Corrections to hold until such property shall be disposed of according to law. This designation shall be null, void and of no further effect upon my release from the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections. Inmate's Signature _____ Date _____ Witness _____ Date _____ Witness _____ Date _____		
3. ADVISEMENT OF RIGHT OF COMMUNICATION If any problem arises within the facility concerning your confinement, you may bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate staff members for assistance. The Inmate Grievance System may be used if applicable. In addition, you may address privileged communication at any time to the Secretary of Corrections, the Attorney General, the Governor, or any elected local official or any appointed or elected state or federal official. This is not to be construed as limiting your access to the courts in any way. I have read or have been read the following advisement and hereby acknowledge receipt thereof. Inmate's Signature _____ Witness _____ Date _____		

Department of Corrections | SCI Mahanoy
301 Grey Line Drive | Frackville, Pennsylvania 17931
570.773.2158 | www.cor.state.pa.us

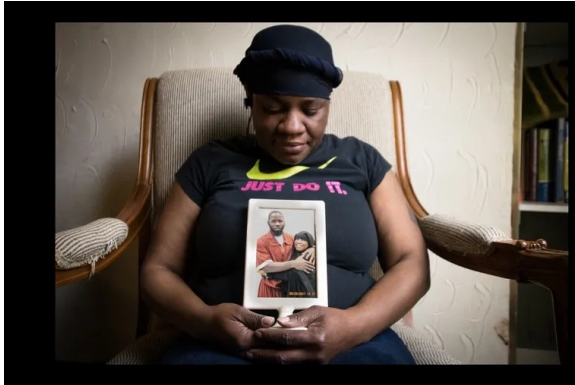
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What's The News!

A Philly teen saw a murder, called 911 — and did 15 years in prison. Now, he's exonerated.

David Sparks, convicted of the 2006 murder of Gary Hall, was cleared Monday after the DA's Office and the Pennsylvania Innocence Project used previously undisclosed police files to show his innocence.



Tameeka Sparks in 2018 with a photo of her son, David Sparks, who was exonerated Monday after being wrongfully convicted of first-degree murder at age 16. ERIN BLEWETT / Staff Photographer

by Samantha Melamed, Nov. 6, 2023

When teenager Gary Hall was gunned down on a Nicetown street in 2006, his friends all seemed to know who did it.

They blamed Ivan Simmons, whose little brother had been seen arguing with Hall minutes earlier. A few months later, Simmons was fatally shot in what Hall's friends told police was an act of revenge for Hall's murder. And after that, a friend of Simmons shot Hall's cousin — retaliation for the retaliation.

Yet Philadelphia police disregarded those statements, court filings show. Instead, they arrested someone else: David Sparks, a 16-year-old who'd been picked up for violating curfew the night of Hall's killing.

Sparks was convicted and served 15 years in prison for Hall's murder. He was exon-

erated Monday after the District Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) and the Pennsylvania Innocence Project unearthed extensive, previously undisclosed evidence in police files pointing to Simmons as the shooter.

The case was the subject of a 2018 Inquiry investigation that highlighted evidence pointing to Sparks' innocence. It noted that Sparks was actually an eyewitness to the shooting — even sticking around to call 911.

On that recorded call, Sparks' voice can be heard, tinny but urgent.

"Somebody got shot. He's possibly dying," he told the dispatcher. "Please could you hurry up. Please."

The new investigation unearthed ballistic evidence in the police file that the same gun used to kill Hall was used in another murder police believed Simmons had committed four days earlier. Also in the file was a statement from an eyewitness to Hall's murder who was later arrested for one of the retaliatory shootings. That witness told police about how Simmons shooting Hall had instigated the cycle of violence.

"Based on that evidence, the court is convinced that the verdict should be overturned," Common Pleas Court Judge Scott DiClaudio said Monday. He noted that Sparks' was the sixth murder conviction he had tossed out in three days. "That's gotta be a world record."

Three of those cases involved disgraced former homicide detective Philip Nordo, who was convicted of raping informants in the course of investigations that yielded at least 15 wrongful convictions.

In Sparks' case, which was assigned to homicide Detective Donald Marano, prosecutors said it was not clear why the undisclosed evidence was not turned over to the trial prosecutor, James Berardinelli. Neither Marano nor Berardinelli could immediately be reached for comment Monday.

"This just shows the power of finally getting information from those homicide files," said Nilam Sanghvi of the Pennsylvania Innocence Project, who worked on the case with lawyer Jim Figorski. "It really proved what David has always said, what the neighborhood has always said, was the truth."

Claims of coercion

In 2008, Sparks waived his right to a jury and stood trial before Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper.

The case against him rested largely on two eyewitnesses, sisters who were 12 and 14 years old when they saw the shooting from inside a Chinese takeout store. Their testimony was inconsistent, evolving from statement to preliminary hearing, and again during the trial.

A third witness denied having given a statement to homicide detectives, testifying: "They wrote it down and made me sign the papers. Those are not my own words."

Sparks' defense lawyer presented a testimony from Sparks' girlfriend at the time, who said she saw Simmons shoot Hall. But, due her relationship with Sparks, Woods-Skipper did not credit that statement. Instead, she found him guilty and sentenced him to life in prison with no possibility of parole.

The Pennsylvania Innocence Project first took on the case in 2013. Figorski joined the case when Sparks became eligible for a new sentence, based on a U.S. Supreme Court decision that minors could not be subjected to mandatory life-without-parole sentences. But it was not until the DA's Office turned over its case file that the ballistics and other evidence surfaced.

The information they found revealed that police knew well before Sparks went to trial about the evidence linking Simmons to Hall's murder.

Sparks' mother, Tameeka Sparks, still lives in the neighborhood where her son was arrested. Over the years, she said, residents would often tell her they knew

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her son was innocent — but no one was willing to come forward.

Now, though, she's looking ahead. On Sparks' to-do list: Surprise his 16-year-old daughter, who didn't yet know her father had been exonerated. And then, hopefully, an Eagles game.

For Sparks' younger brother, Dominic White, Sparks' exoneration was a bitter-sweet moment — cause for relief, but not celebration.

"This is past due. We're burnt out," he said. "We feel like he never should have been there. So at this point we just want to get away. There's nothing to celebrate."

More exonerations

Last week, DiClaudio tossed out four other convictions, including another Pennsylvania Innocence Project case.

In that case, Eddie Ramirez, convicted of the 1995 murder of Joyce Dennis, won a new trial after extensive new evidence was uncovered in the police file — including exculpatory DNA evidence on the murder weapon. Multiple witnesses in the case also recanted their statements, alleging they had been coerced by homicide detectives.

Sparks' conviction was one of two overturned on Monday. The family of Hall did not attend, but provided a statement informing the court that the proceeding was "retraumatizing."

District Attorney Larry Krasner, whose administration's policy of disclosing homicide files to petitioners has revealed undisclosed evidence in dozens of cases, said the exonerations reflected an effort to right what he likened to "war crimes" by previous administrations.

"I think all of this is illustrative of the terrible consequences of police officers or prosecutors who think they can do what they want — who are not guided by their oath to tell the truth all the time or to seek justice," he said.

The other case was Reafeal Fields' conviction of the 2010 murder of Michael Smith, 24, in North Philadelphia.

That case, handled by former Det. Philip Nordo, also involved extensive undisclosed evidence, most of it regarding Nordo's history of misconduct. Based on that evidence, the prosecutor and judge agreed to allow Fields to plead guilty to third degree murder and accept a 21-to-42-year negotiated sentence.

DiClaudio told Smiths' family, including Smith's mother, Tyra, and Smith's 13-year-old son, McKaaeel, "I want to make sure that if we resolve it this way, this is the end of your nightmare."

For Tyra Smith, though, it was just a new chapter — since now she'll have to dread Fields' parole hearings. She tries to remind McKaaeel, who was born after his father's death, of who Michael Smith was: "not perfect, but a person who was willing to help everybody. He planned to have his son. He wanted to be a father."

"I feel like the city dropped the ball. [Nordo] never should have been out there handling cases. Now, everybody has to relive and rehash this," she said.

UN Human Rights Committee releases recommendations to address sweeping US violations

Story by Kaitlyn Kennedy, Nov. 6, 2023

Geneva, Switzerland - The United Nations Human Rights Committee on Friday released its recommendations for the US, revealing a pattern of routine and systemic violations.

Last month, more than 100 social and racial justice advocates traveled across the ocean to Geneva, Switzerland, to testify

on the US' failure to meet its international human rights obligations.

The UN Human Rights Committee heard from those advocates and from a delegation of US officials in order to monitor the country's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It was the first time the process had happened in nine years.

During its two-day review, committee members posed questions to Biden administration officials on topics ranging from treatment of people detained at Guantanamo Bay to extreme sentencing practices, Indigenous water rights, militarization of Southern border communities, access to reproductive health care, and other top priorities.

Activists and advocates felt the US delegation's engagement in the process left a lot to be desired. In a powerful moment, many stood up and turned their backs on government officials in silent protest as Ambassador Michèle Taylor made her final remarks to the committee.

Even though they did not get the responses they wanted from the US government, advocates expressed hope that their concerns would be reflected in the committee's concluding observations, released on November 3.

Here are some of the UN Human Rights Committee's top recommendations for the US after its 2023 review.

Expanding voting rights

The UN Human Rights Committee's 17-page report includes numerous recommendations to address sweeping human rights crises across the US and its territories, including at the ballot box.

To combat the recent slew of discriminatory voter suppression laws, the committee recommended:

- broadening access to polling stations

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- passing the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act
- ending partisan gerrymandering
- increasing protections for election officials
- reinstating voting rights for people previously convicted on felony charges

The committee also called on the US to rein in the use of dark money and boost transparency in elections through passage of the Democracy is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections (DISCLOSE) Act.

Guaranteeing access to reproductive health care

Access to reproductive health care was another central theme in the 2023 review, with the UN Human Rights Committee pushing the US government to fight back against states' restrictive abortion bans and end discriminatory barriers to midwifery care.

In particular, the committee recommended:

- guaranteeing the federal right to an abortion via the Women's Health Protection Act
- expanding access to medication abortion
- ending criminalization and strengthening privacy protections for patients and providers

"Today is a reckoning for United States policymakers at every level of government," Bethany Van Kampen Saravia, senior legal and policy advisor at Ipas, said in a statement upon the recommendations' release. "The United Nations Human Rights Committee has appropriately called on the US government to acknowledge the human rights crisis that is taking place within America, as states

continue to ban abortion and limit access to sexual and reproductive health care."

"The US government has long held itself as a beacon of human rights, but the reality is far from it and the truth is finally coming to light. In the past twenty years, nearly 40 countries have liberalized their abortion laws, while only four have regressed and the US is one of them," she continued.

"The US is going against the global trend and now we must do something about it."

Ending racial profiling and protecting immigrants' rights

Ending racial profiling and protecting immigrants' rights were additional priorities during the review.

The committee ultimately urged the US government:

- to pass the End Racial and Religious Profiling Act and the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act
- to investigate and prosecute all allegations of racial profiling
- provide effective remedies to the victims
- to collect comprehensive data on incidents and complaints of racial profiling by law enforcement, including Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers

On top of that, the committee said the US should do a comprehensive review of its immigration and border policy and strengthen protections for migrants and asylum seekers by ensuring access to legal aid, language interpretation, and safe living conditions.

The committee noted that detention of migrants should only be a short-term, last-resort measure and encouraged the US to explore alternatives to surveillance-based technology at the border, which may violate the ICCPR's right to privacy.

The recommendations came after a delegation of activists traveled to Geneva

to testify on militarization of borderlands communities and systematic human rights violations by federal, state, and local law enforcement officers.

Ending mass incarceration and life without parole

The UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern over the overrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and Latino people in jails, prisons, and detention centers across the US.

To address these grave injustices, the committee recommended the US pursue alternatives to detention, the cash bail system, and mandatory minimum sentencing. It also urged an end to the use of solitary confinement for juveniles and disabled persons.

The committee additionally also called not only for a nationwide moratorium on executions but also for life without parole (LWOP) sentences, often referred to as death by incarceration or "the other death penalty."

The inclusion of LWOP marked a huge win for abolitionists who made the trip to Geneva to share personal testimonies of surviving death-by-incarceration sentences.

Strengthening protections for Indigenous Peoples

Regarding Indigenous rights, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concerns over obstacles to the recognition of Indigenous Peoples as well as threats posed to Indigenous lands and sacred sites from extractive industries, US military infrastructure, and toxic and nuclear waste.

The committee urged greater protections for lands and sacred sites plus more effective measures to honor treaty rights and secure free, prior, and informed consent before engaging in development or infrastructure projects.

The US was also called upon to do more to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, including by

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improving data collection and ensuring thorough investigations, prosecutions, and punishments, as well as effective remedies for survivors and their families.

Indigenous leaders and advocates at the UN testified on the urgent need to trigger decolonization processes in illegally occupied Alaska and Hawaii, as well as in the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico.

However, calls for decolonization were not reflected in the committee's recommendations.

Ending the gun violence epidemic

The wave of gun violence sweeping US communities was another central issue for the UN Human Rights Committee.

Their concluding report called on the federal government to:

- require universal background checks for firearm and ammo purchases
- ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines
- restrict firearm possession for people under domestic violence restraining orders
- ensure that gun industry entities may be held accountable in cases of fire arm abuse

A failure to take effective action could violate the ICCPR's right to life guarantee, the committee warned.

Ensuring LGBTQ+ and gender equality

The UN Human Rights Committee also called on the Biden administration to do more to guarantee constitutional protections against sex and gender-based discrimination, including through publication of the Equal Rights Amendment.

The US should also enact comprehensive protections against LGBTQ+ discrimina-

tion and expand access to housing, health care, and employment.

Any instances of discrimination, harassment, and violence should be thoroughly investigated and punished, and victims should have effective channels to seek redress.

Ending the criminalization of homelessness

Laws and policies that seek to punish unhoused people are another area in need of improvement, with the US urged to abolish policies that criminalize homelessness and withdraw federal funding from states and localities that do so.

The US was also encouraged to pass laws that protect the rights of unhoused people and reallocate funding for law enforcement responses to housing and shelter programs.

Addressing the climate emergency

When it comes to the rapidly heating planet, the UN Human Rights Committee noted that the US has so far failed to take comprehensive and effective steps to protect the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

In accordance with the ICCPR's right to life guarantee, the committee called on the US to strengthen its legal framework and take measures to combat environmental racism, including by ensuring access to safe and clean water for all.

Creating a national human rights institution

The UN Human Rights Committee expressed grave concerns over the incorporation of ICCPR rights in the US' domestic legal framework – a necessary step to facilitate the enactment of its recommendations.

That's why the committee said the US government should establish an independent national human rights institution to monitor implementation of the covenant

at the federal, state, local, and territorial levels.

The committee's recommendations are non-binding. Nevertheless, advocates believe they will provide an important boost to their work, showing that human rights are not only a matter of domestic policy but also of international law.

See entire article: UN Human Rights Committee releases recommendations to address sweeping US violations (msn.com)

The Last 12 Months Were Hottest the World Has Experienced in Last 125,000 Years

November 13, 2023

Global average temperatures over the past year were 1.32 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial levels.

By Chris Walker / Truthout

Average global temperatures set a new 12-month record high, according to a new analysis of climate data, coming alarmingly close to a threshold at which scientists believe the climate crisis will become irreversible for many of the world's ecosystems.

Climate Central, **an organization that describes itself as** “an independent group of scientists and communicators who research and report the facts about our changing climate and how it affects people's lives,” **released a report this week** examining average temperatures from around the world, finding that in no other point in at least 125,000 years has there been a warmer 12-month period.

Ninety-nine percent of humanity was exposed to above-average temperatures in the period between November 2022 and October 2023, the report found, with

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around 5.7 billion of the world's 7.8 billion individuals being exposed to at least 30 days of higher-than-normal temperatures that were "made at least three times more likely by the influence of climate change," the organization said.

"This 12-month record is exactly what we expect from a global climate fueled by carbon pollution. Records will continue to fall next year, especially as the growing El Niño begins to take hold, exposing billions to unusual heat," said **Andrew Pershing**, vice president for science at Climate Central.

"This is the hottest temperature our planet has experienced in something like 125,000 years," **Pershing added in a press conference announcing the findings.**

The report also suggested that temperatures would be higher next year. "Records will continue to fall next year, especially

as the growing El Niño begins to take hold, exposing billions to unusual heat," **Pershing said.**

Long streaks of extreme heat were felt in several locales around the globe, with Houston, Texas, experiencing the longest streak, lasting 22 days, the report noted. Around a quarter of the world experienced heatwaves that lasted at least five days, and 90 percent of the world's population experienced at least 10 days with high temperatures that wouldn't have been seen if not for the influence of the climate crisis, **Climate Central said.**

Such long streaks of heat can be incredibly harmful, resulting in thousands of deaths. **According to analysis from the National Institutes of Health**, each day when temperatures exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit is associated with around 1,373 deaths in the U.S. alone.

Global temperatures were around 1.32 degrees Celsius (2.4 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than pre-industrial averages. That

number comes dangerously close to the 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels that **climate scientists say would be enough to create an irreversible crisis** that will destroy entire ecosystems around the planet.

The Climate Central report also noted that, while some parts of the globe will be more impacted by the worsening climate crisis than others, everyone will see, and feel, the effects.

"While climate impacts are most acute in developing countries near the equator, seeing climate-fueled streaks of extreme heat in the U.S., India, Japan and Europe underscores that no one is safe from climate change," **Pershing said.**

Reprint from: The Last 12 Months Were Hottest the World Has Experienced in Last 125,000 Years - scheerpost.com

JOIN OUR HARRISBURG DAY OF ACTION
December 12



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HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

A.L.C. ABOLITIONIST LAW CENTER

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Dear Friends Visit the RHU!

I am writing you regarding the institution I am currently housed in. Here at SC-Pine Grove the conduct of staff, from the top down, is very bad. On 9-14-2023 a Correctional Officer (CO) - who can actually be traced back to making home calls at work - pretended to be exposed to drugs and claimed to be intoxicated from it. I believe he's just trying to get time off from the B-1 Unit, 6am-2pm shift.

Also the staff here tend to cancel yard for no reason. We've been on lock down at least two times per month since I've been here. There is no wellness checks for mental health with peer support. The RHU is totally in violation. And they seem not to care. The fact that there will be juveniles and young adults flooding this institution should alarm everyone. No one checks on mental health here. NO ONE. I am a Lifer, I should not be here for two many reasons to count.

When you visit, ask to visit the RHU. They will try to bring to the BA Unit, the dog program, as if that is the only pod to visit. Visit the RHU! The windows are blocked and you cannot see outside, so you cannot really tell if its night or day due to the "street light" shining in your cell. You do not know what time it is, can barely see the television, and they only allow you 10 books from you property (soft back only) for your entire stay in the RHU. They give you small sheets that neither cover the bunk nor your body so that you have to choose. The cells are extremely cold, by the way.

So when you come, go visit the RHU. Go inside a cell. Ask the prisoners questions. There is so much more to inform, but I'll stay in touch.

Always,

Mark Love, # HR-9995

SCI-Pine Grove

Joe Died at SCI-Houtzdale

On 10/10/2023, Joseph Solomon, #HG-2276, died at SCI-Houtzdale. He is one of many in the past 18 months to have died suddenly at this prison. To our State, he was just another number, but to me, and many others, he was a caring, and soft-spoken person who struggled with mental health and trauma. Years ago, Joe was a body-builder, in great shape, filled with confidence. Recently, he looked like a skeleton with skin. He walked around with his head held down, his hair was thinning, and he had to hold his pants up with one hand. The prison staff treated him maliciously. He lived in the I-Unit with me which has a notorious reputation for being cruel on inmates because of the Unit Manager, Mr. Adolf Ginter (as he is referred to). Ginter and his regime find enjoyment in forcing people who don't get along to live with each other. Two weeks ago, they forced Joe to move in with a guy who didn't like whites. Joe pleaded, "Please, I'm scared, I'll live anywhere else, I don't want trouble." The staff responded, "You'll live where we tell you!" Several of us heard this and Joe, now even more scared, moved in with that guy. The next morning, Joe was found tied up. The cell-mate was taken to the "hole" and Joe was untied. He came to me for help. He talked to me about trauma, something I'm familiar with being at this prison, and I drafted a grievance for him to file. That was last week. Now he's dead. They continued to deny him parole for no reason. He could have been home. The staff here forced him into that vulnerable position. They caused this. They do it all the time here, especially on I-Unit.

We need help for Joe and many others suffering from mental health problems. Help put a stop to this terrorism and these senseless deaths. And please, **help me find Joe's family**. They need to know what really happened and that Joe was a good person who was trying so hard to get home to them. I understand how difficult it is to believe that prison staff could commit such horrible acts on people, but they do it at this prison more often than not. An investigation will certainly reveal something. A lot of young people have died here recently, and it's never heard of again.

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You may contact me at Smart Communications/PA DOC, Mark Rokita Jr. #LJ-8688, SCI-Houtzdale, PO Box 33028, St. Petersburg, FL 33733, email @ connectnetwork.com.

Privatized Health Care = Medical Neglect. Tips for Navigating.

In response to the article in THE MOVEMENT Summer Issue #51 about hundreds of elderly and geriatric Lifers dying: I understand all too well about the discord concerning the medical department to all of us, not just the Lifers.

I have been incarcerated since 1996. When I came to Muncy, sick calls were free. Medical was managed by the Department of Corrections (DOC). In fact, the DOC was in charge of our overall health care. It was the decision of the PA or the doctor here at the institution to determine if we would be seen by a specialist outside the institution. Now, it's a whole different ball game. The DOC now has what they call "medical providers". Okay, so if you don't know, all "medical providers" are privatized meaning they are contracted to provide a service. They are not state employees. The DOC administration does not have any say in the medical treatment of an inmate. This is such a heart-breaking situation to get into knowing there is only custody and control.

I suffer from ESRD (End Stage Renal Disease) meaning both my kidneys are dead. I have been on life support at my sickest. Since the DOC has contracted the medical department, they do absolutely NOTHING to ensure our medical care. They say it is out of their hands.

I am a health crusader for all inmates. I give information to any person who asks me about how to proceed with getting the best possible medical solutions to their serious medical problems. I get it! Every problem that is yours is major. However, some of the medical concerns are deemed frivolous by the grievance officer. I've had very personal experiences with nurses on drugs. Yes! I reported to a nurse, and she had the drugs on her- Oxycodone 80, a

big brown bottle, quantity: 90 pills. The captain of security at the time escorted the nurse out of the jail and she was terminated from her contract with the institution. Internal Affairs was notified, and I did in fact, speak with them on several occasions. What I am trying to say is, follow your chain of command. Please try not to jump the chain. I know that this is time-consuming. However, it is the best way to get your medical needs addressed. I am going to give you two outlets that can help you. I must say that in order for this process to work, you must grieve the initial person then when that grievance is denied, your second option is to grieve the Facility Manager who is the superintendent of your institution. When that grievance comes back denied, you grieve to Mechanicsburg.

So here is all the information you need:

1. Head of Grievances, 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
2. If you're grieving a nurse: PA Board of Nursing, PO Box 2649, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649
3. If you're grieving a doctor: PA Department of State Professional Compliance Office, 2601 North 3rd St., PO Box 2649, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

Be patient for your greater good. Doctors and nurses have licenses, which they need to practice. Period. If found negligent, their licenses can be suspended.

In solidarity,
Karadara Young, SCI-Muncy

Expert

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

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.

Equal Protection For All

Some time ago, people were seeking help, shouting that men in uniforms were beating and murdering their families in the streets. Finding it difficult to believe, no one helped. These people began begging, screaming that these men in uniforms were now taking their families from their homes and throwing them onto a train that led to prisons in the middle of nowhere. No one helped. Some newspapers were able to take pictures of a few incidents where it seemed that men in uniforms were beating people. But still, no one helped. Several years later, a war ended and it was discovered that millions of men, women, and children were beaten, abused, and taken to prisons where they were beaten, abused, and slaughtered.

It was so hard to believe that people in uniforms could commit such horrendous acts against other people. Psychologists have studied and attempted to understand why and how a human could inflict such pain and torture on another. We understand now that during this time, immunity was provided to what was called "The Nazi Regime" by the head of their government - a man named Hitler. Since then, we are still hearing families cry and plead to the people for help. But no one is helping. It doesn't seem plausible that what the Nazis did in Germany could be happening here in America, could it?

There are stories today of officers beating, abusing, and murdering people in the streets. People are torn from their families and hauled away to far-away prisons. What goes on in these prisons is kept silent by those in uniforms and the government. Again, the news reports and show the few captured videos that validate what these families cry to be true, but it is again, too few to warrant any intervention by the people. We trust that our judicial system and government know what they are doing and that they would-

n't intentionally hurt people. Our president has even said, "Trust in the justice system."

Unfortunately, history has a disturbing way of repeating itself and though the people in uniforms in this country are not wearing a discerning swastika on their sleeve, the many different badges state a similar intention. The Fraternal Brotherhood, in Philadelphia, and the slogans of prison guards all delineate that they work in a group with impunity. I don't believe our President or government understand what justice system we are talking about because there are obviously two: one for those with immunity and another system for the rest of us that has found a way to profit from abusing and torturing people.

When we see a person abusing another while holding their badge up, we don't want to think that they are wrong. We are taught to trust the police. However, the psychology of providing a person with immunity and a weapon is clearly too much for most people. The only way to prevent the people from being abused and murdered is to remove one word from this regime's resume - "Immunity." Equal protection in this country was meant to be for all the people, not just those with a badge or in government.

Smart Communications. PA DOC

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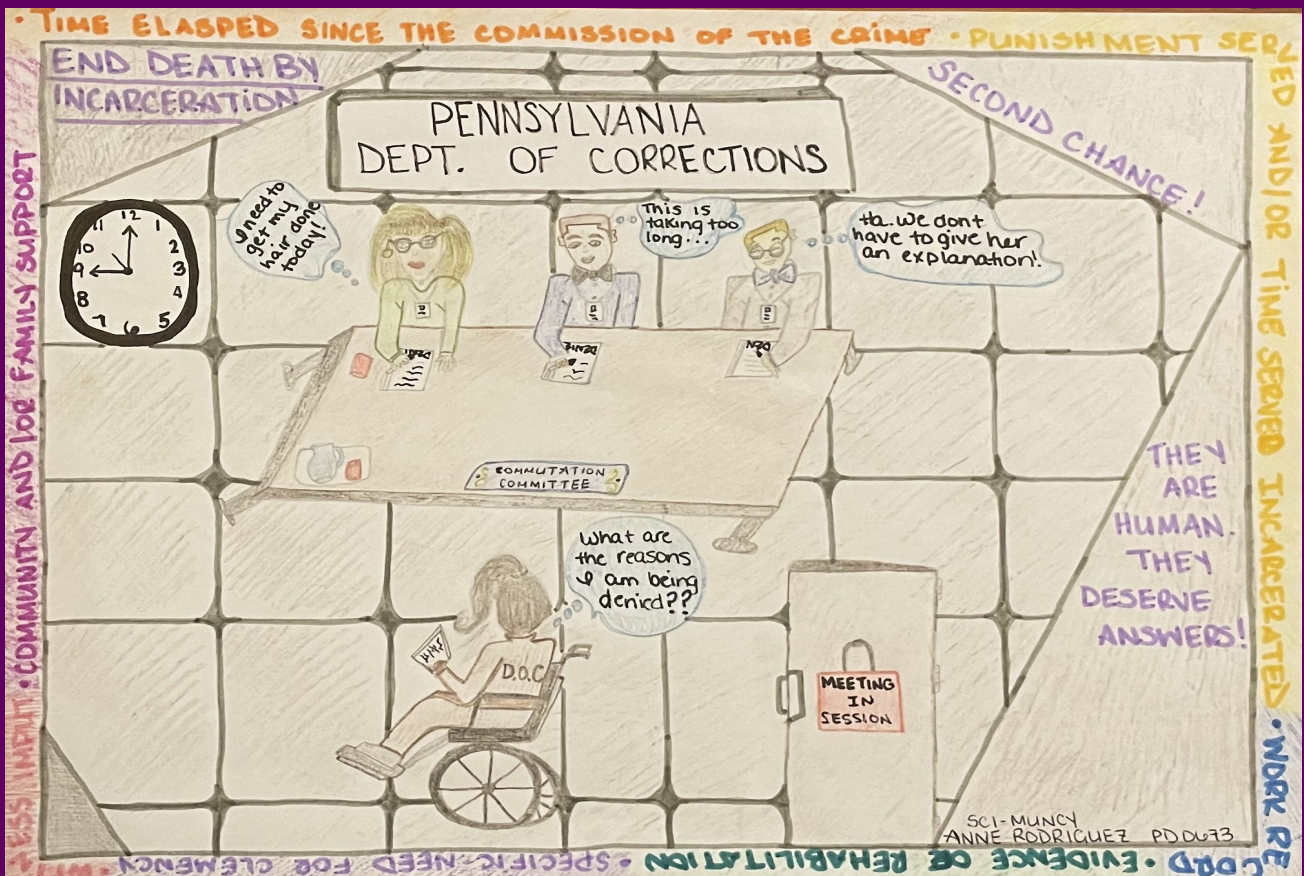
THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcalition.org

Artist from the Inside



Above: "Bad Advice from a Bird in a Dream" by Mark Loughney Below: "Commutation Board" by Anne Rodriguez



Human Rights Coalition
P.O. Box 34580
Philadelphia, PA 19101



Artist From the Inside
"Evasion" by Elena House-Hay