

THE MOVEMENT

OCTOBER-DECEMBER
2009
Issue # 5

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

Families of Prisoners Unite!

HRC FEDUP! SUED BY PA STATE C.O. ASSOCIATION

Continued On page 6

PA GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION EXPOSED !

By: CAMARA OYE

If there were any positive outcomes in the current economic crisis, one would surely be the exposure of Government Corruption throughout the country. With Federal, State, and Local Governments struggling to keep their wheels turning, and fed-up citizens taking to the streets demanding accountability – elected officials are holding on to their positions with both tooth and nail and have begun to clean house. Party affiliates are now cooperating witnesses, secretaries are now whistle blowers, and as usual, the citizens are being lead to the spectator section to watch it unfold during a time when an effective government is needed the most.

There has always been isolated incidents of corruption that makes the front page of the news paper and then disappear. Recently, the most notable were Alaska Senator Tedd Stevens lying about gifts from corporate contractors, Illinois Congressman Jefferson's bribery case, and Philadelphia's Vince Fumo in his criminal conviction for misappropriating funds. Not since Nixon's Watergate Scandal, however, have we seen the wide scale criminal indictments we are witnessing today.

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Editor's Note

Greetings!

Welcome to THE MOVEMENT. We have reached the last issue for the year 2009. As 2009 closes , I can't help but to reflect on the many achievements and few shortcomings that the HRC has had. Our achievements are: produced a consistent newsletter for prisoners' families; maintained an updated website; produced a child Lifers pamphlet; expanded our office; conducted speaking tours around Philly; added new committees; organized Philly's first mass protest rally to end prisoner abuse and torture; and inspired prisoners' families and prisoners' rights groups to stand up and fight back against the corrupt Criminal Justice System and slave-making Prison Industrial Complex to secure our natural rights and collective freedom. There are even brothers and sisters in New York and Maryland who are seeking to establish HRC Chapters in their respective states.

While our achievements have been few. However, our shortcoming on our part that's for sure. It participation of prisoners/ex-lack of participation among ex-the HRC severely limits what we to do, and it has also prevented the much needed community out-serve the people in order to gain ment, and not being able to become Pennsylvania judges and Philly Dis-



*been many, our shortcomings have
ings haven't been from a lack of try-
has mostly been due to the lack of
prisoners and their families. This
prisoners and prisoners' families in
are able to do and what we want
HRC from being able to launch the
reach projects we need to do to
community support for our move-
politically involved in the recent
trict Attorney election process.*

Again, the HRC and a plethora of Prisoners' Rights groups in the state, has sat on the sidelines politically disengaged from the recent election of Judges to the Pennsylvania Supreme, Superior, Commonwealth, and Common Pleas Courts. Although we all know it is these very same judges that will determine with their judicial powers from the bench when elected, whether the prisoners' interest of ending Child Lifers, control units, prisoner abuse/torture, PCRA time limits, Death Penalty, and parole policies are constitutional or not. So our goal for 2010 is to get more ex-prisoners and prisoners' families directly involved with the HRC so that our community outreach projects and political organizing/educating projects may finally be realized, that we may influence local/state elections. To do so, half of our battle of overhauling the current bankrupt system would be complete.

A community activist recently contacted me and had these words to say, "... the hundreds of ex-

prisoners I run into that tell me that they remember the many friends that they left in the belly of the beast—almost none of them have it in them to join the HRC or some other prisoners' support network to help the friends they left behind in prison." Brothers and sisters in prison can surely attest to that statement.

He went on to say, "Believe when I say this, but if you in there were to find some kind of way to be more effective in re-educating peoples' solid commitment on behalf of each other - and more ex-prisoners to join organizations and become heads of prisoner support committees with prison ministries and grass-roots prisoners' rights groups such as HRC - if we just get 1 out of 10 ex-prisoners per year or 1 out of 10 prisoners' families to join, in just one year (as I see it from out here where I'm looking at this stuff) we can transform prison and re-entry culture here. But, until we change the tide that cause most ex-prisoners and prisoners' families not to support prison transformation and re-entry, we will continue to have merely a few members trying to save the world all alone."

Enough said. We simply ask for more participation and commitment from prisoners, ex-prisoners, and the families of prisoners. We can't help you or advance prisoners' interests, if prisoners and their families aren't willing to stand up for it all and get involved in whatever way they can. There's 52,000 state prisoners and 250,000 (a quarter of a million!) of their family members whom are registered voters. These numbers don't include county/federal prisoners and their families! - so there's no reason why we should be thinking and behaving as if we are powerless, because we aren't! We have the numbers; and thus, the power to transform this state. We only have to know this with surety, just like we know the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.

To reach this attainable goal for 2010, I propose that all the secular/religious prisoner groups within the state prison system adopt the HRC as a sister-organization, and make a commitment to carry out a continuous campaign to get prisoners' families and ex-prisoners directly involved with the HRC and to have their groups make annual donations of \$1,000 to the HRC. Prisoner organizations in the belly of the beast should also maintain close correspondence with the HRC that we may build stronger relations with each other and struggle together for the collective interests of prisoners in Pennsylvania.

Let us all enter the New Year with a mission of greater involvement within this righteous struggle. Commitment is key! And remember, the Power is truly in our Hands—the Hands of the People.

STRAIGHT AHEAD!

Kerry 'Shakaboona' Marshall, Co-Editor In Chief

PA Govt. Corruption Exposed!

By: Camara Oye

Pennsylvania is currently experiencing a government meltdown resulting from corruption that dates back to the early 2000. The League of Women Voters, a non-profit political activist group, filed a federal civil lawsuit in federal court against former Ps. Supreme Court Chief Justice Ralph J. Cappy, claiming Cappy used secret meetings with state legislators to negotiate the ruling on slot machine gambling laws in the State and pay raises for more than 1,000 judges, including himself and six other Supreme Court Justices. The lawsuit states that the key witness providing information is an unnamed legislator.

In Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, two county judges, Mark A. Ciavarella Jr. and Michael T. Conahan, have pleaded guilty to federal fraud charges. Ciavarrella and Conahan have controlled the county for years using fear, intimidation, and widespread corruption including case-fixing and payoffs. The former judges have been reported as being a team; however, sources have said that Conahan – who along with his father and wife has been tied to the Mafia – is the mastermind of the corruption. The federal case against the former judges involves their roles in taking money from attorney Robert Powell, the co-owner, and Robert Mericle, the builder, of a juvenile detention facility. The scam labeled “Kids for Cash” involved Conahan and Ciavarella receiving cash in exchange for violating the rights of juveniles in court proceedings so they would be illegally convicted and sent to serve sentences at Powell and Mericle’s juvenile facility. Several attorneys, including Powell, have also been indicted with criminal charges.

What has not been mentioned in the Luzerne County case is what, if anything, will happen to the prosecutors who took part in the illegal juvenile court proceedings conducted by Conahan and Ciavarella. This, however, is not uncommon, Pennsylvania prosecutors have historically been given a free pass for their roles in judicial scams and corruption. One notable incident is the 1997 “Jury Selection” scandal in the Philadelphia District Attorneys Office. The scandal not only revealed racial and gender bias throughout the Philadelphia district Attorneys Office, it also revealed the reluctance of Pennsylvania Courts – Philadelphia common Pleas and Pennsylvania’s Appellate Courts – to hold prosecutors accountable for their illegal actions.

Six months before the 1997 Election for Philadelphia District Attorney, incumbent Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham revealed a videotape made by her former colleague, and now, opponent in the coming election, Jack McMahon, while he was an assistant prosecutor Head of Training in 1986. In the tape McMahon instructed soon to be prosecutors on methods of removing perspective citizens from jury selections on the basis of race and gender as a means of securing a conviction. McMahon instructed that “young black women are bad for juries, them and blacks from low-income areas like North and West Philly are less likely to convict.” McMahon went as far as instructing prosecutors on was to fake an illness to avoid picking a black jury. After the tape was revealed studies conducted showed that within the last decade of the study over 80% of the criminal defendants prosecuted in Philadelphia were convicted by a majority white jury.

When revealing the videotape District Attorney Lynn Abraham acknowledged that hundreds, maybe thousands, of tainted convictions would have to be opened up and reviewed for illegal jury selection tactics. However, after Jack McMahon dropped out of the race and Abraham was re-elected as Philadelphia District Attorney, those hundreds, maybe thousands, of tainted convictions were denied review at every level of Pennsylvania’s court system with Lynn Abraham’s office requesting the denial in every case. It was revealed in 2005 that another Philadelphia Assistant District Attorney, Bruce Segal, taught the same exact illegal tactics as McMahon while he was head of training in 1991. Despite this new development review of “Jury Selection” case in Pennsylvania’s courts were still denied.

The most recent Pennsylvania corruption case to grip headlines is what has been titled “Bonusgate” criminal scandal. Some twenty-five Pennsylvania elected officials and staffers, both Democrat and Republican, have been indicted for providing bonuses from state government funds to staffers who assisted in their political election campaigns, and illegally operating “Robo-Calls” during election time. A key player in the indictment is Republican Representative John Perzel of Philadelphia who is said to have given \$3.6 million in state money to staffers working on election campaigns in 2005 and 2006. The criminal indictment stem from an investigation launched by Ps. Attorney General Tom Corbett, however, state Attorney General Corbett has his own corruption issues to deal with.

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Attorney General Corbett is preparing to run for Pennsylvania Governor in 2010. While investigating John Perzel as Attorney General, Corbett sat down with Perzel at a restaurant in the Harrisburg Hilton Towers on October 2, 2007, as a candidate for Governor. It is reported that Perzel and his former Chief of Staff Brian Preski spent \$1,044.95 on food and beverages for Corbett's 2007 political fundraiser. This raises questions about Corbett's true motives for the indictments, as well as his timing.

Information unearthed in the investigation reveals that former state representative John Perzel should have been under indictment by Attorney General Tom Corbett long before he squandered citizens' tax dollars, violated election laws, and tampered with elections. Perzel was well known for displays of racial bias and trampling over the rights of the citizens he took an oath of office to serve. In 2000, when it appeared that he would lose votes in the 62nd Ward of Philadelphia (a low income area) to a democratic opponent, Perzel used his influence to have the 62nd Ward removed as a district and combined with a suburban district that has been known to support him.

It's time that citizens began to take charge of their governments. Elected officials are elected to serve and represent the agenda of the citizens. The current government only represents the agenda of those who fill their pockets in backroom deals or fund their political campaigns; citizens must bring this to an end. In upstate New York, citizens of that region unsatisfied with their government have placed Citizens referendums on their election Ballots to have officials removed. It's time that citizens all across the country – Pennsylvania in particular – begin exploring proactive measures to keep their government in check and fight to hold politicians, judges and prosecutors accountable for their criminal actions done while holding political office. Failure to do so will allow them to remain above the law and leave citizens in the Strands watching their tax dollars be used in every way but for them.

It is the duty of every citizen of Pennsylvania to hold the politicians, judges and prosecutors that violate the criminal codes of our state, accountable for their illegal actions while in office. We, The People, can place legislative measures on the ballot through signature petitions to pass laws that will immediately remove or criminally charge judges and prosecutors who commits Judicial/Prosecutorial Misconducts. We can also force the legislatures to submit a Referendum to do the same. For those public elected officials who are not performing their duties to the peoples' satisfaction or whom we deem to be corrupt, we should have a Recall law - like the state of California - where the citizens can petition for the removal from office of an elected official before the scheduled completion of his or her term. We must understand that the Power is in the hands of The People if we ever want to hold those in office that work for us accountable. Public officials are not "Above The Law" but are subjected to the laws just the same as any citizen of this state.



(Continued from Front Page)

HRC FedUp! Sued By SCI-Dallas C.O.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

2421 N. Front St.

Harrisburg, PA 17110

SCI-DALLAS CORRECTIONS OFFICER FILES LAWSUIT CLAIMING DEFAMATION, INVASION OF PRIVACY

HARRISBURG, Pa. (Dec. 9, 2009)

Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers Association (PSCOA) President Donald G. McNany today announced James Wilk, a corrections officer at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas (SCI-Dallas), has filed a lawsuit against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC), agency Secretary Jeffrey Beard, prisoners rights groups and others who wrongfully accused Wilk of being intoxicated while on duty.

The lawsuit, filed in Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas on Dec. 4, names prisoners rights groups Angola 3 of Louisiana and the Human Rights Coalition/Fed Up! of Pittsburgh, including Bret Grote, a representative of the organization. Also named is DOC Press Secretary Susan McNaughton.

The basis of Wilk's claims is an interview of Grote conducted by Angola 3, the contents of which were placed on its Web site. During the interview, Grote asserted that a number of employees at SCI-Dallas had been arriving to work drunk, and specifically identified Wilk as one of these individuals.

Under the direction of Beard and McNaughton, the DOC placed the contents of the same interview on DOCNET, an electronic message board maintained by the DOC and made available to all of its approximately 15,000 employees.

In his lawsuit, which includes counts against all of the defendants for defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress and invasion of privacy, Wilk alleges that the publication of the blatantly false and inflammatory statements have placed him in a false light, causing great harm to his reputation and standing in both the community and his place of employment. An undetermined amount of damages is sought.

Attention Comrades,

We are in a constant battle on your behalf. And we all are aware that HRC is straightforwardly exposing the illegal practices of the DOC. However, in doing so we would never deliberately relay information that is untrue. As with any news media, you report the news as given. Bret Grote, who is the main object of this lawsuit, fights on a daily basis for the rights of prisoners. Please support him with donations to fight against this malicious lawsuit of retaliation (and we've witness retaliation of the guards on numerous occasions) by donating money and/or letters of encouragement. Send to HRC FedUp!, 5125 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15224, Attention: Bret Grote.

Why "Some" Black-Youth are the Victims of The American Culture of Violence

- Posted by Richard Tut Carter on November 29, 2009 at 8:30pm
- View Richard Tut Carter's blog

Why "Some" Black Youth are Victims of America's Culture of Violence

Richard "Tut" Carter, The 21st Century Activist & Chester Native
HRC-Chester Resource Center & Outreach Project
www.hrcoalition.org/AboutHRC-Chester

There are different interpretations for explaining the causes of anti-social behavior in current society just like there are different interpretations of history. Both interpretations regard how we see the factors which explains "for us" what we think we see. However, human perception for the most part is purely the by-product of the matrix of where we're positioned in this world. It's a matter of the advantage or disadvantage of our view. For example, those of the social sciences tell us that, how we interact within the world in general and, where we see our position in the world in particular, is based on where an invisible force (called society) pre-determines where we fit into sets of pre-designed social-structures. Therefore, to explain why we are seeing the "seemingly" escalation in the percentage of youth-violence among girls and boys in the Black Community – we must first examine the impact America's matrix of violence has on our children's self-concept and why "some" of our children internalize this perverted side of American-culture.

MOST CHILDREN DO NOT ENGAGE IN VIOLENCE TO RESOLVE PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND, MOST CHILDREN MAY NEVER PERSONALLY ENCOURAGE PROBLEMS INVOLVING DANGEROUS VIOLENCE. AND, MOST OF OUR CHILDREN TODAY ARE DOING QUITE WELL IN SCHOOL BUT, THE FEW OF THEM WHICH MAY PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION WILL NOT SHARE THE BENEFIT OF THEIR LEARNING ON BEHALF IMPROVING THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF CHESTER. ANYWAY, THERE ARE SOCIAL-TRAPPS IN PLACE WITHIN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY WHICH IS CAUSING GROWING NUMBERS OF CHILDREN TO BE AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE, DRUGS AND CRIME.

The author of "The Afrocentric Guide to a Spiritual Union," suggested that, if we see that a few fish in our aquarium are sick we know that we need to treat the few sick fish as individual problems that effect just those few fish. However, if we see that a large number of fish are effected by sickness we need to address this situation as an environmental or culture problem. In treating the problem within the aquarium-culture we would first have to change the water entirely and, then address each individual sick fish. I think this is how we need to begin a different discussion for treating the environment of violence and, at the same time treat those affected by the culture of violence.

Sometime ago we started a Black-Studies Group in prison and one of the books we selected for orientation was written by Dr. Amos N. Wilson, one of our great Afrocentric (African-centered) scholars, the social-culture anthropologist and advocates for progressive-change. The name of the book is titled "Black-on-Black Violence; Black self-annihilation in service of White Supremacy." As you may suspect, violence among people who see themselves as "bad" is a persistent anti-social problem within every aspect of American society and its even more concentrated within our prisons. When we decided to act to attempt to reduce prison violence, we began targeting certain young-prisoners that had influence on their peer at S.C.I. Dallas, PA. Many of them were amazed to learn how their so-called "badness" had been pre-design to

work against them.

When those young men were able to really grasp the ideas why Wilson had given his book its sub-title most of them wanted to learn more. Brother Amos explained in clear language why, in his view we are seeing what appears to be a constant rise in youth violence (among girls and boys) in the Black Community. He said, we are so connected now to the white power-structure in this society that now all they have to do is think that they don't like us and we automatically go out and start killing each other. Those young-people at Dallas-prison got that message really fast because most of them had been sentenced to life in prison because of their violent behavior – some of them told us that they no longer felt that they were “bad-asses” anymore and, they now could see how so many prison guards had job security and the government was paying over millions to keep them in prison for the rest of their lives. Shortly thereafter, some of them started their own study groups for their homeies who would one day get out of prison.

Our children are really under the perverted influence of American culture and we should know that young people are not the creators of this culture. Because they are controlled by this culture its influence serves to impact the range of their behavior. In a sense the injustice our children suffer daily is reflective of how society continues to demand that our children be held accountable for their anti-social behavior and, how society shuns its responsibility to protect children from negative social-forces that shape negative behavior. In effect, we always hear about new laws that are supposed to enforce certain behavior – they want our children to change while they openly refuse to change the mistreatment of our children.

The irony of so-called Black-youth violence is that it's simply a strain in the fabric anti-social American culture. In other words, it's not just Black-young people who are the seemingly willing victims of negative culture. In fact, believe it or not, Young-Black so-called criminals or thugs or, gangbangers “are just convenient scape goats” that serves as shields to block us from comparing the anti-social; criminal and violent behavior of White America. We focus so much attention on how much trouble black youth cause in their homes, schools and community that we forget that the children of other races are equally causing trouble in their homes, schools and community also. We hear all the time that there are more black youth getting arrested for economic-based crimes; drug arrest for blacks in the media always looks higher than similar arrest of whites; the local media show blacks involved in thefts, burglaries, robberies and assaults. We heard recently that more blacks die from violence in the hood than those killed in the current wars – and we never once ask how many whites got arrested during that same period for killings in America. Drug addictions and its ensuing criminal-activities to support addictions is seen as black-behavior. Even spousal abuse and domestic violence in America gets to wear young black-faces in the media. So much attention is given to black-violence and black drug-crime in the American-Ghetto that we aren't permitted to see that, within the past 20 years -complexion of prison populations are now less black.

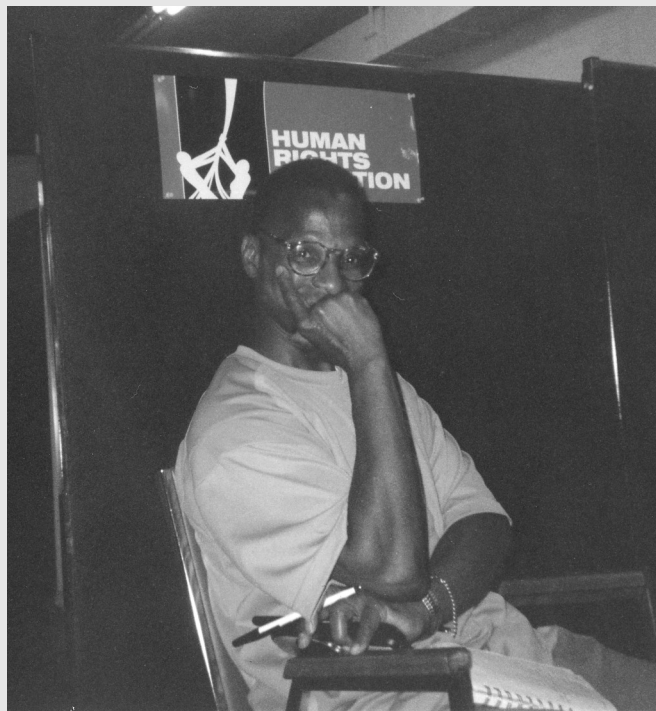
What we haven't been allowed to see through the media's focus about what's really going on with our children is how plots of years-gone-by which are designed to eliminate Black youth from developing healthy self-concepts – those plots have spilled out of the Black-Ghetto into the middle-class and upper-class America. If “poverty is a worse form of violence” (Tom Big Warrior) in the hood, than mimicking the gangbangers must also be in some way reflect of a growing level of social-disorganization which affects in some way or the other the lives of Americans regardless of racial description or social-class.

Youth-violence and drug problems among young people outside the Ghetto can be described by words Malcolm X gave us, what we are really alluding to is a case of “chickens coming home to roost.” When our government (“Home-Land Security” and the “Coast Guard”) “still” permits ship-loads of illegal drugs to freely penetrate our borders and, then (DEA & FBI) allows those shipments to travel unfettered to reach the American-Ghetto – we shouldn't be surprised when

those drugs and ensuing criminal behavior spill out of the Ghetto.... Notwithstanding, enter 2010 if we are really serious about reducing youth violence – than we better get ourselves ready to battle with an invisible-hand that puts guns and drugs in our kid’s hands. We better be prepared to begin learning how to love our children inside this culture of violence and learn how to hate that culture. In 2010 Chester and other communities really needs to begin hosting the kind of “serious” seminars and workshops which enable us to “trace to the source” how drugs, guns and violence reach our children. We must re-learn as a community how to love our children and, we need to learn how to hate the cultural-influence which twist our emotions and make us want to hate our children, the victims of perverted culture. Harambee (“Lets Pull Together!”)

Black children will continue to suffer assaults on their self-concept if there are no enlightened witnesses who intervene and lay the groundwork for self-esteem to flourish. Our nation is not and has never been a child-loving culture. Increasingly it is a culture that devalues the life of black children, that represents that life as disposable. Even the advocates for black children are often blinded by their own allegiance to negative styles of parenting that highlight discipline and punishment. If we want black boys and girls to survive with integrity, with the capacity to know joy, then we recognize that more than anything else they need to be loved. That love can thrive even when there are scarce material resources. Love is the key to changing and transforming the self-concepts of black children; it creates the path to self-esteem.

p. 199 “Rock My Soul; Black People and Self-Esteem” by bell hooks



Human Rights Matters

Daniel Delker

MISCONDUCT CHARGE: NONE GIVEN
MISCONDUCT SANCTION: NONE
PLACED IN SOLITARY ON: SEPTEMBER 1973
PLACE OF INCIDENT: SCI-PITTSBURG
TIME HELD IN SOLITARY: 36 YEARS!!!

No Photo Available

DANIEL DELKER CAME TO PRISON AS A YOUNG MAN FOR A MINOR CRIMINAL CONVICTION IN 1972. HE WAS SENTENCED TO 14-28 MONTHS IN PRISON, AND SENT TO WESTERN STATE PENITENTIARY IN PITTSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA (NOW CALLED SCI-PITTSBURG).

IN SEPTEMBER OF 1973, DANIEL WAS PLACED IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR FIGHTING THREE OTHER PRISONERS, IN WHICH ONE PRISONER DIED AND A SECOND PRISONER WAS INJURED. DANIEL WAS CHARGED WITH THE DEATH OF THE PRISONER.

ON DECEMBER 10, 1973, A PRISON GUARD CAPTAIN WAS KILLED IN THE SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AREA AT WESTERN STATE PENITENTIARY, AND AN INMATE SEEKING TO BE RELEASED FROM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT (THE HOLE) AND AN EARLY RELEASE FROM PRISON, CUT A DEAL WITH PRISON OFFICIALS AND THE PROSECUTOR TO FALSELY ACCUSE DANIEL AND TWO OTHER PRISONERS OF MURDERING THE PRISON GUARD CAPTAIN. DANIEL AND TWO OTHER PRISONERS WERE CHARGED WITH HOMICIDE.

DANIEL FIRST WENT TO TRIAL FOR THE DEATH OF THE PRISONER, AND WAS FOUND NOT GUILTY OF MURDER BY A JURY. THEN AFTERWARDS, DANIEL AND HIS CO-DEFENDANTS WENT TO TRIAL FOR THE DEATH OF THE PRISON GUARD, WHERE AN INMATE GAVE FALSE TESTIMONY IMPLICATING DANIEL'S INVOLVEMENT. DANIEL WAS WRONGLY CONVICTED OF MURDER OF THE PRISON GUARD WITHOUT ANY EVIDENCE EXCEPT FOR THE FALSE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY AN INMATE, AND WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH BY LIFE IMPRISONMENT. DANIEL INITIALLY APPEALED HIS CONVICTION AND WON A NEW TRIAL. AT HIS SECOND TRIAL HE WAS CONVICTED AND SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR A SECOND TIME. AT HIS SECOND TRIAL PRISON GUARDS DESTROYED CRUCIAL EXONERATING RECORDS AND PROSECUTORS WITHHELD EXCULPATORY EVIDENCE. THERE IS ALSO A DNA ARGUMENT WITHIN DANIEL'S CASE THAT COULD PROVE HIS INNOCENCE IN THE DEATH OF THE PRISON GUARD THAT DANIEL IS NOW SEEKING TO PROVE HIS INNOCENCE ON APPELLATE COURT REVIEW.

AS A RESULT OF DANIEL'S ALLEGED MURDER OF A PRISON GUARD IN 1973, THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS HAVE PERMANENTLY CONFINED DANIEL TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND CONTROL UNITS WITHIN THE STATE. DANIEL HAS NOW BEEN CONFINED IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR 36 YEARS NOW! DANIEL IS THE LONGEST HELD SOLITARY CONFINEMENT PRISONER IN THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA. SINCE HIS IMPRISONMENT, DANIEL HAS LOST HIS ENTIRE FAMILY AND WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO ATTEND ANY OF THEIR FUNERALS.

HOW LONG IS TOO LONG TO KEEP A HUMAN BEING CONFINED IN SOLITARY? IS 36 YEARS CONFINED IN SOLITARY A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION OF ABUSE AND TORTURE?

MR. DANIEL DELKER
SCI-FAYETTE/#AP-8403
50 OVERLOOK DRIVE
LABELLE, PA 15450-1050

Human Rights Matters

Kenneth Pate

No Photo Available

Misconduct Charge: Disobeying an Order; Escape

Misconduct Sanction: 4 Months in Solitary

Placed In Solitary On: August 6, 1999

Place of Incident: SCI-Huntingdon

Time Held In Solitary: 10 Years and 4 Months!!!

On August 6, 1999, Kenneth Pate was placed in solitary confinement at SCI-Huntingdon for disobeying a guard's order. He was later given another misconduct report for allegedly possessing implements of escape in his assigned cell. As a result, Kenneth was given a total of four months to serve in solitary confinement as his disciplinary sanction.

On February 23, 2000, Kenneth was transferred to SCI-Greene Super-Max prison in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, where his placement in solitary confinement was continued there on Administrative Custody status for allegedly being a danger to himself. However, on November 11, 2004, SCI-Greene's Security Office informed Kenneth that his continued confinement in solitary is actually because of allegedly possessing implements of escape while at SCI-Huntingdon in 1999.

Kenneth received official documents from the state's Attorney General's Office on July 17, 2006, proving that SCI-Huntingdon's charge of escape in 1999 had been dismissed for being a false allegation. Kenneth presented this documentary evidence as proof to the false escape allegation to prison administrators at his PRC review hearing in support of his request to be released from solitary confinement, however, SCI-Greene's administrators has still claimed Kenneth was a 'High Security Risk' prisoner and has continued his confinement in solitary (the Hole) indefinitely.

Kenneth Pate has now been confined to the Hole for 10 years and 4 months, and remains on indefinite solitary confinement status at SCI-Greene on a bogus misconduct charge of possession of implements of escape. Kenneth claims that the true reason he has been indefinitely confined to solitary for an entire decade is because SCI-Greene's prison officials are persecuting him for being a member of the Nation of Islam religious group, a jailhouse legal litigator, and a prisoners' rights activist throughout his incarceration.

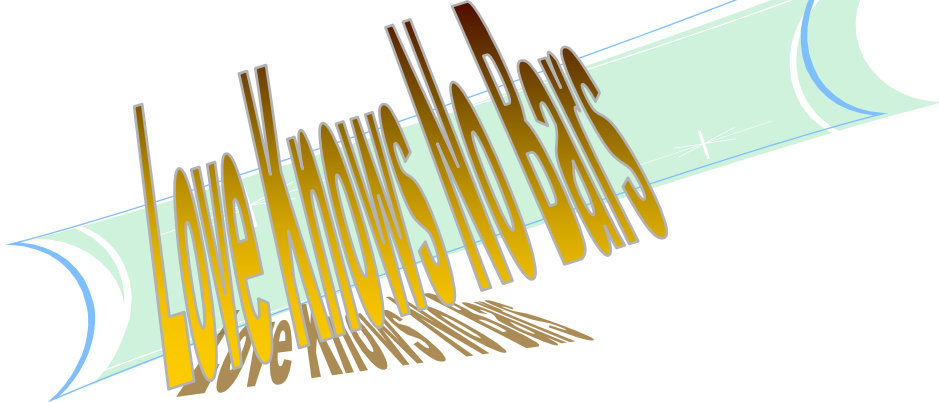
How long is too long to keep a Human Being confined in solitary? Is 10 years confined in solitary a Human Rights violation of abuse and torture?

Mr. Kenneth Pate

SCI-Greene/#BW-6320

175 Progress Drive

Waynesburg, PA 15370



Family Holds a Brother Down



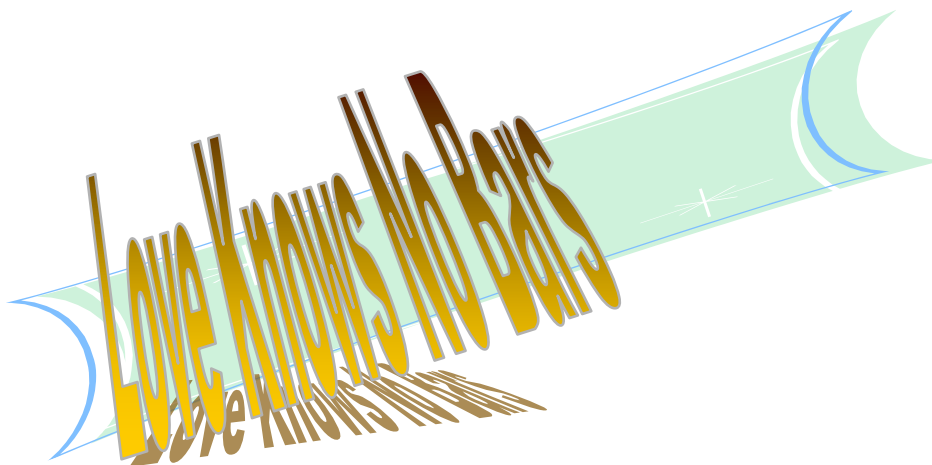
I am ashamed to say this, but I have been coming in and out of this prison system for the 15 years. And whether innocent or guilty; my family has been there for me through it all. No matter the miles that have separated us, my family has been there with love, support and understanding, and through our fights.

Through the years my family is growing bigger and bigger. The little ones are jumping in line to love, to fight, and support their uncle, friend, and comrade. I love them unconditionally, and I'll be their soldier soon. Keep your heads high and continue the fight. We have only just begun.

Love Ya'll

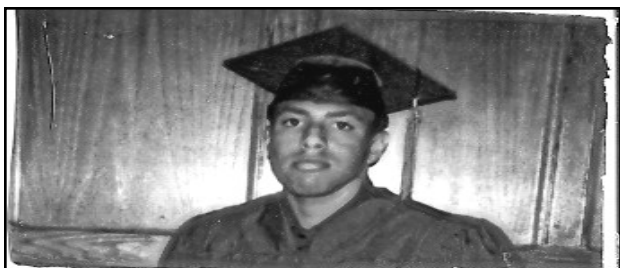
Yasir Abdur Razzaq

On Photo: Abdur Razzaq, Quintella, Sharisse, Meoshi, Tiara and Renee



I Pledge My Allegiance...

My name is Shannon Kionna. I was 6 years old when my brother Mustafa aka Shawn Saunders was initially arrested, and I had just turned 12 years when he was falsely accused, re-arrested, charged with a homicide, and even after he was found guilty by a group of mentally dead slaves (so-called jury): My brother gave his allegiance & loyalty to never again allow himself to be mentally defenseless, which I didn't know in due time would become my direct blessing, nor did I realize that greatness at that point was in the making. The history books hold great stories about great people who accomplished great things during their life time. But we so easily overlook the great that are among us today, which are the ones who liberate you from your fears, who gives you the keys to unlock the door of possibilities, who, through loyalty and persistence, raise your consciousness and help you to see and comprehend reality, and then challenge you to move out accordingly. This is what greatness is made of. I thank God for my direct blessing (i.e. My Brother & Best Friend).



**I LOVE YOU YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW
& FOREVER (I PROMISE).**

Peace,

Your Sister & Best Friend Above All.

Shannon Kionna

Chester, Pa.

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

PA Prison Society (PPS)

Terminated Bret Grote's Official Visitor Status

Season greetings to all,

I am not a member of any PPS direct service program/Official Visitor Network of more than 450 volunteers. I am not a member of any prisoner advocacy group at all. I am a concerned citizen and tax payer with a brother on the inside and Bret Grote is a friend of mine.

The Pa. Prison Society presents itself to be a inmate advocate... so does Bret. The PPS presents to advocate on a number of fronts..one of which being in print (Graterfriends and the Correctional Forum)..to help the inmate population, family and friends along with any others that care.....Bret does the same, in print.

The PPS presents itself to be responsible for administering the Lester vs. Shuler complaints, a court ordered program designed to monitor and reduce guard brutality...which is the very same goal, that Bret is committed to. The PPS after fact finding interviews of reported incidents of brutality, submits it's report to Internal Affairs in the Philadelphia Prison System for investigation.....as does Bret.

Can anyone reading this...tell me.....What set The Conflict Of Interests ???

I don't get it and I don't like it.

Sincerely,

V Miller

Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist

If you are a family member, loved one, or friend of a prisoner and wish to submit an article detailing any negative experience that you've encountered with the state and county prisons and/or their guards just forward your article w/photo of your self to the HRC's Newsletter department for possible printing.

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist



Family Members Testify at Hearing on Overcrowding

FFLW President Donna Pfender and Juvenile Lifers Chairman, Joe Heckel, testify at the Senate Judiciary Hearing on Overcrowding on Nov. 16, 2009.

Greetings to all Inmates and their loved ones,

When we first heard that inmates, including lifers, would be shipped to other states, we tried to find out what we could do about it before it was too late. To us and to others we have spoken to, it signifies a further dehumanization of prisoners, but also the destruction of families in Pennsylvania who have loved ones on the inside. We couldn't understand why there wasn't public outrage? If not regarding the selling, bartering and trading of human beings, then at least about the increased cost to the taxpayers. We had reports that inmates were being shipped to as far away as California, which has the most overcrowded population in the United States. There are also at least six other states that the PA DOC is in negotiations with according to news media and agencies that study such matters

We learned that there was to be a public hearing in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee on November 16, 2009 and we asked to testify. We were granted that honor by Senator Greenleaf's office and wish to thank him and his aide, Gregg Warner, for putting us on the agenda.

From our allies across the country, there seems to be many states undergoing this form of slave trading in a bid to comply with court orders about overcrowding and bids are being taken as if human beings are commodities for sale.

The Senate Judiciary Committee decided to hold an 'open' hearing after many human rights advocacy groups wrote to protest plans to re-locate inmates to other states. They met to consider the various options that could be alternatives to incarceration.

There were many alternatives, including releasing low level drug offenders into alternate forms of housing such as treatment facilities. It was also suggested that the PA Board of Probation and Parole join forces with the PA DOC in allowing inmates to be released to halfway houses even if they haven't completed their DOC mandated programs, so that they could finish them in halfway houses or under monitoring at home and re-enter society under more intensive supervision than

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

(Continued from page 15)

regular parolees. It was also brought up about the aging lifer populations because they are thought to be an additional expense on Pennsylvania taxpayers because of the increased costs to house elderly inmates, due to illness and special needs. They were also considered to no longer be a threat to the public, and it was felt that there should be the option to send them to alternative facilities or home to their loved ones.

It was also suggested that there should be alternatives for parolees being taken back to prisons on technical violations because a large percentage of inmates were serving additional time and contributing to the overcrowding.

There was also testimony about alternative sentencing and reduced sentencing that has been successful in other states, while bringing down recidivism rates. And while some persons think that re-locating inmates to other states is a possible solution, they also thought that the states should be nearby to Pennsylvania. When Secretary Jeffrey Beard was asked by Senator Greenleaf if the states would be close to Pennsylvania, Dr. Beard answered that one was relatively close and one was farther away. He only mentioned two states, (not by name) even though there are wide spread reports of at least six or more states involved and many of them far from Pennsylvania. And, while we are building 3 new State Correctional Facilities, Senator Greenleaf remarked that the new prisons that were being built would be immediately filled with new inmates and that those shipped out of state would be unable to return.

With all of the alternatives offered regarding possible successful remedies, it was shown that in other states who had tried options other than to keep building prisons, that with supervised early release, the recidivism rates dropped, public safety was maintained, inmates could work or go to school and give back to society and make restitution for their crimes while rebuilding their families and communities.

I wish to ask all of you and your families to contact your legislators and let them know how such proposals directly would affect you and your families. Ask your families to write. It doesn't need to be a professionally written letter, just write from your heart.

Finally, I would like to wish you all Happy Holidays and a brighter New Year. Please consider making a New Year's resolution to become more involved and stick to it. Every single one of us needs to be involved in order for change to occur. A commitment of an hour a day to write letters to your lawmakers can save lives, our children's lives and our already fragile family structures. Write letters regarding not just this, but against any and every act of oppression that you see or live through. The general public needs to know the truth. The legislators need to know the truth. You are in the best position to educate them. This Modern Day Slavery needs to be abolished TODAY! ". Change it! Don't cry later if you don't act today! No one can do it for you. YOU need to act. Let today be the first day of the rest of your life.

Peace and Blessings,

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

TRUE PRISONER REFORM

By: Gregory X Moore

Under the first African-American President of the United States of America, the United States continues to create and maintain the highest rate of incarceration in the world. It continues to be composed of millions of people who have been criminalized and incarcerated primarily on account of their condition of poverty. African-Americans and other people of color are disproportionately represented in the ranks of the incarcerated. This can be reversed with the proper method of **true prisoner reform**.

I must echo the words of the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, who says self-improvement is the basis for community development. Self-improvement is the **key to true prison reform**. As reformed prisoners, we can help reduce the violence in our perspective communities in the city of Philadelphia and throughout the country. As **true reformed prisoners; we have learned** the true value of human life. **This learning experience can help connect us to the human family of the planet earth**. Can a prisoner be **redeemed**? **Yes**. And, the Human Rights Coalition believes it and demonstrates it through their work of fighting for the protection of “prisoners’ human rights.”

Why is the “legislature” ignoring the **true reformed prisoners**? **It would be more feasible economically to focus on reformed prisoners across the board and not just among non-violent offenders**, which some have proven to be a failure to the “fight against recidivism.” Reformed “violent offenders” have a low recidivism rate. The successful stories of “reformed violent offenders” do not get media coverage to educate the public on the fact that “prisoners” can change.

The Pennsylvania legislators should be able to trust us and work with us to make a difference as the ex-factor: “ex-drug dealer, ex-gang member, ex-hustler, ex-pimp, ex-liar, and ex-offender. The legislators should test the success record of “self-improvement among “**reformed ex-offenders**.” **It will save the state millions of dollars which is more humane than “warehousing prisoners”**.

Once again, we urge all people of Pennsylvania to contact their legislators to demand a more meaningful method of consideration regarding release of reformed prisoners.

Gregory X Moore has been incarcerated the past 31 years of his life after his first adult conviction with no history of violence. He was arrested in Philadelphia only a month before his 21st birthday. He is a reformed prisoner and has been a “prisoner activist” for “justice” since 1981. He is published writer and essayist. He is currently waiting to be paroled from SCI-Mahanoy, located in Frackville, Pennsylvania.

Cracks in Mumia’s Case

By Linn Washington Jr.

A clear case of open-and-shut guilt is how Philadelphia police and prosecutors describe the first-degree murder conviction that sent journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal to death row over a quarter century ago.

However, just a quick peek underneath the surface of this case reveals a litany of errors and wrongdoing by police, prosecutors and judges that implode all claims of Abu-Jamal’s absolute guilt.

The case against the world’s most famous death-row denizen arguably contains compelling aspects of apparent guilt, albeit circumstantial and lacking the conclusive forensic evidence normally expected in such a high-profile prosecution.

Yes, police did find Abu-Jamal at the crime scene, critically wounded by a bullet fired from the slain policeman’s gun.

Yes, eyewitnesses testified that Abu-Jamal shot Officer Daniel Faulkner.

Yes, two policemen claimed hearing Abu-Jamal confess to the crime.

And, yes, courts from Philadelphia’s Common Pleas up to the U.S. Supreme Court have upheld Abu-Jamal’s conviction.

Yet, arguably compelling aspects cannot quell serious questions arising from the mound of documented misconduct by authorities in Abu-Jamal’s case that make a mockery of America’s constitutionally enshrined rights to a fair trial.

While fair trial rights require an impartial judge, the judge presiding at Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial declared on the eve of that proceeding that he would help prosecutors “fry the n----r” — a declaration graphically displaying unfair bias.

Five of the seven Pennsylvania Supreme Court justices who unanimously upheld Abu-Jamal’s conviction in 1998 received critical political and other assistance from Philadelphia’s police union — the main group pushing for Abu-Jamal’s execution.

That entanglement undermined the appearance of impartiality required of jurists by Pennsylvania’s Code of Judicial Conduct.

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“ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE”

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One of those five justices in 1998 — Ronald D. Castille, a former district attorney of Philadelphia who fought to execute Abu-Jamal — rejected recusal requests that cited code provisions barring participation of a judge who had “served as a lawyer in the matter in controversy ...”

The “overt hostility of the trial judge and the appearance of judicial bias during appellate review” render Abu-Jamal’s “verdict and sentence fundamentally unsound,” Amnesty International noted in its seminal February 2000 study of this contentious case that recommended a new trial for Abu-Jamal.

Facts Don’t Fit

Consider the fact that the two policemen who claimed hearing Abu-Jamal confess hours after Faulkner’s fatal shooting waited several weeks to report this key evidence to detectives.

One of those two policemen claiming to hear Abu-Jamal’s confession had even filed an official report hours after the fatal shooting saying Abu-Jamal made “no comments.”

Exactly 64 days after that officer filed his no-comment report, he told detectives his delay in revealing the confession resulted from him not realizing the confession “had any importance until today.”

Evidence of perceived injustice underlying Abu-Jamal’s conviction literally hides in plain sight.

One glaring example is photos of the Dec. 9, 1981, crime scene taken by police investigators that don’t show two central elements of the prosecution’s case against Abu-Jamal.

A main pillar of the prosecution’s case against Abu-Jamal was eyewitness testimony from a cab driver named Robert Chobert.

Prosecutors proclaimed Chobert sat in his cab when watching Abu-Jamal murder the police officer. But police crime scene photographs don’t show Chobert’s cab behind Officer Faulkner’s patrol car where prosecutors say it was parked.

The trailer for a forthcoming film about Faulkner’s slaying features four police photos showing different angles of the crime scene. Chobert’s cab is not shown in any of those photographs.

There are only two possible scenarios for the missing cab in those official crime scene photos: either police tampered with the crime scene by removing the cab or the cab was never there. Either scenario is a major legal violation that should warrant a new trial.

Also missing from official police crime scene photographs are bullet marks in the sidewalk around the fallen body of Faulkner fired from Abu-Jamal’s gun.

Prosecutors claimed Abu-Jamal executed Faulkner by firing four times at the fallen officer’s body at point blank range, hitting Faulkner once in the face and missing three times.

Yet, a sophisticated computer examination of crime scene photos conducted a few years ago by a NASA scientist who analyzes deep space photographs revealed no bullet marks in that section of sidewalk that should be clearly visible if Abu-Jamal acted as prosecutors claim.

It is impossible ballistically for three specialized high-velocity bullets to strike a sidewalk at point blank range without leaving any marks.

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“ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE”

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The prosecution's other prime eyewitness was Cynthia White, a prostitute with a long arrest record and pending criminal charges at the time of Abu-Jamal's June 1982 trial.

During Abu-Jamal's trial, the prosecutor told the jury that White hadn't received any offer of leniency or other considerations in exchange for her testimony.

Yet immediately after Abu-Jamal's conviction, Philly prosecutors dropped those charges pending against white.

Examples of Injustice

Remember that Philadelphia police and prosecutors applied that “open-and-shut guilt” assertion to four other men arrested for three separate murders in 1981 — the year of Abu-Jamal's arrest.

One of those four men spent 1,375-days on Pennsylvania's death row before evidence documented that police detectives framed him. Two of those four men spent 20 years in prison before evidence revealed they were innocent. The fourth man — accused of a killing a cop — won an acquittal from a jury in 1982 when the only witness against him crumbled in court.

Seventeen of the policemen involved in the arrest or investigation of Abu-Jamal “were disciplined, indicted for crimes, found guilty of committing acts of corruption or brutality or resigned from the department under a cloud of suspicion,” stated investigative reporter Dave Lindorff in his 2003 book on the Abu-Jamal case. Lindorff's book “Killing Time” is the first non-partisan book published on this miscarriage of justice.

What, many in Philadelphia's Black community would ask, is the likelihood of corrupt cops not cutting corners to secure the conviction of a person accused of killing a fellow policeman?

The same Philadelphia and Pennsylvania courts that found major flaws in 86 Philadelphia death penalty convictions between Abu-Jamal's December 1981 arrest and last October declare that not a single error exists anywhere in the Abu-Jamal case — the murder conviction sparking the most controversy worldwide.

Pennsylvania courts, for example, find no fault in prosecutors improperly excluding Blacks from Abu-Jamal's trial jury, or allegations of manipulating evidence and making secret deals with alleged eyewitnesses — all fundamental fair trial violations producing favorable actions by those courts for defendants in numerous other cases.

Additional evidence of judicial impropriety against Abu-Jamal is evident in Pennsylvania State and federal courts voiding 22 death sentences because of failures by defense lawyers to present any mitigating evidence for their clients during the death penalty phase hearing following guilty verdicts in capital cases.

Voiding convictions for this reason is called procedural fairness where courts accept the guilty verdict but seek to ensure that all procedures are properly followed.

Suspiciously, despite voiding those 22 death sentences, state and federal courts found no fault in the failure of Abu-Jamal's trial lawyer to present any mitigating evidence during the penalty phase hearing.

The judge for Abu-Jamal's trial, the infamous Albert Sabo, holds the national record for presiding over the most death penalty trials.

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While courts have overturned two-thirds of those capital convictions in Sabo’s court, including citing mistakes or misconduct by Sabo himself, Pennsylvania state courts claim Sabo made no errors in Abu-Jamal’s case.

Federal courts have voided Abu-Jamal’s death sentence citing errors by Sabo when providing death penalty phase instructions to the jury.

However, Abu-Jamal remains on death row because Philadelphia prosecutors are seeking to reinstate his death sentence. Because of harsh death row isolation restrictions, Abu-Jamal has not hugged his wife and children for over 20 years.

Injudicious Judges

Courts — state and federal — have repeatedly altered and/or abrogated established law to block Abu-Jamal receiving fair trial relief granted to other defendants raising the same legal challenges.

Precedent, or following established law, is supposedly the foundation of U.S. jurisprudence. Another foundation of U.S. law is requiring a fair trial to establish guilt or innocence.

A prime example of the alter-the-law-to-undermine-Abu-Jamal dynamic is the 2008 ruling by a federal 3rd Circuit Appeals Court panel that created a new legal standard for persons challenging racist jury selection practices by prosecutors.

The prosecutor during Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial used 10 of 15 preemptory challenges to purge potential Black jurors — more than twice the exclusion rate expected statistically with race-neutral procedures.

That newly created legal standard advanced by two 3rd Circuit judges to reject voluminous evidence documenting racist jury selection practices by Abu-Jamal’s trial prosecutor erected procedures far in excess of those then required by existing 3rd Circuit and U.S. Supreme Court precedent.

The third member of that three-judge 3rd Circuit panel issued a stinging 41-page dissent that repeatedly criticized his panel colleagues for radically changing jury discrimination standards applied by their circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Incredibly, the ruling by that panel’s two-judge majority — later backed by the full 3rd Circuit — faults Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial attorney for not strictly following procedures the U.S. Supreme Court didn’t adopt until 1986 ... four years after Abu-Jamal’s trial.

Curiously, just days before that March 2008 3rd Circuit ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a Louisiana death row inmate a new hearing after finding race tainted jury selection practices during that inmate’s trial.

That U.S. Supreme Court ruling employed preemptory challenge standards less stringent than those the 3rd Circuit created in its Abu-Jamal ruling.

The author of that 2008 Supreme Court ruling, Justice Samuel Alito, formerly served on the 3rd Circuit where he participated in rulings granting relief to inmates victimized by prosecutorial jury selection improprieties less onerous than those in the Abu-Jamal case.

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected Abu-Jamal’s appeal of the 3rd Circuit ruling.

American law is an “instrument of the powerful,” Abu-Jamal stated in his latest book released earlier this year, his sixth book written from death row. “For the weak, the powerless, the oppressed, the law is more often a hindrance than a help.”

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"ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE"

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Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and supporter of Philadelphia's MOVE organization, is a harsh critic of America's racially inequitable society, a posture enraging many powerful people.

Fundamental Issue

In 1959, when Abu-Jamal was 4-years-old, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued a ruling that goes to the heart of the most important yet frequently downplayed aspect of Abu-Jamal's conviction — a fair trial.

Pennsylvania's highest court proclaimed that defendants are entitled "to all the safeguards of a fair trial ... even if the evidence of guilt piles as high as Mt. Everest."

Defendants retain fair trial safeguards irrespective of whether judges or prosecutors are convinced of the defendant's guilt before trial.

That 1959 ruling prohibiting judges and prosecutors from failing to follow fair trial procedures came in a Philadelphia murder case where the defendant pleaded guilty.

Abu-Jamal has always maintained his innocence.

Evidence shows that politics and prejudice drives the determination to punish Abu-Jamal, not irrefutable proof of his guilt.

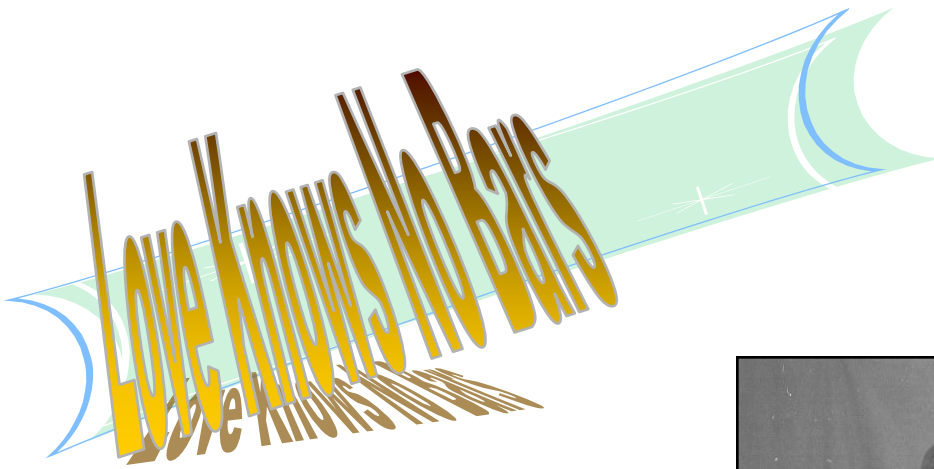
Because of that, Abu-Jamal deserves a new trial — a trial that is fair.

--Linn Washington Jr. is columnist for The Philadelphia Tribune and a professor of journalism at Temple University. He has been covering the Abu-Jamal case since 1981. This article first appeared in the Philadelphia Tribune on December 5, 2009:

<http://www.phillytrib.com/tribune/index.php/newsheadlines/8292>

**NEED RESEARCHERS, FINDERS, BROKERS, FIND DEALS
(FOR BOOKS, MOVIES, ETC.), TYPE PDF'S , LAUNCH PRO-
JECTS, START-UP WEBSITE OR FIND PEOPLE?**

**WE WILL DO ALL FOR A FEE. WRITE US AT:
FRIENDS OF MINE
C/O MEOSHI SMITH
737 FOX STREET
BRONX, NY 10455(4I)**



Mom, I Love You



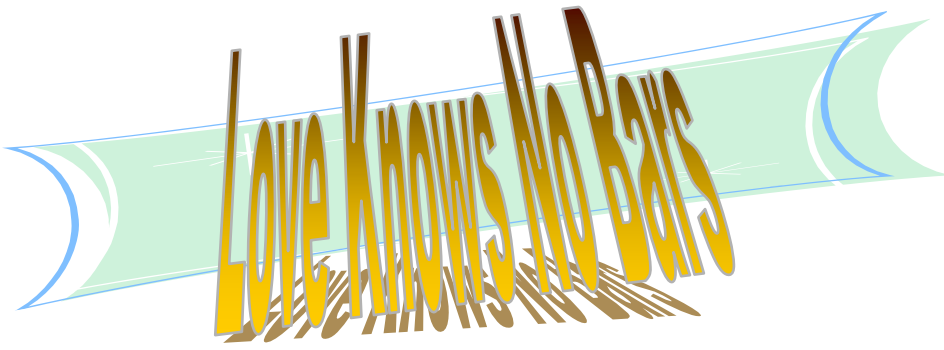
On Photo: Miss Debra and son, Yaya.

If I could live my life all over again I would change some things, of course. But one thing that I would not change is my love for you Mom. You mean the world to me! You've been there through it all, with me, Mom – the good and the bad. And even with the closing of these prison doors on me, separating us, our love has only grown stronger. I don't know what I could do to show my gratitude to you, Mom. But to say I love and cherish you, beautiful. Stay healthy, strong, and safe. And may you be blessed!

From Your Loving Son,

John 'Yaya' Daniels

(SCI-Mahanoy)



Picture This:

Almost every family has its photo album. Now we want a HRC family album, too—one that will show the faces of HRC and send a message besides. And your family's picture may be just what we need.

In each of our issues of The Movement, we will publish several pages of pictures to illustrate the strengths of families and the insanity of the PA Department of Corrections hostile anti-family policies. We want pictures of prisoners and their families, preferably taken in prison. We'll run as many pictures as space permits.

If you and your loved ones want to participate here's what you'll need to send us:

- *A family picture made during a prison visit.*
- *Names and Relationships of those in the picture, listed left to right.*
- *Information on the prisoner's sentence (how much of sentence he/she has in and how much remains to do).*
- *The name and location of the prison.*
- *The name and address of the person sending the picture.*
- *A brief article by a loved one or prisoner expressing their personal feelings to the other (article no longer than three paragraphs).*
- *A stamped, self addressed envelope (or \$.50 institutional check) if you want the picture returned.*

Send your pictures and article to H.R.C., Attention: Newsletter Committee, c/o Lava Space, 4134 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19104.



Is Innocence Irrelevant?

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

LORENZO JOHNSON

Jurisdiction: Harrisburg, PA

Criminal Charge: Murder and Conspiracy to Murder

Date of Sentence: 1997

Sentence: Life With Out Parole (i.e., DEATH)

On March 17, 1997, Lorenzo Johnson was falsely accused of murder and wrongly convicted without merit in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Johnson is from New York and he was visiting with friends often in Harrisburg. On the night of the murder Mr. Johnson was in New York, where witnesses could place him at. One witness gave a statement that Mr. Johnson was in New York with her and was later forced by police to get her to change her testimony for a reduced sentence on a open criminal charge she had pending. Other witnesses gave statements saying that Mr. Johnson was no where around on the night that the murder occurred.

Statements were made by a known crack user, that she was paid crack cocaine to lure the victim to the area where he was murdered. This statement was made to one of Mr. Johnson's alibi witnesses, yet his name was never mentioned. This young lady originally told police she knew nothing about the murder. At trial she gave testimony that there was an argument in a asked to leave the bar. When the two walked around the corner, she said she heard a boom, but never saw what happened in the alley but it looked like Mr. Johnson could have been the look-out.

At trial the bar owner gave testimony that Mr. Johnson was not part of any argument or was present in the bar the day of the murder. Another witness gave testimony that he observed a lady go into the alley at the time the deceased was murdered.

The police during their investigation and questioning of witnesses was provocative by their suggestive by their suggestive/illegal methods of only showing the witness two (2) photo mug shots – mug shots of Mr. Johnson and his alleged co-defendant.

Another witness for Mr. Johnson who was later arrested on unrelated charges was taken to the police station from the county prison and threatened to give a false statement against Mr. Johnson and in return he would be given a reduced sentence.

There were many illegal practices used to convict Mr. Johnson. No factual evidence was presented that could place Mr. Johnson at the crime scene or that he had anything to do with the crime. On appellate review, even a dissenting Superior Court Judge gave an opinion that the state's evidence was not sufficient enough to show that Mr. Johnson committed or conspired to commit murder.

Mr. Johnson is factually and legally Innocent of the crime of murder and conspiracy to murder. He is being represented by Attorney Michael Wiseman at MichaelWiseman@fd.org, and aided by the Association In Defense of The Wrongly Convicted (AIDWC). More is needed to help free this Innocent man.

Do you think that Lorenzo was wrongly convicted of this crime?

**Lorenzo Johnson
SCI-Mahanoy/ DF#-1036
301 Morea Road
Frackville, PA 17932**

HELP FREE THE INNOCENT, TOMORROW IT COULD BE YOU!



HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION REPORT

AMERICA'S SUPERMAX PRISONS DO TORTURE

by Kiilu Nyasha

Video Interview With Kiilu Nyasha: America's Supermax Prisons Do Torture

By Angola 3 News

This new video interview conducted in November, 2009 in San Francisco, is based on a recent article by Nyasha, entitled "America's Supermax Prisons Do Torture." This full article is featured below. For more about Nyasha, please read the recent Black Commentator interview with her, entitled "Media, Revolution and the Legacy of the Black Panther Party."

November 22, 2009

President Barack Obama has clearly stated, "We don't torture."

Oh, yes we do. Big time.

A myriad of studies have clearly shown that human beings are social creatures – making prolonged isolation torture.

The New Yorker published an article March 30, 2009 by Atul Gawande titled, Hellhole: The United States holds tens of thousands of inmates in long-term solitary confinement. Is this torture?

Gawande asks, "If prolonged isolation is – as research and experience have confirmed for decades –so objectively horrifying, so intrinsically cruel, how did we end up with a prison system that may subject more of our own citizens to it than any other country in history has?"

By 2000, some 60 supermax prisons had been opened nationwide, in addition to new isolation units in nearly all maximum-security prisons.

The first such gulag was established in 1983 in Marion, Illinois. In 1989, California opened Pelican Bay State Prison near the Oregon border housing over 1,200 captives. It's been the model for dozens of other states to follow. The SHU (Security Housing Unit) is entirely windowless, and from inside a cell with doors perforated with tiny holes, prisoners can only see the hallway.

They're confined 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year with just a brief time (when permitted) in the "dog run" or outdoor enclosure for solitary exercise with no equipment, not even a ball.

But after nearly 20 years, California is now holding more people in solitary than ever; yet its gang problem is worse, and the violence rates have actually gone up.

Nationwide, at least 25,000 prisoners are in solitary confinement with another 50-80,000 in segregation units, many additionally isolated but those numbers are not released.

According to The Washington Post, a spokesperson for the Bureau of Prisons reported there are 216 so-called international terrorists and 139 so-called domestic terrorists currently in federal facilities (I'm convinced the real terrorists are on Capitol Hill). No one has ever escaped from these "most secure prisons."

In a 60 Minutes segment titled, Supermax: A Clean Version of Hell (revisited), June 21, 2009, the reporters took cameras into the ADX-Florence, Colorado Supermax where there have been six wardens since it opened in 1994. It's where Imam Jalil al-Amin and Mutulu Shakur are held captive, along with myriad other political prisoners.

One former warden stated, "I don't know what hell is, but I do know the assumption would be, for a free person, it's pretty close to it."

"Supermax is the place America sends the prisoners it wants to punish the most – a place the warden described as a clean version of hell."

HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION REPORT

Continued - AMERICA'S SUPERMAX PRISONS DO TORTURE

(Continued from page 26)

In a national study (Hayes and Rowan 1988) of 401 suicides in U.S. prisons—one of the largest studies of its kind—two out of every three people who committed suicide were being held in a control unit.

In one year, 2005, a record 44 prisoners killed themselves in California alone; 70 percent of those suicides occurred in segregation units

Bret Grote is an investigator and organizer with Human Rights Coalition/Fed Up!, a prisoner rights/prison abolitionist organization based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

In the Angola 3 Newsletter, Grote details how HRC/Fed Up! Documented many hundreds of human rights abuses in Pennsylvania's 27 prisons. Their investigations concluded that Pennsylvania is "operating a sophisticated program of torture under an utterly baseless pretext of 'security,' wherein close to 3,000 people are held in conditions of solitary/control unit confinement each day."

Supermax prisons can also contain death rows where prisoners can spend decades in isolation, torture, with the added torment of impending execution. One obvious example is the highly political case of former Black Panther, journalist and author, Mumia Abu-Jamal, falsely convicted of killing a cop in 1981. Despite hard evidence of innocence, he's still locked up in SCI Green, a Pennsylvania Supermax, after 27 years on death row and the signing of two death warrants.

These conditions are a flagrant violation of article 6 of the U.S. Constitution which affirms that treaty law (i.e. international law) is the "supreme law of the land." Thus, article 10 (3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that "The penitentiary system shall comprise treatment of prisoners the essential aim of which shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation."

Contrary to the lock-em-up-and-throw-away-the-key rhetoric of politicians, A Zogby poll released in April 2006 found 87 percent of Americans favor rehabilitative services for prisoners as opposed to punishment only.

The Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons, a bipartisan national task force, produced a study after a yearlong investigation (2005-2006) that called for ending long-term solitary confinement of prisoners. The report found practically no benefits and plenty of harm – for prisoners and the public.

One of the most egregious cases of prolonged torture is the politically-charged isolation of Hugo Pinell still held in Pelican Bay's SHU after nearly 20 years. For his active resistance back in the 1960s and assault conviction in the San Quentin Six case (1976), my dear friend has spent a total of 40 years in hellholes – 45 of his 64 years in California prisons. (<http://www.hugopinell.org>).

"In much the same way that a previous generation of Americans countenanced legalized segregation," writes Gawande, "ours has countenanced legalized torture. And there is no clearer manifestation of this than our routine use of solitary confinement – on our own people, in our own communities, in a supermax prison, for example, that is a 30-minute drive from my home."

In the words of Friedrich Nietzsche, Distrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful!

Power to the people!

--*Angola 3 News* is a new project of the *International Coalition to Free the Angola 3*. Our website is www.angola3news.com where we provide the latest news about the Angola 3. We are also creating our own media projects, which spotlight the issues central to the story of the Angola 3, like racism, repression, prisons, human rights, solitary confinement as torture, and more. Our online video series has now released interviews with Robert King and Terry Kupers entitled "The Psychological Impact of Imprisonment," Black Panther artist Emory Douglas entitled "The Black Panther Party and Revolutionary Art," author J. Patrick O'Connor entitled "Kevin Cooper: Will California Execute An Innocent Man," author Dan Berger entitled "Political Prisoners in the United States," and Colonel Nyati Bolt entitled "The Assassination of George Jackson." Please help spread the word!

What's The News!

2,000 Pa. prisoners to be housed out-of-state

Posted on Tue, Dec. 22, 2009

By Amy Worden and Joseph N. DiStefano
Inquirer Staff Writers

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania will send 2,000 prisoners to correctional facilities in cash-strapped Michigan and Virginia in February to ease overcrowding in its state prisons.

Under the arrangement, announced yesterday, 1,000 prisoners will be sent to the Muskegon Correctional Facility in Michigan and another 1,000 to Green Rock Correctional Facility in Chatham, Va.

The inmates - all men without medical or behavioral issues - will be housed at a cost of \$62 a day, which adds up to \$22.6 million a year for each state.

"It's a break-even deal," said Susan McNaughton, a spokeswoman for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, adding that it would cost about \$69 a day to house the prisoners in Pennsylvania.

The medium-security inmates scheduled to be transferred are being held in prisons throughout the state, including Graterford in Montgomery County.

Prisoners selected to go to the out-of-state facilities have received few if any visitors, said McNaughton.

Pennsylvania's 27 state prisons, built to hold 43,200 inmates, are housing 52,000, forcing some to bunk in modular units.

McNaughton said safety concerns - for inmates and employees - drove the decision.

Four prisons are scheduled to be built in Pennsylvania over the next several years at a cost of \$800 million - including on the site of Graterford - but ground has not yet been broken for any. The first new prison is not expected to be open until 2012.

The prisoners being transferred all have longer than three years remaining on their sentences, which will allow them to return to a Pennsylvania facility before being released, said McNaughton.

Gov. Rendell's pitch to other states this year for temporary quarters for Pennsylvania prisoners was welcomed by Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, whose state is grappling with a nearly 15 percent unemployment rate.

The deal will save nearly 250 jobs at the Muskegon prison, which had been slated to close next month.

"It's an agreement that works well for both states," said John Cordell, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Corrections. "Pennsylvania needs its prisoners lodged with the current overcrowding, and Michigan is able to fill that need and keep employees employed."

A spokesman for the Virginia Department of Corrections said that while it is facing overcrowding in many of its prisons, it has space in its medium-security facilities.

Federal statistics released this month showed Pennsylvania one of three states with the highest prison population increases last year. The Department of Justice said Pennsylvania, Florida, and Arizona had annual increases higher than the federal prison system, which grew by 1,662 inmates in 2008. State corrections officials attribute the spike to the two-month moratorium on parole issued by Gov. Rendell in late 2008 after the fatal shootings of two Philadelphia police officers.

What's The News!

Prisoner lawsuit seeks justice for brutal assault by guards



Monday January 4

(Harrisburg, PA) Seven members of Human Rights Coalition from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh traveled to the U.S. Middle District Federal Courthouse to show support for William Victor, who has filed a civil suit against PA Department of Corrections staff involved in a 2008 “cell extraction” beating in which his jaw was broken.

Many of us are familiar with courthouses; there are crowds of people tunneled, airport-security style, in & out of the justice factory in a steady stream. In these courtrooms, even if you have no friends or family present, there are many other people there to witness what happens to you. In sharp contrast, when the HRC crew arrived in Harrisburg's Federal Courthouse, it was nearly deserted. The hallways and elevators were empty except for courthouse workers- security guards & janitors- & when we reached the courtroom itself, it too was empty save for the defense lawyers and the judge's staff.

Mr. Victor was led into the room, accompanied by 3 beefy prison guards. He took his place at the plaintiff's table, the magistrate judge entered and the proceedings began. A quick glance at the scene was enough to see the power (im)balance in the room: Mr. Victor, who is representing himself, looked hastily shoveled into a rumpled & oversized suit & was alone at the table except for the three large corrections officers. He faced three well-dressed and comfortable attorneys, who had been chatting conversationally when he came in. The implications were clear: the defense attorneys are supported by law offices staffed by assistants & equipped with total access to online legal resources, and are far better equipped to prepare their cases than Mr. Victor, whose access to legal resources consists of brief stints in SCI Fayette prison's RHU Mini Law Library, which by DOC policy has only a limited selection of the material necessary to prepare a case.

(Continued on page 30)

What's The News!

(Continued from page 29)

Mr. Victor seemed unruffled by the the forces lined up against him. He held his head high as he spoke in measured tones about the facts of his case, which he's succeeded in bringing about despite the considerable procedural and bureaucratic barriers faced by prisoner litigants, especially those who are fighting their cases *pro se* (by themselves, without lawyers) as Mr. Victor is.

One of the main issues was the possibility of having a mediation rather than a trial. In a courtroom context, a mediation is a conversation facilitated by a court-appointed, supposedly neutral third-party, in which settlements can be negotiated without either side admitting any fault. Magistrate Judge Carlson seemed particularly interested in this option, which he raised several times. It seemed, however, that the only person in the room other than the judge who was interested in a settlement through mediation was Ray Dorian, attorney for some of the DOC defendants. When asked about his interest in mediation, Mr. Victor spoke at length of his prior dealings with the DOC, in particular the fact that the DOC staff involved in his beating haven't been prosecuted & in fact are still working in the prisons. With this, the hearing turned to procedural matters and a pretrial/trial was set to be scheduled in June.

Background

The lawsuit, *Victor v. Lawler et al. #08-1374*, names 30 Pennsylvania DOC officials and employees for an assault by guards at the State Correctional Institution at Huntingdon.

The civil rights complaint filed by Mr. Victor reports that on June 28, 2008 he was "brutally beaten, kicked and punched in face, head and body, face slammed into floor, knee to face repeatedly, tortured with electricity repeatedly" in the RHU at SCI Huntingdon. During the prolonged assault that included repeated attacks with electro-shock weapons,

Mr. Victor's hand and jaw were broken. He was later refused treatment by medical staff, who accused him of faking his injuries.

An internal investigation by the DOC's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) found guards guilty of criminal conduct and recommended that the District Attorney for Huntingdon County bring charges against them. The DA recused himself (stating that some of the guards were witnesses in other cases) and the matter was sent to Attorney General Corbett for further action. The investigator assigned to the case, George Zaiser, has stated that an investigation is ongoing; however to date Mr. Victor has not been interviewed and no charges have been pressed. Although the DOC has "withdrawn counsel" for 9 of the DOC staff involved (meaning that they won't be represented in Victor's civil suit by DOC lawyers), these individuals are currently still employed by the PA Department of Corrections. A criminal complaint filed in July is currently being reviewed by the Department of Justice.

Since filing the suit, Mr. Victor has reported retaliation from prison guards ranging from verbal threats to the theft & destruction of his legal mail, and several witnesses have provided affidavits testifying to prison staff's encouraging other prisoners to harass or assault Mr. Victor. To date, the DOC has not investigated, and outside law enforcement agencies have ignored these reports of civil rights violations and criminal conduct on the part of DOC staff.

January 6, 2010

Solitary Suicide at Huntingdon

(Huntingdon PA) The Department of Corrections reported in a December 28 press release that earlier in the day Timothy Kelly, 41 was found dead by hanging in his cell in the Restricted Housing Unit at SCI Huntingdon. Prisoner witnesses have since reported to the Human Rights Coalition that Mr. Kelly's suicide was in response to a 100 day sentence to the RHU that he had received from the Hearing Examiner.

Guide to Filing (State) Complaints Against Phone Companies

1. Generally, phone companies are classified as Public Utilities according to definition found at 66 Pa. C.S.A. §102(1)(vi)
2. Complaints against a public utility are filed with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). 66 Pa.C.S.A. §§331, 501.
3. Before filing a formal complaint you must contact the company you have the problem with and try resolving the problem. If that's unsuccessful then file a complaint. In it, you must attest to the fact that you've already tried to resolve the problem with the company. 66 Pa. C.S.A. §1410
4. You can obtain a formal complaint form directly from the PUC by writing to:
Secretary of the Commission
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg Pa 17105-3265
5. You may also draft your own formal complaint. However it must conform to the rules at 66 Pa. C.S.A. §201, §1410, and 52 Pa. Code §5.22; 1. Pa Code §35.10
6. Before actually filing your complaint you should review the entire Public Utilities Code book found at 66 Pa. C.S.A.. It contains, among other things, specific regulations a public utility must adhere to on the state level in Pennsylvania. Study them, then determine whether anything they've done violates those regulations. If so, argue those violations.
7. Once you send your complaint to the PUC they'll send a copy of it to the company you're complaining about for their response. 66 Pa. C.S.A. §702
8. The time for filing an answer to your complaint and all future related petitions, motions and preliminary objections exchanged between you and the company are governed by rules found at 52 Pa. Code §5.61
9. The time for a hearing, decisions, rehearings and other related matters are governed by rules found at 66 Pa C.S.A. §703
10. After exhausting all formal procedures and proceedings before the PUC, if you still aren't satisfied with the PUC's decision you can appeal the decision directly to the Commonwealth Court via "Petition for Review". Pa. R.A.P. Rule 1551.
11. The Public Utilities Code book previously Mentioned can be viewed at your local library or purchased from:

State Bookstore
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg Pa 17120-0053
www.dgs.state.pa.us
Tel: (717) 787-5109

It costs about \$7.50 but you should contact them and request current pricing information.

12. In addition to filing a complaint with the State Public Utilities Commission there's also a Federal complaint option available. That option will be discussed in my next communique.

In struggle,
Antonio Howard

The Babylon System -

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

If any prisoner, family member, or community activist would like to submit an article that is “critical” of the state and county prison systems, courts, D.A. offices, police, capitalist corporate America, and the government, just forward your article to the HRC’s Newsletter Department for possible printing.

PA D.O.C. IN DISARRAY: A FAILING SYSTEM **BY SAFIR CHUMA ASAFO**

OVERVIEW

Amid the hoopla and general hype over “crime & punishment” in America, some very pertinent elements has gotten drowned out; perhaps the most essential elements, which are:

- a) Crime is a reflection of the society that creates it.
- b) Prisons are actually on-going experimentations, and
- c) It’s all politics, politics, politics.

In traditional African society, for instance, if a person stole something the society didn’t necessarily deem that person the “lone” perpetrator per se, as the entire society would come under scrutiny. For it reasoned that if one was compelled to steal within a society where the tenets of the social order are grounded in communal sharing, then what has the society done, in terms of the distribution of the resources (or neglect of same), to cause one to steal (in the first place). Seems logical enough.

However, the American society doesn’t subscribe to such logic. For it is a society predicated on, at its very foundation, “Slaves & Masters” which has assumed more pabulum variations: “the poor & the privileged”, “the haves & the have-nots,” etc. Therefore, it isn’t uncommon to see a group (class) of people having fluent privy to such human necessities as education, medical care, food, clothing and shelter, while another group or class of people doesn’t (within the same society). These are the class contradictions that forms the axis upon which American-style “Law & Order” revolves, with have-nots being portrayed as socially inept, thus “naturally” precluded from higher (class) ideals, thereby inherently prone to crime or social deviancy in general; a proclivity endemic to that class alone, void of any congenital nexus to its avaricious progenitor. Such is the hypocrisy. And to this warped line of reasoning, an 18th century poet once quipped that:

“The law will punish a man or woman who steals the goose from the hillside, but lets the greater robber loose who steals the hillside from the goose.”

And since the invented racial factor is at the very crux of American-style social inequality, it should be little wonder then why Blacks and other Non-Whites comprise the overwhelming majority of America’s prisons and jails, while making up the minority demographic of the entire society.

We often hear so-called social scientists, criminologists/penologists, and the like, engage in a prolix of word semantics, statistical jargon, and other forms of psycho-prattle to lend legitimacy to the mass criminalization of Black and other non-White peoples, which has given rise to the spurious “Bell curve theory” wherein pseudo bio-social science is posited to portray Black as having a natural-born propensity toward crime, particularly violent crime; the anodyne for non-black public consumption, to absolve themselves of guilt for the “justified” mishandling of non-White peoples.

In fact anywhere (on the planet) where a group of people are subjugated/supplanted by another group of people you can rest assured that the dominating group has manufactured a litany of pejorative titles and designations to stigmatize the subject group, thus justifying its eventual demise. Still, that’s only half of it; the other is convincing the subject group that they are who they’ve been (falsely)

The Babylon System -

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

(Continued from page 32)

portrayed/projected to be. The word “NIGGER” and the designation “three-fifths human,” et al, are just a couple of the well known degrading and dehumanizing epithets contrived by whites to legitimize (in their own minds) the enslavement of African peoples. And the fact that, over a hundred years up from plantation/chattel slavery, Blacks’ persistence in referring to one another as nigger = nigga (no matter the variation), the very term used to degrade them, is proof-positive that they believe they are who the slave maker said/says they were/are.

And since the Prison Industrial Complex is most certainly the continuum of slavery, the terms: CRIMINAL, PREDATOR, VIOLENT, AGGRESSIVE, INCORRIGIBLE and other related negatives are likewise the necessary “code words” that, when mentioned, invariably connotes non-Whites, thus the (legal) justification to usher Black and other non-White peoples, en masse, into America’s prisons, the neo-slavery (of the 21st Century).

In this vein, it is significant to note that the January 1, 1863, “Emancipation Proclamation” issued by President Lincoln, didn’t mean, as many people believed (and still do), that Blacks were “set free”. Emancipate means etymologically: “Transfer of ownership.” This helps to shed some light on the fact that within the first few years after the Civil War, the percentage of Blacks in prisons went from zero to over 30 percent, an immediate transference from plantations to prisons, with the double-edged 13th Amendment clause ratifying slavery within the “crime & punishment” context. And though the civil rights upheavals did yield some “tentative” benefits, it is no secret that American-style racism still prevails upon the society. And the elite are still addicted to slave labor, whether manifested in outsourcing or imprisonment. Prisons are regarded as the new plantations. This fact is becoming more and more obvious as the once touted “rehabilitation” has given way to social engineering, socio-political repression, torture and the like. And while these neo-plantations are springing up throughout the good ol’ U.S. of A., at great economic and political aggrandizement to the elite, we need only examine Pennsylvania’s Department of Corrections (PA D.O.C) to get an idea of the trends and currents that are on the rise.

PENNSYLVANIA’S PERFIDIOUS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Over the last 10-15 years, not only has Pennsylvania constructed and immediately filled, with great rapidity, a whole host of prisons, but the term “correctional facility,” though originally replacing “penitentiary,” for more mainstream public acclimation – has become a gross misnomer, a hyperbole even – given the raw and wanton antagonistic posture of today’s prison officials, starting at the top administrative levels under the auspices of PA D.O.C. Secretary Jeffrey A. Beard, who no doubt inherited a system pushed into decline by former Governor Tom Ridge, with the reverberations of his “tough-on-crime,” anti-prisoner crusade still being felt under current Governor Rendell’s administration.

There isn’t even a semblance of “corrective” measures being promoted. It is ostensibly about profits and power. So much so that more brutal and inhumane “rules and regulations” are being implemented to force prisoner compliance. Toward this end, PA prisons are increasingly becoming, behind their whitewashed faced, torture chambers, insane asylums, sensory-deprivation control units and what have you, all rolled into one. The general sentiment is: “Work (for the State) or be locked down.”

In recent years, the state has pretty much streamlined its lucrative operations. It is literally profiting off the misery and misfortune of the poor; with the commissary-store being centralized, and contracted with reputed prison-profitier Keefee, who offers low grade products at marked up prices – a complete rip-off (by majority prisoner consensus). The same with the sale of radios, TV’s, watches, boots, sneakers, etc. There was a time when such mundane items could be purchased from (approved) outside ven-

(Continued on page 34)

The Babylon System -

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(Continued from page 33)

dors. Not anymore. The PA D.O.C. has cornered the market. Even the local repair shops for the maintenance of said items are reported to be owned by family members of prison officials at each respective prison; in some cases owned by officials themselves.

The cable company is purported to be owned by the Bush family, offering the most basic services for marked up prices. The telephone companies operate in the same vein, with its exorbitant prices, charging the (poor) families of prisoners excessively for the acceptance of collect calls. Even the calling-cards offered in the prison commissary-store are a rip-off. Yet, prisoners are rendered voiceless with their families, friends and loved ones being pulled into this systematic sham. I guess crime really does pay!

THE PLOT THICKENS

In what many believe to be a deliberate plot to further attenuate the already tenuous ties between prisoners and their loved ones, prisoners are routinely placed in prisons in remote, rural areas, far removed from the urban centers from which they are extracted. And these prisons (especially in the western Pennsylvania region) are invariably staffed and run by racist whites, from the general area. Incidentally, this bears a strange irony worth mentioning here – because about fifteen or so years ago, rural whites would strongly oppose and protest the building of prisons in their little towns; with the rationale being that they simply didn't want “nigger,” “spics” and the general “criminal element” in their (peaceful) towns. They reasoned, “what if they get loose.”

But, once they caught on to the economic opportunities of it all, especially in the wake of the closing down of the local coal mines, steel mills, etc. they had a change of heart. Now they bid and sign petitions to have them build in their towns. They in effect become, unwittingly, and in some cases, knowingly, local agents of the broader “social engineering” project that's being implemented, for ultimate social control. All is required is a high school diploma/GED, and any tobacco chewing white racist can sign up. They comprise the bulk of the guards, culinary personnel, medical staff, construction contractors, maintenance crew, contracted vendors and other related profiteers.

Another related element worth mentioning is (in this post 9/11 climate) a lot of the “corrections” officers are military men (and women) who routinely rotate from active duty to their “regular jobs” at the states' prisons. And since a lot of them have been in combat in African, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries – and as a result, have a built-in bias, hostility even. The ethnic discrimination and subsequent abuses of Latinos, Blacks (a lot of whom happen to be Muslims) and other non-Whites, are increasingly on the rise. The abuse that was exposed at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, at the hands of American soldiers - a large number of whom are prison guards and other related prison personnel back in the U.S., with one of the main perpetrators (Grainer) being a prison guard at the ultra racist and repressive Greene County State prison (in western Pennsylvania) - may have shocked and awed the general public, but to the millions trapped in America's prisons, it wasn't surprising in the least, as it is a daily experience within the United States' (invisible) sub-societies. Again, “corrections” or “rehabilitation” has been effectively replaced by pure, unmitigated antagonistic hatred. This is especially evinced in the sham of a grievance system (with no oversight), the biased Prisoner Litigation Reform Act (PLRA), and even the small-town court houses in the jurisdictions of the respective regions of the many State prisons, who seem to be in cahoots with prison hierarchy.

Part II continued in next issue of the Movement.



4134 Lancaster Ave.
Phila., PA 19104

Yes, I want to join the Human Rights Coalition!

Name: _____

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Address: _____

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Email Address: _____

Donation Amount: ☐ \$3.00-\$6.00 (Suggested membership donations for prisoners.)
 ☐ \$10.00
 ☐ \$25.00
 ☐ \$50.00
 ☐ \$100.00 or above

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

RESIDING IN MAMMA'S HEART

THE LAND WHERE I RESIDE LIES INSIDE MY MAMMA'S PRIDE. IN THE DEEP SPACE OF THE FEMININE RACE, MY FACE IS PLACED WITH GRACE.

I LIE WITHIN MY MAMMA'S COMPREHENSION. I RIDE THE TIDES OF HER ETERNAL DIMENSIONS. IN MAMMA'S MIND, I PLACED A DESIGNED SIGN OF BLIND RHYMES.

I'M A PERMANENT PHOTOGRAPH IN MY MAMMA'S LAUGH. AS THE SUN RISES, I AM IMMERSED IN THE SHADE OF CASCADING BABES—FOR BEING A CHILD IS WORTHWILE IN MY MAMMA'S SMILE.

I STRETCH MY NOSTRILS TO THE SWEET BREATH OF MY MAMMA'S CLEVERNESS. IF A HUNDRED YEARS GOES BY WITHOUT FALLEN TEARS TO GRACE MY EYES, I WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE SMARTS TO KNOW THAT I STILL RESIDE IN MAMMA'S HEART

POEM BY:

CRM

AT GRATERFORD



Inmates! Know a family member in society who you would want to receive this newsletter?

<p>Please provide:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Phone #: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p>	<p>Send to:</p> <p>Human Rights Coalition Attention: Newsletter Subscription C/O Lava Space 4134 Lancaster Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19104</p> <p>Subscription Rates:</p> <p>Families of Prisoners – FREE! Prisoners - \$6.00 One Year Subscription</p>
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412-361-3022 xt.4

hrcfedup@gmail.com
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/fedup/

Official HRC Chapters

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

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

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 inmates 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"