

THE MOVEMENT

Winter 2013
Issue #21

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

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

2014 Starts with a BANG!



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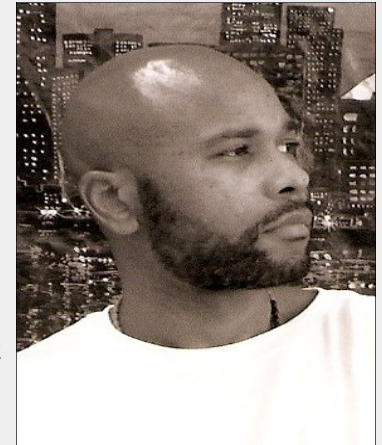
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**Front cover: Photo from Steven Hirsh, Splash News
Lynne Stewart, released January 1, 2014**

From The Desk of The Editor

"It Always seems impossible until it is done."

- Nelson Mandela



Welcome to The Movement,

On December 5, 2013, former political prisoner and former South Africa President Nelson Mandela—affectionately referred to as “Madiba” (Father) by the South African People—has made his transition to the other side to be with our ancestral spirits. Madiba Nelson Mandela was 95 years of age when he passed away.

To the worlds’ people, Nelson Mandela and the South African peoples’ liberation struggle was an inspiration for their continued resistance to military occupations, neo-colonial economic policies, racism, wars of aggression, and domestic tyranny and oppression.

For prisoners in America, like myself, Nelson Mandela was a great hero to us because he was a prisoner like us. He was our beloved comrade in the world-wide struggle of the oppressed versus the oppressor. So to all of us prisoners confined in America’s racist prison systems in the 1980’s and early ‘90s, Nelson Mandela—identical to political prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal at present—was our living symbol of a freedom fighter par excellence, of resistance, of freedom, of hope, and of truth (good) triumphing over falsehood (evil). Nelson Mandela was one of our lions of Judah, our Christ Jesus with the sword!

Not a prison protest went by that you didn’t hear a fellow prisoner yell out “Free Mandela!”, “Down With American Apartheid!”, “Long Live Nelson Mandela!”, and chants of “Amandla!” (Freedom!) in the faces of sadistic racist prison officials.

We, prisoners in America, identified with Nelson Mandela as a political prisoner sentenced to hard labor at the infamous Robben’s Island prison because likewise we too were being subjected to the same racism, brutality, cruel anti-human treatment and conditions, and terror by Nazi-like prison officials on American soil.

To throw our support behind Nelson Mandela and the South African Peoples’ Liberation struggle we learned all we could of Nelson Mandela, we analyzed his political ideals, we studied the South African peoples’ struggle and apartheid and connected it to our struggles in America, and at every turn we sought to inform others about Nelson Mandela’s 27 years of imprisonment and the racist Afrikaaner Apartheid regime in Azania (South Africa) that were oppressing African and Indian peoples.

So not only was Nelson Mandela the “Son of Africa”, as he reverently called, but to prisoners here in America he was our “Beloved Brother of Africa”. Today, Nelson Mandela has ascended to “Madiba of the World!” So much so, that the United Nations has established July 18th as international Nelson Mandela Day!

Some things may seem impossible until it’s done. The Struggle continues!

Madiba, we love you! Amandla!

Long live the spirit of Nelson Mandela!!!

Bro. Shakaboona, Co-Editor and HRC Organizer

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WELCOME TO THE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE

You've just come upon a dynamic and unique magazine that informs the public and speaks raw truth to power by educating the masses in society on major social issues of the day as it relates to human rights. While some of the writing is by journalists and professionals, much of the writings printed in THE MOVEMENT magazine are by activists, prisoners, and the families of prisoners. We publish four issues of THE MOVEMENT magazine a year and all back issues remain posted on the website - hrcoalition.org.

THE MOVEMENT magazine is an independent Voice of the Voiceless. We are unapologetically for human rights and solidly against status quo, racism, poverty, militarism, and the so-called criminal justice system.

We call for building a 'National Prisoners Human Rights & Abolish Prisons Movement', as well as forming coalitions with other social movements, throughout the United States to end the injustices of the establishment. THE MOVEMENT magazine advocates for human rights, justice, equality, freedom, protection of Mother Earth, peace, and total social-political economic transformation of the United States.

We especially encourage families of prisoners and prisoners (particularly women prisoners) to submit their writings of stories and experiences that critically examine the so-called Criminal Justice System (i.e., police, DA's Office, Public Defenders Office, courts, Parole Board, Dept. of Corrections, for-profit private prison corporations, and lobby groups) to THE MOVEMENT magazine.

Each issue of THE MOVEMENT magazine focuses on the criminal Justice System, racism and poverty as human rights issues and what people can do to bring about change. Additional poems, art, political satire cartoons, announcements, and more are included. Unsolicited writings and graphics are accepted and welcomed. We won't guarantee printing but we'd like to see your work. If you want your work or photos returned to you, then include a self-addressed stamped envelope. This and other correspondence should be sent via regular mail to:

Human Rights Coalition
Attention: Newsletter Committee
4134 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Call for Contributors

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

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

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

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

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

Subscriptions

THE MOVEMENT magazine provides FREE family subscriptions to the families of prisoners! Please support this effort by subscribing or donating.

Families of prisoners subscriptions: **FREE**
1 Year prisoners subscription: **\$12**
1 Year public solidarity subscription: **\$24**

We publish four issues of THE MOVEMENT magazine per year.

Winter Issue - mailed first week of January
Spring Issue - mailed first week of April
Summer Issue - mailed first week of July
Fall Issue - mailed first week of October

See our subscription form inside to subscribe on page 10.

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

Human Rights Coalition sues prison officials for censoring political dissent and human rights advocacy

January 9, 2014: Philadelphia, PA — The Human Rights Coalition (HRC), politicized prisoner Robert Saleem Holbrook, and College of Charleston Professor Kristi Brian brought a lawsuit today against several employees of the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Coal Township and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) for confiscation of mail sent to Holbrook, a co-founder of HRC currently held at SCI Coal Township.

“Today HRC is going on the offensive to fight back against prison censorship,” editor of *The Movement* and HRC-Philadelphia activist Patricia Vickers stated. “It is long overdue that prison officials are held to account for their attempts to silence those who speak out against this abusive system. The rights, health, and lives of our loved ones are at stake.”

The suit, *Holbrook et al. v. Jellen et al.*, filed by attorneys from the Abolitionist Law Center, details a series of confiscations of Holbrook’s mail since January 2012 that includes academic correspondence with a college professor and issues of *The Movement*, essays written by Angela Y. Davis and James Baldwin, a newsletter published by HRC which focuses on prison abuse, solitary confinement, and ways that prisoners’ family members can come together to challenge human rights abuses and injustice in the criminal legal system.

The content of the materials censored by SCI Coal Township and Central Office officials touch on the most vital issues of the operation of the prison system in Pennsylvania: juveniles sentenced to die in prison, deaths in solitary confinement, repression of human rights defenders inside prisons, advocacy efforts by families of prisoners, and the pervasive racism that defines the criminal legal system in Pennsylvania and the U.S. In this context, freedom of thought, speech, and association carry life or death consequences.

Plaintiff Robert Saleem Holbrook, a 39-year-old prisoner who is serving a sentence of life-without-parole for a conviction imposed when he was 16-years-old, wrote about prison censorship in an article published in October 2012, “Censorship on the Prison Plantation: Extinguishing Dissent”:

“[T]he prison mailroom supervisor at the prison I am incarcerated in (SCI Coal Township) reflexively denies all books by Black/Latino authors that provide a radical critique of prisons, as well as all publications that contain articles written by prisoners that critique prisons from an adversarial position. Every issue of the Human Rights Coalition newsletter “The Movement” has been denied by this institution, as well as informational brochures and flyers related to HRC’s advocacy on behalf of prisoners. It is not the information contained in these newsletters that the prison censor fears, because none of the material is threatening or inflammatory. What angers the censor and the prison administration is that prisoners are taking the initiative to challenge their imprisonment and conditions of confinement without apology! On the pages of these publications, prisoners are demonstrating that they possess a voice and are insuring that their voice be heard.”

“This lawsuit challenges the ability of PA DOC officials to target political dissent and human rights defenders with arbitrary censorship,” said Bret Grote, an attorney with the Abolitionist Law Center representing the plaintiffs in the case. “The First Amendment protections at stake extend far beyond the confines of this particular case, and touch upon the daily lives of millions of people in this country who are in prison or who communicate with people in prison.”

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Bret Grote, bretgrote@abolitionistlawcenter.org 412-654-9070

Memories of Mandela

by Matt Meyer



Let's Not Mourn a Myth

As the world joins together in celebrating the life of Nelson R. Mandela, South Africa's "Madiba" who symbolizes freedom and dignity in every corner of the planet, let us not make the too-easy mistake of constructing an icon rather than honoring a man. He was, after all, a rather heroic although complicated man — with almost one-third of his life spent as a political prisoner who refused to bend on his most basic beliefs and strategies yet lived to lead a mass movement of international dimensions which put a number of those beliefs into practice.

The mythology comes when we forget about the complications, smooth over the rough edges which actually make his story most meaningful for those looking to continue building movements for lasting and radical social change. Those who support the status quo, or who remain largely ignorant of or uninterested in the history of struggle, can be expected to revel in the over-simplifications; there can be no sympathy, however, for those who knowingly ignore one side of Mandela's legacy to callously and opportunistically proclaim and showcase another. Madiba was, for example, a true champion of peace and reconciliation — an admirer of Gandhi and nonviolence (who tried out and perfected his earliest "experiments with truth" fighting injustice in South Africa). He was also, of course, a strong advocate of armed struggle, spending twenty-seven years in jail primarily for refusing to have the African National Congress (ANC) he led set down their weapons or ideological commitment to use of arms so long as the racist apartheid regime was armed to the teeth; he was not imprisoned simply for wanting Africans to have the right to vote. He was an adherent of democratic socialism who quickly compromised some fundamental aspects of the ANC's Freedom Charter to allow for capitalist enterprise to play a large role in post-apartheid South Africa. One could argue that Mandela played a significant role in the development and advancement of neoliberal policies over the past twenty years, encouraging multinational corporations to profit off of a mineral-rich country whose majority of citizens are still dirt poor; one would have to also recognize that for most of his life his closest friends and advisors were members of the South African Communist Party, some of whom maintained Stalinist positions on economics and organization till the time of their deaths.

Those who called Mandela friend, of course, include raging imperialists (Barack Obama and Bill Clinton to name just two), but also included leaders of the Palestinian liberation movement, Fidel Castro and indigenous leaders throughout Latin America and Asia, grassroots peoples movements who gained inspiration from his commanding presence and progressive vision. Mandela liked to remind people, for example, that Libya's Colonel Muammar Gaddafi was also a friend of his, one he would not give up so easily on even as the world seemed to revile him. Gaddafi supported the anti-apartheid movement during some of its lowest, least popular times, and Mandela would not so easily forget that. Almost every Head of State who met Mandela, and every member of civil society who had that opportunity too, are trotting out their photos and reminding us of the diversity of ways in which he influenced people — from petty dictators to the most revolutionary of matriarchal eco-socialists. Mandela was, after all, part Winnie as well as part Graca, part anarchistic rebel part diplomatic statesman, both compromiser and man of principle, all rolled into one.

It has been written, by others and me as well, that Madiba was the world's most famous political prisoner — but of course he was so much more than that. Nevertheless, it is a plain truth that he often reminded all the peoples he encountered that it was by looking at the way a country treats its prisoners which reveals the true characteristics of its rule. Twenty-first century USA, currently incarcerating men of African descent at five times of the rate of apartheid South Africa, is not faring too well in that respect. It is much more than rhetorical flourish when we link Mandela's life to those still languishing under torturous conditions behind bars; senior citizen Russell Maroon Shoatz of the Black movement of Pennsylvania in the 1970s (!), for example, has spent almost as many years in continuous solitary confinement as Mandela spent altogether in jail. The US movements to free all political prisoners understand what so many in the Global South know well, but so many in the Northern and eastern parts of the planet try hard to forget: that these prisoners hold the key to our legacies of resistance. Forgotten, they enable right-wing and fascist movements to intensify repression against popular efforts for peace and freedom; remembered and fought for, they provide short-cuts and invaluable histories for advancing new levels of struggle (especially if, like Shoatz, they continue to engage in and write about the lessons we must learn to make the world a better place). Perhaps it is that link to the best of human history that has made Mandela more than just the world's most famous political prisoner, but the world's most famous face.

Perhaps in some ways Mandela is the world's first post-modern revolutionary. Resting comfortably between strategies and ideologies — between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King — Mandela defies the old dichotomies which falsely turned tactical differences into divisive polar opposites. Today, young South African activists — typified by the dynamic (and persecuted) Abahlali baseMjondolo Shackdwellers Movement — understand that it is their responsibility to press beyond supposed past contradictions, and create economic justice on a scale only imagined and talked about but never implemented by Mandela and his comrades. Tomorrow, in early July 2014, Africans from across the continent will converge on the Cape Town City Hall to press for an end to all war and the causes of war, for gender justice and lesbian and gay liberation and a Pan-African borne

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peace. Bandile Mdlalose, the Secretary-General of Abahlali baseMjondolo, put it this way when mourning the death of ‘the light of the nation.’ “To hell with protocol,” she wrote. “The only way for our generation to fulfill Mandela’s dream is to take power into our own hands. Together we must turn this country into a revolutionary democracy.”

Memories without Myth

The following two vignettes, written immediately after the passing of “our” dear Madiba, chronicles two experiences this author had with welcoming the man to New York City and meeting the man in Johannesburg. Though Mandela was many things, he was not a New Yorker ... but I think my home-town Daily News got it correct when they headlined his passing with the words “Farewell, dear friend.”

Mandela in Harlem, 1990

Remembering Nelson Mandela’s first visit to the USA some months after his release from prison brings back many thrilling moments ... but none beats the Harlem street rally, where secret service and official US governmental “protection” met We, the People energy in the Black capital of the empire. Unbeknownst to everyone at the time, Mandela was still on the US terrorist list; he never did denounce armed struggle. Harlem was out in force and ready to greet the great man, but some troubling behind-the-scenes rumblings were reverberating, especially for those of us who had just begun to have some successes in getting word to a new generation of folks about the then-fairly unrecognized fact that there are over 100 US political prisoners in jails throughout the country. A visit from the planet’s best-known political prisoner was too great an opportunity to pass up.

The days in preparation for the outdoor Harlem gathering had already been filled with tension. Mayor David Dinkins, in a disastrous splitting move that would later haunt his political career, insulted several Puerto Rican former political prisoners from the 1950s (the contemporary generation were all still behind bars at this time) by making it clear that they would not be welcomed on the podium with Mandela. Our best bet, though, for direct spotlighting of the cause was the extraordinarily dynamic, recently-freed Black Panther militant Dhoruba Bin-Wahad. If anyone could excite Harlem, connect with Mandela, and send a message that all people concerned with peace, justice and human rights had to face the reality that the US political prisoners deserved immediate release, it was Dhoruba. Beloved Harlem organizer and historian Elombe Brath, who was the emcee and coordinator for the celebration, finally made it all possible. Just before Mandela was to speak, Dhoruba would be brought to the podium and introduced by Elombe, who would highlight Dhoruba’s own 19 years of incarceration after a Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) frame-up.

Dhoruba strode mighty to the stage; he was even wearing what came to be thought of as a “Mandela” shirt: unique patterns and colors crossing between worlds and eras. Looking at the crowd and at Mandela himself, Dhoruba recounted his own years of struggle and incarceration—but mainly spoke of the many political prisoners still behind bars, from resistance movements willing to truly confront US imperialism and colonialism. At the end of his speech, the crowd excited to hear Mandela but just as thrilled by Dhoruba’s bold message, he led us in the bold chant “WE WILL NOT GIVE UP THE FIGHT” to free all US political prisoners. All of us in the streets were already on our feet; there were no chairs or seats at this street rally. At the perfect pitched moment, however, Mandela himself rose from his front row chair on the podium, right between Winnie and Dhoruba, and hugged our Panther spokesperson as the assembled masses cheered.

Then, as now, there is much work to be done — from South Africa to gentrified south Harlem and beyond. Then, as now, there are prisoners to be freed, whole peoples to be liberated. Then, as now, WE WILL NOT GIVE UP THE FIGHT!!

Meeting Mandela in Johannesburg

It was more than a little odd, traveling to the land we had both so long boycotted — Bill for his decades as a Pan African people’s ambassador for entire generations (and representative of organizations such as War Resisters International and the American Friends Service Committee), me since my coming of age in the early 1980s, part of the Columbia University divestment campaign and a burgeoning anti-imperialist. But the movement — the African National Congress (ANC) — had insisted; we were touring the continent conducting dialogues for our joint project and book, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan African Insights on Nonviolence, Armed Struggle and Liberation* (2000). So, with ANC’s explicit permission (and a diplomatic nod to our comrades in the Pan African Congress as well), Bill and I crossed into South Africa two years after Mandela’s triumphant release from prison and two years before his even more triumphant election as first president of an electorally democratic South Africa. It was the height of the Mass Democratic Movement, the newest incarnation of the grassroots, multifaceted United Democratic Front (UDF), and we were meeting with friends of both of ours—Zwelakhe Sisulu, Dr. Ivan Toms, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, Ela Gandhi, End Conscription Campaign co-wards Laurie Nathan and Gavin Evans and Richard Steele and Anita Kromberg, comrades in the South African Council of Churches and iconic she-roles like Sister Emma Mashinini.

But that particular afternoon was special: we were spending the day at ANC headquarters in JoBurg, with a long scheduled interview with Walter Sisulu. The timing was not coincidental, as at one point the interview was interrupted so the wonderful OR Tambo could join us, along with Walter’s wife and former UDF co-chair Albertina Sisulu. After the excitement of that reunion (Bill had for years provided hospitality at his Tanzanian home to Tambo and national liberation movement leaders from Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and so on...but those were the days when Man-

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delandela and Sisulu were still behind bars and Tambo didn't dare enter the land of his birth), another interruption took place. We were to leave the comfort of Papa Sisulu's office and greet the ANC National Executive Committee, about to go into session. It was a who's who of a part of South African politics, as Bill and I were led round the circle to shake hands with the gathered leadership – including Cyril Ramaphosa, Joe Slovo, and so many others. At the end of the line, however, standing just outside the room, Mandela towered over us all. It was far from just his height; it was his stature. In his calm, steady, regal voice, he greeted us, thanked us for coming to his country, for working for his freedom, for joining in the continued work for his people.



Bill Sutherland with Nelson Mandela
1992; photo by Matt Meyer

By this time in our travels, I had met, interviewed and spent time with many wonderful people, including some rather impressive Nobel Peace laureates, Presidents, Prime Ministers, trade unionists, musicians, revolutionaries. But Mandela, for all his very human qualities, stood out. It was all I could do to quietly ask Bill if it might be OK to snap a few pictures. This is one of the only times, in a routine which was familiar to the two of us where photos would be taken, books inscribed, with small talk leading to serious dialogues on strategies and tactics, that I felt too awed to ask to get in one photo. There was a special respect, not quite reverence but not familiarity either, that seemed to reverberate across the walls. As we said our good-byes so Madiba could go off to his meeting and we could return to our interview with his life-long best friend, I got my confirmation that I was hardly the only one who felt that way in the man's presence. Ramaphosa, who was himself President of the ANC at that time (before Mandela had any particular title in the party or the government) stood alongside of his elder to whisper some ideas about an agenda item in the old man's ear. His salutation to his colleague? "Greetings, Mr. President."

We can be sure that the work for an end to economic apartheid is far from completed in South Africa, and that the call to free all political prisoners has not been met. But those ongoing struggles and others must now take a moment to pay homage to Madiba — our imperfect, inspiring, challenging man. Long Live Nelson Mandela! Long live all freedom fighters!!

From: <http://www.newclearvision.com/2013/12/10/memories-of-mandela/>

Editors' Note: Attention Pennsylvania prisoners. Due to the overwhelming censorship and banning of issues of THE MOVEMENT by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) and its State Correctional Institutions (SCI) the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) will be seeking legal redress for the violations of its First and Fourteenth Amendments rights. To that end the HRC is asking that PA inmates to do the following: **1.)** Notify the HRC when their incoming publication of THE MOVEMENT is censored by IPRC, **2.)** Appeal the IPRC decision to the Superintendent and to Final Appeal Review, and **3.)** Mail the HRC a copy of your final appeal and the PADOC's "Final Appeal Determination" to:

Human Rights Coalition
Attention: Newsletter Committee
4134 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104

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A Call for Support

By: Sarah Bell

For most of us serving a long-term (20+ years) or a life sentence, it is very important for us to maintain positive relationships with our family, friends, and the community we once lived in. However, many of us like myself are lacking the support we so desperately desire in order to make it through each and every day in prison. Some fall hard into the scams, drama, and negativity to cope with the possibility of dying before we are released. While others remain hopeful and use the many educational programs and groups they offer to develop positive life skills. I have been able to do just that and more.

In 2004 I plead guilty to third degree murder and other related charges. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. My mother was a drug addict and I never knew my dad. At the tender age of four years old, my mother left me on the corner of my grandmother's block and called my aunt to come pick me up because she was too embarrassed to walk me to my grandmother's door. I spent the next three years there. I felt lonely and sad. I missed my mother. She did not drop me off on the first day of school. When I got all A's on my first report card, I ran home from school excited to show my family but no one cared. At that point I shut down all my emotions and became a loner. A year after moving in with my grandmother, I began to be molested by a teenage female cousin. I continued to be molested by her until 1991 when my grandmother died from breast cancer. I was forced to move back with my mother who at the time was strung out on crack cocaine and had recently been diagnosed as being HIV positive. At seven years old I did not understand what that meant. I was happy and excited to be with my mother. I missed her so much and I thought things were going to get better but they did not. For the first few years we lived in abandoned buildings with her drug addicted friends, in subways, and in shelters. With the help of public assistance my family and I, which included my two younger siblings and my older sister, eventually moved into an apartment of our own. It was okay until my mother would disappear for days sometimes weeks at a time. It made me feel as if she did not care about us, she didn't love us. So of course I built a wall up around me. I did not allow myself to get close to anyone because we were constantly moving and changing schools. How could someone else love me when my own mother did not even love me? Eventually child welfare stepped in and placed my siblings and I in foster homes and group homes. I hated it. The foster families were no different from my own family. They would leave us in the house to fend for ourselves. They were very mean and I never got along with their children. So I ran away in search of my mother who chose drugs over her own children. In 1995, my younger sister passed away while living in a foster home. I was heart broken. I was eleven years old at the time. I blamed my mother for neglecting to be there for us. I loved my mother but for years I held a lot of resentment inside towards her. Soon after I turned twelve years old I began to get into a lot of trouble. I got into fights in school, I smoked marijuana, drank alcohol, and stayed out late. Sometimes I just did not return home. Eventually I joined a gang. The gang gave me a sense of security. I felt loved, something I was lacking from my real family. I just wanted to feel like I belonged to something. For the first time I did. A lot of consequences came with joining a gang. I started selling drugs and I robbed people in order to support myself. Soon after I joined the gang, I found myself in the NY state juvenile justice system. I was in almost every juvenile placement there was. I was angry. I had no guidance, no support, no direction, and no one to encourage me to do the right thing. At the time no one in my family graduated from high school or even had a steady job. I can recall a time when I moved to Long Island to live with my uncle and his wife. I was so bad they just gave up and kicked me out. In 2001, when I was seventeen years old, I left NYC. I hooked up with a few of my friends and we all moved to PA for the sole purpose of selling drugs. Two years later I was in prison for murder.

It is true that I became a product of my environment. However, that was my choice. It is easy to blame my parents for their imprisonment. The fact is there are many people who grew up in the same circumstances but they did not become drug dealers or murderers. They persevered and became successful. That is not my story. I can come up with many excuses for why I ended up in prison. A drug addicted mother who neglected me, no father, getting molested by a relative; however, I do not want to be the person with a thousand excuses. In July of 2004, when my mother passed away, I made the decision to never have an excuse for not being better or doing better. So today I do my best to be a better person than I was yesterday. Since my incarceration I have obtained my GED and took several college courses. I have also done many groups to help me deal with my abuse and abandonment issues. I am now in the upholstery apprenticeship program. Everything I do now is to prepare myself for when I do walk out of this prison. I won't allow my past to dictate who I am or the person I choose to become. If I was given the opportunity to reach out to young kids going through what I went through, I would tell them not to give up on themselves. Stay in school and do not be influenced by your peers. It is so easy to get into trouble and end up in prison. I would tell them not to take the easy way out like I did. Maya Angelou once wrote, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage need not be lived again." So to all those kids who have been molested, don't have a father and their mother is on drugs, face your future with courage and strength. Do not be afraid to ask for help. Reach out to your teachers. If you want to feel a sense of belonging, don't join a gang like I did. Join a basketball team, a boxing gym, or a church. The only thing no one can take from us is education. Once it is acquired it can never be taken away.

Many of our young men and women are at war with themselves. It is our responsibility to fix this epidemic. They are becoming victims of abuse, neglect, bullying and violence. They are turning to gangs and drugs to escape the pain they are feeling in their own homes. Society focuses solely on the effects and not enough on the cause. As an inmate in a state prison, I am in constant interaction with many women who were victims themselves. We find ourselves addicted to drugs, money, and unhealthy relationships because we have not dealt with our core issues. When I turn on the news, I only hear about the people who are poisoning our communities. What about the ones who are making a difference? In prison you only hear about the people who are released and continue to do the same things that they were initially in prison for. What about the ones who go home and become productive citizens? There are many of them.

I have plans on applying for commutation within the next ten years. I am going to be one of many who leave prison and become successful. There is no way I will be able to do it on my own. I am going to need the support of my community. I can get all the tools in prison and take all the groups that are required of me. The fact is if I do not get the help of my community, I will not make it. Please help me on this journey to get out of prison and become successful.

Thank you.

Sarah Bell #OJ-1653 P.O. Box 180 Muncy, PA 17756



JUSTICE FOR THE DALLAS 5

PACK THE COURTROOM

January 21, 2013

1:00 pm

Luzerne County Courthouse

200 N. River St

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

Judge Lisa Gelb

In April 2010, at SCI Dallas (PA), after a series of abuses at the hands of corrections officials, 6 prisoners housed in the solitary confinement unit decided they had enough and decided to stage a protest in response to the inhumane conditions and mistreatment of prisoners. Each prisoner involved in the protest is now collectively referred to as the **Dallas 5**. They are Andre Jacobs, Carrington Keys, Anthony Locke, Duane Peters and Derrick Stanley. They peacefully covered their cell windows and barricaded their doors to protect themselves from harm after guards began beating prisoners one by one. They asked for an outside official to come into the prison and mediate between the inmates and guards, who were abusing prisoners. Instead of receiving this mediation by an outside official, guards attacked the Dallas 5 with pepper spray, Tasers, and their fists.

For peacefully demonstrating for an end to human rights abuses, these men suffered retaliation and criminal charges of riot. Contrary to the charges, these men did not incite riot. They did not cause or create riot! They had no ability to do so within a single cell solitary confinement unit! These same men contributed to the Human Rights Coalition report which detailed ongoing abuses and human rights violations within the dungeons of this state and especially at SCI Dallas. These charges are inappropriate; non-violent protests are always handled through internal Pennsylvania Department of Corrections disciplinary actions not criminal court.

As revealed in the Human Rights Coalition report and before the House of Representatives, there has long been a policy within the prison walls of Dallas and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) to operate a **corrupt administration** under an iron wall of silence. Under this code of silence, SCI Dallas, PA DOC, District Attorney's Office, Attorney General's Office as well as the Pennsylvania State Police operates in participation and conjunction with one another to cover up crimes and misconduct by overlooking video footage of officers, the real criminals, committing human rights violations. The guards should be on trial and not the Dallas 5.

For more information and updates visit the Dallas 5 Blog: <http://scidallas6.blogspot.com/>

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist



I stand on the shoulders of our
heroes and roar.

December 22, 2013

Dear Community Activist,

Although former judges Ciavarella and Conahan now sit in prison for the Kids-For-Cash-Scandal, the corruption which allowed and encouraged their outrageous crimes continues to exist. I am asking for support for a group of men known as Dallas 5. These men are being targeted for providing inside information to HRC-FedUp, lawsuits against Department of Corrections (DOC) and former DA Jackie Musto Carroll and for successful civil rights actions against the DOC. In April of 2010, guards were beating inmates whose names appeared in an abuse report concerning SCI Dallas. The only act of the men was to cover their cell door and barricade themselves in for protection. In protest of widespread abuse that was taking place there, they asked for outside intervention. In response, they were pepper sprayed, electroshocked and bloodily beaten on video. This all happened with the approval of Luzerne county District Attorney's Office and State Police who were sent complaints but never investigated. 3 months later, the prosecutor charged the men with riot in retaliation for complaints filed against her and the DOC. These men have been wrongfully accused and the case has become a personal vendetta.

If you are involved or concerned with social justice, this is an opportunity to witness firsthand what "really" goes on in the solitary units of Pennsylvania. The DOC is making a mockery of the court system by blatantly wasting taxpayer money for a personal vendetta against prisoners who dare challenge their abuse by taking legal action. They have violated many criminal procedural laws in this vendetta. Even while they await trial they have been individually retaliated against. The judge, DOC and DA's office are working in collusion. It is evident that they will do anything to win the case and railroad these men.

Please sign the petition <http://www.change.org/petitions/petition-to-dismiss-all-charges-against-dallas-5>, or attend the trial. The trial is scheduled for a January 21, 2013 with Judge Lisa Gelb presiding and prosecuted by Assistant DA James McMonagle at Luzerne County Courthouse, 200 N. River Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711 at 1:00 pm. Please give me a call at 412.403.6101 or email sd4hrc@gmail.com if you would like to show support in any other way or if you have any questions. I am also available to speak to your group. Please visit the Dallas 6 website for more information and updates <http://scidallas6.blogspot.com/>.

Sincerely,
Shandre Delaney
Mother of Carrington Keys

Think Tank Reflection

You get the occasional, but welcomed letter. You try your best to be able to have enough money on the Global Link to accept the calls. You factor in your already meager budget to put a few dollars on the books. You might even forego that cable bill for the month to squeeze in a much needed visit.

But nothing prepares you for the Think Tank at Graterford, which is a program started in 2002 where participants meet on a weekly basis to develop projects focusing on re-educating the public about crime and justice. Let me add too that almost all of the current inside members are serving life sentences without the possibility of parole. For me personally, seeing so many young, vital, engaging, intelligent, real and disarmingly honest men was something I was not prepared for. You see, I too have a young, vital, engaging, intelligent, real and handsome son, if I must say so myself, who is also doing time. Every young man I saw that night reminded me in some way of my Mizzy. The tall young brother with the swagger was him. The brother with the engaging, toothy smile was him. The young man with the full beard and kufi really reminded me of him. The old head who came over to me afterwards and told me of his challenge to stay connected with his children and grand children was him. The loneliness I felt was palpable and the care and concern I felt was genuine and real. And even though they were polite, congenial and probably told to be on their best behavior, I was inwardly steaming.

It could have been due in part to the guard who was rude and in my opinion lacked professionalism. I was also angry that the system is a cold and callous one and herein lies our future and even though these men were behind bars, I found them to be much sharper and wiser than what many on the outside probably don't give them credit for. But what really sucked the air out of my lungs was upon leaving. I have never seen jail cells before up close and personal. The cells were located to our right and this is where the participating inmates had returned. I've only seen jail cells on TV and depicted in magazines. I've also seen cages in the SPCA, and that is what these cells reminded me of. It really hit me hard, so hard that I had to retreat over to a corner to regain my composure. Is that where my son spends his days and nights? Does his arms touch both sides of the cell when he stretches them out? If he's sick, hot, cold, I can't reach out to him; and do the guards care enough to? It's been a week and I still can't get the image of those young engaging men out of my mind, nor those cells. And even though I am not a punk, every time I recount this story or visualize those bars, I get filled up.

So I have reaffirmed my personal mission and that is to remain diligent in challenging abuse of any form, to challenge unfair legislation that is more concerned with getting returns on their investments, to get political benchwarmers to listen to our concerns and complaints, and for those who are unable to do so or don't care to do so, move them out, and vow to eradicate injustice where it has taken root. And lastly, those on the inside tell your loved ones, friends, and associates on the outside to help us help you. Love and Respect.

Karen Lee
HRC Member

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist



I stand on the shoulders of our
heroes and roar.

RISE Out of Poverty Act

By Pat Albright of Every Mother is a Working Mother Network

Women are the fastest growing population as a result of the Welfare Reform legislation passed in 1996, which ended welfare as an entitlement for the work of raising children and made it a work program.

Welfare reform was a racist attack. When Black and Latina mothers started to press for their right to welfare, the attacks on welfare mothers began. The propaganda of the Black “welfare queen” getting wealthy off welfare while sitting around doing nothing all day was not seriously challenged by the left, labor unions or white middle class dominated feminist movement.

Welfare reform was really about punishing mothers who chose to live independently of men by pushing them and their families off welfare, even at any cost to the children. Welfare reform was also about quelling the welfare rights movement, a way of breaking the back of the grassroots women’s movement and the militant anti-racist and anti-war movements that welfare mothers and their children were so central to.

The welfare rights movement was also at the forefront of the fight for access to higher education for themselves and their children. Welfare would enable women to fight for higher wages which are pushed down with every welfare cut: women have to take what they can get, whatever starvation wages we are offered. Welfare reform, don’t forget, is an attack on wages, demanding that we leave our children to someone else’s care and compete with other workers in order to feed our kids. Welfare reform has helped drive all wages down, beginning with women’s. It’s not competition for jobs we need, but money for the work of caring.

Right now there is a bill in Congress called the Rise Out of Poverty Act introduced by Rep. Gwen Moore (Democrat, Wisconsin), a former welfare mother herself. With the Global Women’s Strike, we formed a national grassroots network to press for its passage and for the value of caregiving work that is done by mothers and others in society to be recognized, entitling us to resources and support for that work and to change all society’s priorities to support caregiving work.

Vikki Law said that in prisons they don’t offer a chance to get a college education the way they used to. That’s true for welfare reform. When they established welfare reform, they took away any right to get a four-year college education. So you can see part and parcel of same thing going on here.

RISE would make ending child poverty the goal of welfare, not punishing caregivers with destitution. It would raise benefit levels, end some of the most punitive aspects of welfare reform such as the lifetime ban on people with drug felonies getting benefits, allow mothers to go to college, start to make states accountable for reducing the number of kids put in foster care because of poverty – another punishment for mothers’ poverty -- and change the whole discussion away from welfare as a charity or thinking of welfare mothers as moochers. I’m a former welfare mother myself and to really look at our entitlement and the fact that as mothers and carers, there is nothing more important to society than the work that is done caring for people and raising children.

One way to address the issue of the growing prison population and in particular women in prison is to challenge how money is allocated, how we are entitled to support for that very basic caring work. We hope people here will sign our petition in support of RISE. We want to form a big movement and try to get it through in the present Congress. It’s going to take a lot of work so we hope that organizations will endorse and help circulate the petition so we get this bill through Congress.

For more information please contact, Every Mother is a Working Mother Network, P.O. Box 11795, Philadelphia PA 19101
Phone: 215-848-1120 Email: philly@allwomencount.net Web: www.everymothereetwork.net

THE MOVEMENT

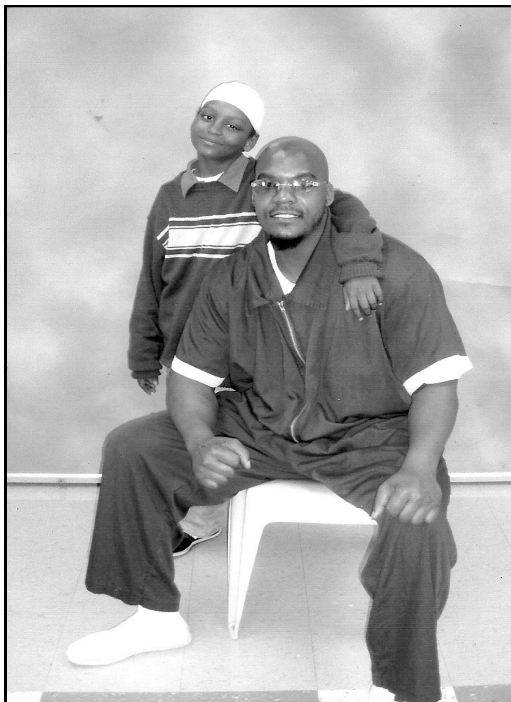
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Love Knows No Bars

“One on One”

Little man have a seat, it's a cold world and things you need to know. So button up, open your mind and rest your feet. Let me school you to a part of life neither one of us want you to meet. I know the ups and downs of having it your way in these streets. Let me be your guide on where to step and where not to stand.

You wanna get money, well I have a fool-proof plan. We both know what a thug is, but it's my job to show you the true essence of being a man. Education is a key factor, the ignorant considerate it lame. It's two sides of each coin and street life has never been a game. The circle never gets the square, let this be your lane. Stay on it, and ride it out with no detours. They only lead to short term success, jail time or death from Street Wars. A soldier's greatest weapon to man is his mind, stay ten steps ahead of the rest and you'll never fall behind. If you don't allow your mind to travel pass the present, then your future is shot. You are a born leader amongst blind followers with their eyes wide shut, if your friends have shattered lens then it's time to rise up. Until I'm in a position to be hands on, it's a must that you wise up. Being falsely accused and convicted I refuse to sit back and just let you get sized up. Think outside the box, this is how you avoid it. The game ain't the same and I'll be the one to exploit it. I've been around good dudes and monsters on different



Pinner & Son

my second chance at life, follow these instructions, success is clear sight. Rectify my wrong by doing this right. The sky is not the limit, it's merely a beautiful view. Be what I should have been, I'm depending on you.

Word to the wise, capitalize off my downfalls. It's deep but I know you can dig it, you're smart my little ground hog . . .

By: Don Pinner EV-8751, SCI-Forest

levels. I've danced with angels and in jail cells sat with devils. Million dollar bails and most couldn't afford it. Where friends tell on friends and lawyers get appointed. Jury gets selected and not one of them peers. Guilty until proven innocent and still get a thousand years!

I've ate with people society calls killers, and here's something you wont believe is true, these guys I speak of started out in life just like me and you. The love of a mother and father in many cases were there; but, the streets got a hold of them and they didn't care. Once they got hooked to the culture and lifestyle, they forgot everything they learned as a child. They forgot about morals, integrity, loyalty, value and a lot of other things. They forgot about the suffering that misery brings. With this talk I hope you understand what I'm trying to do. I been there, done that and refuse to let it happen to you. What kind of father would I be if I didn't teach the things that were shown to me. You are

Mr. & Mrs. Locke



My husband said thanks to all who were there collectively at court Monday! In solidarity and unity we stand strong and shall prevail! Thank you Shandre Delaney; Theresa Shoatz; Patricia Marshall Vickers; Blue Sbada; and please tell Miss Karen thank you from him as well. And thank you to our family and friends as well! You are all appreciated! We must keep all the guys in prayers and speak life into the dismissal of the charges come January! We can do this! Have a good night, and blessed weekend. ~Locke Family.

THE MOVEMENT

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“What did Nelson Mandela mean to YOU”

By: Karen Ali

After the announcement of the death of the former President of South Africa, Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela, aka Madiba, a locally popular radio station asked the question,

“What did Nelson Mandela mean to You?”

Nelson Mandela has always meant and represented to me a sense of hope. HOPE, that a person with vision and ideals, that would make a better way of life for one's self, family, and community in general could make that happen. A person can accomplish this with strong determination and self-discipline, even though he is being separated from society and supposedly every way of making things happen. Brother Madiba stepped out of a bondage that was determined to keep his light dimmed and remained of strong mind and spirit and character.

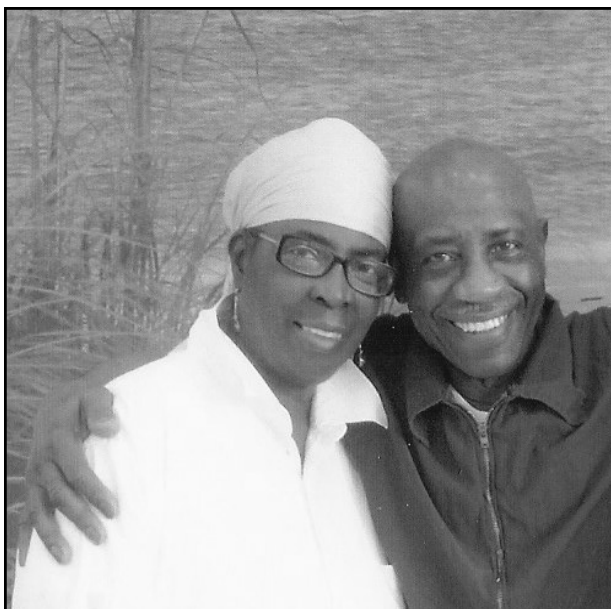
I remember in 1990, while visiting my oldest son's home in Virginia, an announcement came over the air stating that Nelson Mandela would be released some time that day, after serving twenty-seven years of imprisonment. I became glued to the television as the story unfolded. Hundreds of people began gathering along the road to catch a glimpse of this distinguished man's long walk to freedom.

Omar Askia Ali, very much like Brother Madiba, was considered a revolutionary type of Freedom Fighter by many in his community. The label of militant troublemaker was given by the establishment authorities of that era and he was charged, tried, and convicted of a crime he is totally innocent of committing. At the time of Brother Madiba's release, Omar had been incarcerated twenty years on a life sentence, and was also involved in an ongoing appeal process that we hoped would turn things around and bring us the relief we were seeking, FREEDOM.

Over the years of incarceration Omar's vision and involvement was in programs that reached beyond the wall of the prison that was meant to contain him. He considered the families of victims by setting up and participating in programs that gave compensation through finances and or resources to family members whose needs came to his attention. He heard the cries of families of loved ones incarcerated that couldn't afford the cost of the van services to visit their parents, spouses and children in prisons, even as close as SCI Graterford, and others further away. Omar wrote a letter to the editor of the Daily News. This letter initiated an interview, and hearings that extended the bus route to go up the road to the door of SCI Graterford. Omar reached out to projects that would reduce the levels of recidivism, through training the at-risk population in areas of nutrition, physical fitness, life skills, and job readiness. This training was administered through a non-profit program “The Boxing Association of America, Inc”.

Omar, like Brother Madiba, was also a trained boxer. During the early 80's, Omar was in a fight for his life with the court system, to overturn this conviction. Omar made time and used his skills to work with the youths that were beginning to flow into the system in increasing numbers. His work assisted in lowering the levels of tension and unrest that were causing the institution to be in a constant state of lock down.

Today, December, 2013, HOPE still reigns. After over 40 years of incarceration on this PA life (without the possibility of parole) sentence, Omar Askia Ali still has the vision that everyone is entitled to the human rights of life. He continues to be supportive of projects involving solutions and the betterment for our society as a whole. A society in which he and our family and others believe he is entitled to live in and contribute to.



Omar Askia Ali and wife, Karen Ali

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

THE STRUGGLE FREED LYNNE STEWART!

By Dolores Cox on January 3, 2014

From: Workers World, <http://www.workers.org/articles/2014/01/03/struggle-freed-lynne-stewart/>

New York, Jan. 1 — There she was standing, then walking slowly towards us, unshackled, without handcuffs or belly chain, and with a gigantic smile on her face. She was a sight for sore eyes, her inner and outer beauty reflected. Lynne Stewart's family — her two children, who are attorneys; a daughter, who is a hospice doctor; grandchildren and great-grandchildren — along with her many supporters and attorneys were there. WBAI radio producers, independent photographers and videographers, Prison Radio's Noelle Hanrahan, and Amy Goodman of "Democracy NOW!" had also gathered inside LaGuardia Airport, waiting for what seemed like forever, to welcome Lynne home. There were 75 to 100 supporters there.

We had been waiting anxiously to see for ourselves what seemed to be too good to be true. Our Lynne, the people's lawyer, woman warrior and courageous freedom fighter, finally was coming home.

And then, she emerged. It was a day that many feared would never come.

We had been admonished several times by airport personnel not to block the elevator, staircase or passageway. But at the sight of Lynne and her spouse, Ralph Poynter, we could no longer contain ourselves. We rushed towards her, carrying cameras, signs and flowers as we chanted. With our big smiles and crying tears of joy, we surrounded her. Many hugs, kisses, "congratulations" and "thanks" were exchanged. Passersby whispered, "I wonder who that celebrity is they're all greeting."

When asked how she felt, Lynne said, "There ain't nothing like freedom." She talked about being very tired, and said that she was surprised about her release, and that she was getting to the point of giving up hope. She was notified of her approved release on the morning of Dec. 31, New Year's Eve, by a phone call from her lawyer, in France, and by prison officials. Everything happened quickly at that point.



Lynne laughed and stated, "When the warden told me I was leaving that day, he literally threw me out of prison."

What had occurred during the previous 24 hours seemed unbelievable. First, we, her supporters, heard on the morning of Dec. 31 that the U.S. Justice Department had ordered that 74-year-old Lynne Stewart be granted a compassionate release due to her terminal illness. Her 10-year sentence for "aiding and abetting a terrorist organization" was also reduced to time served. Since 2012, breast cancer has metastasized throughout Lynne's body, due in part to delayed medical care in prison. Lynne had filed a written request for medical release at the beginning of 2013. Her doctors now say she has approximately 12 months to live.

During the course of one day, we witnessed what the Justice Department, the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Manhattan federal judge could have done a year ago or at least six months ago — namely, freed Lynne Stewart. They may have just decided that they didn't want her to die in prison. That might incur some bad publicity for a so-called "democratic" country.

Former slave and activist Frederick Douglass described this oppressive state in his 1852 Fourth of July speech: "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim ... your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; ... your denunciation of tyrants brass fronted impudence; your shout of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; ... to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes. ... There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than ... the United States, at this very hour."

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

LYNNE STEWART'S CASE PART OF GLOBAL STRUGGLE

Lynne's case is known internationally; it's part of a global movement for social justice. We know that expecting the heartless to have a heart or evil-doers to have a conscience is beyond reason and logic. The powers-that-be are utterly shameful.

As Dec. 31 unfolded, we learned that Lynne's release from prison was imminent. Meanwhile, Ralph was airborne and on his way to Fort Worth, Texas, to visit Lynne as he had done routinely since her imprisonment there. It was not until after his plane landed, when he was on his way to the car rental desk, that he got the call informing him of Lynne's fully approved compassionate release. One can only imagine how shocked he was when he got to the prison and saw Lynne sitting in a car in the parking lot.

By 9 p.m. on New Year's Eve, Ralph walked into his hotel room with Lynne at his side. This moment was captured by fellow activist and producer Bob Lederer on the air at WBAI radio, when he telephoned Ralph to interview him about the day's events. Unknown to him and the listeners was that he would also be speaking on the air with Lynne herself.



Lynne interviewed by Democracy Now!'s Amy Goodman.

We were fortunate enough to see how Lynne's release impacted Ralph the next day, when the plane carrying him and Lynne landed in New York City. Ralph was standing tall with Lynne, grinning from ear to ear. Lynne described her freedom and coming home as "sunlight bursting on me. Yesterday at this time I was deep in the dungeons. Prisons are loveless," she said. Lynne repeatedly expressed her gratitude for "the tremendous support from tens of thousands of people in New York, in the country and worldwide."

Safe at home with her son in Brooklyn, where she will live, surrounded by a loving family and friends, Lynne described her four years in prison as horrible. She told of how she barely survived the life-threatening chemotherapy treatments. She stressed that she won't forget the women that she left behind in the prison, and that she'll fight for criminal justice system reforms.

We also reflect back to this past summer and the many weeks that Ralph stood in front of the White House in Washington, D.C., in the rain and sweltering heat, with his signs, banner and leaflets; speaking to anyone who would listen about Lynne's plight. He and a group of supporters protested in front of the U.S. Justice Department against the director's refusal to approve Lynne's request for compassionate release.

Ralph said he saw no acceptable alternative other than to fight like hell for Lynne's release. His unwavering love, spirit, strength and determination were contagious. How could anyone knowing him or Lynne not join in the struggle? Or not give up?

Jan. 1 began a new year. What better way to start the year than to see the fruits of our labor realized? To have achieved a tortuous, long-fought-for victory? To see our hopes become a reality?

We dreamed what seemed the impossible dream, and saw it come true. The day seemed surreal. But we were believers once again.

Ralph joked about renting Yankee Stadium to celebrate Lynne's return home. That idea notwithstanding, Lynne says we will definitely have a celebration party.

On Jan. 2, Lynne reported in person to the Office of Probation, which was mandatory within 72 hours of her release. All of the conditions of her release are not yet known, yet their ramifications may put her in the position of walking a tightrope. When Noelle Hanrahan of Prison Radio arranged for Mumia Abu-Jamal to speak to Lynne by phone, she could not speak to him for fear of violating conditions of her release. To paraphrase a saying, "freedom ain't necessarily free." Lynne's courage and principled stand have been inspirational. Ralph and Lynne took a firm stand against the government and the powers that be. Their position allowed us to stand, too, and fight back with and for them.

The road ahead will be anything but smooth. Lynne faces more medical treatment as she literally fights for her life. She will have to make appointments with Sloan-Kettering, the leading cancer center in New York City, and submit her medical records to them. She says she "looks forward to beating the odds. I've fought lions and tigers, and I won't let cancer get me."

As we celebrate a victory over a tragic injustice, there are so many more victories to achieve. We must free all our political prisoners. Lynne urges us to take action on their behalf. She states, "Fight on, resist, resist. It makes life worth living. Power from the people made [my] release happen." She adds that she's "skeptical, but hopeful of better future changes."

A better world is possible and we must make it happen. La lucha continua!

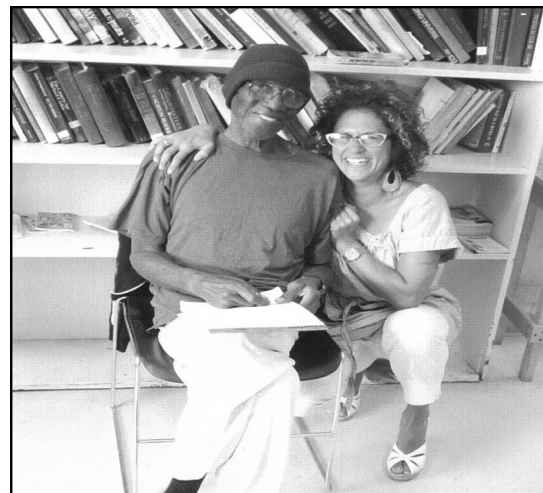
The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

The Screening of Herman's House

Although Herman Wallace passed away October 4, 2013, we continue the struggle to bring attention to the abusive and inhumane use of solitary confinement. We did not postpone our planned screening of 'Herman's House', which is an expression of his struggle in an unusual project proposed by artist Jackie Sumell, as some would suspect. It would have been an abandonment of his memory not to bring awareness to his confinement within a 6-by-9-foot cell for 23 hours a day for 41 years as well as the 80,000 prisoners across the United States who are held under similar conditions .



Hannah Zellman



Herman Wallace and Jackie Sumell

On October 17th, 2013 the screening of Herman's House was viewed at the University of Pennsylvania's International House in Philadelphia, PA; and consciousness was raised in the large group of students and community in attendance. It was a moving account of imagining Herman's "dream home" that began as a game and became an "interrogation of justice and punishment in America", it was a prime example of the power of art, and an exploration of the 12-year friendship of between Herman and the artist Jackie Sumell.



Left to right: Hakim Ali, Patricia Marshall Vickers, LuQman Abdullah, and Robert Meek

The screening was co-sponsored by Hannah Zellman and Philadelphia FIGHT with allies at the ACLU of Pennsylvania and was followed by a prevailing panel discussion on the struggle to end solitary confinement and other forms of torture in prisons across the U.S. The panel discussion was lead by Hakim Ali and LuQman Abdullah – ex-offenders and survivors of torture in solitary confinement - and Patricia Marshall Vickers – activist and mother of a Juvenile LIFER who survived eight years in solitary confinement, and Robert Meek of the Disability Rights Network of PA. Sincere gratitude to all who contributed to this event. Herman Wallace RIP, see more on page 34

[This project] helps me to maintain what little sanity I have left, to maintain my humanity and dignity. It's probably the best move that I've ever made in my life. –Herman Wallace

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The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

When the Punishment is a Crime –

A report on the Sept 21, 2013 Forum on Solitary Confinement, Germantown Friends School, Phila. by Phoebe Jones

A multi-racial group of about 60 people came together for a forum on solitary confinement, “*When the Punishment is a Crime*.” The crowd included Formerly Incarcerated Persons (FIPs), family members with loved ones inside, the religious community, students, and women’s, prisoner rights, civil rights, disability rights, peace and justice groups.

Taking our lead and inspiration from prisoners’ and others’ actions against solitary confinement, and in particular from the great California prisoners’ hunger and work strikes and their principle of “*ceasing of all hostilities among racial groups*,” the Forum pledged to continue to work together to stop the torture – and therefore the crime – of every form of solitary confinement.

Speakers included **Bonnie Kerness** of AFSC Prison Watch in New Jersey who spoke of how, just as with slavery, the criminal justice system is working perfectly as economic and social policy, generating huge sums for private industry. She spoke of the torture of solitary confinement and its use in particular against Black liberation, civil rights, Native American, anti-war, jailhouse lawyers and other activists to “neutralize radical political education on the streets and within the prisons.”

Ojore Lutalo, in solitary confinement for 20 years, also came down from New Jersey and displayed his beautiful and moving artwork throughout the hall relating prison to slavery.

Theresa Shoatz announced that her father, political prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz 40 years in solitary, has been moved to a lower level of security, and that change is made because of years of efforts to get him out of solitary, to get medical care and education for loved ones inside, and for congressional hearings to end solitary confinement. She said of the CA prisoner strikers’ ceasing of all hostilities between racial groups - “*you must take a stand and back these prisoners up!*”

Vikki Law, author, *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women* spoke of CA women prisoners being placed in solitary confinement because of prison overcrowding and organizing hunger strikes in 2011 and this year, in solidarity with the men and also to protest their own conditions. Solitary confinement is used as retaliation against women who report rape and speak out and she mentioned the watershed 1974 August Rebellion at Bedford Hills NY when women prisoners rioted after prison guards retaliated against those who won the right to due process.

Ed Nakawatase of the Mass Incarceration Working Group of Germantown Monthly Meeting (event co-sponsor) spoke of Quaker history, first

promoting solitary confinement as a form of penitence rather than corporal punishment, and now working for an end to long term solitary confinement. And **Phoebe Jones** of the Global Women’s Strike (event co-sponsor) spoke of women’s justice work and of the “*mothers, daughters, sisters, wives fighting for our loved ones’ lives*.”

Human Rights Coalition opened the discussion by coming up as a group to speak about the actions they are taking: a statewide speaking tour, legislation to end solitary confinement, a “know your rights” for families, and a focus on the schools.

Bob Meek of the Disability Rights Network of PA talked about a legal complaint they have filed against the Department of Corrections on behalf of people with mental disabilities in solitary.

Pat Albright of Every Mother is a Working Mother Network spoke from the audience on how welfare reform led to women being the fastest growing population in prison, and that there is a bill now in Congress called the **RISE Out of Poverty Act** to get rid of the worst parts of welfare reform. [see page 11]

Actions suggested included supporting the demands of the CA Prisoner Hunger Strikers and HRC’s actions; endorsing the RISE Out of Poverty Act; decriminalizing marijuana and changing the drug laws; calling for public hearings on solitary confinement; participating in Mumia Abu



The panel, from l to r: Vikki Law, Theresa Shoatz, Ed Nakawatase, Phoebe Jones, Ojore Lutalo, and Bonnie Kerness

Jamal’s 60th birthday party actions this April; using alternative court systems; confronting police abuse and corruption and calling it out on “testilying” (police lying while giving testimony); opposing solitary confinement in juvenile facilities, immigrant detention centers, and military prisons where it is used against military refusers and whistleblowers; understand foster care as often a sort of solitary confinement for children; and include young people in future discussions to bring out how young people are moving on this issue.

All agreed that this was a good beginning, not the end, and many have continued to meet on the 2nd Monday of every month and work together to take collective action.

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THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

We Cannot Move Forward Into a New Year Without Remembrance of Herman Wallace, RIP

For Herman Wallace solitary confinement amounted to a death sentence

By David Cole, Published: October 24

David Cole is a professor at Georgetown University Law Center .

When Herman Wallace died Oct. 4 at age 71, he had been a free man for about 2½ days. Before that, he spent 41 years in solitary confinement in the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. Forty-one years. The U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture has concluded that, because of the mental suffering it inflicts, solitary confinement imposed as punishment for even 15 days can constitute torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Yet for 41 years, Wallace was confined to a 6-by-9-foot cell for 23 hours a day. The prison allowed him out for one hour each day, to walk or exercise on his own. For most of his life, Wallace was deprived of any daily human contact other than with prison guards. His 68-year-old co-defendant, Albert Woodfox, placed in solitary confinement at the same time, remains there to this day.

What possible threat could warrant such extraordinary treatment? Were Wallace and Woodfox the leaders of a terrorist cell or international drug cartel, at risk of issuing orders that could result in death or serious injury? Was Wallace a threat to others even as he was dying of liver cancer? No. Prison officials were required, every six months, to assess whether solitary confinement was still necessary. Every time, they offered only one reason: “nature of original reason for lockdown.” Not once was it suggested that either man posed any continuing physical danger or risk of escape.

The “original reason for lockdown” was that Wallace and Woodfox were convicted of fatally stabbing a prison guard while incarcerated in Angola in 1972. On its face, that is a legitimate basis for solitary confinement, at least initially. But Wallace ultimately was released because a judge ruled that his conviction was rendered unconstitutional by a discriminatory grand jury. And because that required a new trial, the judge did not need to address the many other constitutional errors alleged in the case, including the suppression of exculpatory evidence showing that the only witnesses who had implicated Wallace at trial — fellow prisoners — had been threatened and offered pardons and other favors by prison officials in exchange for their testimony.

No physical evidence linked Wallace or Woodfox to the crime. Fingerprints at the scene did not match those of the defendants, but the prison did not attempt to test the prints against any but a handful of other inmates. Wallace and Woodfox maintained that they were framed because they had started a Black Panther Party chapter at Angola and had objected to the prison’s brutal conditions. Angola’s own museum Web site acknowledges that it was known in the late 1960s as “the Bloodiest Prison in the South.” From 1972 through 1975, more than 270 inmates were stabbed by other

(Continued on page 20)



Robert King, Angola Three member , released in 2000 pays his respects to Herman Wallace

(Continued from page 19)

inmates. Corruption and sexual exploitation were rampant, and armed inmates patrolled the halls. One guard boasted in a published interview that “I’ve got just about every finger broke on both hands from punching” prisoners. Wallace and Woodfox led the protests of these conditions, and when a prison guard was found dead, they were charged with the crime.

Even if Wallace and Woodfox were guilty, how is 41 years in solitary an appropriate response? Solitary confinement is not a permissible punishment for a crime. It is justified, if at all, for prison security reasons when an individual poses a danger to others that cannot otherwise be reasonably contained. It can understandably be used for brief periods as discipline for infractions. But for all practical purposes, Wallace and Woodfox were sentenced to prolonged solitary confinement by prison authorities, not a judge. Wallace was released for only the last 2½ days of his life. Woodfox, whose conviction has also been overturned, remains in solitary pending the state’s appeal.

These cases are unusual only in the duration of the two men’s confinement. Thousands of inmates across the United States have been relegated to similar conditions in “super max” prisons — often for many years. In May 2012, the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a class-action lawsuit challenging prolonged solitary confinement at California’s Pelican Bay State Prison. More than 500 prisoners there have been in solitary confinement for longer than 10 years; more than 75 have been in solitary for longer than 20 years. Many are sent to solitary on little more than a suspicion of gang affiliation, which can be established merely by waving hello to a prisoner suspected of gang ties, possessing “gang-related” art or having the wrong tattoo. About the only way to get out is to “debrief” — to name names and implicate others, who are in turn likely to be sent to solitary.



Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox may or may not have killed a prison guard in 1972. We will probably never know for sure. But one thing is certain: Their 41-year confinement to cells not much larger than a grave, without human contact, was cruel and inhumane treatment. Prolonged solitary confinement can be justified only in the most extraordinary circumstances. Yet it has become an all-too-routine part of the American system of mass incarceration.



From left to right: General Rico, Robert King, Malik Rashim, and Jason, former member, of the Black Panther Party attended Herman Wallace’s funeral.

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

Protestors rally for more transparency in private prison



The Rev. Keith Collins, holds a sign and leads protesters in prayer outside George W. Hill correctional facility in Trainer, Delaware County. — TRIBUNE PHOTO NATHANIEL LEE

Written By: Nathaniel Lee | Date: December 18, 2013

A small group of activists and community organizers braved the cold and snow to hold a demonstration against the George W. Hill Correctional Facility in Trainer on Saturday.

The group representing various organizations met at the Church of the Overcomer at 1016 Sunset St. in Delaware County where they held a brief consultation with an ACLU observer who explained the legal rights and guidelines for protests near correctional facilities.

"We are here to finish what we started on Nov. 5," said the Rev. Keith Collins, pastor of the church and founding member of the group Citizens for Social Justice of Delaware County.

On that day, Collins said that protestors planned and attempted to hold a lawful demonstration near the church to protest alleged abuses in the facility and other issues they felt needed to be addressed.

Organizers say that the prison administrators met them with unnecessary show of force wearing black garb and dispatched a k-9 unit.

"We were forbidden from engaging in lawful, constitutional protest and were met by about 20 security officers from the prison as well as park police so today we are here to finish and exercise that right that many Americans fought and died for," said Collins.

Collins said that the protestors had reason to believe that civil rights violations are taking place in the prison and that they have received numerous complaints from prisoners themselves alleging abuses.

"We know that there are some things that need to be changed and we want to begin a process of dialogue with the community, the correctional facility as well as the officials of Delaware County."

Although only a handful of organizers showed for the rally bearing signs and chanting as cars rode by, several honking in support of the protestors, Collins said that he hoped that the effort would serve as a catalyst for future change.

"We want to have citizens advisory commission formed and we would like to be given official visiting status for myself and others who are advocates for the community," said Collins.

Official visitor status would allow members of the group to visit and meet with prisoners without prior notice in an effort to help maintain disclosure and make it more difficult to conceal abuses.

"I've spoken with inmates, male and female, regarding sexual and physical abuse; inmates being deprived of their property and funds and it is on record that there are people who died there, there have been drug overdoses which occurred there."

There are other allegations which trouble the protestors and rather it is financial or human rights considerations, Collins says that it is something that all citizens should be concerned about.

What happens at George W. Hill Correctional Facility has importance, says Collins, for yet another reason:

"It is the only privatized prison in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; if this is accepted as the model then we will see more privatization in Pennsylvania and we are against privatization because it breeds this kind of lack of observation," Collins stated.

State, county and federal prisons have more oversight and therefore conduct themselves in a more efficient and humane manner than private prisons, said Collins.

"Grassroots empowerment," said Collins when asked what the purpose was for the demonstration.

"I believe that people can compel elected officials and those in power to make the necessary changes and not the other way around," he said.

Administrators of George W. Hill correctional facility could not be reached for comment by press time.

From: phillytrib.com

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

The Breakthrough of Students Against Mass Incarceration

Written by: Sournya Kurnool, University of California at San Diego



From the Editor: Please note that the artwork (last piece 2nd row right) is the work of a regular contributor to the Human Rights Coalition, Richard G Hall, Jr. #C-0727 Soledad, CA. For more art posters google Prison Nation Posters On Prison.

A new organization on campus seeks to raise awareness of the institutionalized racism of the U.S. prison system with a poster art exhibition

The United States of America is a prison nation. According to the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, even though the U.S. holds only 5 percent of the world's population, it houses 25 percent of the world's prisoners — the largest percentage in any region. This percentage has quadrupled between 2008 and 2011 alone, a span of a mere three years. The statistics suggest that mass incarceration is an unnoticed reality in the U.S. today, which compelled Revelle College junior Eunice Ho to establish a new organization on campus this quarter called Students Against Mass Incarceration.

SAMI is dedicated to spreading awareness at UCSD about the prison system as a form of institutionalized racism. In November, the club seized the opportunity to display the "Prison Nation: Posters on the Prison Industrial Complex" art exhibition from the archives of the Center for Study of Political Graphics. The entire collection of posters was created by artists, activists and organizations around the world who aim to speak out against mass incarceration. Currently, 75 posters are on display — 25 in the Cross-Cultural Center and 50 in the West Wing of Geisel Library on the second floor. The pieces will be on display until January.

The exhibit features powerful images that may force viewers to reevaluate their perceptions of the prison system. For instance, one

poster depicts the U.S. flag with prison bars for stripes and lock holes for stars, emphasizing how prisons have become such an integral yet unnoticed part of the nation. Another poster equates prisons to slavery, juxtaposing a bird's eye perspective of a prison and that of a slave ship.

"The goal [of the exhibit] is to challenge the way people at UCSD think about the prison system and to bring awareness," Ho said. "A large aspect of this is through the provocative aspect of those pieces — not because they are exaggerated, but because they bring focus to issues in the dark."

"Prison Nation" explores the various facets of the prison system, including the treatment of women prisoners and political prisoners and the controversial laws of the system, such as the Three Strikes Law in California and the Stop and Frisk Law in New York. As defined by Stanford Law School, the Three Strikes Law condemns a life sentence for nearly any crime, regardless of its level of severity, if the defendant has a criminal record of two previous convictions that the California Penal Code deemed as serious or violent. The Stop and Frisk Law allows officers to stop, question and frisk people at random to check for weapons and illicit substances.

The part of the exhibit that personally touches Ho the most is a display in the Cross-Cultural Center with the following quote by American union leader Eugene Debs: "While there is a lower class I am in it, while there is a criminal element I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison I am not free."

Ho has felt similar emotions regarding the Prison Industrial Complex. There is a disproportionate percentage of black and Latino prisoners on a national level; according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, 37 percent of federal prison inmates are black, and 34.9 percent are Latino. In addition, numerous companies, including big names like Starbucks and Microsoft, invest in corporations that exploit prison labor at rates as low as 93 cents a day, according to the Prison Policy Initiative.

"I became enraged about this injustice, which is so relevant but not widely covered enough," Ho said. "And yet we don't know about it, and we spend our tax money putting people in prison. I couldn't continue my undergrad years with a clean conscience without doing anything about it."

SAMI is the result of this drive to promote awareness. Ho even plans to issue a divestment bill campaign during winter quarter to be passed by the A.S. Council. Such a bill would work as a filter to prevent council from investing in any companies that use prison labor, thereby fighting against the PIC. UC Berkeley and UC Santa Barbara have already passed similar bills. Ho hopes that UCSD will be the third UC campus to follow suit.

Ho plans to continue to raise awareness about the injustices of the prison system throughout the school year and even after she graduates, as she says that SAMI's fight is her own personal fight. In fact, her passion for the cause was what led to her shift from a physiology and neuroscience major to an ethnic studies and sociology double major during her sophomore year.

"People are supportive of [my cause]," Ho said. "They know that I know the direction I'm going towards and that I'm not doing this haphazardly. My shift [in majors] served as a catalyst among friends to engage in this issue."

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

2013 National Convening of Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth is dedicated to ending the practice of sentencing America's youth to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

By: Patricia Vickers, HRC Member

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth 2013 National Convening was a three day assembling beginning on November 13, 2013 in Washington, DC with attendees from across the United States.

Myself and other families of youth serving LIFE in prison were extended an invitation to attend this conference and had accepted. But, as a mother of a juvenile serving LIFE in prison, I am skeptical of large groups discussing diverse issues – particularly, so-called, “juvenile delinquents”, who are, of course, the result of bad parenting - and honestly I wasn’t sure what I was getting myself into. The first day of the convening began with a “meet and greet”. It was held in what I thought was a lovely room that was filled with flowers and white linen covered tables that held pitchers of water, glasses, and note pads. The delightfulness of the room vanished when I realized that I was surrounded with the families of victims – the families of those who had been murdered by juveniles. I wanted to get up and run, but I held my ground. I kept reminding myself that I am a victim too; I, too, have lost, suffered, blamed, and cried. I stayed still and listened to a horrible story of how a mother’s *only* son was shot and killed by a sixteen year old at a party. Her name was Mary Johnson and she told us, decisively, how she hated that boy and felt he deserved to be locked up and never let out. But, she said, something inside her wanted to know more, wanted to understand this young boy. So, twelve years later (someone shouted understandably, “There’s no date on healing”) in Minnesota Stillwater state prison she met the guy, O’Shea Israel, who killed her son. This began a friendship in where they talked and listened and healed together. Mary told us that they are now close friends and O’Shea now lives right next door to her.



Mary Johnson and O'Shea Israel

After Mary’s story I settled down a little and my leg had stopped jumping. Another family – Ministers Ronald and Kim Odom – shared their story. Mrs. Odom talked about the senseless murder in 2007 of their thirteen year old son, Steven. She explained how important it was for her to get to the

O’Shea is now a grown man who works, goes to school, performs community service, and they (Mary and O’Shea) go to church together. He is not that teenage gang member who killed her son; he’s grown up and changed – like young people do. They now consider themselves spiritual mother and son and they travel around the U.S. advocating ending LIFE sentences for juveniles.

root cause of what happened. She found out that it was gang related, even though her son was not in a gang. Her son’s killer, a teenage youth, had been murdered ten days later. She later learned that the one who supplied the gun was arrested and in jail, and a third boy who was in the car was paralyzed and in a wheel chair. She said someone had said something about, you must be happy that . . . “Happy?” she said, “We’re not happy, we’re heavy. Now three families are suffering from the pain of this vicious cycle of violence.” She said her and her husband were ministers and had to be one with what they believe in, redemption. Mrs. Odom said that they preach forgiveness . . . there are stages that we all go through; grief, sorrow, anger, and forgiveness.

Several others spoke during this “meet & greet” session. We discussed ideas of how to work collectively as advocates; and the idea moving from victim to survivor to advocate, and restorative justice. My heart was swelling with hope. It seems forgiveness is possible. It seemed that the people in this room thought the way I thought. There are people, families of victims and offenders across this United States, who believe that children make decisions without thinking about the consequences – to put it plainly, they do some out-and-out stupid stuff. These people believe that we as a society should try to teach them better – we should *believe* that we can teach them better, and with this belief allowing the courts to sentence our children to death (finally over-ruled by the US Supreme Court in 2005) or LIFE in prison (imprisonment until the day that they die) should never ever be an option.

But I kept my guard up around these people knowing that I would surely run into the “average American citizen” who wants revenge; an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth, punishment for the sake of punishment. America penalizes its offenders by any means necessary – death, LIFE in prison, years of solitary confinement, and torture; one man once told me that you can chop of their heads or piss in their mouths, that he didn’t care! We hear it and see examples of it on the news, radio, TV and in the movie theaters. Someone in the audience described the U.S. as a society of redemptive violence. We took a break and moved onto the evening convening, entitled ‘**Healing & Hope: A Celebration**’.



Jason Baldwin-at age 16 sentence to LIFE

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Sara Kruzan

The celebration was just that, a celebration. The room was filled with people from across the U.S. who were dressed impressively. They came to honor four: two organizations and two individuals.

Participant Media, a global entertainment company, was honored for their media that inspires social change. **WilmerHale**, an international law firm, served as a leader in the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth's project to implement the Miller

v. Alabama decision in Virginia.

The first individual that accepted his award was **Jason Baldwin**, one of the West Memphis Three who was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for a crime that he did not commit. Jason was imprisoned for 18 years in Arkansas prison before being released in 2011. He now travels throughout the country raising awareness about extreme sentencing for youth. He said, "'Save a life' is a good way to think of the work that we are doing."

Sara Kruzan was the last honoree. After 19 years in California she was released from prison only two weeks to the day of this celebration and, with tears in her eyes, spoke to us through web cam. Sara was sentenced to LIFE in prison without the possibility of parole when she was 16 for killing someone who had been abusing her for years. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger granted her clemency in 2011, reducing her sentence to 25 years to LIFE. In January, a California judge reduced her conviction, making her immediately eligible for parole. Sara said that her soul has been reborn and this seems surreal. She said that when she was sentenced she didn't understand the concept of LIFE without the possibility of parole. She began to just function. She didn't live. She felt she was a horrible person and deserved her sentence. There was no therapy. She thought it doesn't matter; I'm going to die in here anyway. She wanted to understand why this had happened to her. Her message to family members: don't give up, you don't get to quit, let that person know that you love them, that you're with them. To know that you're doing it alone is death in itself. Be there and love them with all that you have.

Their stories brought tears to my eyes. We all stood applauding the young people's struggle, their faith and most important their freedom. I took a moment to observe these people in the room with me and the tension that had been with me all day disappeared as I looked into eyes of genuine joy and admiration. They had soft kind faces that were smiling and cheering for these youth who'd survived unimaginable treatment in an adult prison. The allegiance of the crowd was so great that they

pledged over \$5,000 in fifteen minutes to the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. At that moment there was no doubt in my mind that these people were sincere and committed, since a sure sign of sincerity, in my opinion, is when people dig deep into their pockets to support what they believe. NOW, they had my allegiance and faith. I no longer felt that I was surrounded by "*these people*". I was embraced and uplifted by humanitarians, colleagues, advocates, and friends.

Throughout the second day of the convening we listened, questioned, and discussed issues concerning our young ones. There was a wide range of workshops presented and we were encouraged to attend those of interest. In summary they were: Just Alternatives to JLWOP; The National Landscape Post-Miller; Official Supporters of CFSY; Post-Miller: Where Do We Go From Here; Putting Miller into Practice: The Courts Post-Miller; Telling Your Story; Creating Second Chances: Making Periodic Review Meaningful; Coordinating Campaign Strategy; Defending Children Facing LWOP; Roper, Graham, JDB and Miller: Leveraging the Quartet in Advancing Broader Reforms.

My only regret is that I couldn't clone myself so that I could attend all of them. However among the statistics, the strategies, the talk of who, what, when, and how, I found the last day of the conference to be most significant.

What a "healing & hope" moment to witness seven men give their testimonies (see following page). These men who were given LIFE sentences, as young as 13 years old and condemned to rot in prison until their last breath are examples that a child's life is worth saving. Their testimonies swelled the space with emotion. At one point Xavier McElrath-Bey (pictured below), who was sentenced to LIFE at 13 years



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young held Minister Kim Odom to comfort her. What an encouraging way to end this convening and to return home to spread promise and hope for the future of our young.



From left to right: Xavier McElrath-Bey, Eric Alexander, William Outlaw, Tyrone Werts, Ralph Brazel, Raphael Johnson, O'Shea Israel

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth is worthy of your support. Your help will ensure that youth are not stripped of all hope, but instead are held accountable in age-appropriate ways that emphasize rehabilitation and reintegration into society. **Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth, 1319 F Street NW, Suite 303, Washington, DC 20004. Telephone: 202-289-4677 E: info@fairsentencingofyouth.org**

O'Shea Israel - Israel was convicted of the murder and sentenced to 25 and a half years. He was recently released. . . . *Seven men [here] are the faces of this campaign. Proof that if given a second chance a lot of good things can happen. I am lovable, I am valuable, I am powerful, I am important, BELIEVE this about yourself. . . . We may have done what they say; but we are not who they say we are.*

Xavier McElrath-Bey - From CFSY website: I was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to 25 years in prison when I was 13 years old. I had already spent time in the juvenile detention center on seven different occasions. Yet at such a young age, I didn't fully understand the ramifications of what had occurred; nor did I understand how so many lives — including my own — would be devastated because of my actions. . . . *I want victims to know that their loss was not in vain, they [offenders] carry that with them. . . . Darkness cannot drive out darkness.*

Eric Alexander - Home ten years - Nashville, TN . . . *We live in a very violent society. War is the first thing that we turn to. Kids are paying the highest penalty cause they don't know any better.*

William Outlaw - Received 85 years as a youth. . . . *We can never forget the victims. Parents know [understand] that before we broke the law; we broke the first law [God's law] - Honor Thy Father and Mother. After that its between us and God, not your fault. You were a good mother, don't blame yourselves.*

Tyrone Werts - After 36 years Tyrone Werts was released in 2011 from Pennsylvania's maximum security Graterford Correctional Institution after his life-without-parole sentence was commuted by former Governor Ed Rendell. . . . *This was an extraordinary experience, meeting guys from across the country. We are vessels, you are the power. Without you we wouldn't be here. Wearing a black suite, black dress shirt, and black shoes (not sneakers) he said that he wants everyone [who see him] to know that LIFERS look like me. Speaking to the ex-offenders on the panel Werts advises - be willing to be intrusive in people's lives; travel, talk to people, tell them who you are and what you do.*

Ralph Brazel - Ralph was sentenced to three terms of life without the possibility of parole when he was 17. He became eligible for relief after the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Graham v. Florida*, which found that it is unconstitutional to sentence a child to life in prison without the possibility of parole for a non-homicide crime. Ralph was released earlier this year, two months before his 40th birthday. . . . *When in prison we know guys that have a great deal of intelligence. Education is making use of what you have learned, by Marcus Garvey.*



Ralph Brazel and mother, Esi Mathis

Human Rights Coalition Report

CAMPAIGN FOR THE FAIR SENTENCING OF YOUTH

Washington, DC, November 2013

By Kim Angle

Several hundred people from all over the country met in Washington, DC, to attend the Convening of the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. The conference was held November 13-15 and included presentations by attorneys, family members, elected officials, and those freed from unjust sentences, as well as many others. The power and promise of this meeting will be felt for a long time to come.

Robert Listenbee, Jr., the Obama appointee as Administrator to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, offered the keynote address. Mr. Listenbee noted that reform in juvenile justice is occurring at the local level. He and many other professionals were encouraged by how quickly the landscape of juvenile justice has changed in a very short time. In 2005, the death penalty for juveniles was abolished and in 2012, mandatory life without parole was ruled unconstitutional...major changes in 7 years. Additionally, juvenile arrests have dropped significantly: in 1996, there were 2.9 million such arrests. In 2010, that number had shrunk to 1.6 million.

A plenary session entitled, "It Doesn't Have to be this Way: Just Alternatives to JLWOP and Other Extreme Sentences for Children" described evidence-based programs that hold children accountable in age-appropriate ways, that focus on their capacity for change and integration into society. Other presentations highlighted, "Lessons Learned Post-Miller: Where Do We Go From Here?", "Defending Children Facing LWOP: What Does Miller Require?", "Creating Second Chances: Making Periodic Review Meaningful", etc.

David Siegel, Professor of Law and Co-Director, Center for Law and Social Responsibility, New England School of Law, outlined strategies used in capital cases and their applicability in resentencing hearings for lifers...WHEN (not if!) these hearings become a reality. Professor Siegel termed these cases "Capital Equivalents" since the outcome of death was the same in both types of cases. Case preparation was one of the most vital tasks of these strategies... a thorough life history with mitigating circumstances carefully researched and spelled out for the hearing judge. Dana Cook of the Atlantic Center in Philadelphia described the elements of such a life history and the role of mitigation specialists in its preparation.

Some of the most moving speeches came from the lips of those released. Ralph Brazell, known as Amin Rafiq, was released subsequent to Graham in August from a federal facility in Georgia where he had been sentenced to three life sentences for a non-violent drug offense. Amin noted that the man who beat his two year old child to death received less of a sentence than he did: ten years.

Xavier McElrath-Bey spoke movingly of having grown up on the streets of Chicago and looking to gangs for the family structure he lacked at home. By the age of 11, he had been arrested 15 times, and after being shot in the face by a friend, was arrested by the police for not identifying the shooter. Xavier noted that unfair processes reinforce negative behavior. He conducted a longitudinal study as part of Northwestern University of boys in gangs in Chicago that highlighted common themes: absent father, impoverished environments, many were victims themselves, gang influences, Black/Latino, etc. In short, these boys were the products of their environments, places where violence is the norm.

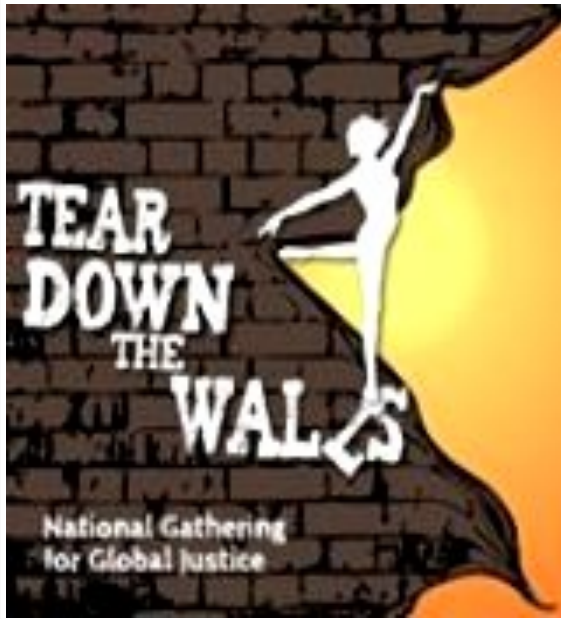
Both men and many others of the released citizens noted the responsibility they feel to lead exemplary lives so as to prove to society that positive change is possible... to pave the way for those still behind bars.

For those reading this from behind bars, please know that the compassion, conviction, collaboration, and wisdom to bring you justice is present and growing. There are thousands of us working for you, and we will not stop. You are not forgotten.



Kim Angle (right) friend and supporter of Juvenile Lifer Norman Bryant, pictured with Esi Mathis (left) mother of Juvenile Lifer Ralph Brazel.

Human Rights Coalition Report



Tear Down the Walls National Gathering for Global Justice

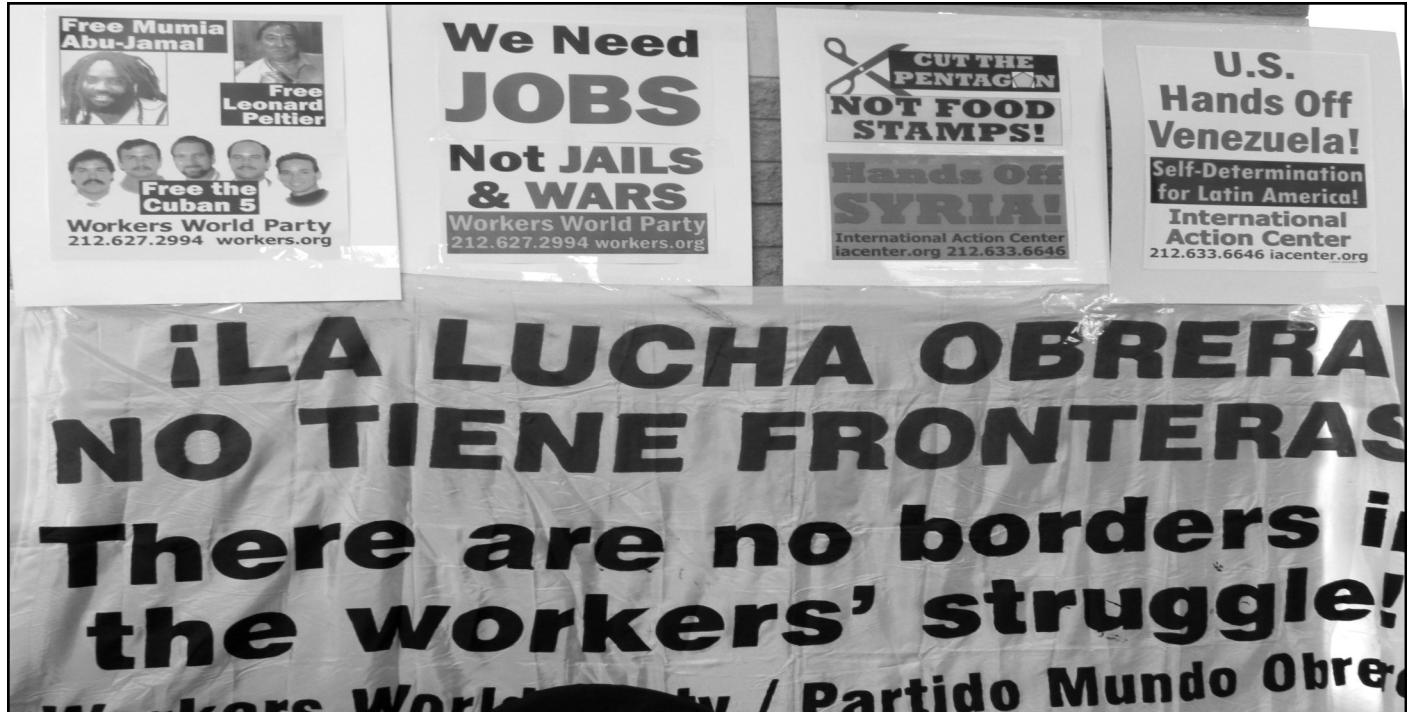
By: Gale Marshall, HRC Member

From November 1st through November 3rd, 2013 a national gathering for global justice, entitled "Tear Down The Walls" was held in Tucson, AZ. The conference was designed and coordinated by the 'Alliance for Global Justice' along with the support 70 diverse groups whom Alliance serves as the fiscal sponsor. Although Alliance's core work is in Latin America solidarity, the fiscal sponsorship of Occupy Wall Street and many other groups has worked to further their mission.

As the planning began, Alliance and the fiscally sponsored groups realized that they had to open this important conference to the rest of the movement. They asserted, "We all have many walls we are working to tear down: Wall Street, the US border and Israeli apartheid walls, prison walls, the Pentagon militarism walls, the walls of capitalism, the walls of oppression by race, gender, ethnicity, personal identity – the list goes on. Among them are the walls that weaken our efforts, the walls between our separate movements. Tear Down the Walls National Gathering will bring multiple movements to strategize and network together on how to build a more unified, powerful movement for transformational change in the US. This will be the largest gathering of those working for social and economic justice in the US in 2013."

The conference held six People Power Assemblies (PPA) with the goal of having each adopt at least one nationally coordinated day of local action that would cement cross-movement alliances. They stipulated that "The PPA are the heart and soul of Tear Down The Walls and where strategizing among diverse movements will take place and joint action over the next year will be decided upon." The People Power Assemblies were entitled: 1) Economic Justice, 2) Drug War and Drug War Prisoners, 3) Immigration and Border Militarization, 4) Anti-Repression and Prison Industrial Complex, 5) US Imperialism and Anti-Militarism, and 6) Ecology and Empire.

Sample banners and signs from groups attending conference



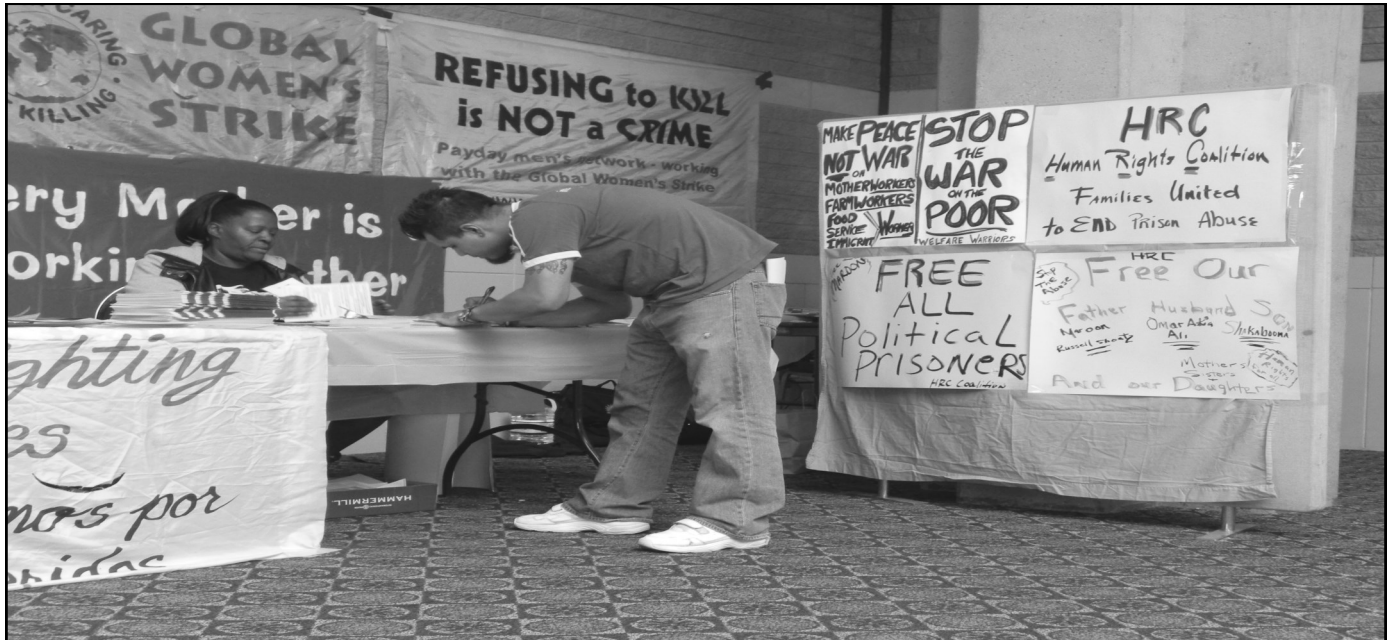
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Human Rights Coalition Report

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Throughout the conference different movements were able to network, learn what others are doing, and share their experiences. Tables were filled with a wide range of information and all who attended were welcome to sign petitions, share flyers or hand cards, purchase books or T-shirts, and pickup free popcorn and treats.

In addition there were eighty-five workshops available as a tool for awareness, information and discussions on track topics such as: Latin America Solidarity, US Political Intervention, Immigrant Power, Economic Justice, Poor People Power, Democracy, Anti-Militarism, Black Power, Queer Justice, Ecological Solidarity, Mideast Solidarity, Indigenous Solidarity, Anti-Imperialism, Labor, Grand Strategy, Environmental Justice, Prison Abolition, Systemic Progressive Change, Anti-repression, Occupy Movement, Cuba, Labor, whistle-blowers, Feminism, Gender, All people learning about peace as we all experience violence, Police Brutality, Prison Justice, Discrimination/Racism, Reproductive Justice, Women's Rights, and Free Education.



Photos by: Patricia Vickers

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THE MOVEMENT

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Human Rights Coalition Report

(Continued from page 28)

The Tear Down The Walls conference ended on November 3rd, 2013 and the People's Power Assemblies were tasked with discussing the issues and also creating nationally coordinated, local, days of action for the upcoming year. The information from each PPA was collected resulting in dates of action that will make Tear Down the Walls not just a stand alone gathering, but a driving force in the movement for change.

If you or your organization want to get involved or participate in any or all of the days of action? Please email daniele@AFGJ.org to be included in the conversation.

Dates:

Immigration & Border Militarization:

December 10 – December 18, 2014

Human Rights Day-Global Day for Migrants and Refugees

US Imperialism & Anti Militarism:

April 14-15 Tax day

Focus: Cutting the pentagon budget.

Anti-repression & Prison Industrial Complex:

March 8 – (International Womens Day) How prison system affects families

Possibly: Participate in events planned, add materials and speakers.

August 23 – National day of solidarity with US political prisoner and prisoners of empire

Additional Idea! Putting together a bus caravan.

Ecology and Empire:

Helping to organize and mobilize a series of Ecological Truth Commissions over the next year to lead up to and build for campaign of actions for 2015. Doing first ones on Earth Day as part of Take Back Earth Day activities.

September 2014: Supporting and attending gathering of indigenous people on Diné reservation

Start: Preparing for and building a national campaign of direct actions to demand climate justice leading up to and concurrent with the 2015 UN Climate Summit in Paris.

Economic Justice: Spring into Action

March 8 – April 22 – May 1

International Womens Day- Mother Earth Day-May Day.

Drug War & Drug War Prisoners:

Date not yet chosen.

The Drug War Working Group & Latin America Solidarity Coalition will be continuing discussion.

From website: www.teardownwalls.org



(Center) Margaret Prescod (KPFK 90.7 FM) participant of People's Power Assembly. KPFK can be heard live on the air at 90.7 FM in Los Angeles and most of Southern California, 98.7 FM in Santa Barbara, 99.5 FM in Ridgecrest/China Lake and on 93.7 FM in Rancho Bernardo/North San Diego.



Attending the conference workshop, 'For Survival Against Poverty: Reclaiming Our Children and Our Welfare Rights', were students from Prescott College, Prescott, AZ.

From left to right: Miriel Manning studying Organizing & Social Movement, Instructor, Zoe Hammer, and Jada Boyd studying Cultural Regional Studies—Critical Social Theory.

Human Rights Coalition Report

“And the walls came tumbling down” - or at least some of them started to! at the ‘Tear Down the Walls’ National Gathering (Tucson AZ, Nov 1 to 3)

By Phoebe Jones



A grassroots delegation of 22 organized by the Global Women's Strike joined several hundred others at Tear Down the Walls, a conference organized by the Alliance for Global Justice to “bring multiple movements to strategize and network together on how to build a more unified, powerful movement for transformational change in the US.”

The GWS delegation -- itself a “tearing down of walls” and a coming together of women's and other groups organizing against poverty, prisons, war, immigration laws and ecological devastation -- included representatives of CA Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement, Californians United for a Responsible Budget (LA), DHS and DCFS Give Us Back Our Children (Philly and LA), Every Mother is a Working Mother Network (Philly and LA), the Human Rights Coalition (Philly), Iraq Veterans Against the War (SoCal), No More Jails (LA), Payday men's network (London and Phila), Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights (Olympia), US PROStitutes Collective (SF), and the Welfare Warriors (Milwaukee).



Dolores Canales of CA Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement moved everyone to tears at the plenary on Political Repression and Prison Struggles when she spoke of the coming together of the prisoners across racial divides also bringing together the families in organizing support for the prisoner hunger strike. Margaret Prescod of Women of Color in the Global Women's Strike brought down the house as a speaker at the plenary on Economic Justice with the demand that “the wealth we have created go to the caring of people and the environment, beginning with the carers.” Both plenaries, along with the plenary on Ecology, agreed to participate in international actions on March 8th 2014 International Women's Day to demand that society prioritize the care of people and the planet, and end poverty and war.



Margaret Prescod speaking at Economic Justice plenary.

While the conference ended on Sunday -- in time to participate in Tucson's Day of the Dead massive procession! -- the work carries on, and national phone meetings are regularly scheduled. Contact: Global Women's Strike 215-848-1120 philly@globalwomenstrike.net

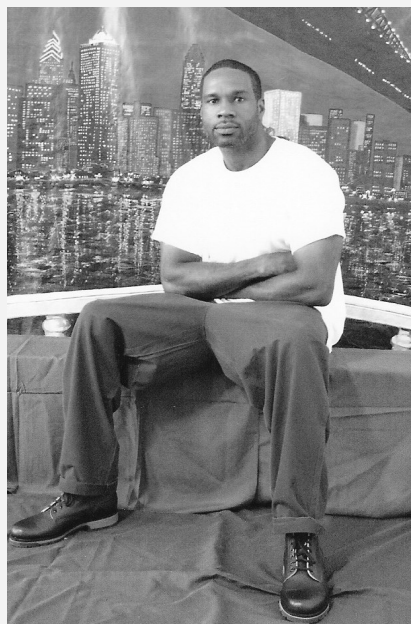
Margaret Prescod, Dolores Canales, Phoebe Jones at Day of the Dead, Tucson Nov 3.

Our workshops: For Survival, Against Poverty: Reclaiming Our Children and Our Welfare Rights; and The Prisoners' Struggle: Point of Reference for Our Movement and Our Communities were well-attended and exciting. Videos are available on the Global Women's Strike YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/GlobalWomenStrike>.

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

New Age Slave



Let's take an introspective look of the new Jim Crow

Where Americans overpopulated prisons continues to grow

Where unjustified sentences leads to the poor being persecuted

Incarceration, parole, and probation replaces whips, chains and nooses

No more slave boat cruises

Prison blocks pack'd with men shack'd up by the deuces

The truth is - we're still being plotted against

Don't be fooled

The plantation still exist

It's been modernized

In the form of a prison yard

With barbwire fences

Slave masters re-named as Superintendents

Working like mule's for nineteen cents

America's most precious commodity

- no longer sold on auction blocks

Today's slave is sold in the court-rooms

Thrown in prison as live stock

The correction of slavery, past and present is no different

- today's slavery is disguised as prison

Replace lynching, with lethal injection

And you have slavery resurrected

By: "G"

Mr. Garry "G" Johnson
#CQ-8884/SCI-Rockview
Box A
Bellefonte, PA 16823

LEVEL : HARD 002

ANSWERS FOUND ON PAGE 39

A Class Action Lawsuit will soon be filed in the U.S. District Courts, against PTS of America, LLC, (a prisoner transport service, based out of Tennessee).

If you have been transported by this company, or if you know of anyone that has been transported by them; please contact:

Jim Otero
c/o Human Rights Coalition
4134 Lancaster Ave
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104
cell#: 267-588-7393
email: jimotero25@gmail.com

You may have been victimized by this corporation without your knowledge and you may qualify to be compensated from this Lawsuit once we prevail.

If there are any questions or comments in respect to the above, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

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_____ **\$100.00 or above**

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THE MOVEMENT

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The Human Rights Coalition (Disclaimer)


The Human Rights Coalition is an organization that focuses on the plight of prisoners in their struggle for human rights and humane conditions of prisons, and challenging the prison industrial complex exploitation of prisoners and the drastic ramification on the families of prisoners and society at large.

We recognize that most prisoners are people of color and often are economically disfranchised working class people. HRC serves as an educational and resource forum to the community.

The Human Rights Coalition does not have the ability to represent individuals in the court of law nor has funding for such activities. The Human Rights Coalition does not have lawyers for personal counsel nor the ability to write legal briefs on behalf of any individual.

The Human Rights Coalition is about building a grassroots movement with the leadership of the families of prisoners and citizens who are concerned about the proliferation of prisons and the lack of social programs that could prevent crime and injustice.

"We can bomb the world into pieces but, you can't bomb it into peace"



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What's The News!

Life without parole for juveniles is struck down in Massachusetts

By Michael Muskal
December 24, 2013, 12:58 p.m.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court struck down a judge's power to choose to give a life sentence without parole to juveniles.

The unanimous ruling by the state's highest court came after the U.S. Supreme Court in June struck down mandatory life sentences for minors. The state's top court went further in its Tuesday ruling, saying that even discretionary sentences should be banned.

"Given the unique characteristics of juvenile offenders, they should be afforded, in appropriate circumstances, the opportunity to be considered for parole suitability," the court wrote in its decision.

Also

The U.S. Supreme Court limited the use of life in prison for murderers under age 18, deciding that that judges must consider the defendants' youth and the nature of the crime before putting them behind bars with no hope for parole. In a 5-4 decision, the high court struck down as cruel and unusual punishment the laws in about 28 states that mandated a life term for murderers, including those under age 18.

In the state ruling, the court used elements of the same argument about proportionality of the punishment to the crime and noted the special conditions for juveniles who are still developing.

"Given current scientific research on adolescent brain development, and the myriad significant ways that this development impacts a juvenile's personality and behavior, a conclusive showing of traits such as an 'irretrievably depraved character,' can never be made, with integrity, by the Commonwealth at an individualized hearing to determine whether a sentence of life without parole should be imposed on a juvenile homicide offender.

"Simply put, because the brain of a juvenile is not fully developed, either structurally or functionally, by the age of eighteen, a judge cannot find with confidence that a particular offender, at that point in time, is irretrievably depraved. Therefore, it follows that the judge cannot ascertain, with any reasonable degree of certainty, whether imposition of this most severe punishment is warranted," the court wrote.

The ruling came in the case of Gregory Diatchenko, who was 17 in 1981 when he murdered a man in a car in Kenmore Square. He has been in prison for more than three decades. The court ruled that he was eligible to be considered for parole immediately.

Officials have said 61 other inmates in Massachusetts are in the same position as Diatchenko.

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/nationnow/la-na-nn-massachusetts-court-life-without-parole-juveniles-20131224,0,7793310.story#ixzz2oiKKuULw>

John Carter's Family Files Lawsuit against DOC Officials

By: HRC Member, January 2014

The Human Rights Coalition with the assistance of inmates across Pennsylvania brought the abuse, torture, and senseless death of John Carter to light through public reports. In addition HRC aligned John's family with Robert Pierce and Associates who in December 2012 filed a lawsuit (Williams v. Lamas) against the SCI-Rockview Superintendent, Marirosa Lamas, and several guards.

John Carter was sentenced to life in prison at the age of sixteen. After half of his life time spent in prison he was killed in the Restricted Housing Unit at SCI-Rockview during a cell extraction on April 26, 2012.

Immediately HRC received reports from numerous prisoners in the RHU at Rockview and all who knew John Carter. They denied the alleged "death by suicide" by DOC. Reports came describing his death in a totally different manner. The reports received stated that when Carter was cell extracted on April 19—one week before the extraction of April 26—guards were heard yelling "f*** him up" several times as the extraction team rushed into his cell. Other reports stated that the day John Carter died; guards used three canisters of pepper spray and a stun shield during the cell extraction. Subsequent correspondence of the cell extraction and death of John Carter on April 26, 2012 reported that the prison officials were callous and abusive. HRC later received more reports with exact details:

- * "in total, it is reported that the guards sprayed gas into Carter's cell at least ten times"
- * "Finally, Carter's door was taken down and 6 guards in riot gear and gas masks rushed in, pinned Carter to the ground, and reportedly electro-shocked him "at least seven times."
- * "Carter was then dragged out of the cell by his knees with his head dragging along the floor, out into the hallway."

John Carter had been held in solitary confinement in several different prisons for the last ten to eleven years of his life, many believe this to be a result of retaliation by the guards. After his death his family received numerous letters attesting to John's good character and strong spirit. They wrote that he was a person of integrity. That he didn't believe in abuse of others, especially the abuse of prisoners from prison guards.

Carter's death was a shock to many prisoners. All were questioning why there wasn't a big investigation, an outrage about his death like Trayvon Martin's death; John Carter was black, he was someone's son and he died senselessly.

This lawsuit is an important step in *not* allowing John Carter's life and death to be meaningless. Undoubtedly it serves as proof that solitary confinement is the

breeding ground for unscrupulous guards and DOC officials who feel that their actions and methods are above the law. Only we, The People, can put an end to this rouge behavior without consequences. I salute the family of John Carter for their courage and resolve.

Idaho to take over privately-run state prison

January 3, 2014

From <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/01/03/idaho-prison/4304689/>

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Idaho's governor says the corrections department will take over operation of the largest privately-run prison in the state after more than a decade of mismanagement and other problems at the facility.

Nashville, Tenn.-based Corrections Corporation of America has contracted with the state to run the prison since it was built in 1997. Taxpayers currently pay CCA \$29 million per year to operate the 2080-bed prison south of Boise.

Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter made the announcement Friday at a preview of the upcoming legislative session.

For years, Otter has been a champion of privatizing certain sectors of government, including prisons.

In 2008, he floated legislation to change state laws to allow private companies to build and operate prisons in Idaho and import out-of-state inmates. In 2008, he suggested privatizing the 500-bed state-run Idaho Correctional Institution-Orofino.

The CCA prison has been the subject of multiple lawsuits alleging rampant violence, understaffing, gang activity and contract fraud by CCA.

CCA acknowledged last year that falsified staffing reports were given to the state showing thousands of hours were staffed by CCA workers when the positions were actually vacant. And the Idaho State Police is investigating the operation of the facility for possible criminal activity.

A federal judge also has held CCA in contempt of court for failing to abide by the terms of a settlement agreement reached with inmates in a lawsuit claiming high rates of violence and chronic understaffing at the prison.

Meanwhile, Idaho prison officials, led by IDOC Director Brent Reinke, have lobbied to allow the agency to put together its own proposal and cost analysis for running the prison. Each time, however, Reinke and his staff have been rebuffed by the state Board of Correction.

(Continued on page 35)

What's The News!

(Continued from page 34)

Recently, Board Chairwoman Robin Sandy said she opposed the idea because she didn't want to grow state government.

New Exonerations Registry Catalogs Over 2,400 Wrongful Convictions

According to the National Registry of Exonerations, more than 1,230 criminal defendants who were wrongfully convicted have been exonerated since 1989. Another 1,170 cases involving wrongful convictions were not included in the Registry's database because they were "collective exonerations" in police misconduct scandals in which officers fabricated evidence – for example, by planting drugs or guns on suspects.

The criminal justice system does not keep an official record of exonerations. As such, the University of Michigan Law School partnered with the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University School of Law to found the Registry in May 2012.

The Registry's database includes cases gathered from court records and catalogs of exonerations maintained by wrongful conviction organizations, such as the Innocence Project.

One of the most recent exonerations in the Registry is that of Sheldon Mosley, who was convicted of child sexual abuse in 1996 in Texas, sentenced to 60 years and released on October 11, 2013. Mosley was falsely accused of molesting his 4-year-old daughter, who recanted in 2012, saying she had been coerced into testifying about the abuse by other family members. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals vacated Mosley's conviction and the district attorney dismissed the charges.

The Registry has amassed details about 1,232 exonerations between 1989 and October 2013. The wrongfully convicted defendants in those cases served a combined total of more than 10,000 years in prison before being exonerated. Ninety-three percent were male and around half were African American. Over 100 had been sentenced to death.

Interestingly, 83% of the exonerees had taken their cases to trial and been convicted by juries; 7% were convicted by judges while only 9% pleaded guilty. This indicates that in a disproportionate percentage of cases, the defendants who went to trial proclaiming their innocence were, in fact, innocent.

According to the Registry, 52% of wrongful convictions involved perjured testimony or false accusations; in homicide cases that number climbed to 65%. Police and prosecutorial misconduct, including withholding exculpatory evidence, contributed to 43% of the cases resulting in exonerations.

Just over 40% of the wrongful convictions were based on mistaken eyewitness identification – 79% in sexual abuse cases. False or misleading forensic evidence was involved in 22% of wrongful convictions, while false confessions occurred in 14%. [See: PLN, Dec. 2011, p.14; April 2011, p.18]. The percentages add up to more than 100% because multiple factors were involved in many of the cases.

"The most important goal of the [criminal justice] system is accuracy," said Michigan Law School professor Samuel Gross, who helped create the Registry. "Getting the right person and not getting the wrong person are obviously the most important goals. The only way to get those are to learn how we made our mistakes."

The Registry does not include innocent defendants who pleaded guilty to avoid the risk of more serious punishments, or cases that were dismissed due to legal errors absent evidence of innocence.

The Registry is "a good start" said Rob Warden, executive director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions. However, it represents only a small fraction of the total number of cases involving innocence. "We know there are many more that we haven't found," said Gross. Counties such as San Bernardino County in California and Bexar County in Texas are heavily populated yet claim to have no exonerations. Researchers believe that is unlikely.

"What this shows is that the criminal justice system makes mistakes, and they are more common than people think," Gross stated.

Unsurprisingly, some prosecutors disagree. Exonerations "give the gross perception that there is a serious problem with wrongful convictions in this country, and it is just not the case," said Scott Burns, executive director of the National District Attorneys Association.

One cannot help but wonder if Mr. Burns and his fellow prosecutors would feel the same way if they were among the thousands of innocent men and women who have been wrongfully convicted and sent to prison for crimes they didn't commit.

The Registry is not the first project to compile a database of exonerations. Justice Denied maintains a list of more than 3,900 people who were wrongfully convicted both in the United States and other countries, and publishes an online quarterly magazine of the same name about wrongful convictions. Plus the Innocence Project has a database of 311 post-conviction DNA exonerations.

From:
www.prisonlegalnews.org/25616_displayArticle.aspx

FCC Order Heralds Hope for Reform of Prison Phone Industry

by John E. Dannenberg and Alex Friedmann

"After a long time – too long – the Commission takes action to finally address the high cost that prison

inmates and their families must pay for phone service. This is not just an issue of markets and rates; it is a broader issue of social justice." – FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel

On August 9, 2013, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), in a landmark decision, voted to cap the cost of long distance rates for phone calls made by prisoners and enact other reforms related to the prison phone industry. [

The FCC's 131-page final order was released in September and published in the Federal Register on November 13, 2013. It has not yet gone into effect due to a 90-day waiting period following publication in the Register, plus legal challenges have since been filed by the nation's two largest prison phone companies.

The order, entered in response to a petition for rule-making submitted to the FCC, is the result of a decade-long effort to lower prison phone rates and implement much-needed changes in the prison phone industry.

... "This all began with one Washington, D.C. grandmother, Mrs. Martha Wright, who spoke truth to power in 2003, and reminded us that one voice can still spur a movement and drive meaningful change.... In 2003, she filed a petition with the FCC asking for help. Others who were paying a high toll for interstate inmate calls would follow her lead and after many twists and turns – we are finally here."

For full story see:
www.prisonlegalnews.org/25646_displayArticle.aspx

Police Bust Drone Dropping Contraband Into Georgia Prison Yard

We're always hearing of new creative uses for drones, but this has got to be one of the better ones: Four people in Calhoun County, Georgia have been accused of using a mini helicopter to smuggle contraband tobacco into a prison.

Georgia's WALB News 10 reports that the team was busted allegedly piloting a mini helicopter from the woods nearby Calhoun State prison. They had already made two drops of rolling tobacco into the prison yard before a guard noticed the drone hovering above the gate. A search led police to a suspicious car nearby. They searched it, and found the copter and "one or two pounds of tobacco rolled up" for delivery.

The foursome faces up to 20 years in prison for crossing prison lines with contraband, which seems pretty harsh. It's not like they Hellfired anyone.

From: gawker.com/georgia-police-bust-drone-dropping-contraband-into-pri-1472633983

Official HRC Chapters

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412-361-3022 xt.4

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www.prisonerstories.blogspot.com

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

- 1.) Respond to inquiries in a timely manner as resources permit.
- 2.) Update membership to HRC-Philly at least quarterly.
- 3.) Incorporate as a non-profit organization.
- 4.) Obtain tax exempt or 501 (C) 3 status.
- 5.) Publish a newsletter at least semi annually as resources permit.
- 6.) Send minutes of chapter meetings to HRC-Philly.
- 7.) Establish internet video conferencing for statewide chapter meetings.
- 8.) Create a cooperative business to finance your chapter or branch to be financially independent.

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The Human Rights Coalition would like to thank RESIST for their support of our efforts; i.e., protecting the human rights of our loved ones in prison, bringing a stop to the torture and abuse of prisoners, and making the public aware of DOC's inhumane practices and the effect it has on our communities.

Human Rights Matters



December 10th, 2013 International Human Rights Day Celebrated Across the Globe



Cambodian dancers perform a blessing dance during a celebration marking the 65th International Human Rights Day in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, December 10, 2013. AP



Women activists of Jammu Kashmir Mass Movement (JKMM) hold placards as they participate in a protest a day before International Human Rights Day in Srinagar. AP



Exile Tibetans raise slogans during a protest against the alleged human rights abuses of Tibetans by the Chinese government outside the Chinese embassy on the eve of World Human Rights Day in New Delhi.

Larry Cohen President, Communications Workers of America, HuffPost, 12/10/2013

December 10, 1948

Eleanor Roosevelt proclaimed International Human Rights Day, speaking mostly to the rest of the world emerging from war and facing human rights issues on every continent. At that moment, the U.S. led the world's democracies by almost every measure. Now 65 years later, the blocks to our democracy are as glaring in the U.S. as anywhere else.

Sixty-five years ago, workers' rights in the U.S. matched any other nation. Collective bargaining was on the rise with more than one in three U.S. private sector workers covered by agreements with their employers, providing a voice on the job and a rising standard of living. Today only 1 in 15 workers has those same rights and the standard of living has stagnated for 40 years. In 1948, the new federal minimum wage actually provided a path to a livable wage; today, the federal minimum wage provides virtually nothing but an excuse for employers to say they are following the law.

Just as importantly, in 1948, our civil rights movement was emerging as a major force, just as independence movements were building across Africa and Asia after a century of colonization. Over the next 20 years, Jim Crow was dismantled from the schools to the buses to the voting booths.

But since then, our judiciary has extended unlimited free speech rights to corporations from the workplace to electoral politics -- first ruling that corporate free speech meant the unlimited right to campaign against collective bargaining and eventually deciding that money equals speech, so there could be no limits on money in politics, for corporations or individuals.

So despite significant gains in the rest of the world from South Africa to Brazil, India to Argentina, democracy in the U.S. is collapsing, compared to our 21st century counterparts. Collective bargaining is a shell of its past, and real wages are falling in all industries. While most democracies now have near universal voter registration, voter suppression measures passed by most states result in about 71 percent of U.S. citizens registered to vote, roughly the same as in years before the Voting Rights Act. Nearly \$7 billion was spent in the 2012 congressional and presidential elections. While Senate rules and confirmation of key consumer, labor and judicial nominations. We also work together on voting rights and getting big money out of politics, working mostly at the state level. The endorsing organizations will meet early in January to gear up for the coming year.

One year ago we helped launch the Democracy Initiative, a massive coalition of organizations with more than 20 million members from civil rights, environment, community, faith, consumer, student and labor groups. As noted, we have already made a difference on Senate rules and confirmation of key consumer, labor and judicial nominations. We also work together on voting rights and getting big money out of politics, working mostly at the state level. The endorsing organizations will meet early in January to gear up for the coming year.

But as we celebrate International Human Rights Day this December 10, we need to realize how far we must go compared to the promise of 1948. We need to build this movement to create the 21st century democracy that provides comparable rights for our citizens in the increasingly global economy.



What Modern Day Heroes Look Like

It has been said that “heroes are ordinary people who make themselves extraordinary.” Maryanne Godboldo and Allison Folmar are extraordinary women.



ATTORNEY ALLISON FOLMAR (LEFT) AND DETROIT MOTHER MARYANNE GODBOLDO (RIGHT)

By Kelly Patricia O'Meara

Maryanne Godboldo and Allison Folmar are extraordinary women. Their names may not elicit immediate recognition by the masses but it is because of their belief in the right of parents—not the state—to decide whether to medicate a child, that their struggle will protect thousands of children who otherwise would have become victims of deeply flawed State Child Protective Services policies.

It's been two years since Detroit mother, Maryanne Godboldo, withstood an armed assault by a SWAT team and a tank, assault weapons and helicopter, accouterments worthy of a Die Hard film, determined to kidnap, by force, her then 13-year old daughter, Ariana. The alleged crime? Godboldo refused to give Ariana harmful psychiatric drugs.

The 55-year old Godboldo, after an hours-long standoff, gave herself up to police, was taken into custody and charged with multiple felony counts. Worse, though, was that 13-year old Ariana was taken into state custody while Godboldo's case worked its way through the court system.

Godboldo's attorney, Allison Folmar, firmly believed in Godboldo's parental rights and never wavered in her support. Much to her credit, Folmar has represented Godboldo pro-bono throughout the judicial proceedings and was pleased when, in August of 2011, all charges were dropped against Godboldo.

But that was just the first hurdle. It wasn't until five weeks later that Ariana was returned to Godboldo, and then only after three Michigan

courts had determined that Godboldo's refusal to drug her child was completely legal.

In fact, from beginning to end of the Godboldo saga, no part of the assault had been legal. Child Protective Services did not have a legal court order nor warrant to forcibly remove Ariana from her home. Rather, a “writ” was issued to CPS with literally a rubber stamp, with no judge actually reviewing the request.

Local Detroit residents protested the unlawful seizure of Maryanne Godboldo's daughter, with signs saying ‘Free Arianna.’

To make matters worse, in initially agreeing to treat Ariana with the state-recommended Risperidone—an extremely dangerous antipsychotic—Godboldo signed an informed consent document guaranteeing her the right to stop the medication at any time. Despite these assurances and the law behind Godboldo, Child Protective Services moved forward with the assault—a State policy that apparently has been terminated.

Today the Michigan Department of Human Services reports on its website that the reason for Ariana's removal no longer exists. “Medication—CPS is not responsible for investigating complaints that allege parents are failing or refusing to provide their children with psychotropic medication such as Ritalin.”

“The Michigan DHS website is interesting,” says Folmar, “because this is what Maryanne's case is all about. The CPS policy at the time of the assault was different. I can't help but think that the change is a direct result of this litigation.”

It's anyone's guess why Michigan DHS has decided to change its CPS investigation policy, but there is enough startling information about the drugging of children within state programs that one can be sure it is none too soon.

For example, according to a 2012 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report reviewing psychotropic drug prescriptions covered by Medicaid in 2008 for Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon and Texas, “foster children in each of the five states (Maryland's data was unreliable) were prescribed psychotropic drugs at higher rates than were non-foster children.”

The GAO report further revealed that “foster children in the five states were prescribed psychotropic drugs at rates 2.7 to 4.5 times higher than were non-foster children in Medicaid in 2008 (most recent data) and the rates were higher in each of the age ranges reviewed.”

Additionally, according to the GAO report, children in foster care across the five states were prescribed five or more psychotropic drugs at higher rates than non-foster care children, exceeded the maximum doses at higher rates than non-foster care children and were given to infants (under 1 year old) at higher rates than non-foster care children.

Given the above data, is it any wonder that Godboldo stood up for her daughter? Unfortunately, though, despite having all charges dismissed against her, the Wayne County prosecutor still is looking to take Godboldo to trial.

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"They are continuing to try and put Maryanne in prison," says Folmar, "for standing up and refusing to let police into her home. We won at the district level and the judge saw the case for what it is... the illegal conduct of police. They had no probable cause and no valid order to enter Maryanne's home."

"We need help putting the word out," says Folmar, "that this case affects everyone. Forcing medication down parents' throats and literally the throats of children cannot be tolerated. This is about parents' rights to be able to protect their children."

"I think," says Folmar, "that the continued interest in Maryanne is about them sending a message. They are scrambling for some justification of their wrong-doing."

"In the end," says Folmar, "it is a basic human right for parents to choose if they want to medicate their children. When the state steps in and says 'hey, mom and dad, we know what's better for your child,' that's wrong. There are too many of these cases where the state believes it knows more than the parents. It isn't good for the kids, it isn't good for the parents and it is ripping families apart."

"I'm happy," says Folmar, "to represent someone like Maryanne. She stood up and said 'no, I refuse to harm my child.'" With respect to CPS and its heavy hand with medication, "It boggles the mind," says Folmar, "that they are putting kids on medication that they don't need and is harmful. Maryanne did the right thing to protect her child." "How could anyone not support that," asks Folmar. "Whatever it takes," says Folmar, "we'll see this through."

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

Puzzle on page 31



PHOTO TAKEN FROM TV FOOTAGE OF THE ACTUAL TANK SENT TO THE HOME OF MARYANNE GODBOLDO

From: <http://www.cchrint.org/2013/04/23/modern-day-heroes-detroit-mother-maryanne-godboldo-attorney-allison-folmar/>

(Continued from page 40)

Livingston was arrested on the night of 20 July at her 79-year old grandmother's house, accused of violating a specialized protection order in place that forbid her from drinking on the premises or engaging in loud arguments. Police first took her to Kings County Hospital, a public hospital, to get "detoxed" and toxicology tests, a standard procedure when they suspect someone has been drinking. Then they took her to Central Booking, when after she was photographed and her eyes scanned, police handed her over for a medical check in with EMS (part of the FDNY), she was transferred to a female cell until arraignment before the judge.

Then she waited in a cell, waiting to go home, except she never made it. Sixty-six percent of the time, charges are dropped, and people go through a humiliating process only to go home. But regardless of guilt or innocence, the people in the criminal justice system are still people: mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, and their cries for help should not go ignored.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/27/deaths-in-jails-885-inmates>

Mortality in Local Jails and State Prisons, 2000-2011 - Statistical Tables

<http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/mljsp0011.pdf>

Human Rights Matters



There's an alarming number of deaths in US jails

Whether guilty or innocent, people in the criminal justice system are still people. Their cries for help should not go ignored

By: Cara Tabachnick, 27 December 2013

Kyam Livingston begged for help. After seven hours of lying on the floor of a jail cell, the 38-year-old mother of two died, her calls unheeded by the correction officers providing security for the approximately 15 female inmates at Brooklyn "central booking" jail this past summer, according to witnesses and court documents.

Witnesses told the family that she had died in the cell among fetid conditions before she was taken to Brooklyn Hospital Health Center on 21 July 2013 where Livingston was pronounced dead at 6:58am, according to police reports. A witness, registered nurse Aleah Holland, told The Daily News, that police at Central Booking ignored her complaints of stomach pains and diarrhea. She said that when she and other inmates banged on the bars calling for help, officers told them Livingston was an alcoholic.

No one knows what happened, and no one wants to say. The NYPD told the family that she died of a seizure, but her family says she never suffered from seizures. This October the family sued the city, the NYPD, and the Department of Corrections in an effort to force systemic change and "responsibility" for her death.

Livingston was one of the few hundred jail deaths that happen across the country. In 2011, (the latest available numbers) 885 inmates died (pdf) in the custody of local jails, the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics reported. Notice I said jails. These are different from prisons. Prisons are for people who have been convicted of a crime and sentenced. There are roughly 3,000 jails nationwide and each facility is set up to process people that have been arrested before they are arraigned or go to trial. Some will serve a misdemeanor sentence (of under a year). The majority will be let go because the charges against them won't stick as they move through the legal system. Others will remain in jails while waiting to go to trial too poor to make bail – yet to be convicted of anything. Regardless, they will be treated as criminals.

As a result, there is great hesitancy on the part of security to address sick complaints as seriously as they should be, especially in jail where the churn of people is endless, with most disappearing quickly. For those with health issues, this suspension of belief can prove fatal.

Across the nation the news is chilling: in Albany, New York, Irene Bamenga, 29, had pleaded with jail staff to deliver her medicine before dying from a life-threatening heart condition. She was at the jail for a week, where she died awaiting deportation to France.

In Irving, Texas Sarah Tippet, 37, died on a jail cell floor after not receiving insulin for her diabetes while she was in custody. Her boyfriend, who was in the cell next to her, told the news that he had screamed at the guards at the facility for over 10 minutes until they took action.

In Cook County, Illinois, the death of Eugene Gruber from pneumonia, which resulted from paraplegia following spine injuries suffered in an altercation with a corrections officer in the Lake County Jail was ruled a homicide. Over the next 24 hours, the Chicago Tribune reported, Gruber complained that he couldn't move his legs and was carried around, sometimes with his legs dragging, as guards tried to take his mug shot.

Some jails, such as New York City's Rikers Island, can house inmates on misdemeanor charges for up to a year. But that is often not the case. Hundred of thousands of people pass through jails yearly, in New York City alone the jails processed 90,000 people through its "booking centers". There is no delineation or separation within these facilities. Rapists and murders can be sharing a cell with someone who urinated on the sidewalk. Some people can be in the facilities for 24 hours, others can languish for years.

In "booking centers" agencies from NYPD, FDNY, Department of Corrections to the Department of Mental Health share responsibility for hustling detainees through the 24 hour arrest-to-arraignment process while maintaining their safety, making hard to assign responsibility when things go wrong. In these under resourced and chaotic environments the challenge of protecting – and believing – inmates health concerns can be overwhelming.

For anyone the process is scary, humiliating and contentious. But, in particular, the relationship between the inmates and the officers are especially fraught with distrust, especially when it comes to health issues. There is the dual loyalties of doctors and nurses: in a correctional setting, security is often more important than patient care. Doctors and nurses that staff these jails don't have any medical information or background on the patients that they serve. Resources are scarce. Although some "central bookings" have a clinic on site, for most inmates' health issues mean an off-site visit to the hospital. That necessitates a delay in arraignments, and arranging an ambulance and police escort, often at a great financial and time cost to the city.

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



Mr. Aqeela Sherills

Lifting Mandatory Life Terms for Juveniles Is Right Decision

The Supreme Court ruling bars mandatory life sentences without the possibility of parole for children. I have not given up on young people, even after my child was killed by another.

By Aqeela Sherills

My 18-year-old son Terrell was shot and killed by another young person more than eight years ago.

The person who killed Terrell was never arrested. I want him be held accountable, but I don't think he should go to jail for the rest of his life. I think our children — and all of us — are worth more than that.

That is why I applauded the U.S. Supreme Court ruling earlier this week that declared it unconstitutional to impose mandatory sentences of life without the possibility of parole on children. We should not give up on people, nor should we suggest that a child's value can be summed up by his worst act.

I understand how children get into trouble. As a young person, I made plenty of bad decisions. Growing up in the Jordan Downs housing projects in Watts gave a young person few options. With the lack of youth programs and services, I joined the neighborhood gang. I witnessed things that no young person should. When I was in ninth grade, my good friend Ronzell was shot and killed at school. That was a turning point for me.

I have spent my entire adult life working to bring peace and healing to my communities. At 19, Hall of Fame football great Jim Brown and I co-founded the Amer-I-Can Program, an organization to heal gang violence around the country. In 1992, working with my brother and a few other key individuals, I forged a "Peace Treaty" between the Crips and Bloods in Watts, creating a domino effect across the country for urban peace treaties amongst warring gangs.

I raised four of my children as a single father. Terrell was the oldest. While home on break from Humboldt State University, he was shot to

death at a party in an affluent black neighborhood. One theory is that a Crip may have mistaken Terrell for a Blood because he had a red Mickey Mouse sweater slung over his shoulder.

Terrell died within the hour. I ultimately forgave the killer because I know that the real villain is what has gone wrong in our culture that has led us to devalue the lives of one another.

The Supreme Court has taken an important step in the right direction. Thankfully, judges now will have to consider mitigating factors, such as a child's age, history of abuse and neglect, and the circumstances of a crime when determining a sentence. But I think that we can go even further because no child should ever be told he or she deserves to die in prison.

Children can change. I am proof positive of that. Our children deserve our support and, sometimes, a second chance, to become all that they can.

Aqeela Sherills is the regional director for Resources for Human Development and is the Southern California outreach coordinator for California Crime Victims for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

From: <http://www.bet.com/news/national/2012/06/29/commentary-lifting-mandatory-life-terms-for-juveniles-is-right-decision.html>

11/29/13

Human Rights Coalition,

I am a female inmate at SCI-Muncy. I had an opportunity to read one of your newsletters and found it fascinating and informative. I would like to become a member of your organization and be put on your mailing list to receive your newsletter. And thank you for the hard work you do on behalf of inmates and our families. It's truly appreciated!

Also, I am gay, as many of us here are and we are harassed by the C.O.'s about it on a daily basis. They call us "bull daggers" and make very lewd sexual comments. I would like to organize a class action lawsuit regarding this sexual harassment. If you can refer me to any attorney who would be interested in representing us that would be awesome. It's becoming a huge problem at our institution.

Sincerely,

Donna

Readers! If you can help Donna in any way contact: HRC, 4134 Lancaster Ave, Phila., PA 19104

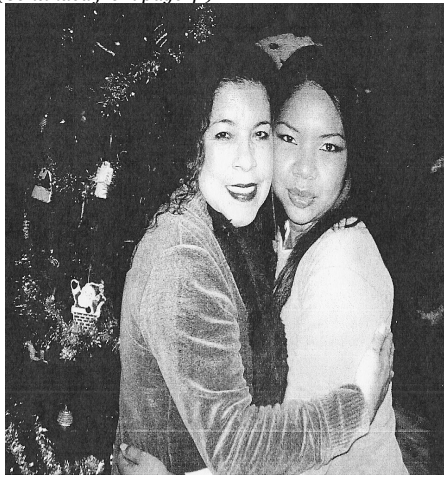
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THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

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

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Exchange a Word For a Life

"Hi! How are you?" has become a cliché and has lost its importance concerning others. We say it in passing as we are rushing to a destination and expect the response to be "I'm fine, thank you." But what if the

response is something other than "I'm fine", would we be prepared to stop what we're doing to talk to that person? What if the response was, "I'm not doing too well today, in fact, I feel like killing myself." What would you do then? Would you drop what you are doing, or would you just say, "I'm sorry to hear that, I'll be praying for you," and continue on with your day.

I know this entire hypothetical dialog may sound unreal, but it happens. The spirit of suicide can come over anyone and oppress him or her. Some of us go through life and are caught up with ourselves without even realizing it. We forget the power that each one of us has to make a difference in this world. We do not talk about suicide openly because it is not everyday conversation. Sometimes people do not feel comfortable because when they do speak out, their love ones or peers will tell them that they are weak or just seeking attention. Well I got some news for you, they are. They are crying out for help to a problem that they just cannot see pass.

Suicide can be crippling, a feeling that takes over you, and does not allow you to see pass today or the potential you have in you. When it happens, you lose all hope and think that the momentary problem is eternal. As I write, I speak from experience to the feelings that have come over me. I came into prison as a juvenile lifer, and at one point in my life felt like there was no hope or reason to live. I was carrying the guilt of my past and had tormenting thoughts that told me to give up and end my life. Some of you may think I am crazy, but the enemy is the father of lies and will torment us with lies and deception.

I was thankful to have a strong support network and so many people that loved me and saw the calling that I had in my life. You see, the enemy only sees the seed that is planted and comes to pull it out of us, but God sees the full-grown tree and our future. When you ask someone, "How are you?" mean it, and be prepared to take some time out of your schedule if they are not doing well. We need to put back meaning to the words that we speak. Make your "How are you?" moments be an opportunity to save someone's life and encourage them.

I recently read a story of a high school boy that cleaned out his locker on a Friday and was bringing all his belongings and books home. Some guys knocked his things over and tripped him. His glasses went flying and he was searching for them on the floor. A boy who was a football

player witnessed it and came to help him with his things and glasses. It turned out they lived by each other and the football player asked if he wanted to hang out and they did all weekend. On Monday morning, he brought all his books back. They both became best friends, and the boy that cleaned out his locker became valedictorian when they graduated. At the graduation, he made a speech and said that he was planning to kill himself that Friday when he carried his books home so that his mother would not have to clean out his locker. But because a person who he never knew until that day was kind to him, it changed his life without anyone even knowing what he was feeling.

One smile, word, or act of kindness could change the outcome of someone's life. In life, we will encounter hardships and defeats, but we will eventually snatch victory from defeat. When we do, it will build character and show us that we are stronger than we give ourselves credit for. With that strength, it will be enough to propel us to face our issues and heal from our past; then give that strength to others to help them heal themselves.

"History, despite its wrenching pain cannot be unlived. But if faced with courage, it need not be lived again" - Maya Angelou.

Natalie De Mola X-12907
509-29-3up, P.O. Box 1508, Chowchilla, CA 93610

MENTAL HEALTH AT SCI-FAYETTE

SCI-Fayette's E-Block is the Special Needs Unit (SNU). At least that was what the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) was made to believe. The E-A side receives proper treatment services for the most part. The E-B side is greatly neglected and this fact needs to be exposed.

E-A receives three day room and block yard recreation per day. E-B receives one day room every other day, where every other block receives a full block yard, recreational time for E-B's are cut in half meaning more time behind locked doors for those with mental health issues. This is because E-A has priority in the yard for smoke breaks. If E-B had day room activities the yard issue would be moot.

The men on E-B repeatedly receive misconducts for sleeping through count due to the psychotropic medication prescribed by the licensed psychiatrist, Dr. Saavedra. This doctor has been ordered by the officers on E-B to lower the dosage of medication as they are tired of waking them up. These are non-SNU certified officers.

I met with Dr. Saavedra on November 4th, 2013 at which time I mentioned how my E-B brothers are receiving misconducts for sleeping through count. His face lit up with anger stating this is not supposed to occur. He stated that he would address this matter. The very next day I met with Dr. Lynn Fischer the psychology department manager. I mentioned the above issues. She to stated that she would address this, that this is not supposed to occur. I stated I would tell the guys to begin writ-

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ing the DOJ. Dr. Fischer said, "No! Please let us handle it, in house." The very next day, November 6th, 2013 I met with the E Block psychologist, Carolyn Brown, assigned to E Block with an office on E Block whom had no idea this was going on.

Since the above meetings and notifications more men have gone to the hole or placed on cell restriction. Nothing was done to correct these wrongs. Those with mental health issues and those on psychotropic medications are still being punished and/or sanctioned by employees of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Therefore nothing has changed, just a lot of fluff to make it look good to the Department of Justice (DOJ). Now, I, the martyr for all that's wrong with the DOC will contact the DOJ and the Disability Rights Network (DRN), the media and our elected officials to let them know it's not fixed, in fact, far from it. Those with mental illness are still being discriminated against.

As always I cannot do it alone, I need your help. Send copies of this news article to the DOJ, DRN, the media and our elected officials, because together, united we can compel change.

A quick after thought, another man was taken to the hole, RHU, while I was writing this story. He too is on psychotropic medication. He's old with no history of drug use or abuse in RHU because he could not urinate in a cup when ordered to.

Darren
SCI-Fayette

The year in review and Albert Woodfox's Hearing on Jan 7th 2014

2013 proved to be a tremendous year, both for Herman's House and for the wider struggle to end the use of torture in our prisons. While we are still in the process of coming to terms with the triumphant release and immediate loss of Herman Wallace, his legacy continues to provide us with fuel to continue this fight. As we come to the end of the year we'd like to highlight some of the notable moments in the national movement to end the use of solitary confinement and extend our gratitude to those organizations, community groups, individuals and collectives who have contributed their precious energy to this movement.

Jan 4th TAMMS Supermax prison in Illinois closes down after decades of torturing inmates in solitary

May 2013 Jackie Sumell receives SOROS Justice fellowship for new media campaign focused on ending solitary confinement

June 19th The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) hosts a national 23 hour fast to in conjunction with the first ever Congressional hearing on solitary confinement by the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights

June 25th political hostage Sara Shroud launches a fundraising campaign for her play about solitary confinement: Opening the Box

July 8th Over 30,000 inmates go on a historic 60 day hunger strike in California to protest conditions in prisons including solitary confinement

July 8th Herman's House premieres on national television as a part of PBS' POV series

July 12th Congressmen Richmond, Conyers, Nadler and Scott call for Investigation of Louisiana's use of solitary confinement

Oct 1st Herman Wallace's conviction is overturned and he is released from prison after 41 years in solitary confinement

Oct 4rd Surrounded by people who loved him, Herman Wallace joins the ancestors

Oct 7th UN Rapporteur on torture, Juan Mendez issues a statement condemning the use of solitary confinement, specifically highlighting the torture of Albert Woodfox.

Oct 21st Jackie Sumell lectures at Tulane University as a part of "Conversations on Race, Privilege, Power, and Justice"

Dec 13th The Colorado Department of Corrections announces that it will no longer allow mentally ill inmates to be placed in solitary

Dec 20th, The Promise of Justice Initiative (PJI) wins a ruling on behalf of inmates in Angola establishing the heat index inside the prison to be cruel and unusual

Dec 23rd Democracy Now hosts a roundtable discussion on political prisoners in solitary confinement

This time of year provides the collective opportunity to transform reflection into resolve. Let's continue the momentum of victory and of structural change into 2014. Join us for a rally in support of Albert Woodfox, the only remaining member of the Angola 3 behind bars, on January 7th, The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments respective of Judge Brady's ruling that Albert's conviction should be overturned for a third time. Jackie recently visited Albert where he remains in solitary confinement at David Wade Correctional facility. Albert expressed tremendous gratitude for the hundreds of letters of support in recent weeks, and admiration for all of those who continue to struggle for his freedom. For more details from the visit, read here.

We at Herman's House ask supporters to stay connected to us for the New Year as we continue our focus to build Herman's dream home, we are looking forward to good news in the coming weeks, and the prospect of significant community collaborations. Additionally we will be republishing the book, The House That Herman Built in collaboration with the prestigious Akademie Schloss Solitude in early 2014. Jackie will be speaking at several colleges and universities and the House That Herman Built will be exhibited at at least two venues in north America. For the year ahead our charge to end the use of solitary confinement in the United States can only strengthen with your commitment. Herman's House asks that you round up the 2013 by considering to support the organizations and creative projects who have made the victories of 2013 possible.

Happy New Year!
The Herman's House Team

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

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THE POWER OF MANY: WOMEN STANDING UP AGAINST RAPE CULTURE

BY SARAH SHOULAK

She spent hours in front of the mirror wither social microscope
With a fear of rejection she'd found a way to cope
She smeared around the war-paint to cover her scars
The red blotchy remnants of adolescent wars

The boys all called her "cake face" and the girls mocked her clothes
In the bathroom with tears she wiped powder from her nose
She had a slight limp, so she waddled when she walked
She knew she was the subject when other people talked.

But the perpetuation of the segregation
She faced from the cool kid nation
Only made her despise it
As much as she yearned for it

She worked as a waitress with a sweet disposition
She trusted stranger without much suspicion
One of her co-workers said he'd done some time
As they shared nicotine gases, he talked 'bout his crime

One night after work, he asked for a ride
Making her stop at bar after bar, he took her inside
His house was dirty and he smelled like a drunk
She wanted to go but then her heart sunk

What happened next was a blur
Of colors and feelings
Emotions and terrors
Screamings and squeelings
She just kept shouting
NO IT HURTS PLEASE STOP

He left her broken and walked away un-phased
With such a lack of emotion one should be amazed

As she grew older she learned to quietly accept
She buried all the emotions and secrets she kept
But then her stress had reached such an unhealthy level
She didn't care what would help her, even the devil

The drugs weren't bad, she'd seen her brother use before
She'd justify, "sex is natural, I'm not a whore!"
But then she wept as another stranger shut her bedroom door
And left her curled up, a naked mess broken on the floor

A sexy kleptomaniac just trying to steal love

Taking out her daddy issues on the father up above
Disregarding God after feeling she was abandoned
She squandered every opportunity she had been handed

But you see, that she was me, that her was I
And it took a damn long time to admit that
To be prouder of being intelligent
Than hearing "I'd hit that"

We live in a world where a tight waist and nice rack
Will make anyone love you for a night
But I'm tired of having my ass slapped and passed like it a Bop-it
A game to chuckle at and then toss out when the batteries die

*We devalue victims
We ask what she did wrong*

All around the globe women are killed
Forced to have sex against their will
Sold into modern-day slavery trade
All for the profit their mothers have made
Prostitute mothers teach their daughters the same
Lie it's some sort of sick coming of age
I can only imagine my pain and my fight
Multiplied by six customers a night

This horror takes some guts to ignore it
Allow me to illicit the explicit:
If you're not against it, then you're for it.

Women who thought they were going to help their families
Ended up beaten and hooked on methamphetamines
Even if they do somehow run away
The cops take them back to their pimps the same day

Oh, I'm sorry, these countries don't have oil
The United States can't be burdened with their toil
However when it came to Iran and Iraq?
The US had "no choice" but to help them fight back

I look at the sad eyes on acid-burned faces
Women captured and locked in these cold forgotten places
Who are not there because of their own choices
These women are prisoners with absent voices

Violence against women knows no boundaries
Indian, African, Cambodian, Chinese
The victims are not just her and she, they are you and me
We are all affected, don't you see?

No one can argue that more must be done
But I'm tired of preaching "the power of one"
Fuck standing alone, try giving a penny
Imagine what we can do with the power of many

From: Captured Words Free Thoughts | Writings and Art from America's Prisons | Volume 11 | Fall 2013
If you would like to receive either hard-copies or e-versions of the magazine write to: Stephen John Hartnett, Professor and Chair, Department of Communication,
UC Denver . P.O. Box 173364, Mail Code 176, Denver, CO 80217

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

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.

When Vengeance Trumps Justice

by Robert Saleem Holbrook

On October 30, 2013 in the case of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Ian Cunningham, in one stroke the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's right-wing justices created a class of political prisoners within the state's prison population by denying retroactive parole relief to prisoners who were juveniles when sentenced to mandatory sentences of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole (LWOP) – sentences that the United States Supreme Court abolished as unconstitutional in 2012. The ominous signs were on the horizon when the six sitting justices deadlocked 3 – 3 along party/ideological lines and Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett, a conservative, appointed a fellow conservative, Judge Stevens, to the Court to cast the deciding vote. Justice Stevens, as expected, delivered for his gang and in doing so Pennsylvania's Supreme Court disregarded the precedent of three prior US Supreme Court decisions in Roper, Graham and Miller that established that juveniles are different from adults when it comes to imposing society's harshest punishments and should be afforded greater protections from the "one size fits all" mandatory sentences that have proliferated in the hysterical "Tough on Crime" era of mass imprisonment.

The argument the Pennsylvania Supreme Court used to justify its decision, that the United States Supreme Court in Miller didn't specifically say its decision was retroactive, is absurd. The Court essentially determined that the 450 prisoners sentenced to LWOP as juveniles prior to Miller should die in prison, based not on sound judicial reasoning but rather through the use of judicial semantics and a procedural rule to justify a political decision. Let us make no mistake about it, the Pennsylvania's Supreme Court's decision in Cunningham was not about justice, it was about holding the line and maintaining the politics of vengeance and mass imprisonment that have come to define the state of the justice system in the United States. The decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, written by Justice Saylor, is littered with "states' rights" language that is reminiscent of the language Southern segregationists used to obstruct the United States Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education which eventually led to the desegregation of the Jim Crow South. The "states' rights" doctrine has historically been employed to deprive minority groups of their rights and protections under the United States Constitution. When Justice Saylor writes that the litigants failed to persuade the Court that the new rule abolishing mandatory LWOP sentences imposed on juvenile offenders should be applied retroactively because "it is not resonate with Pennsylvania norms" he sounds strikingly similar to the Southern segregationists who defended Jim Crow segregation from federal intervention to abolish it because it represented Southern tradition and norms.

The ideological climate in which Pennsylvania's conservative justices operate in and view the US Supreme Court's intervention into Pennsylvania's draconian sentencing schemes imposed on juvenile offenders is summed up by the late conservative segregationist Governor of Alabama, George Wallace, who said, "The same Supreme Court that ordered integration and encouraged civil rights is now bending over backward to help criminals." This is the mentality of the opposition to parole for juveniles sentenced to mandatory LWOP sentences within this state.

Some may find that analogy a bit too extreme, but before one dismisses the statement as hyperbole, they should consider the reality that in Pennsylvania over 70% of the juveniles sentenced to mandatory LWOP sentences are youth of color. In addition, Black youth in Pennsylvania are over 20 times more likely to be sentenced to LWOP than White youth (Human Rights Watch Report, "The Rest of Their Lives," 2008). In Pennsylvania, Black youth are 19 times more likely and Latino youth are 8 times more likely to be sentenced to juvenile placement than White youth. Also, as if to prepare the present generation of youth of color for a future that awaits them in the prison industrial complex, the city of Philadelphia is forced to close 30 schools, and eliminate 7,000 jobs (including 2500 teachers). The school district's annual budget has been stripped of \$300 million while, at the same time, the state legislature has committed over \$400 million to the construction of two new prisons a couple of miles from the city of Philadelphia. It should be noted that Philadelphia's population is over 60% Black/Latino while the state legislature is over 90% white and rural. Where does one think Philadelphia's undereducated youth

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will end up? (For more on this read "Fund the Schoolhouse, Not the Jailhouse" by Sergio Hyland, <http://www.phillystudentunion.org/index.php/psu-blog/item/511-your-actions-must-speak-louder-than-your-words-a-letter-from-sci-greene>).

Outside of the criminal justice spectrum the picture is equally unsettling. Pennsylvania is one of the only states in the country whose population has yet to elect an African-American to a statewide elected position, despite numerous qualified candidates running for office. Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia and Georgia have all done so. This is not to imply that all of the Justices of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court are racists, however they operate within an institution that unquestionably imprisons Blacks at a disproportionate rate. We must also be mindful that it was the conservative movement that deliberately attached a Black/Brown face to crime in the United States to play off of deeply ingrained racial fears within white America. Whether overtly or unconsciously, this mentality motivates the Justices' decisions, for as the revolutionary George Jackson observed, "Racism is a question of ingrained traditional attitudes conditioned through institutions - for some it is as natural a reflex as breathing." Justice Saylor and his colleagues were only following a script they've been conditioned to play through years of operating within Pennsylvania's notoriously harsh and unjust criminal justice system.

While the criminal justice system in Pennsylvania (and for that matter the United States) overwhelmingly deprives people of color justice and imprisons them at a disproportionate rate, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision is also about maintaining the politics and institution of mass imprisonment through the protection of mandatory sentences which are responsible for the assembly line sentences handed out in Pennsylvania, and by extension in courtrooms throughout the United States. The conservative right and its "tough on crime" lobby of hate and vengeance (which has members in both political parties) recognizes that the United States Supreme Court's abolishment of mandatory LWOP sentences imposed on juvenile offenders was the first victory in the incremental battle to dismantle the system of mass imprisonment and the Prison Industrial Complex that has been spawned in its wake. The Supreme Court's abolishment of mandatory LWOP sentences on juveniles would be used to eliminate all mandatory sentences. To prevent this, the opposition is doing everything in their power to hold the line.

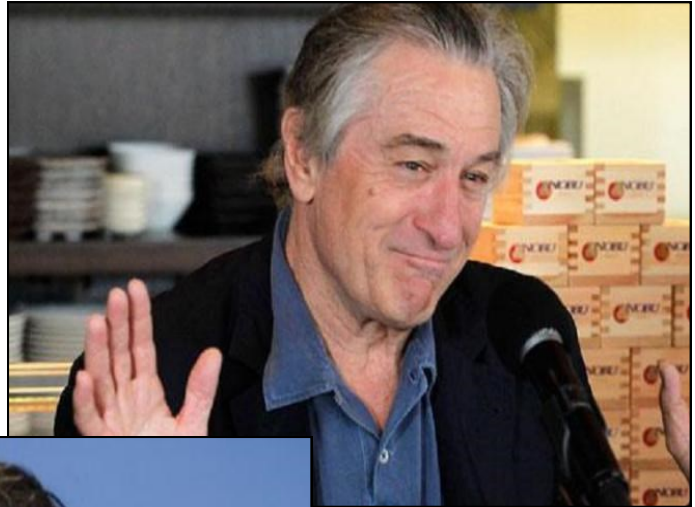
Pennsylvania's judicial, political and law enforcement establishment is not the only state that is attempting to hold the line. Florida, Michigan, Minnesota and Louisiana's Supreme Courts have ruled that Miller should not be applied retroactively to the prisoners who were sentenced to LWOP in their states as juveniles. So now the decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the other states will be appealed to the United States Supreme Court for a clarification whether its ruling in Miller was retroactive to prisoners sentenced to LWOP prior to Miller. It is not guaranteed the United States Supreme will rule it is, though it is likely it will as it would appear unjust to say that juveniles sentenced prior to 2012 are not entitled to the protections granted juveniles following the Court's decision. What we must keep in mind is that even if the Supreme Court rules in our favor, the conservative right and its allies will continue to do everything in their power to maintain the sentence in spirit by just imposing harsh determinate sentences on those prisoners slated for resentencing. For their opposition is not based on justice, it is based on preserving the dysfunctional, discriminatory and unjust status quo surrounding mass imprisonment. Like the segregationists of old who they draw ideological inspiration from, they will remain entrenched in the doorway to justice.

Make no mistake about it: this is a contest between injustice and justice, between hope and hate, between a state that has lost any judicial legitimacy and individuals who have become victims of politicians and judges possessing outdated social and political views. When prisoners become victims of politics, when judges and politicians allow the politics of injustice and vengeance to supersede justice, then the prisoners impacted by these decisions become either "prisoners of politics" or "political prisoners." The question to the 500 juvenile lifers in the state of Pennsylvania (and elsewhere) is who will you decide to be, a "prisoner of politics" or a "political prisoner"? A prisoner of politics is someone who continues to allow him/herself to be victimized by a criminal justice system that is illegitimate and morally bankrupt. A "political prisoner," on the other hand, is one who challenges and denies the authority of an illegitimate judicial system and asserts his/her human right to be free of an illegal sentence and detention. The political prisoner is motivated by the words of Malcolm X: "Whenever you're going after something that belongs to you, anyone who's depriving you of the right to have it is a criminal. Understand that. Whenever you are going after something that is yours, you are within your legal rights to lay claim to it. And anyone who puts forth any effort to deprive you of that which is yours is breaking the law, is a criminal." I've already made my choice. The decision is yours and no authority can deny you of that choice.

Robert Saleem Holbrook #BL-5140
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Some Celebrity High School Drop Outs - If they can do, **you can** do it to.

Tyler Perry, Robert DeNiro, Fantasia, Johnny Depp, Mary J. Blige, LL Cool J, Jay Z





The Universal Declaration of HUMAN RIGHTS

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, the Universal Declaration states basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled.

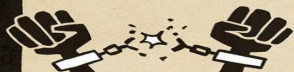
WE ARE ALL BORN FREE AND EQUAL

EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO THESE RIGHTS

NO MATTER YOUR RACE, RELIGION OR NATIONALITY

**EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO
LIFE, FREEDOM
AND SAFETY**

No one has the right to hold you in slavery.



No one has the right to torture you.

You have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

We are all equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.

You have the right to seek legal help if your rights are violated.



No one has the right to wrongly imprison you or force you to leave your country.

You have the right to a fair and public trial.

Everyone is innocent until **PROVEN** guilty.

You have the right to privacy. No one can interfere with your reputation, family, home or correspondence.



You can travel wherever you want.

You have the right to seek asylum in another country if you are being persecuted in your own country.



Everyone has the right to a nationality.

All adults have the right to marriage and to raise a family.



You have the right to own property.



Everyone has the right to belong to a religion.

Freedom of Expression: You have the right to free thought and to voice your opinions to others.

Everyone has the right to gather as a peaceful assembly.

You have the right to help choose and to take part in governing your country, directly or through chosen representatives.



You have the right to social security and are entitled to economic, social and cultural help from your government.

Workers' rights: Every adult has the right to a job, a fair wage and to join a trade union.

You have the right to leisure and rest from work.

Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their family.



Everyone has the right to education.

Your intellectual property as an artist or scientist should be protected.

We are all entitled to social order so we can enjoy these rights.

You have the responsibility to respect the rights of others
NO ONE CAN TAKE AWAY ANY OF YOUR RIGHTS



FOR THE FULL VERSION OF THE DECLARATION VISIT [UN.ORG/EN/DOCUMENTS/UDHR/](http://un.org/en/documents/udhr/)

zenpencils.com

The Huffington Post | By Eleanor Goldberg

Tuesday December 10th marks the UN's Human Rights Day, which means people are taking to the streets to demand that they get the treatment, equality and opportunities that they deserve. But what exactly are those inalienable rights to which all humans have been promised? The infographic above summarizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in easily digestible nuggets.
From: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/10/human-rights-day_n_4420841.html?utm_hp_ref=impact