

# THE MOVEMENT

Fall Issue #42

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

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

Across the U.S. **169,286** cases of  
coronavirus reported among prisoners as of Nov  
3rd! **132,982** prisoners have recovered.

**1,363** deaths from coronavirus re-  
ported among prisoners.

**38,965** cases of coronavirus re-  
ported among prison staff.

**27,280** staff have recovered.

**91** deaths from coronavirus reported  
among prison staff.

See Human Rights Report beginning on page 20

# In This Issue!

**The Editor Speaks !** By: Sergio Hyland . . . **3**

## **Knowledge Is Power: All Power To The People!!**

The City that Really Did Abolish the Police . . . **5**

#DefundTheDOC, By Daniel Vincent . . . **9**

Defund or Abolish the Police, By Yusef Jones . . . **11**

A Syllabus on the Process to Effectively Reduce Mass Incarceration, By Melvin White . . . **13**

## **The HomeFront: Serving Our Community**

CADBI-Lancaster Chapter, By Rebecca Mentzer . . . **14**

#SolidarityNotSolitary . . . **14**

Toxic Prisons & Environmental Justice Committee,  
By Trika Parasimo. . . **15**

Artist in Residence Creates Portraits of Reform at The DA's Office, By Neda Ulaby . . . **16**

**Love Knows No Bars . . . 18**

**2nd Chances , By Big Hick. . . 19**

## **Human Rights Coalition Report**

COVID & Prisons, By Mama Patt . . . **20**

A State-by-State look at Coronavirus in Prisons . . . **23**

COVID & Rockview - What can families do? . . . **25**

Gov. Wolf's effort to grant Corona Reprieves came up small . . . **29**

2,258 NJ Prisoners will be Released in a Single Day . . . **31**

**Road Trippin Book Review . . . 34**

## **Is Innocence Irrelevant?**

The Innocence of William Daniels Jr. . . **38**

**Writings of Multiplicity . . 41**

## **Justice "and" Humanity?**

Dear Honorable Men of Faith, By Yusef Jones . . . **43**

The Decision Making is all Yours!

By William A. Johnson . . . **45**

Compassionate Release, Not So Compassionate,  
By Kimberly Morrobel . . . **45**

Do You Really Matter?!? By Jeffery A. Shockley . . . **46**

**What's The News . . . 47**

## **The Babylon System**

Capitalism & Racial Equality, By Sergio Hyland . . . **48**

## **THE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE**

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

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

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

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

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

Human Rights Coalition  
Attention: Newsletter Committee  
PO Box 34580  
Philadelphia, PA 19101



## *From the Desk of the Editor*

### *Welcome to Issue #42 of THE MOVEMENT!*

Thank you for interest and involvement. I'm really beginning to enjoy the "Guest Editor" position and I'll be around as long as the people (you)

want me to be. I could begin this letter in so many different ways - there is so much taking place in the world today. But I must start with the Covid-19 pandemic and the woefully incompetent "geniuses" stationed comfortably in their central office headquarters in Harrisburg.

Right now, several prisons across the state of Pennsylvania are on an "enhanced lockdown", due to countless Coronavirus infections - all of which could've been prevented and kept out of the path of thousands of vulnerable prisoners. No prisoner is at all surprised by the recent outbreak since we live in this environment where social distancing is absurdly utopian and virtually impossible.

This crisis is a grand example of what happens when government officials deny science, all for the purpose of continued capital accumulation. Society is being forced to reopen, even while this deadly virus is close to approaching its most dangerous stage. Prisons are a part of the economy, and as such, prison bureaucrats will do everything in their power to keep them functioning at as close to 100% as possible. And when we deny science, we get adverse results - just look at the way Trump refused science and was infected shortly thereafter! The spread of Covid-19 amongst the prison population can only be attributed to weak protocols and/or a lack of enforcement of those protocols. For example, staff aren't tested before entering a prison; instead, they're "screened" for symptoms. But when we look at the science, we know that many infected persons can remain asymptomatic. So, an asymptomatic guard can walk into any prison and infect numerous prisoners. To make matters worse, these infections amongst staff are kept secret from prisoners and staff alike.

Some people wonder why the "brilliant" minds at central office would allow these things to happen. But we all know who and what John Wetzel is. He was placed into his position of leadership because he is known as a fiscal conservative. His sole purpose was to reduce costs associated with prisons. I find that ironic though, since the prison budget has continuously increased each year during his tenure. The only funding being cut is that which would provide the treatment and attention for prisoners, necessary to promote transition and opportunities for success upon re-entry. The spread of Covid-19 throughout Pennsylvania prisons, and the deaths which will naturally ensue, are a

direct result of the fundamental contradiction that exists within the PADOC mantra: "Care, Custody, and Control". Staff go through extreme measures to ensure the "custody and control" of prisoners, but when we mention "care", we might as well be speaking ancient Chinese. A prisoner has a better chance of being beaten, pepper sprayed, or killed by a staff member, than they do of getting quality medical treatment. Prison is a "square peg" and we keep trying to fit in the "round hole" of humanity. It will never fit. It is fundamentally impossible to "humanely" warehouse human beings, just as it was fundamentally impossible to "humanely" possess slaves. The people in power understand this which is why prisoners are constantly misrepresented, through media outlets, as being thugs and criminals - an effort to reduce prisoners to some form of subhuman species, thus justifying the inhumane treatment we receive. And the more we keep trying to find some benefit in prisons, the more exhausted we become. Prisons are a failure in every sense and in all aspects. I can guarantee that there isn't a person alive who can prove that the prison experiment in america has been a success for anybody other than the corporate capitalists.

In fact, the prison experiment in america has been a dismal failure and an international embarrassment. It amazes me how a prisoner will be promptly fired from his/her kitchen job for something as simple as drinking a milk while on duty, but John Wetzel keeps his lofty position, even with the recidivism rate being near 70%! And he had the nerve to come to SCI Chester, in November of 2019, with the American Conservative Union (a conservative political action committee) to preach to prisoners about the importance of "hard work, integrity and accountability"! Of course I wasn't invited to that gathering, due to Jennifer Storm and her strongarm tactics of controlling the lives of prisoners by fancying herself a victim of crime. Ironically, she is now being pushed out of the Office of Victim Advocate after coming under scrutiny for her own controversial history of misdeeds.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, prisoners have been forced false axioms such as "we're all in this together, staff and inmates alike". But we AREN'T "all in this together". If we were all in this together, prisoners would have access to quality healthcare; we would have more access to our families and loved-ones, instead of being punished with the current round of phone restrictions and dysfunctional virtual visitation system. Though people love to be comforted and reassured, the fact of the matter is that we are NOT "all in this together"! Prisoners face the sad reality that, on the inside of these walls, the only people forced to be accountable, are us! If we get sick, it's our fault! If we're denied parole, it's our fault. If we're assaulted by staff, we must have done something to deserve it. Staff routinely refuse to wear masks while working certain units, but prisoners are punished for becoming infected. (Maybe we ARE in this together, and I'm just delusional? I don't think so!)

*(Continued on page 4)*

Our current reality - and the hardships associated with that reality - underscores the need for more cooperation and organization among and between prisoners, our communities, and society. Prisoners are just as vulnerable as elderly folks in nursing homes. But society is trained to regard us as a disposable population, since we've been stigmatized and labeled as "criminals". Notwithstanding the immorality of it all, prisoners and our allies must finally accept the fact that we will win no great victories if we continue making the circumstances surrounding the terms and conditions of our confinement one of morality. The American capitalist system isn't designed to be swayed by moral arguments - only economic ones! And the best example of that was slavery. It wasn't a moral epiphany which led to "emancipation", but the threat of competing economic interests between the north and the south. We must continue focusing our energies on educating the masses on the true costs of prison and other forms of governmental control (parole, probation, etc.). But that education can only result from better, more effective organizing.

So as we read this issue, think of different ways that you can contribute to what we all are building... TOGETHER. And until next time, remember that one day, we WILL reach our destination... TOGETHER!!!

Your loyal comrade, **Serg**

Follow me on IG @uptownserg  
Email: sergiohyland8@gmail.com  
Sergio Hyland /FX-1537/SCI-Chester

## Call for Contributors

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

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

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

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

***You may contact HRC-Philly at  
this address:***

***Human Rights Coalition  
P.O. Box 34580  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
or  
Email: Info@hrcoalition.org***

***You may contact HRC-Pittsburg  
at this address:***

***Human Rights Coalition &  
PJWSC Jailhouse Lawyer  
Support  
P.O. Box 8561  
Pittsburgh, PA 15220  
PH: 412-628-3759***

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

## The City that Really Did Abolish the Police

*And rebuilt the department from the ground up. The strange, hopeful, politically complicated story of Camden, N.J.*



In this Saturday, May 30, 2020, photo, Camden County Metro Police Chief Joe Wysocki raises a fist while marching with Camden residents and activists in Camden, N.J., to protest the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

By KATHERINE LANDERGAN  
06/12/2020

**CAMDEN, N.J.**— It was the moment that America needed.

Days after George Floyd died at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis, a different scene was playing out in what was once the most dangerous city in the United States.

Joseph D. Wysocki was marching in the streets of Camden alongside residents in “Black Lives Matter” T-shirts. He found the organizer of the protest: Yolanda Deaver. Wysocki introduced himself and asked whether he could join her. Absolutely, she said, and the two started marching together, holding up a sign reading STANDING IN SOLIDARITY. And then they posed for a now-viral photo.

“I’d seen her do the peace symbol, you know, it’s not something I ever do. But I really thought it was appropriate,” he said. “I think everybody wanted peace.”

Wysocki wasn’t just any 50-year-old white man. He was chief of the Camden police. And as protests erupted across the country, this moment—Wysocki and the protester with their banner, peace signs and clenched fists held high—gave Americans reason to think its widening social fractures really could be healed.

Behind that image is a years long story of how Camden officials transformed policing in a city where the murder rate was once on par with Honduras. The police were despised by residents for being ineffective at best and corrupt at worst. Today, violent crime in the city has decreased, and police officers are a regular presence at community block parties.

As a movement grows in American cities and suburbs to overhaul police departments and confront their long records of racially unjust, violent enforcement, Camden is one rare—and complicated—success story, a city that really did manage to overhaul its police force and change how it operated. And it took a move as radical and controversial as what some activists are calling for today: Camden really did abolish its police department.

And then the city set about rebuilding the police force with an entirely new one under county control, using the opportunity to increase the number of cops on the streets and push through a number of now-heralded progressive police reforms. And with time, the changes started to stick in a department that just years earlier seemed unfixable.

Over the past two weeks, Camden has become an example of reform that works—cited in articles, tweets and on network shows as an example of what can go right. And it’s true that the reforms produced real change in the statistics: The excessive use of force rates plummeted. The homicide rate decreased. And new incentives laid the groundwork for a completely new understanding of what it meant to be a good cop.

“You had to change the underlying principles of the way police officers were being trained and taught, and the culture in the department,” said former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, who supported the changes in Camden. “The most effective way to do that was to start over.”

The reforms carry lessons for what it takes to transform the police in any city. They ultimately amounted to nothing less than a reboot of the culture of policing in Camden, changing the way every beat cop in the city did his or her job. And they also required enough political will at the top—all the way to the governor—to survive opposition from police unions and some residents. The case of Camden shows that if there’s enough motivation to blow it all up and start over from both the top and the bottom, reforming a police force is achievable.

But nothing is as simple as it sounds in a tweet. While largely a success story, the overhaul was by no means a clear win for social-justice progressives who are driving the police-reform debate nationally. The Camden police reform was—and remains—politically divisive. In part that was because union contracts

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

were thrown out, leaving many on the force earning a lower salary and with fewer benefits. And it required very strange bedfellows to succeed—an all-powerful Democratic machine, a Republican governor, conservative budget-cutters and progressive police thinkers, all aligned to break an established department and start over.

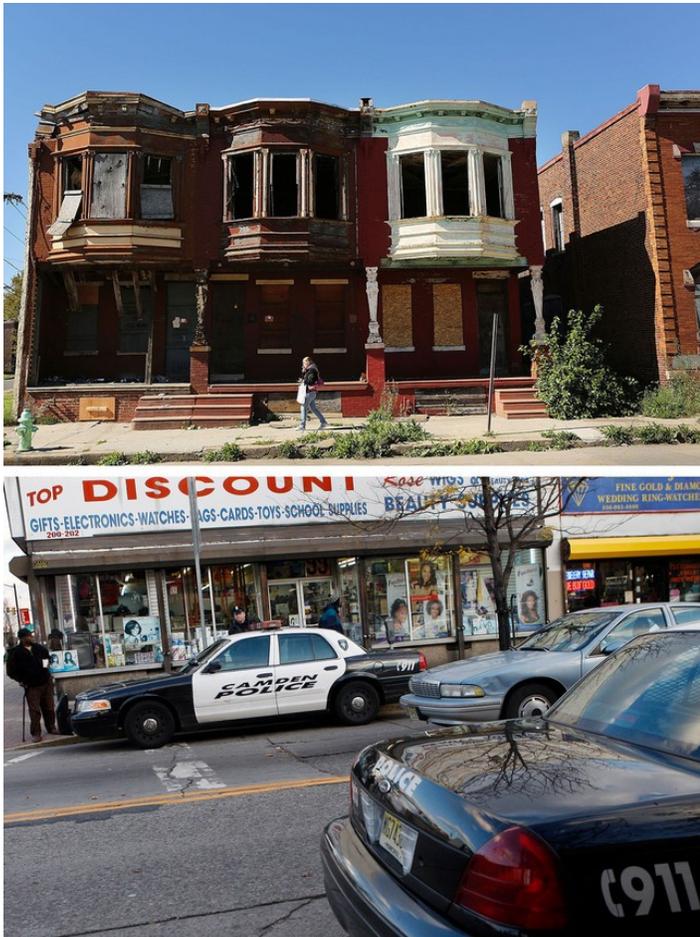


PHOTO Empty homes and a downtown shopping area in Camden in 2012. | Spencer Platt/Getty Images, AP Photo/Mel Evans

**In 2010, Camden hit rock bottom.** The city, population 77,000, was widely considered one of the most dangerous in America. A depopulated former manufacturing center across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, and the home of the first condensed Campbell's soup plant, the city had more than 3,000 abandoned buildings. Almost 40 percent of residents lived below the poverty line. At one point, the city had 175 open-air drug markets, and 80 percent of drug arrests were of nonresidents, suggesting that out-of-towners were making a stop in Camden just to buy and sell.

Violent crime had been high in the city for decades, but it was about to get worse, because the police department was broke. In 2010, Camden, faced with a \$14 million budget deficit, laid off

half of its police force. Arrests in 2011 fell to almost half of what they had been just two years earlier, and burglaries increased by 65 percent. The murder rate skyrocketed. Eventually, residents largely gave up on calling police for minor crimes.

On top of that, the police department had a reputation for bad cops. Of the 37 excessive use of force complaints levied in 2011, not one had been “sustained,” or clearly proven or disproven, which raised serious red flags about accountability with the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in New Jersey at the time. In 2010, five officers in the department were charged with evidence planting, fabrication and perjury. Later, state and federal courts would go on to overturn the convictions of 88 people who had been arrested and charged by those officers.

The idea for dissolving the Camden police force came amid the backdrop of a push by both Governor Christie and Democratic state lawmakers to regionalize city and town services in a new era of government austerity. State Sen. Don Norcross, Camden County Freeholder Lou Cappelli and Mayor Dana Redd started promoting the idea of dissolving the Camden police force and creating a new county-led force to replace it. The plan also had the support of George Norcross, an insurance executive and Democratic power broker in southern New Jersey (and brother of Don), and Christie.

A state statute was already on the books allowing counties to create police departments that towns then have the choice to opt into. But the plan would also involve busting a union: The city force had already been unionized, but the new county one would not be unionized, at least at first. The plan, as a result, was met with opposition from the police union. But the state of crime in Camden, coupled with the complete lack of money, dulled Democratic resistance to the proposal overall. “There’s no alternative, there’s no Plan B,” Democratic City Council President, Frank Moran, told the *New York Times* in 2012. “It’s the only option we have.”

Without the restrictions of the union, proponents argued, more cops could be put on the streets of Camden, and hopefully, the city’s deadly spiral could finally be stopped.

Not everyone agreed with the changes. A group of Camden residents who saw this as high-handed intervention submitted a petition to stop the disbandment with the goal of placing the issue on the ballot in 2012. Redd and Moran filed a complaint against the residents on the grounds that the petition amounted to an unlawful restraint of legislative power.

The case would work its way through New Jersey courts while the city went ahead with the changes.

In May 2013, the Camden City Council approved resolutions that eliminated the city police department and established a new one under county control. The remaining city cops were all laid off and had to reapply to work with the county, under far less generous nonunion contracts.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

In a strange legal coda to the whole drama, the case filed by the Camden residents to save their local police department worked its way through New Jersey courts and ultimately ended up in front of the state Supreme Court, which ruled 6-0 in favor of the residents in 2015. But it was too late: The Camden County police force had been around for four years, and by most accounts, was already a success. In this case, politics had moved faster than the courts and, legally or not, the Camden city police force was long gone.

---

**Those who championed the disbandment** of the department say the upheaval was critical to the department's ultimate success. Scott Thomson, the Camden police chief at the time, had locked horns with the police union for years over contracts and virtually "any type" of managerial decision, he says.

"I was able to do in three days what would normally take me three years to do," he said. "All of the barriers were removed. I was now driving on a paved road."

The most obvious change was that the Camden police was now bigger: By cutting salaries, the county was able to hire more officers, increasing the size of the department from 250 to 400 and putting the number of Camden police officers close to what it was before the 2010 budget cuts.

But the more important changes went beyond the size of the roster. Thomson, who had been appointed chief in 2008 and oversaw the department through the transition, also used the changes as a way to implement a number of progressive policies. The challenge, he said, was reframing how officers viewed their roles. No longer would officers be the "arbitrary decider of what's right and wrong," he said, but rather consider themselves as "a facilitator and a convener."

In practice, this meant prioritizing resident complaints. According to Thomson, when someone was spoken to in a disrespectful way, that investigation was handled swiftly.

The internal metric system for rating an officer's performance was also overhauled—no longer were officers rewarded for the number of tickets they had written, or how many arrests they had made. Thomson says his highest priority was working to integrate officers into the fabric of the community.

**"Every couple of months I get a call from an officer, who just asks me how is everything going in my neighborhood? Do I feel safe? Is there anything I want to tell them? Things are demonstrably different."**

--- Sean Brown

"I don't want you to write tickets, I don't want you to lock anybody up. I'm dropping you off on this corner that has crime rates greater than that of Juárez, Mexico, and for the next 12 hours I don't want you to make an arrest unless it's for an extremely vile offense," Thomson recalls telling his officers. "Don't call us—we're not coming back to get you until the end of your shift, so if

you got to go to the bathroom, you need to make a friend out here. You want to get something to eat? You better find who the good cook is."

Sean Brown, a business owner and native Camden resident, says he had complicated feelings about the department. While he supports the end result, the transition from the city-led to county-led force was "quick" and "harsh," and he said he saw good people lose their jobs. But he says he now feels safer in his city than ever before, in part because police actively check in with him on the status of his neighborhood.

"Every couple of months I get a call from an officer, who just asks me how is everything going in my neighborhood? Do I feel safe? Is there anything I want to tell them?" he said. "Things are demonstrably different."

Police officers can now be seen hosting block parties, flipping burgers and competing in games alongside kids in the neighborhoods.

Another community-focused initiative is Camden's "scoop-and-go" policy, a mandate that requires officers to drive gunshot victims to a hospital if waiting for an ambulance would cause a delay. The policy, modeled on a long-standing one in Philadelphia, was put into effect after the outrage over the Ferguson police department's handling of Michael Brown's body after a police officer shot him in 2014. The officers left him lying for four hours on a Ferguson street after the shooting before his body was taken to a morgue.

The changes were not without hurdles. In the first year of the new department, for instance, the number of excessive force complaints by police spiked dramatically. But the department implemented a series of reforms to reduce conflict between officers and residents.

Camden was chosen as one of seven cities by the Police Executive Research Forum, a reform think tank in Washington, D.C., to develop its signature de-escalation training, according to Executive Director Chuck Wexler.

Camden soon had proof on video that the training worked in real life.

**"18 months before that we would have shot and killed that guy, two steps out of the store."**

--- Former Camden Police Chief Scott Thomson

Clips from surveillance and body cam footage in November 2015, which have since spread across YouTube, particularly in police-reform circles, show a man walking into a fried chicken shop in Camden, knife in hand. He leaves the shop, thrashing the knife in the air, and is encircled by a group of officers. They walk with the man for several minutes, asking him to "drop it, drop the knife." They attempt to tase the man, and fail, but are ultimately able to tackle him.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

“Eighteen months before that we would have shot and killed that guy, two steps out of the store,” said Thomson, the former police chief.

Last year, the department implemented a use-of-force guidebook developed with New York University’s Policing Project, which has gotten the seal of approval from both the ACLU and the Fraternal Order of Police. The rules clearly outline when deadly force can be used. Officers are required to intervene if they see another officer violating the rules, and the department can fire any officer who doesn’t follow them. According to the department, complaints of excessive use of force have dropped from the range of 35 to 65 a year in the first years of the county force to less than five today.

**When former President Barack Obama** visited the city back in 2015, he held up Camden’s police department as a model for police reform. He called Camden a “symbol of promise for the nation,” praising the improved relations between officers and residents.

“This city is on to something,” he said before a crowd of hundreds.

But there are critics who think the reforms have not gone far enough.

There are concerns that the department’s force does not reflect the community—the department is just ever so slightly majority-minority. Camden is 93 percent minority—mostly (50.3 percent) Hispanic, with a large (42.4 percent) African American population, according to the most recent census figures. But the police department is nearly half white.

Camden police officials agree that things need to change, but say they can do only so much within the current civil service requirements. Those rules require lists of eligible officers to include individuals from all over the state, including from the whiter, wealthier northern parts, thus making the overall talent pool less demographically representative of cities like Camden.

Critics also say the department has been less than transparent. In particular, they point to Camden’s failure so far to post any data online after entering into a federal partnership under the Obama administration to track and improve policing. Camden was one of 21 cities selected for the federal program, and it’s the only one that hasn’t posted any data yet.

There is also high turnover in the police department, according to several people interviewed for this article. “It’s hard to say that things are changing when you’re having a revolving door of officers coming in,” said Kevin Barfield, president of the Camden County NAACP chapter. “And a lot of them are young. A lot of them are not really familiar with the community with which they serve.”

On Sunday, a group of activists gathered in Camden to give voice to these concerns, and let the public know that they hadn’t gotten the full picture a week earlier. Hundreds of protesters walked the streets of the city in the midday June sun, ending their march on the steps of the Chief J. Scott Thomson police department building.

“President Obama tweeted out Camden has been the poster child for reform across the country,” activist Ayinde Merrill yelled to the crowd.

“Say no,” he told a crowd of hundreds of Black Lives Matter protesters.

“No!” the crowd responded in chorus.

The tone of this gathering was markedly different from the one a week earlier. The participants in this protest spoke about the “crooked cops” and felt the viral photo was merely a feel-good photo op. As Merrill stood on the steps of the building, he called out for Police Chief Wysocki to stand beside him.

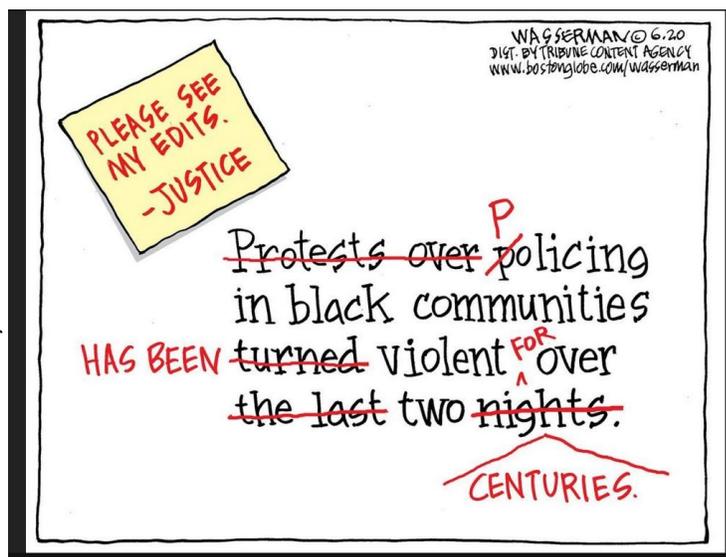
“We are going to hold everyone accountable, we have to stop being scared of authority figures and really hold them accountable,” Merrill said, wearing a loose noose around his neck.

He then presented the chief a list of demands, including working to help officers eliminate racial bias in policing, the creation of an independent civilian review board and recruiting a more diverse force.

But what came next suggests why even the toughest critics feel like there is more hope in Camden than there is in other cities.

“We are going to give credit where credit is due. They said they are already starting to work on things we listed,” Merrill said as he removed the rope from his neck. “Today we are loosening this noose and taking it off.”

From: [www.POLITICO.com](http://www.POLITICO.com)



Comic By Dan Wasserman

# #DefundTheDOC

By: Daniel Vincent

Thanks to, THE MOVEMENT magazine, I am back, ACTIVATED...lol. Its been difficult as of late, I can't lie, with all of the pressure that's being applied on criminal justice/prison reform we get a lot of that push back on the inside. It amazes me how everything's caught on camera these days and that still hasn't deterred them, so imagine how much more egregious it is behind these walls where there are no cameras at all. We are truly "behind enemy lines." Staffer's come to work wearing "Make America Great Again" mask and hats.

That within itself let's you know what we're up against. Staffer's have been over heard speaking in admiration of Kyle Rittenhouse (17 year old who shot protesters in Kenosha). They have also been over heard speaking in admiration and praise of a "Black Lives Matter" rally that was recently shot up here in central Pennsylvania. Inmate abuse and staff assaults are at an all time high, and that's mostly due to the unsurmountable amount of media coverage on the up coming elections and protest. Even before the Portland attacks it was reported that there was over 64 assaults, 9 shootings, and 3 deaths of "Black Lives Matter" protester's at the hands of Trump supporter's. This is fueling the superiority complex of those who've felt inferior for so long. Staffer's are overdosing on "Fox News" and coming into work all "Trumped" up (pun intended) full of hate, bias, ignorance and fear, and in search of some form of retribution and contribution to the cause whether consciously or sub-consciously.

While the DOC has began testing officer's for Covid-19 before entering facilities, they have yet to begin mental health evaluations on officer's before entry into DOC facilities. This is a matter of extreme importance and should not be overlooked. Law enforcement officers have to get mental health evaluations before becoming officer's, and those who don't past those evaluations usually become Correctional Officers. Many of these people are unstable, many are ex-military suffering from undiagnosed PTSD with no proper treatment, nor training on how to deal with inmates who many themselves suffer from undiagnosed PTSD, so imagine the kind of environment we're living in. This environment itself has been proven to cause PTSD. There are studies that show very high numbers of domestic violence and abuse in the homes of Correctional Officer's and prison personal. Many of these people are extremely violent and abusive individuals. Although I said "individuals" it is definitely systemic.



Most in corrections would have you believe that it's only a few bad apples, but we all know "a few bad apples spoils the bunch." So when you're taught to look the other way or back your guys no matter what, a sentiment that is so common, it's not even given a second thought. That's infectious and complicit rendering the problem is no longer an "individual" problem but rather a "systemic" one, because it "affects the whole body" of corrections. Because of the systemic culture of Corrections, Law Enforcement and every other branch of criminal justice for that matter, you're taught to back your guy no matter what. So while every correctional officer may not be racist, if that officer has to back the racist acts of another officer does it really matter whether said officer truly shares the same views as the other? So you may have a "good officer" but if he/she is forced to back the bad acts of "bad officer's" is he/she still a "good officer"?

This conduct is so deeply rooted and common practice, you may be surprised at the answer you receive. I once witnessed a Correctional Officer attack an inmate, the inmate defended himself, the officer ended up in pretty bad shape. Embarrassed, the officer lied and said he was jumped by multiple inmates, luckily the officer that was working in the control room that night didn't lie and reported that the officer attacked the inmate first, and no one other then the inmate and the officer were involved. I was under investigation in that matter and sat in interrogation being interrogated by the Major, Secretary Captain, Lieutenant, and many other high ranking officials. They called the officer that told the truth every b\*\*\*\* and p\*\*\*\* in the book. Needless to say that officer never worked a respectable post again, and he was outcast and shunned by all of his peers. All because he didn't back his guy and instead told the truth, did the right thing. Think of the message that sends to other officer's. I was talking to my sista in the struggle a little while back, Delco CADBI's President Dana Lomax-Williams, and this was right after the George Floyd killing, and our sisters and brother's were leading the initiative to "strip police immunity", and to "defund the police". In sharing my thoughts with my sista Dana Lomax-Williams, I shared that I believe along with the initiative to strip police officer's immunity, we have to include prosecutors and Judges immunity as well. Because the same egregious, heinous acts we witness every time an innocent black man's life is unlawfully taken in the streets at the hands of law enforcement, is the same egregious, heinous acts taking place in courtrooms every day, when prosecutors and Judges unlawfully, and maliciously take the lives of innocent black men. You see it every time you turn on the news or read a newspaper e.g. "INNOCENT MAN EXONERATED AFTER 30 YEARS" and this almost always comes after proving some wrong doing or misconduct by prosecutors and Judges. And who's ever held responsible? NO ONE. So what's to keep them from doing it again? NOTHING. So I believe the initiative to strip the immunity of police officers must include prosecutors and judges. There has to be an incentive to keep everyone honest and diligent. After all "The System" is a system, and in order

*(Continued on page 10)*

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

(Continued from page 9)

to function appropriately every part of the "judicial body" must operate accordingly. I'll elaborate more another time, I really want to focus on the Department of Corrections (DOC) and "DEFUNDING THE DOC".

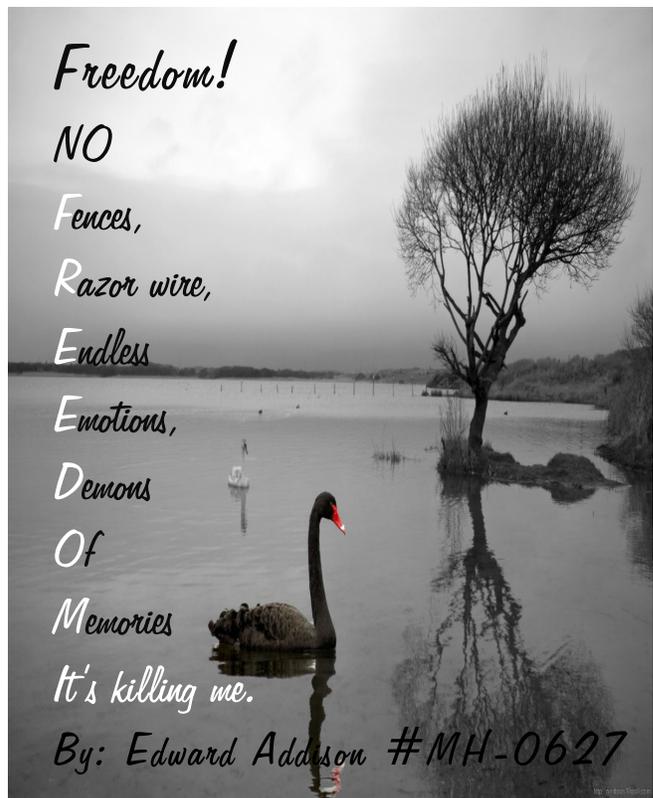
For obvious reasons the initiative to "defund police" should include "defund the DOC". For starters the school to prison pipeline is troubling. When I was last on the streets over a decade ago, I witnessed the shutdowns of schools, recreation centers, and free libraries all in my neighborhood in West Philadelphia, and within the same year I witnessed the opening of "The Youth Study Center " (a juvenile prison) placed in the center of the hood. Even back then in my youth and ignorance, was still conscious enough to think "what a bold message". Recently I was hospitalized for a sports injury at Phoenixville hospital in Montgomery county, and while there, junior high students from a neighboring school was there on a class trip/ internship. I couldn't help but remember, when I was 11 years old in junior high and being taken on class trips to prisons. Just think about the disparity in that for a second, The fix was in from the start. Pennsylvania spends \$26,422 per suburban student, \$15,417 per urban student and \$42,727 per inmate, none of which is actually spent on treatment, programming, education, and rehabilitation, all of the things proven to reduce recidivism and rehabilitate, which I thought was the goal and purpose of prison in the first place. Teacher's in Pennsylvania make an average of \$40,000 yearly, while Correctional Officer's make close to/or more then \$100,000 yearly. Again think about the disparity, and irony in our expectations. Why would we entrust the DOC with our tax dollars to genuinely invest in actual rehabilitation, wouldn't that be counterproductive to their livelihood and job security? The DOC has manipulated and stolen tax dollars and Government funding for so long that its common practice. Pennsylvania taxpayers have become complicit accomplices when we allow it to continue unchecked. Simply asking questions will keep them honest, because now they no you're paying attention. One of the biggest schemes orchestrated by the DOC is the "Census Scheme". The DOC has been counting inmates as part of the general population in these rural area counties where most DOC employees live. This allows for more government funding and more seats in "The House of Representatives" for these areas. This is government funding that should rightfully be in our communities, funding that's actually being stolen out of our communities, Representatives that should rightfully be representing our communities. But wait the corruption gets even deeper.

In 2018 the DOC and Correctional Officer's Union conjured an elaborate scheme to defraud the government of \$20 million taxpaying dollars. Correctional Officer's falsely reported passing out and becoming ill due to an unknown substance alleged to be K2 (synthetic marijuana). Several experts, like Dr. Jeanmarie Perrone (Director Toxicology -University of Penn); Dr. Lewis Nelson (President of American College of Toxicology); Sherri Kacinko (Chemist/Toxicologist); Dr. David Vearrier (Hahnemann University); and Dr. Edward Roger (Harvard Med-

ical Professor) reported that Correctional Officer's reports were false, and not one Officer tested positive for any trace of the substance in their system, and symptoms reported by officer's could not be sustained simply by coming in contact with the substance, but rather only by consumption. Even after hearing from experts, under pressure during an election year the DOC and the Correctional Officer's Union was able to defraud Gov. Wolf out of \$20 million of your taxpaying dollars to fix a fraudulent none existing problem. Reform is necessary. The definition is: Reform - improvement or correction of what is corrupt or defective.

When we say "Defund the DOC" much like "Defund Police" we're not saying take all funding, we're saying funding needs to be strategically placed in areas that are proven to be effective. The problem with the system is its more "reactive" then "proactive". Police, DA's, Judges, the DOC come in after the deed is done. We need to be more "proactive" investing in our kids future early, i.e. education, training, etc, because we know "when you know better you do better." Momma Patt I'm calling on you, HRC and all our Brother's and Sisters in the struggle to keep the conversation going #DefundTheDOC. I greatly appreciate all of your sacrifice and contributions, and think you for opening this line of communication and extending the platform. To one day be able to say that I fought the fight with you is inspiring. Til next time. Peace

Smart communications/pa doc  
Daniel Vincent/KH7761/Sci Smithfield  
P.O. Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733



**THE MOVEMENT**

www.hrcoalition.org

# Defund or Abolish the Police; abolish conditions giving rise to the need for policing.

To begin with – Who started the police and why? How have they been used? How impartial and fair have they been? Whose side are they on?

What do we want them to do now – in the present?

This conversation does not take place in a vacuum. It is connected to and a product of the circumstances.

Let us begin with what we would want the police institution to look like and be doing in the community. Each community stakeholder (business, civic, religious leaders and lay persons) should have input in regulating and managing the final policing product/output. The police work for the community and our greater good.

I would like to marry the practical and doable with the aspirational, crime free neighborhoods; and set forth specific best practices with the goal of keeping the community safe. This includes but is not limited to being safe from violence, theft, over policing, unwarranted government interference and abuse. We should legislate what that means, tasking the police with executing professionally in the heat of the moment.

Business gave birth to the institution of the police as it is commonly understood today. Slave catchers, town sheriffs, the Pinkerton Detective Agency, to list a few of its precursors.

First to allay the disquiet erupting in several quarters, and messaging glee of others: Abolishing the police as an institution is impractical and in my view a non-starter; for messaging purposes we are in need of in-house-cleaning. I suggest Repurposing, redefining crime and reallocating or redirecting funding. It is not the police, an agency of the system we live under, but the entire system itself, that is in need of the overhaul. The Covid crisis has accentuated this incontrovertible fact.

For purposes of this discussion I will confine the focus to the criminal justice system, for which the institution of the police is the most visible.

The criminal justice system consists of:

- ◆ The legislature (lawmakers)
- ◆ the judiciary (law and consequence arbiters)
- ◆ the police (seizure/enforcers) and
- ◆ prison industrial complex (penalty enforcers).
- ◆ Parole and probation departments. (monitors/surveillance)

To repurpose the police away from militarization, we must redefine what laws they are to enforce and how they are to enforce them.

## Legislature

I suggest decriminalization of all citizen activity that is not violent; e.g., sale and use of drugs, prostitution, gambling, and moonshining. End all economic incentive to sell drugs. Offenses defined as violent would continue to be murder, assault, arson, rape, armed theft and kidnapping, come to mind. With the exception of murder, limit the maximum penalty to ten years; with murder being up to 25 years, and a hearing to determine whether you can be safely reintegrated. Injured parties should be able to participate in binding diversion and reconciliation. There should also be jury sentencing.

For all other offenses I would impose civil penalties, fines, community service, social restrictions (no partying or public events) house arrest without dessert (go to your room) I would include public shaming and asset forfeiture. Most especially for corporate fraud and environmental pollution.

The legislature should enact retroactive legislation decriminalizing most non-violent offenses and the release of all offenders who qualify and can be released safely.

## Judiciary

Conviction of codified criminal offenses should result in jury/community sentencing, within guidelines established by the legislature. Those guidelines should include provisions for victim input and sentence recommendations. The guidelines should also permit forgiveness and opportunity for victim/offender reconciliation.

## Police

The officer corps should be drawn from and reside in the community they are responsible for. There should be community oversight over the police with subpoena power and the power to fire. The police should be specifically trained to respond to crime as redefined above. They should also be trained in de-escalation techniques and best practices employed when discharging their duty.

The police should not be involved in traffic stops, domestic disputes, mental health or drug addiction crisis situations. The police as an institution should be demilitarized.

There should be a separate special police task force armed to deal with armed conflict, internal or international terrorists attacks or hostage situations.

To reduce injury and serious bodily harm resulting from possible civilian/police confrontation, common sense gun laws should be enacted. All military styled weapons should be outlawed. Citi-

*(Continued on page 12)*

(Continued from page 11)

zens do not need military weapons to hunt or protect their family and home.

### Prisons

End all private prisons. End all economic incentives to lock people up. End all dehumanizing practices in prison.

Prisons should be used as a last resort to ensure community safety. Only violent offenders and the most egregious cases of non-violent anti-social behavior should qualify for incapacitation. Prisons should not end the humanity of the person incapacitated. Prisons should offer the opportunity to develop the skill sets that were missing and led to the behavior the prisoner was sentenced for: Armed Theft, domestic violence, addiction, etc.

### Parole and Probation Agencies

Probation or parole should operate to the benefit of the offender. These employees should assist with reintegration; i.e., hous-

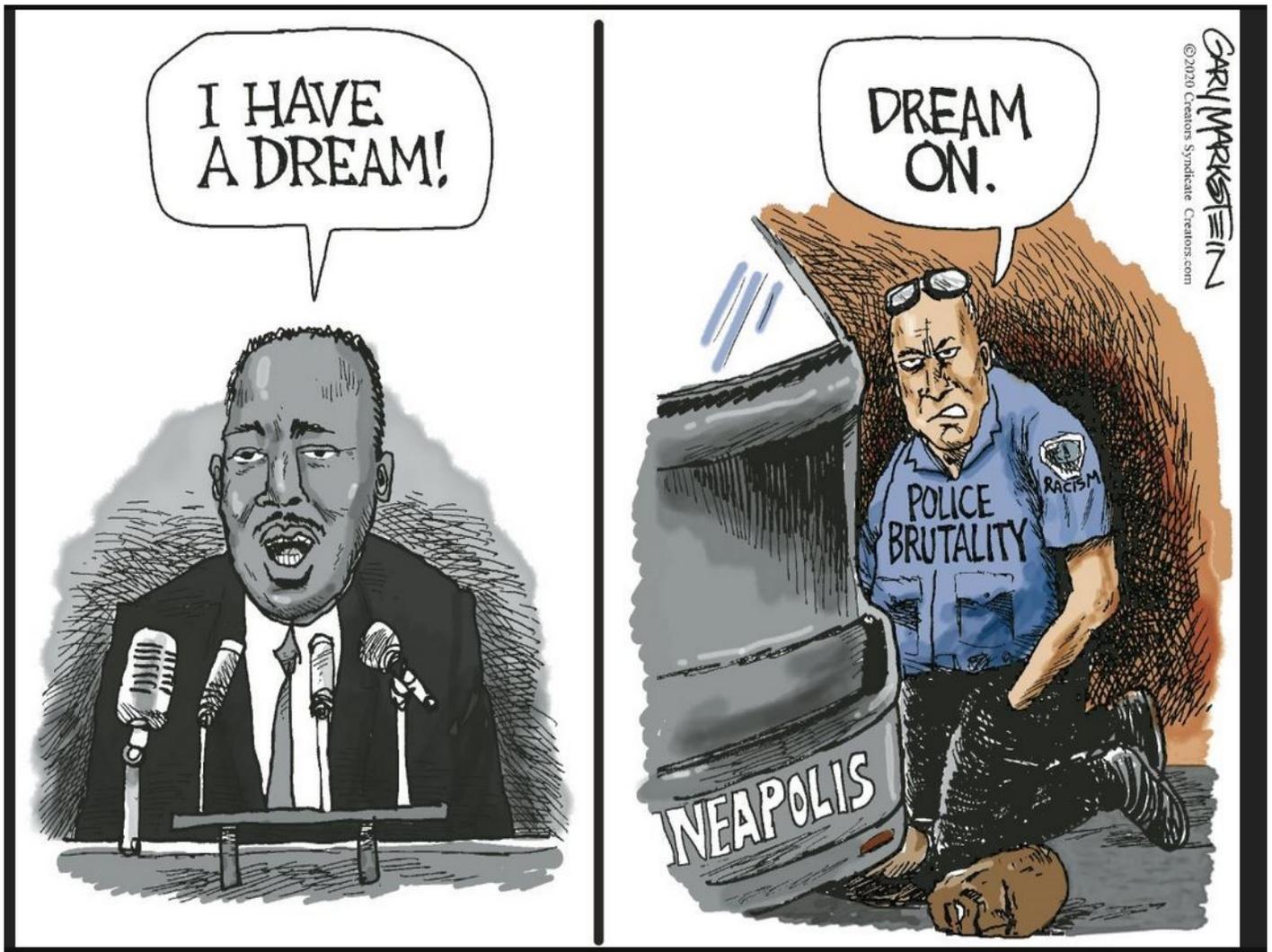
ing, employment and the continuation of treatment plans developed by staff in prison or probation experts.

Stringent revocation procedures should be in place, where only violent and potential violent behavior qualifies for imprisonment. A new criminal conviction should terminate parole and or probation, and any new penalty should include consideration of this past behavior; consecutive sentences should not be imposed.

We as a community should not treat our fallen citizens worse than we treated Civil War traitors, Nazi War Criminal, Klan and other racists murders who ended Reconstruction with neck breaking terrorism.

“We are better than this.” To quote our endeared patriot The venerated and Honorable Elijah Cummings.

By Yusef Jonas



# A Syllabus On The Process To Effectively Reduce Mass Incarceration

By Melvin White

There appears multiple ways in which to obtain marginal release of subject defendants from prison, such as: efforts promoting legislation in Pennsylvania, i.e. a reform bill that would allow parole for lifers, subsequently opening doors that would introduce good time or earned time credit for all prisoners; efforts promoting more commutation filings for consideration of lifer defendants before the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons; efforts in concentrated initiatives that would steer the next generation of youth away from the criminal justice system; or simply waiting for Pennsylvania lifers to die off in prison from old age.

When it comes to individual movement of the incarceration needle, these are all viable solutions as they only serve to release a prisoner here and there or highlight one or two lifers dying off, but none of these solutions serve to effectively reduce mass incarceration in a general sense.

However, there is another viable option that would effectively reduce mass incarceration that appears to be overlooked and yet readily outlined in the certified public records of the courts regarding every lifer and non-lifer alike in Pennsylvania, which is public evidence of "REVERSIBLE ERROR" of closed convictions that lawfully warrant release of the accused from prison.

Reversible error stems from an occurrence of "FUNDAMENTAL ERROR" as legally termed by state officials or an occurrence of "STRUCTURAL ERROR" as legally termed by federal officials, which means: due to such fundamental/structural errors, nothing from that point in the legal proceeding can be deemed valid, legitimate or legally sound, i.e.: "REVERSIBLE ERROR".

A fundamental/structural, e.g.: reversible, error is either committed by the prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, judge (who are all officers of the court) or by the legislators when erroneously fashioning a crime bill. This type of error is so egregious that its occurrence warrants a new trial at the instance the error occurs which can likewise be legally determined that any and all subsequent judgments of the court following such errors are deemed void and any and all subsequent sentences are likewise deemed void, no matter what they may entail.

One may understand such as error being perpetrated by a career oriented prosecutor whose only focus is on winning the case or perpetrated by the mis-steps of an over worked defense attorney attempting to defend multiple defendants at a time.

But, when reversible error is perpetrated by the judge charged with assuring under court sanction that the constitution and lawful statutory codes are complied with, or such an error is perpetrated by elected officials charged with putting in place lawful

statutes, who instead put in place unlawful statutes, you can understand why this type of error is termed (fundamental/structural) reversible error.

The following represents a viable method in which to reduce mass incarceration without the available options of waiting on a bill to be passed; without merely hoping the Board of Pardons decide to commute a sentence or without waiting on lifers to simply die off. Because of a one year statute of limitation put in place as a barrier stemming from a Federal crime bill since the year 1994 and subsequent amendments to State Post Conviction Relief Acts, there presently stands thousands, if not tens of thousands of prisoners restrained and rotting away in prison with said fundamental or structural errors, notably certified in public court records.

On the flip side of the equations, there is no statute of limitations preventing the state from charging a man or woman with homicide, but God forbid, the court proceedings inflict fundamental/structural errors and if so, the victims of those errors only has one year to make the errors known before a court of competent jurisdiction, if victims find them, or forever rot in prison.

There should be no wonder why a law having such inequality may indefinitely charge a citizen under the Pennsylvania crimes codes, but only allows its citizens 365 days under the judicial codes to challenge that identical charge after one's conviction, where in preventing any type of redress. The court's number one, go to, response is that they have no jurisdiction to entertain fundamental or structural errors after a one year time lapse. Such inequity can only be rectified by eliminating the time bar or removal of seated politicians who support a Jim Crow practice against the citizenry.

For these reasons, when it comes to mass incarceration, we need this term "TIME BAR" or this 1994 Federal Crime Bill issue to be the center point of discussion in every 2020 elections debates and beyond, because without judging politicians on what really matters, i.e.: the time barrier preventing federal and state oversight of reversible errors in violations of law that has countless men and women presently rotting in prison or we accept the mass incarceration business. In other words, we should be moving to indiscriminately have all public records detailing fundamental and/or structural errors exposed to demonstrate that there stands in place a time bar (See: AEDPA-PCRA The Time Bar-rier) that is used to override the constitutional right to habeas corpus review that needs to be rescinded in order to effectively reduce mass incarceration.

Smart Communications/PA DOC  
Melvin White / #AM-9017/ SCI-Mahanoy  
PO Box 33028, St. Petersburg, FL 33733/SCI-Fayette

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

## CADBI-Lancaster Chapter



We recently hosted the Lancaster Together event, gathering with organizations providing resources and advocacy for returning and incarcerated citizens. We believe everyone deserves a second chance. We are dedicated to building a supportive community in Lancaster where family and friends of people who are incarcerated can meet and share with others who understand. We are also committed to spreading the word to our legislators and community to advocate for systemic change. We meet regularly and are a diverse group by age, race, class, and gender. Everyone has skills they can use and contributions they can make! We know we are stronger together. To join the fight contact us at: [CADBILancaster@gmail.com](mailto:CADBILancaster@gmail.com)

The Lancaster chapter of CADBI, the Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration, invites you to join the campaign to end life without parole -- also known as death by incarceration (DBI) -- and other forms of long sentencing in Pennsylvania.

By: Rebecca Mentzer

**#SOLIDARITYNOTSOLITARY**

”

ANY IMPOSITION OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT BEYOND 15 DAYS CONSTITUTES TORTURE OR CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT...”

• JUAN MÉNDEZ •  
UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL  
RAPporteur OF THE  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ON  
TORTURE

For more information, please visit: [www.pacaic.org](http://www.pacaic.org)

**HRC** has been coordinating a legislative push to end solitary confinement in PA prisons since last year. Our bill is based on the United Nations declaration that anything more than 14 days in solitary constitutes “torture” and should never be used. We argue that solitary confinement has never

been seen as a legitimate tactic: the Supreme Court denounced it all the way back in the 1890s, and it fell out of use until the mass incarceration era starting in the 1970s when they picked it back up to control and “manage” large prison populations. Since then everyone from people inside prisons to public health and mental health institutions to the UN themselves have called it counter-productive and cruel yet it keeps happening day after day. Everyone who does research on the problem is unanimously clear that solitary is harmful and cruel for anyone to endure, here’s a short list of people who oppose solitary: World Health Organization (WHO), American Public Health Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Bar Association, American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, World Medical Association, National Commission on Correctional Health Care, Mental Health America, The National Alliance on Mental Illness

(NAMI), National Association of Social Workers, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR).

So far many PA politicians have been responsive and come to see solitary for what it is, but almost all the Republicans (and some Democrats) say they trust the DOC to decide how and when to use solitary. These politicians say a lot of the usual things--that people in prisons are dangerous and need to be suppressed, that the prisons do heroic work to contain them, that control must be maintained at all costs, etc. That’s not unexpected but it clarifies for all of us what we need to defeat: solitary has to be seen as a rights issues and a human issue instead of one about control and punishment, and we need to push them to see people inside as humans.

Right now we have around 45 legislators in PA backing the bill, and in 2021 we’ll make a stronger push led by formerly incarcerated people in PA. **We want folks inside PA prisons to be part of that--here are two ways to do that:**

1. Fill out our survey on the processes and effects of solitary in PA; so far we have a couple hundred responses but could use many more.
2. Write to us to be part of the inside-prison advocacy team, we’re linking people with penpals to help keep an eye on solitary inside different PA prisons.

To do either or both, write to HRC saying which of the two you want to do! HRC, PO Box 34580, Phila., PA 19102

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# Toxic Prisons and Environmental Justice Committee

By: Trika Parasimo

Many exciting updates are coming from HRC as winter approaches. First, congratulations to Salena, BP, and Anthony. With the money we received from the Bread and Roses Future Fund Grant, we have hired three new organizers who all recently came home from being incarcerated. They will be helping us in our efforts to expose the DOC and demand action from Governor Wolf. We have been meeting monthly and working with members of Queers against Incarceration in order to raise public awareness of the situation at SCI-Fayette. We are not only engaged in discussion but in what action we must take to #SHUTDOWNFAYETTE.

SCI-Fayette was built on a coal ash dumping site and the administration has been forcing inmates to drink, bathe, and cook with toxic water. The DOC refuses to address these issues, even though the staff and their dogs drink bottled water. Why is that? It is because the DOC has their own agenda which is not congruent with the interests of those caged inside SCI-Fayette. Although all prisons are toxic, we are dedicating our time to shutting down SCI-Fayette because it is such an easy target, with the hope of one day shutting down all prisons.

We, of HRC, are working to build correspondence with those inside SCI-Fayette and those who have been in Fayette. By doing so, we hope to have reliable communication between those on the inside and on the outside. With this, we are able to call the prison when we hear anything alarming and make it known that we will assert our presence against this heinous institution. We would like anyone reading this to spread the word. Contact us at the below address if you have a testimony of how your time in prison has been toxic and inhumane. We hope to take these testimonies to court, and expose the injustices that happen every single day to hundreds of HUMANS, not animals; despite how the state treats people in prison.

Finally, we are partnering with graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh in order to complete a new study on the adverse health effects inmates at Fayette are reporting. We will be sending out surveys over the next year and hope you can fill them out and report back to us with how your health has been neglected. With this study, we will also be able to present legal evidence of how SCI-Fayette is unconstitutional. We will be having HRC's third Voices from the Inside event focused on those in toxic prisons on November 23rd to highlight these injustices.

Send us your grievances!

Human Rights Coalition  
 Attention: Trika Parasimo  
 PO Box 34580  
 Philadelphia, PA 19101

## Sudoku #508 (Easy)

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

*How can I receive a copy of  
THE MOVEMENT?*

*Simply send your contact info to:*

*Human Rights Coalition  
 P.O. Box 34580  
 Philadelphia, PA 19101  
 Attention: Newsletter!*

*Donations are welcome,  
 but not required! Make checks payable to: Human Rights Coalition*

See page 42 for answers.

**THE MOVEMENT**

www.hrcoalition.org

PAGE 15

(FALL ISSUE #42)

# Artist In Residence Creates Portraits Of Reform At The District Attorney's Office

Neda Ulaby, October 2020

When I met him earlier this year, James "Yaya" Hough was surrounded by white buckets of blue and orange paint, working in the downtown Philadelphia studio that came — before coronavirus — along with the first-ever artist residency at the Philadelphia District Attorney's office. He was focused on one of his portraits of various lawyers, victims' rights advocates, judges



James "Yaya" Hough works on a portrait of Michael "Smokey" Wilson, who was incarcerated for life as a child and served for 46 years. Neda Ulaby/NPR

and formerly incarcerated people now on display around the city in an exhibition called [Points of Connection](#).

"I've been an artist since I was a child," Hough told me, recalling life-changing trips to the Carnegie Museum of Art in his hometown of Pittsburgh. "But unfortunately, I grew up in a very dysfunctional environment that led me, in the worst of ways, to become involved with crime and violence to the point where, by

the time I was 17 years old, I was arrested, charged and convicted for killing a man, over *nothing* justifiable."

Hough, now 46, is soft faced and soft spoken. He served 27 years in prison. Hough's release came in the wake of a 2012 Supreme Court case brought by renowned civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson that ruled juvenile life sentences, like Hough's, unconstitutional. In prison, Hough had been extremely involved with the arts — painting portraits of fellow prisoners as gifts, and taking classes with Mural Arts Philadelphia, the largest public art program in the country.

Jane Golden founded Mural Arts Philadelphia 35 years ago and now teaches art at prisons through the program's Restorative Justice project. Among her students at Graterford Prison, she says Hough immediately established himself as a leader.

"He was always mature, thoughtful and had incredible talent," she says. "So when he got out in April, we knew we wanted to work with him. It was just a question of how and when."

Enter Agnes Gund: Back in 2017, the philanthropist and activist started the Art for Justice Fund, dedicated to using the arts in the service of criminal justice reform. To fund it, she sold one of her most expensive paintings — a Roy Lichtenstein — for more than a \$150 million.

"We know art can spark understanding and awareness where traditional methods of engagement fall short," Gund said as part of a public conference early in October, during which she announced additional support for Hough's project that will continue through this year. Together with the organization Fair and Just Prosecution, these organizations worked with the Philadelphia District Attorney's office to create an artist's residency for Hough. (Not a dime of taxpayer money was spent in support of this project, according to those involved.)

Philadelphia's district attorney was enthusiastic from the start. It helped that Larry Krasner is well-known as a social justice reformer, the type who can be spotted online (in a buttoned-up shirt and tie) singing protest songs by [The Clash](#).

As district attorney, Krasner says his job demands empathy for everyone in the system — police, victims, prosecutors and defendants, including those, he says, who do not belong behind bars. "Or even defendants who deserve to be there and should stay there," he says. "I think that it's important we never dehumanize any of these folks. And art does that. Art works against dehumanization."

Originally, as an artist in residence, James Hough was supposed to spend time at the district attorney's office, observing and meeting with various people there. The coronavirus changed that. Still, Hough participated remotely. He was fascinated by the data he was able to access.

"The amount of shootings in a city," he offered by way of example. "I mean not just the raw numbers, or who, but the times of day — so much information. And it makes me think like, if we're only compiling this stuff to generate prosecutorial policy

*(Continued on page 17)*

(Continued from page 16)

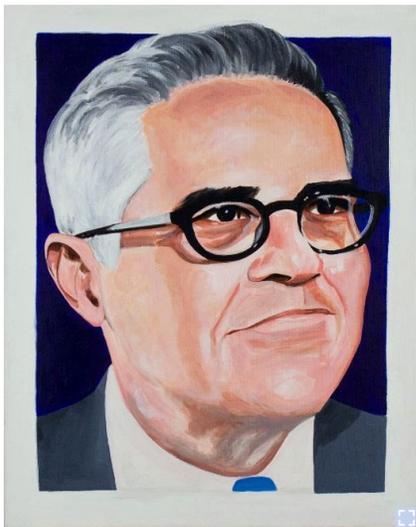
or legislative policy that only confront crime in an adversarial way, then that's actually part of the problem. There needs to be more creative use of this data."

Advocates such as Jane Golden argue the arts are the perfect place to find creativity and innovation at a moment when there's a national push for criminal justice and prison reform. The residency she helped create also pays the salary of Hough's assistant, [Akeil Robertson](#). Now 30, he was also convicted of murder as a juvenile by the very same District Attorney's office where he now helps document the work of victims' advocacy groups and the efforts of formerly incarcerated people to reduce crime in the city.

"I didn't paint or draw before prison," he says. Now, Robertson is in art school. Hough gave him some rudimentary art supplies while the two were serving time. Even more importantly, Robertson says, Hough showed him the basics — both when it came to making art and in reconciling himself with his past.

"That really allowed for me to do the work he's speaking about, which is reflection," Robertson says. "Because when he gave me a sketchbook, I was like, 'What do you use this for?' and he said, effectively, 'To get to know yourself.'"

That's where change begins, says Hough, whose work is also included in the show *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration* currently at MoMa PS1 in New York. His next projects include helping to get this residency replicated in other district attorney's offices around the country.



A portrait of Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner by James "Yaya" Hough.  
Akeil Robertson/Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

See more of Yaya's amazing artwork on back cover!  
Thank you: <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/19/918377213/artist-in-residence-creates-portraits-of-reform-at-the-district-attorneys-office>

From The Cell of Jeffery A. Shockley #ES4796

## Untitled

How is today different than the yesterday we seldom remember or chose to be encouraged by? Why are we not able to walk together and embrace our brother in the strength meant to last past the freedom marches that started even before I was born; as a generation scorns at the manners displayed, the unity they stayed but not for the lives they have paid?

Did not their lives matter yesterday, the same as the "Black Lives Matter" heard today, as changes were made so we may live free, now? Must we forget the atrocities we've seen on mass media that mean to demean in the selfsame Black history yet come together as if anew, whence social media reveals similar images that time before drew loud crowds around for even their children would see, could see, as another Black man beaten so miserably hanging free from a tree?

The actions in our own communities, creating names that change to numbers under the gavel of a judge and then blame a system for the work we as men have not done when by our own accord is made, sending our own to the grave as when our forefather's history came from nothing to something, gathering everything they had in the hope of a tomorrow they have yet to see.

Why must we quit the back history of Black History? Disregarding the tenacity and ability to succeed against far greater odds than we create today? Those who (still) became doctors, lawyers, inventors and artists, navigating through a time the same design existed. Yet, today we have a problem because "they" are not taking care of me. They owe me as if I deserve more than I hold myself accountable for-forgetting to ask how can I honor their yesterday by living today in harmony with the history that tried for me, died for me, and the grandmother's mother's who have cried for me?

May we rise past the last number of years and hear the songs that made us as people able and capable to overcome what was done even through the tomorrow we may not see and be today the Kings and Queens, Princes and Princesses we were before time became defined by shackles and chains that remain...in our DNA.

Smart Communications/PA DOC  
Jeffery A. Shockley/#4796 / SCI-Fayette  
PO Box 33028, St. Petersburg, FL 33733/SCI-Fayette

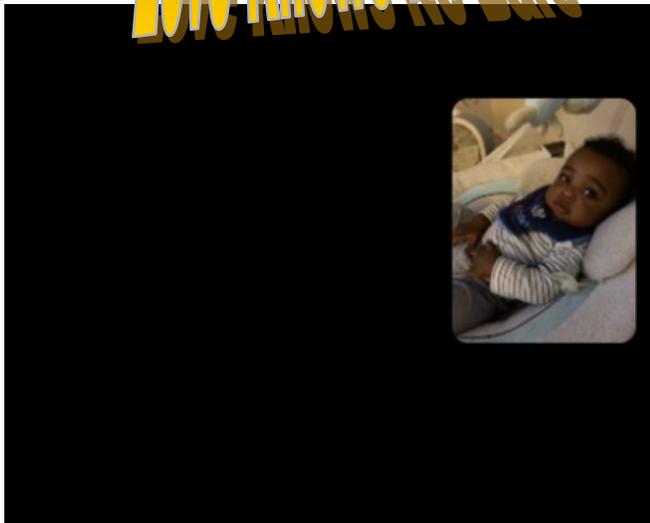
**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# LOVE KNOWS NO BARS



This year has shown us that, with a little creativity, we can still stay close to those who matter, those who we love and care about... and those that we think of daily. CADBI, HRC, and other organizations would like for you to know that you matter, all lives matter and we will continue this fight. Be blessed, be safe and remember... (when possible) "It is better to be six feet apart, than six feet under."



Above: Derrick Cary #MN-2733, SCI-Mahanoy

Hi Uncle Derrick! I was so glad to see you on our zoom call and glad you got to see your great-nephew for the first time. I thank you for being a listening ear, I thank you for your guidance, and I thank you for your insight in helping me navigate this world.

I also have a message for you from great-nephew Nasir: "I've been in this world for 9 months. So far you've been a great and supportive uncle, despite the distance. I look forward to our first meeting, and hope to maintain our relationship."

Love Saniyyah and Nasir

## October

- 10/2 James Lloyd (Benner)
- 10/2 Brandon Moody (Dallas)
- 10/4 Jennifer Vinsek (Muncy)
- 10/4 Jermaine Palmer (Somerset)
- 10/7 Edward Ball (Dallas)
- 10/8 Kevin Cannady (Dallas)
- 10/9 Rodney Derrickson (Forrest)
- 10/10 Eric Coxry (Forrest)
- 10/25 Donlad Massey (Benner)
- 10/26 Christopher Adams (Smithfield)
- 10/30 Heather Lavelle (Muncy)

## November

- 11/4 Stratton Peay (Green)
- 11/11 Matthew Garcia (Coal Township)
- 11/12 Cynthia Gonzalez (Muncy)
- 11/12 Nicole Newell (Muncy)
- 11/26 Brittany Williams (Muncy)
- 11/30 Tyree Williams (Phoenix)

## December

- 12/3 Robert Furgess (Green)
- 12/4 Sheena King (Muncy)
- 12/7 Melvin White (Mahanoy)
- 11/28 Tequilla Fields (Muncy)
- 12/9 Christopher Berry (Camp Hill)
- 12/15 Kerry (Shakaboona) Marshall (Rockview)
- 12/17 Brian Charles (Phoenix)
- 12/21 Denise Crump (Cambridge Springs)
- 12/22 Quadree Stots (Phoenix)
- 12/25 Delores Rivers (Muncy)
- 12/29 Dwayne Hill (Camp Hill)
- 12/30 Mark Taylor (Forrest)



Belated Happy Birthday to Janet Martin 8/30, SCI-Muncy, and (90 year old) Alice Green 8/31, SCI-Muncy.

Yes, even if you do not hear from us, you are on our minds, in our heart, and in the fight.

**Yvonne Newkirk**

# 2nd Chances!

**T**HE MOVEMENT magazine would like folks to know what's happening with the men and women who were young teens sentenced to LIFE without parole. They were considered to be throw-a-way people without hope; at ages as young as 13 to 17 years old they were labeled corrupt adults who would never ever change. We've interviewed a few who have come home in previous issues, asking them to share their experiences. We don't expect to see that folks have won a Nobel Peace Prize, but after decades behind bars a job, marriage, self improvement, or new perspectives are things that we see as accomplishments. Thank you Big Hick (a returning citizen) for your home coming photos and your interview with Curtis Braxton. We look forward to seeing more from you.

Big Hick—Defund Police March



Big Hick— Stop the Violence Protest



Interview by Big Hick.

*Greetings. The Movement magazine has given me the opportunity to interview men and women returning home from the belly of the beast. For me, it is essential to share their stories because their experiences could give hope and insight to those coming home behind them. Speaking of what they go through - getting a job or catching Septa to get around are small things that matters most.*

*I met our first interviewee, Tawfeeq, in 2001 at SCI-Huntingdon. We are both members of the F.O.I.. Since we've known each other he has always been an outstanding brother. He is a phenomenal writer, a good poet and a voice for the voiceless.*

**Big Hick:** As Salaamu Alaikum my brother, it's a pleasure to have you home and I'm sure you are enjoying your freedom. The Movement magazine has given me the opportunity to have a section to interview men and women coming home from the belly of the beast and you are my first interviewee. So thank you, brother, for doing this. Tell our readers your name, how much time you did, and when you came home.

**Tawfeeq:** My name is Curtis "Tawfeeq" Braxton. I was paroled after 23 years. I was released August 14th 2020.

**Big Hick:** Oh brother Tawfeeq, how does it feel to be home after 23 years of captivity?

**Tawfeeq:** Amazing! Every experience is brand new! I'm just taking everything in.

**Big Hick:** So you came in in August which means you were in during the COVID lockdown is there anything you wish to share about that.

**Tawfeeq:** Coming home in these troubling times and readjusting to an adnormal environment can be baffling because places and organizations are operating through phones and the Internet so being unfamiliar with all of this new technology causes me a little dilemma with filling out applications and seeking support from outlets that help prisoners .

**Big Hick:** Speaking of outlets are you currently working?

**Tawfeeq:** Yes, I have a job.

**Big Hick:** What type of work are you doing? If you don't mind me asking was it hard for you to get a job?

**Tawfeeq:** A fancy word for what I do is an electronic technician where I de-construct computers, breaking them down so the parts can be recycled. Honestly, no, I got hired for two jobs at the same time. I just took the job that was more convenient for me. It's opportunity out here for those who exert themselves.

**Big Hick:** I'm glad to see you coming home focused, brother. So many come home and make excuses, but I see you making it happen. We worked for 19 cents in them prisons to come home to any job with a steady income is sufficient, until something better comes along. Brother, keep up the positive work. Is there anything you wish to say to the many men and women who will be reading this interview?

**Tawfeeq:** Keep your heads up. In the words of an African Warrior Amilcar Cabral: "In light of favorable prospects for our struggle we must study each problem thoroughly and find the best solution for it. Think in order to act and act in order to be able to think better. We must as always face the present and the future with optimism, but without losing sight of realities and particularly of the special difficulties of our struggle. We must

always bear in mind and carry out the watch words of our party, hope for the best but prepare for the worst!"

**Big Hick:** Thank you. Spectacular interview and I look forward to working with you in the near future.



Left:  
Curtis "Tawfeeq" Braxton  
Date of release: 8/14/2020

# Human Rights Coalition Report

## COVID & PRISONS

In this Human Rights Report we look at COVID-19 and a population of people too often regarded as an irrelevant population, an estimated 2.3 million within the U.S.

It is 2020 and we're in chaos! An entire country is splintered on issues of economy, foreign allies, global warming, clean air, clean water, fracking, immigration, Muslims, Mexicans, China, Black Lives Mattering, fake news, fake scientist, and, finally, who's at fault for the current 237,000 deaths across the U.S. of America. Trump is currently President. He and his followers believe that COVID-19 is not a problem and will simply go away. It doesn't matter that the death toll is 225,000; which means 225 thousand people have DIED! With human life being so low on the list of things to care about, I'm not surprised that prisoners are a non-issue (**ANGRY**, but not surprised). It's immoral that the so called "leader of our country" doesn't care who lives or who dies, as long as it is not him. The health and welfare of ALL American citizens should always take top priority and when Trump and legislators including Governor Wolf allow people to die, people that they could have saved, from COVID-19, well - I call it MURDER in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree and 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree, in accordance with Pennsylvania Law.

Since COVID-19 began families cried out for their loved ones who are behind bars, approximately 2.3 million people - the majority Black and Brown - in prisons across the entire United States. We reminded our leaders of the obvious - if the virus gets into the prisons it will spread like wild fires because people in prison are crowded on top of each other, they cannot social distance, they do not have masks, and neither do they have cleaning products. Families and advocates demanded to know; "What will happen to the men, women, and children in prisons, immigration centers, jails, youth detention centers?" and "What will happen to the sick, elderly, and people with pre-existing medical issues - the most vulnerable?"

In Pennsylvania twenty-two percent of the inmates in state prisons are elderly according to Secretary John Wetzel, the head of the PA Department of Corrections (PA DOC). That's over 10,000 men and women. So families of prisoners, advocates, health experts and concerned citizens called on Governor Wolf, who took one small step in protecting, not all PA prisoners, but the sick and the elderly. However, Governor Wolf estimated 1,800 who were elderly and/or sick and submitted an executive order for their release. Would you like to know how many people were actually released? Only 140 people (less than 1/2 percent) were released. So I ask myself, does Governor Wolf really care about prisoners or is he just being politically correct?

But wait, there's more to this story. It is my understanding that Governor Wolf passed on the decisions about who should be released onto Secretary Wetzel. With the release of only 140 individuals it is obvious that his concerns were not for the safe-

ty of the men and women in prison. His process for release was assuring that each person was approved by the victims advocates office, the county where they were originally arrested, the sentencing judge, and their crime of 40, 50, 60, 70, or 80 years ago absolutely could not have been against a police officer. My question for Secretary Wetzel is, what does any of this have to do with being sick, elderly, and vulnerable to COVID-19. And what type of risk to the community is a 60, 70, 80 or 90-year-old person with cancer, diabetes or respiratory problems; or those who are in wheel chairs or can't get out of bed?

Shame on you Governor Wolf for passing off your power of reprieve - you did nothing but "pass the buck"; your actions show you care more about your political career than people. For every death of an elderly person in prison resulting from COVID-19, I hold you both responsible.

And shame on you Secretary Wetzel - you, too, have done nothing. The welfare and safety of your prison guards and administrative staff are important; as well as the welfare and safety of the men and women in your custody. You have not lived up to your responsibility! By only releasing 140 people who are sick and elderly you've demonstrated that you hold everyone and anyone at a higher level than the men and women in your care.

When this virus started you were aware of the consequences. You knew that if the virus got into the prison population, everyone confined there were basically sitting ducks. You knew that no one in prison had contracted the virus. With this in mind a lot of people, in Pennsylvania and in other states across the U.S. felt that (at a minimum) people who were vulnerable, those who were close to their release date, and those who were eligible for parole should have been released, so as not to die in prison - this would be the humane thing to do. That act alone would have increased the opportunities for social distancing. But it seems to me that you don't see the men and women in prison as people. Maybe you see dollar signs since prisons are a business, maybe you see political aspirations, or maybe you've become so callous that you see every person in prison as unworthy and deserve what they get, even if that means death. Also, let me remind you, like you and I, the men and women in prison are people; they have made a mistake and are paying for that mistake, but most importantly they have NOT been sentenced to death.

Secretary Wetzel has taken ambiguous steps in his attempt to prevent the virus from coming into the prison. For example, all family members were prevented from contact visits. A twenty-three hour per day lock down was put in place with 45 minutes to shower, make phone calls or exercise, exactly like solitary confinement in my opinion. Only guards and staff were allowed to come and go with no mandatory requirements for wearing face masks or testing. In other words if precautions aren't mandatory and with consequences many workers will do what they

*(Continued on page 21)*

# Human Rights Coalition Report

(Continued from page 20)

want and when they want; staff and guards will not be tested for COVID symptoms properly or consistently. In fact, as it is widely known, Trump supporters intentionally do not wear masks. Neither do they care about quarantine and social distancing. In the swing states such as Pennsylvania these supporters live in the rural areas of the state, five and six hours from the city, where state prisons are located and our loved ones are housed. These Trump supporters/guards do not care about issuing masks or providing cleaning supplies. And let's be real, in general most employees will follow policies/rules, but it only takes one person to enter the prison and contaminate others.

To better show what is actually happening, let's hear from prisoners whose lives are actually in danger of COVID-19.

**SCI-Dallas** October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

... there are 4 confirmed cases of Covid19 in this joint as of 11:45am Thursday, October 14th, 2020. They called for a 72 hour lockdown, but what is that going to do since the guards still have to pass out the meals and the mail, and you guessed it they are the ones who's bringing the virus in this joint but they ain't wearing gloves when they pass the food out and very rarely do they wear the mask or the fake mask that they manufacture out of what looks like ripped up T-shirts, you know the joints that Dr. Fauci said just is not efficient at all. Who better then CADBI to bring attention to DBI which is effectively what these so-called mask and SCI Dallas's remedy for dealing with Covid19 basically amounts to? They told us that we can't shower for 72 hours, (what?!) I thought soap was good for killing the spread of Covid19. I actually saw a guard licking his fingers to separate the mail as he was trying to pass it out not to be ignorant or nothing like that, it was just something that people do to separate paper. They sent 4 guys/inmates to the hospital, now where are, and who are the guards/staff that infected these dudes? Your guess is good as mine, but I'm sure they're still walking around here.

**SCI-Dallas** 10/23/2020

This is just to inform everyone that there has been a coronavirus outbreak in SCI-Dallas. 4 blocks have multiple prisoners with the virus, D/B, F, H & the infirmary. This is a prison with hundreds upon hundreds of elderly lifers. If you have anyone in this prison that matters to you, please speak up. Thank you.

**SCI-Forest** October 29, 2020

I do realize alot of you's already know this data but we prisoners in SCI Forest are not being updated by people on the outside so when we learn of new numbers, its shocking to us.

We learned as of Wed. Oct. 28 there are 273 active positive prisoner cases of Covid-19 and 150 active staff cases. I was told 1 prisoner died in SCI-Dallas quite recently. A close friend of mine, Thomas Greene #BK6584 is in the infirmary, as I write this, recovering from surgery and he has also contracted the virus.

. . . All 1,400+ prisoners in SCI-Forest who willingly took the flu shot will receive a free 6 inch sub from Powerhouse Sub's in Altoona, Pa. Paid for by the Inmate General Welfare Fund. In SCI-Forest we get out of our cells a minimum of 2 hours per day, maximum of 3 hours per day. We are safe, we are okay. Some people do not like Superintendent Derek Oberlander but I do. I've seen his concern with the prisoner population & I have seen firsthand how he tries to help people. Now that he is Superintendent, he does not answer to anyone else in the facility like when he was a deputy. He has shown his concern not just for this virus but also for the well-being of us prisoners. There are a lot of bad Superintendents, but he is not one of them. He can be reached at [doberlande@pa.gov](mailto:doberlande@pa.gov) If you have concerns about a loved one here, reach out.

**SCI-Forest** 9/23/2020

DefCon5

Things here are about what you can expect...madness. Parts of Forest is in what I'm calling DefCon5 lockdown. We seem to have 1 or 2 infected staff members and they locked down one entire block and a half of a block on two blocks due to contact tracing.

The other side of the block, I'm on is in DefCon5 (they're all kitchen workers so everyone is assuming the infected staff is a kitchen staff). They get out every other day one cell at a time for 25 minutes for shower and phone. And everyone on the DefCon5 blocks gets their temperature taken every day. Well we all knew it would happen sooner or later. Of course, we may get lucky and no one catches it (for now), but eventually it will come in here. I guess we're sort of lucky being in such a remote prison?? Sucks.

A "funny" thing is some people are refusing getting their temperature taken as sort of a protest or resistance to what's going on. Not sure if that's entirely helpful but I get their frustration.

9/16/2020

. . . One other thing I've heard from several folks inside the PA state prison system of late is that for those guards who are wearing masks -- there is currently no enforced prohibition against them wearing "custom masks" of their choosing - and thus many, many white guards are walking around

(Continued on page 22)

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

PAGE 21

(FALL ISSUE #42)

# Human Rights Coalition Report

(Continued from page 21)

*in masks with Trump slogans or propaganda and/or the "Punisher" skull icon, etc. And that this, as you might imagine, is serving to amplify an already very repressive racialized (white supremacist) atmosphere.*

*I think because the masks are a "new territory" in terms of the uniform, they right now occupy a loophole and not one that the DOC currently feels interested or pressure/obliged to regulate/restrain. Specifically, two different people at Rockview told me a lot of guards there are wearing Trump/MAGA masks and being emboldened by that permission to really escalate their racist displays. . . .*

9/6/2020 *These numbers are from DOC Dashboard*

## **Coal Township**

*Incarcerated = 19*

*Staff = 0*

## **Camp Hill**

*Incarcerated = 15*

*Staff = 8*

## **Mercer**

*Incarcerated = 39*

*Staff = 8*

## **Houtzdale**

*Incarcerated = 10*

*Staff = 3*

With the above correspondence (which is only a trickle of the letters received by family members and HRC), you will notice that there are four prisons impacted by the virus, today the number of prisons, the number infected, and the number of deaths have risen significantly. Also, shortly after September 6<sup>th</sup> the numbers were no longer reported on the DOC website dashboard. Hmmm, I wonder why?

At this point I reiterate, no one inside the prison had COVID-19; and no prisoners were allowed outside of the prison walls; and if prisoners must go out for a hospital emergency they should be quarantined before being placed back into population with other prisoners. The only way for the virus to get into the prison is if guards or staff members are bringing the virus into the prison. As of now, one could easily argue that the contamination is intentional or negligence.

Complaints have been made to Secretary Wetzel and to individual prisons. There has been no changes in the behavior of the guards.

I say to Wolf and Wetzel, let us put the shoe on the other foot. How would you handle this life threatening virus differently if your guards and staff did not have the virus; but, the prisoners

did? And your guards had to go into the prisons to do their job risking contracting the virus? I am sure (with the pressure from the Guards Unions and FOP) that you would do better for your guards and staff (at a significantly higher level) than you've done for the prisoners (who are majority Black and Brown) currently in your care.

Governor Wolf and Secretary Wetzel, to allow people to die (people who you have the power to save) from COVID-19 is MURDER!

Lastly, our Guest-Editor Sergio Hyland has contracted the virus. SERG! OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU. By the time you receive this issue of THE MOVEMENT, we pray that you've won this fight. Below, our last message from Serg.

*SCI-Chester 11/2/2020 Mama Patt, I hate to inform u, but we're back on lockdown. A major one this time. There's been a serious outbreak here, and they're trying to keep it quiet. It was 5 people at first, but within a week, they've lost count. The infirmary is full and they're now using the gym as a triage area. Several of the elders have been taken to the hospital where they aren't doing very well. And the administration here is still refusing to test the population. They wait until we exhibit extreme symptoms, and then they just lock us in a cell with a poster on the door that says "STOP". No access to phones or kiosks or showers. And that's indefinitely! Its not right. They say they're doing it to slow the spread, but the fact is this: every time they lock us down, the virus still continues to spread uncontrollably. They won't hold their staff accountable, and some still fuse to wear masks while they work the block. But we're the ones who keep being punished.*

*I'm just updating u. Sorry I can't be more help right now [with THE MOVEMENT]. I feel bad. I think I have the virus. I'm fatigued, my muscles are in pain constantly. I have soar throat, headache, and I've been breaking out in chills for the past week or so. I woke up this morning vomiting. I'm sweating while writing this email. I feel like shit ...*

*11/5/2020 Mama Patt. I tested positive for Coronavirus and I'm now in the infirmary bcuz my oxygen level is low, and they want me here just in case I need to be taken to the hospital. This is a painful virus and I felt close to death several times over this past week. I'm working hard just to breathe. I just wanted to update u. We went from 5 cases to almost 200 in just under 2 weeks. And Maroon's people just died down here - Alvin Joyner - from Covid-19. He was 77 and was on his 51st year of a life sentence. This is a sad situation. Sorry I can't be more help right now. I'm struggling just writing this. I have no energy and just using the bathroom makes me weak.*

*By: Mama Patt*

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# Human Rights Coalition Report

## A State-by-State Look at Coronavirus in Prisons

The Marshall Project is collecting data on COVID-19 infections in state and federal prisons. See how the virus has affected correctional facilities where you live.

Coronavirus Updated 4:50 P.M. 10.30.2020

By The Marshall Project

Since March, The Marshall Project has been tracking how many people are being sickened and killed by COVID-19 in prisons and how widely it has spread across the country and within each state. Here, we will regularly update these figures counting the number of people infected and killed nationwide and in each prison system until the crisis abates.

*This reporting was undertaken in partnership with The Associated Press.*

### Cases

By **Oct. 27**, at least 161,349 people in prison had tested positive for the illness, a 5 percent increase from the week before.

The number of new infections reached its second-highest level since the start of the pandemic, 400 cases short of the peak in early August. This week's rise in cases was driven by big jumps in prisoners testing positive in South Dakota, Wisconsin, Kansas and New York as well as outbreaks in Arkansas, Michigan and Minnesota.

Reported cases first peaked in late April, when states such as Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas began mass testing of prisoners. Those initiatives suggested that coronavirus had been circulating among people without symptoms in much greater numbers than previously known.

There have been at least 161,349 cases of coronavirus reported among prisoners.

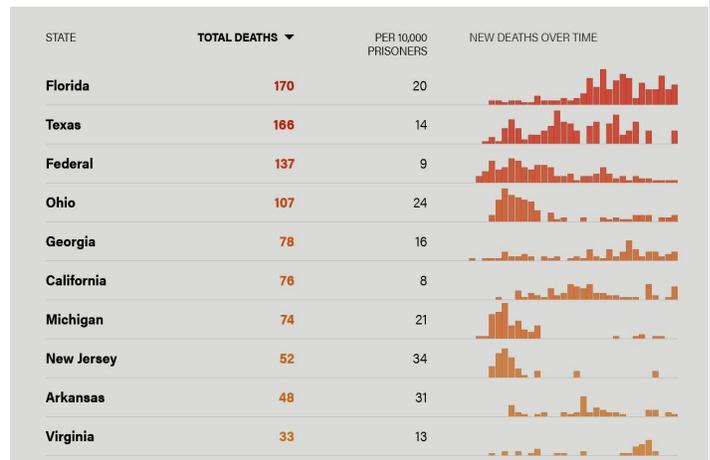
126,887 prisoners have recovered.

### Deaths

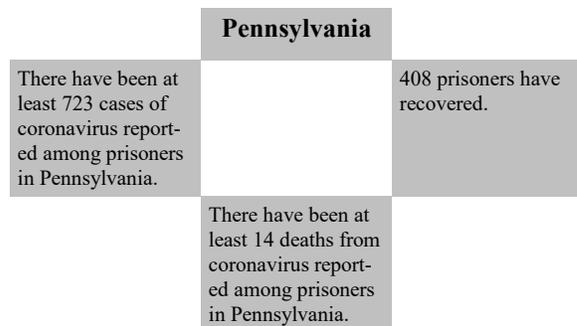
The first known COVID-19 death of a prisoner was in Georgia when Anthony Cheek died on March 26. Cheek, who was 49 years old, had been held in Lee State Prison near Albany, a hotspot for the disease. Since then, at least 1,325 other prisoners have died of coronavirus-related causes. By Oct. 27, the total number of deaths had risen by 4 percent in a week.

There have been at least 1,326 deaths from coronavirus reported among prisoners.

What's happening in your state:



Given the huge differences in how many people are being tested in prisons for the virus, the effects of the pandemic have varied widely between different state prison systems. The first reported cases began popping up in Massachusetts and Georgia on March 20. In August, Hawaii, the last system whose prisoners had not gotten sick, reported its first confirmed cases of coronavirus. Here, you can choose to view the data for any state prison system and see how the numbers compare. **NOTE! The Editor choose the state of Pennsylvania.**



*Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections reports coronavirus testing data for those who have been released on parole. For consistency of comparison with other state prison systems, we removed these tests and cases for prisoners from the data prior to July 28. In mid-August, Pennsylvania began reporting cases for prisoners and staff in community correction facilities. We have included these cases starting with numbers as of August 18, and have updated inmate population figures to add individuals held in community corrections facilities. The number of individuals recovered among both staff and prisoners don't count individuals in community corrections facilities.*

(Continued on page 24)

# Human Rights Coalition Report

(Continued from page 23)

## Prison staff

While we know more about how prisoners are getting sick, another group of people is at risk in these facilities: correctional officers, nurses, chaplains, wardens and other workers. We know little about how coronavirus is affecting them, though they have the potential to carry it both into facilities and back out to their communities. It's difficult to assess how prison workers are being affected because many aren't being systematically tested.

In the most recent week, 16 states—Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia—released information on the number of their staff members tested for coronavirus. Where we do know about positive cases, most state corrections departments stress that the count includes only the employees who voluntarily report a diagnosis, often in the course of calling out sick.

Since the start of the pandemic, more than 36,524 prison staff members have tested positive—with new cases reaching an all-time high this week.

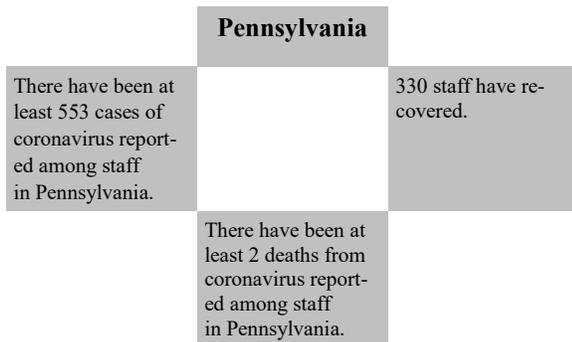
Ninety-one deaths have been publicly reported.

There have been at least 36,524 cases of coronavirus reported among prison staff.

27,652 staff have recovered.

## The staff members in your state

We know very little about how many staff are tested, and in many states it's not clear how many people are working in prisons right now. What we do know is that in several states prison employees began to get sick before the people they oversee. Using this tool, you can view the data for any state's prison system and see how the numbers compare. **NOTE! The Editor choose the state of Pennsylvania.**



The Marshall Project will continue to track and publish data on coronavirus in our prison systems. If you have updates to the data to share or other comments, please contact us at [info+covidtracker@themarshallproject.org](mailto:info+covidtracker@themarshallproject.org).

We are publishing the raw data we have collected at [data.world](https://data.world), in partnership with the Associated Press, and on Github. You can download the data to examine for yourself or to use in your research. If you do use our data, please let us know.

## Methodology (State of Pennsylvania).

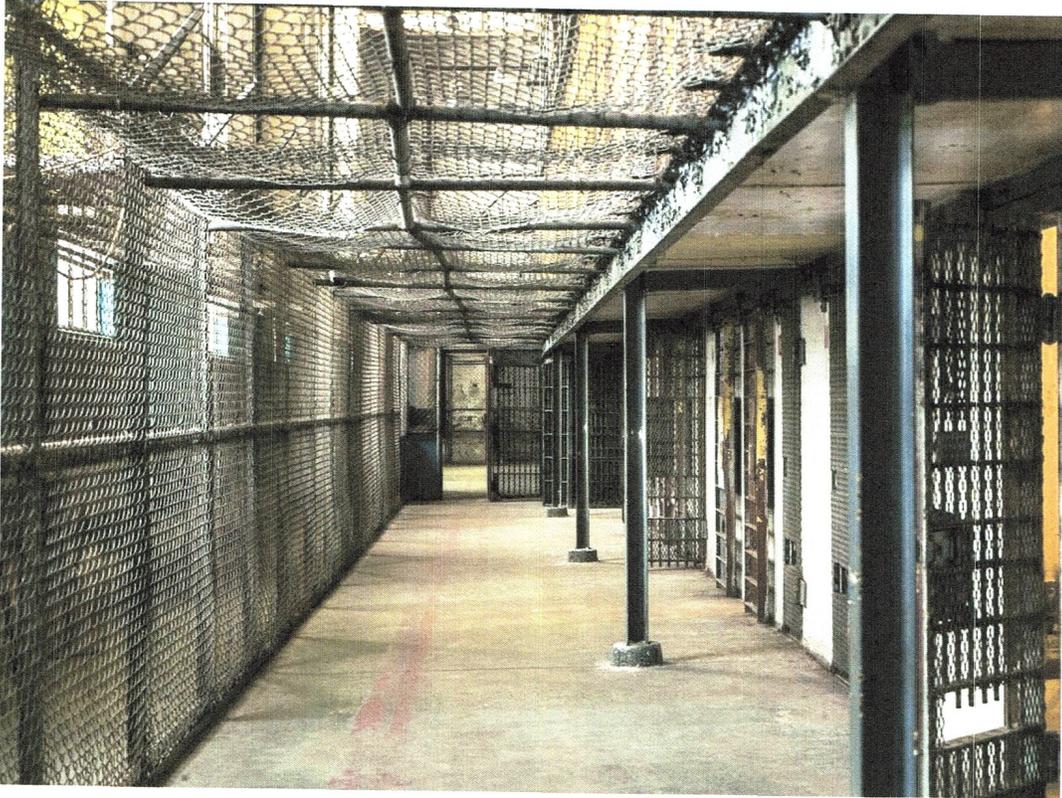
In mid-August, Pennsylvania began reporting cases for prisoners and staff in community correction facilities. We have included these cases starting with numbers as of Aug. 18, and have updated inmate population figures to add individuals held in community corrections facilities. The number of individuals recovered among both staff and prisoners don't count individuals in community corrections facilities.

**Editor's Note!** Due to space constraints, we were unable to print this report in its entirety. For information about the Marshall Project Methodology and to find out about your state or for Federal information visit: <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/05/01/a-state-by-state-look-at-coronavirus-in-prisons>

# Human Rights Coalition Report

11/1/2020 4:35 PM

SCI ROCKVIEW---COVID-19 SPREADING THROUGHOUT PRISON... 24  
HOUR CONFINEMENT TO CELLS



The following horrendous and disturbing account of COVID-19 infections within SCI Rockview, a Pennsylvania correctional institution in the United States was forwarded by activist, award-winning author and documentary filmmaker and Founder of Sagewriters ([www.sagewriters.com](http://www.sagewriters.com)) and Co-Director of the Global Kindness Revolution ([www.trustonekindness.com](http://www.trustonekindness.com)) to the United States Team for the Impartial And Fair Treatment In Parole Initiative which operates under the umbrella of International Men's Day ([www.usainternationalmensday.blogspot.com](http://www.usainternationalmensday.blogspot.com)). We have omitted the name of the author of the heart wrenching communications below to protect his identity and prevent retaliatory action being taken against him. We applaud his courage.

**THE INCARCERATED SOUL'S "CRY FOR HELP" EXTRACTED FROM THREE "COVID-19 PRISON UPDATE" E-MAILS RECEIVED AND REPRINTED IN THEIR ENTIRETY:**

*" On 10-29-2020, at SCI-Rockview, prison officials are remaining tight lipped about what's really going on with the spread of COVID-19 throughout the prison. I can only say for sure, that COVID-19 is in the prison (again), as several guards have it and two incarcerated men. The two incarcerated men that have the COVID-19 virus are from the housing block, B-block and A-block, and I know both individuals personally as they're good friends of mine. The two COVID-19 infected prisoners are Theodore "Butchie" Floyd #AF9724 (from South Philly) and Jeffrey "Jeff" Brown (from Chester). They both worked in the*

# Human Rights Coalition Report

prison's infirmary, which is where they contacted the Coronavirus from infected guards and prisoners whom they were providing medical care to. Butchie and Jeff are front line service workers in prison paid a slave's salary of 17¢ per hour. If anyone can get a hold of Butchie and Jeff's families, please do so. The PADOC / SCI-Rockview is being criminally negligent on how they're handling the COVID-19 pandemic within the institutions.

On 10-30-2020, at SCI-Rockview, the entire prison continues to be under "enhanced" COVID-19 lockdown. We're being denied the little Constitutional rights we do have left as incarcerated people, we're not allowed phone calls/emails/or visits; we're confined to cells 24hrs per day; we're not allowed to shower; and we're given cold food 3x's per day. Now all of a sudden, the prison officials want to begin having "the prisoners" cleaning the blocks with watered-down disinfectant and requiring guards to wear their masks when before this, the pro-Trump guards were quietly rebelling against wearing masks by refusing to wear them all the time or not wearing them correctly. Hopefully, SCI-Rockview's COVID-19 outbreak gets contained. We're waiting for the COVID-19 tests to return.

On 10-31-2020, at SCI-Rockview, we got this MEMO in our assigned cells this morning. I'm providing the Memo here. Read it for

yourself. It's insulting our intelligence, and blasphemous even! The PADOC/SCI-ROCKVIEW Officials won't even admit to incarcerated people and the public that SEVERAL GUARDS AND PRISONERS ARE CURRENTLY INFECTED WITH COVID-19 and are in the damn hospital as a result of their criminal negligence!!! WHY ARE THEY TRYING TO KEEP THIS QUIET? WHY THE COVER UP?

The memo is below:

PADOC MEMO

TO: All Concerned

FROM: SCI-Rockview, H. Haldeman, Major of Unit Management

DATE: 10/30/2020

RE: ENHANCED QUARANTINE

Due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases throughout the DOC, State, and County, SCI-Rockview has implemented Enhanced Quarantine Procedures that will include a deep cleaning and disinfecting of the institution. This is being done for your safety and to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infections.

During this time, the following procedures will be in effect:

- All medications will be delivered to the housing unit, to include insulin.
- Temperature checks will be conducted by Medical staff twice a day.
- Oxygen checks will be conducted for inmates who have respiratory concerns.
- Inmates will be offered limited use of the phones and kiosks daily.
- Inmates will be offered showers daily.
- There will be no work lines, yard, or activities.
- Cell disinfecting materials (spray bottle with disinfectant and a cleaning rag) will be provided to each cell.
- Two inmates will be allowed out to continue enhanced cleaning efforts.

Staff are requesting your cooperation with the Enhanced Quarantine Procedures so that the institution can return to Phase 2 as quickly as possible. If no inmate has a positive COVID-19 test from now until November 9th, the Enhanced Quarantine Procedures will be terminated.

A reminder that masks outside of the cell are mandatory. Please do your best to keep yourself safe."

---

"WHY I DO COVID-19 PRISON UPDATES:: I do it because the public don't know what goes on in prison since prisons are made to be "isolated" penal colonies placed far away and modern day prison officials do their best to keep incarcerated people disconnected & isolated from their communities to better control prisoners with acts of abuse & terror.

I do it to reverse the process by connecting & uniting incarcerated people to their communities. Connecting & uniting us, happens through interaction & communication, which recreates the Bonds that were destroyed.

I do it to tell the Truth against the Powers that Be, which exposes the Lies the PADOC tells

# Human Rights Coalition Report

*the public about what's happening in the prisons. In this sense, I'm a Truth-teller and a News reporter, reporting on the lies and half truths of the PADO.*

*I do it because the PADO is not a transparent government agency, and just like all other state/federal agencies, they keep people in the dark and unknowing of what's happening. As long as the PADO conducts its operations in secrecy under the veil of darkness, it will continue to engage in corruption, anti-Black Racism, criminal wrongdoing, sexism, and Alt-right politics.*

*I do it to make the PADO a TRANSPARENT agency, as transparent as a glass house with florescent lights shining on it. That way, the PADO can be kept honest. I seek transparency because it brings about ACCOUNTABILITY, which brings about JUSTICE & CHANGE.*

*Since COVID-19's arrival within the Pa. prison system, the PADO has consistently LIED about safety measures taken; BUNGLED the handling of COVID-19; FALSE REPORTED COVID-19 in prisons; HIDDEN COVID-19 outbreaks at prisons; and are MANIPULATING COVID-19 safety precautions to further advance their anti-human SUPER-MAX SECURITY & CONTROL AGENDA for the entire state prison system, which if successful can set back our Prisoners' Human Rights agenda & advances over 20 years!*

*I do it because it's the RIGHT THING to do.*

---

## *WHAT CAN PRISONERS' FAMILIES & ACTIVISTS DO?*

*First, there must be a COORDINATED EFFORT among the various Community Organizations & Prisoners' Families in the urban/rural cities across Pennsylvania to deal with the PADO mishandling of COVID-19.*

*Be a Watchdog on what the PADO is doing.*

*Share what the PADO is doing with each other.*

*Spread the news of what the PADO is doing all over Social Media, especially to the Youth.*

*Report the news of what the PADO is doing to every local Newspaper editor across the state, by simply emailing the editors.*

*Report the news of what the PADO is doing to Celebrity Entertainers; they may get involved.*

*Call on Politicians, especially the Governor, Lt. Gov., and State Secretary, from across the state and demand they do something.*

*Call the PADO Secretary & other High Ranked PADO OFFICIALS about the situation with specific demands on what it is you want them to do.*

*Start making DEMANDS on the PADO of how the Public wants COVID-19 handled within the PADO prison system because PEOPLE ARE DYING IN HERE TOO!*

*Conduct our own THE PEOPLES' COVID-19 INVESTIGATION against the PADO! Stop waiting on the government to do the things that you can do yourself. Take the initiative yourselves.*

*DEMAND State Congressional Investigative Hearings to be held on the PADO'S handling of COVID-19.*

*DEMAND that the DOH Secretary Dr. Levine conduct a DOH COVID-19 RESPONSE INVESTIGATION against the PADO.*

*Create a LIST OF DEMANDS (centered around COVID-19 safety & human connections) for the PADO - with all the lockdowns, one demand should definitely be to place phone calls with facetime on our tablets to maintain connections with our families!*

*CREATIVELY DRAW PUBLIC ATTENTION on the PADO with PROTEST ACTIONS.*

*Don't ABANDON Criminal Justice Reform while near Victory, BUT CONTINUE the fight for the lives [of your loved ones] that are currently at RISK, and who are DYING inside these prisons because of COVID-19 and intentional neglect.*

*LETS FIGHT TO WIN!"*

\* \* \* \*

# Human Rights Coalition Report

The incarcerated gentleman who, at great risk, has penned and communicated the "Cry For Help" that you have just read speaks not just for himself, but for all of the incarcerated Men, Women, and Children (Juvenciles) who are vulnerable to contracting and dying from COVID-19. Collectively, prisons are not operating in compliance with the COVID-19 protocols mandated by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). Incarcerated souls are not being given the tools they need to keep themselves safe and reduce and eradicate COVID-19 infections. Here is who you can write to and call to change that.

## **GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA**

The Honorable Thomas Westerman Wolf  
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Office of the Governor  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
Telephone: 717-787-2500  
Facsimile: 717-772-8284  
E-Mail: [govcorresp@pa](mailto:govcorresp@pa)

## **SECRETARY, PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

The Honorable John E. Wetzel  
Secretary, Pennsylvania Department Of Corrections  
Department of Corrections Central Office  
1920 Technology Parkway  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050  
Telephone: 717-728-4109  
E-Mail: [ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov](mailto:ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov)

## **PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

The Honorable Jason Dawkins  
Representative – Pennsylvania 179<sup>th</sup> Legislative District  
Member, Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee  
Democratic Chair on Crime and Corrections Subcommittee of the Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee

### **District Office**

4667 Paul Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19124  
Telephone: 215-744-7901  
Facsimile: 215-744-7906  
E-Mail: [jdawkins@pahouse.net](mailto:jdawkins@pahouse.net)

### **Harrisburg:**

328 West Wing  
Post Office Box 202179  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2179  
Telephone: 717-789-1354  
Facsimile: 7917-780-4789  
E-Mail: [jdawkins@pahouse.net](mailto:jdawkins@pahouse.net)



Diane Alina Sears

# Human Rights Coalition Report



Gov. Tom Wolf, left, signed an order that directed the Department of Corrections, led by Secretary John Wetzel, right, to create a reprieve program for medically vulnerable inmates convicted of nonviolent crimes. (Commonwealth Media Services)

## Why Gov. Tom Wolf's big effort to grant coronavirus reprieves to Pa. inmates came up small

Joseph Darius Jaafari and Matt McKinney  
PA Post and Spotlight PA  
Jun 11, 2020

HARRISBURG — In April, amid growing fear that prisons could be tinderboxes for COVID-19, Gov. Tom Wolf announced he would grant temporary reprieves to certain nonviolent state inmates who have medical conditions that make them particularly vulnerable.

It was a power move by Mr. Wolf, who initially opted to wait for a plan from the GOP-led legislature, but he reversed course after it became clear a bill would be limited to 450 people. At the time of the announcement, Mr. Wolf said, “There is a premium on speed here. We need to move quickly.”

But what has unfolded since has come up short of even the Republican plan. State officials identified just over 1,200 incarcerated people who met Mr. Wolf's conditions, but of those, only 159 have been granted a reprieve, according to data released by the administration.

Of that small group, 148 had been released as of Thursday.

Civil rights groups say there were simply too many cooks in the kitchen — stakeholders far removed from inmates, like district attorneys — while advocates for prisoners, including defense attorneys or even the inmates themselves, were excluded.

“It's just an obvious, glaring omission,” said Elizabeth Randol, legislative director for the ACLU of Pennsylvania.

The Department of Corrections has defended its handling of the process, saying it was a cautious approach that included all relevant parties to represent the public interest. Officials screened thousands of inmates to find ones that met the governor's criteria: older and medically vulnerable people serving time for a nonviolent offense that had no victim, who have not committed a violent crime in the last decade, and who have no active protective orders.

Only a sliver of the total inmate population, which at the time sat around 47,000 people, was determined to be qualified for release. And even among that smaller pool, some say they have been waiting for weeks on word of what is happening with their case.

In a collaborative effort, PA Post and Spotlight PA reached out to nearly two dozen inmates initially identified by the department as eligible for reprieve along with their family members to see where they stood in the process. Some said they were still waiting

for a meeting with the Pennsylvania Parole Board — whose sign-off is necessary for release — while others were completely unaware they were identified as eligible until contacted by the news outlets.

Others have been approved, but are still awaiting release.

George Scantling, a prisoner at SCI Houtzdale, has been waiting for close to a month to be released after getting his “green sheet” — an official decision granting parole. He meets all the qualifications listed in the governor's order: Scantling is 59 years old, has diabetes and high blood pressure, is serving time for a non-violent drug crime, and has no prior violent convictions.

“Everything for him fits the criteria,” said Sherah Freeman, a friend who helped pay off Scantling's outstanding prison fees, one of the conditions for early release. She said she also set up and paid \$400 for a room for him in West Philadelphia.

“Why are they taking so long to get him out of there?” Ms. Freeman asked. “He's got a job lined up. Once he gets out, he'll be able to work. What's the reason?”

Robert Geiman Jr., who is imprisoned in SCI Laurel Highlands, said the Parole Board signed off on his release, but he's still waiting for approval from the department's reentry coordinator.

Mr. Wolf also must sign off on each reprieve, which Geiman was told did not happen in his case. A spokesperson for Mr. Wolf referred a request for comment to the Department of Corrections, which did not address the question in its response.

“Turned out to be a joke,” Geiman wrote over the prison's messaging system. “Something don't add up.”

*(Continued on page 30)*

*(Continued from page 29)*

In March, the Department of Corrections estimated that up to 12,000 inmates would need to be released in order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Officials said they sent a list of about that many names to the Office of Victim Advocate, which sent back a list of more than 10,000 people who did not have a victim registered with their office.

After a stalemate in the legislature, with Republicans who control both chambers offering a bill that limited releases to 450 people, Mr. Wolf signed an executive order establishing temporary reprieves.

The list of criteria, however, limited the program to 1,248 inmates, close to 4% of the state's inmate population. After the department did a second pass on the list of eligible people, officials reduced the number to 851.

Corrections Secretary John Wetzel told reporters last month uncertainty around whether inmates will have to return to prison had been a "limiting factor." Mr. Wolf's order states the reprieves are only temporary, though Mr. Wetzel said the department is searching for an option that would allow people who are successful on the outside to stay out of prison.

Of the inmates identified as eligible, 191 were already close to being paroled, according to department data. Another 245 needed to complete "programming needs," like a parenting class or Alcoholics Anonymous, before they could be considered for parole.

"The reprieve process has gone a little more slowly than than we thought," Mr. Wolf said at a June 5 press conference. "But I think we have to take that in the context of the overall major reduction in the prison population."

State officials faced intense pressure to reduce prison populations in the early weeks of the coronavirus outbreak, prioritizing those whose releases were largely uncontroversial for the sake of expediency, said Claire Shubik-Richards, executive director of the Pennsylvania Prison Society.

While that approach led to an initial surge in reprieves in the days following Mr. Wolf's order, the flow of releases has slowed dramatically in the weeks since. More than two-thirds of coronavirus-related reprieves were granted between April 14 and 21, state data shows.

"It hasn't lived up to what the department, and certainly those of us in the advocate community, saw as its potential," Ms. Shubik-Richards said. "It hasn't. There's uniform agreement on that."

But the process hasn't been a loss, she said. Finding consensus on dozens of releases was "tremendous given how fractured and contentious the criminal justice stakeholders are in Pennsylvania."

Defense attorneys argue that the list of exclusions was too broad, and didn't include parole violators who were serving time for technical violations, such as drinking or leaving home

while on supervision. And with a look-back clause requiring inmates to not have a violent crime in the past decade (a requirement that even Mr. Wetzel said was "tough" to meet), the list of eligible inmates got even shorter.

Peter E. Kratsa, president of the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, said the exclusions for eligibility were too cumbersome, saying that some crimes included in the list arguably don't have a victim, like pickpocketing.

"You're really casting a wide exclusionary net," he said. "While this looks really good in the intentions in it, in practice how many inmates does this really effect?"

Sean Damon, organizing director at Amistad Law Project, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, said prosecutors and the victim advocate held disproportionate sway in the reprieve process, which ultimately led to fewer people safely released from prison.

He pointed to SCI Huntingdon, which as of Thursday had fewer reprieves (one) than inmate deaths (five), according to state data.

"I think that is pretty damning and it really shows the need for us to rethink how we do criminal justice reform in Pennsylvania," he said.

But both the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and the Office of Victim Advocate said their involvement isn't the reason why only 159 people have been approved for a reprieve.

"We weren't the barrier here," said Jennifer Storm, the state's victim advocate.

Ms. Storm said her office followed the letter of the governor's order, which was to identify victims, and didn't have any say beyond that. She said she doesn't know why so few people have been released.

"There should be more," Ms. Storm said.

To keep the coronavirus from spreading widely in state prisons, Mr. Wetzel in late March put the system on lockdown, suspending in-person visits and limiting inmates' movements. That step helped the department avoid a worst-case scenario, with 259 inmates total testing positive for COVID-19 as of Thursday. Nine incarcerated people have died — five at SCI Huntingdon and four at SCI Phoenix.

The department is now relaxing these efforts in coordination with Mr. Wolf's tiered reopening system, though the exact timeline remains unclear. It's also still unknown when Mr. Wolf will end the state's disaster emergency — triggering the end of the reprieves — or if the department will find a way to allow some inmates to stay out of prison.

The prospect of returning may be why some eligible inmates — 16 total — declined to participate in the program. But for the inmates who are ready to go home, waiting to hear about their next steps feels like a cruel tease.

*(Continued on page 32)*

# Human Rights Coalition Report

## 2,258 N.J. Prisoners Will Be Released in a Single Day

By March, officials expect to have reduced the state's prison population by about 35 percent since the start of the pandemic.

By Tracey Tully

In a sweeping acknowledgment of the risks of the coronavirus in cramped prisons, New Jersey will release more than 2,000 inmates on Wednesday as part of one of the largest-ever single-day reductions of any state's prison population.

More than 1,000 additional prisoners will be released in the coming weeks and months after earning early-release credits for time served during the health crisis — resulting in a roughly 35 percent reduction in New Jersey's prison population since the pandemic began ravaging Northeast states in March.

Beyond the health imperatives, the emptying of prisons and jails comes at a moment when there is intense national debate over transforming a criminal justice system that ensnares people of color in disproportionate numbers.

In New Jersey, supporters of the freeing of prisoners said it would not only help make prisons safer but would also build on the state's efforts to create a fairer penal system. But opponents said they were worried about releasing so many inmates at once and potentially posing a public safety risk in communities where they end up.

The mass releases were made possible by a bill that passed with bipartisan support in the New Jersey Legislature and was signed into law last month by Gov. Philip D. Murphy, a Democrat, as part of the first legislative initiative of its kind in the country.

Prisoners in New Jersey within a year of completing sentences for crimes other than murder and sexual assault are eligible to be released as many as eight months early. They will be freed through the gates of state prisons and halfway houses, or driven by bus to transit hubs to begin treks to the county where they last lived, according to state officials and criminal justice advocates.

The releases are set to start less than 24 hours after polls closed on one of the most consequential Election Days in modern history, amid concerns about the potential for civil unrest after President Trump repeatedly sought to sow distrust in the voting process itself.

Assemblyman Jon M. Bramnick, the Republican minority leader, said he opposed the bill because it included people convicted of certain violent crimes and left too many questions unanswered.

"The legislation is way too broad for me to give my rubber stamp," Mr. Bramnick said. "Is the public aware of who is being released and where they are going?"

Other states have made large virus-related reductions to their prison populations this year, including Connecticut and California. California's governor ordered the release of about 8,000 nonviolent offenders and two weeks ago was told by a judge to free or transfer 1,500 inmates from San Quentin, the state's oldest and most notorious prison where more than 2,000 inmates contracted the virus and 28 have died from it.

New Jersey had already released nearly 1,000 inmates early from its prison system under a pandemic-related executive order in April and freed close to 700 people from its county jails after a legal challenge.

But the decision to take a systemwide step on a single day is unique and has drawn criticism from the mayor of Trenton, the state's capital where gun violence is surging, and from lawmakers in Cumberland County, home to three sprawling state prisons.

Those who fought for the releases have argued that there was no time to waste in a state where the virus was seeping anew into prison populations after tapering off in the summer following outbreaks that killed at least 52 inmates.

The infection rate in state prisons is now below 1 percent, but a federal prison in Fort Dix in central New Jersey is experiencing an outbreak involving at least 166 inmates and 10 staff members. An additional 41 people at Fort Dix have recovered from Covid-19, federal officials said.

In the days before the release on Wednesday, criminal justice advocates and relatives of inmates expected to be freed said they had been given conflicting information about where people would be released and when.

One woman said she was initially told by a social worker to pick up her husband at the gate of New Jersey State Prison in Trenton between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., but was later instructed to meet him in a parking lot of a McDonald's across the street during a four-hour window in the afternoon.

The hundreds of inmates without permanent addresses to return home to have been connected with county social services agencies and will be placed in shelters, senior Murphy administration officials said.

Joe Derella, a Democrat who leads the board of commissioners in Cumberland County, a rural region with only two small transit hubs, said the county sent a letter in September urging state officials to plan for ways to transport the former inmates to the counties where they lived when they were sentenced.

"Understand the reasoning," Mr. Derella said about the releases. "Really, really concerned about the process."

*(Continued on page 32)*

*(Continued from page 31)*

About the prisoners who are being freed, he added: “We don’t want them to fail. We want them to be as successful as possible.”

State correction officials have said the 2,258 people being released on Wednesday will leave with necessary prescription medicines and state ID cards, which are crucial for applying for social services.

Social service teams have also provided housing and transportation assistance, as well as food stipends for those with minimal financial resources, according to Liz Velez, a spokeswoman for the Department of Corrections.

“We are taking a process that normally takes six months and compressing it into a very short time-frame,” a spokesman for the governor, Michael Zhadanovsky, said in a statement.

Multiple state agencies have been “working diligently” with local officials, Mr. Zhadanovsky added, “to identify areas of anticipated need and fill those gaps with necessary resources so that people can thrive in their communities.”

James E. McGreevey, the former governor who now runs New Jersey Re-entry Corporation, a nonprofit that contracts with the state to help people transition out of prison, said the number of soon-to-be released inmates who had been signed up for Medicaid had increased over the last several weeks after a slow start.

This, he said, was a positive sign that would help them to access vital health and addiction treatment services.

Criminal justice advocates are preparing to fan out across the state at prisons and transit hubs to offer a friendly welcome and to help connect new arrivals access social services.

But even advocates who fought for passage of the bill have been critical of its implementation.

“We stand as ready as we can be, but we’re getting mostly really halfhearted gestures from the state,” said J. Amos Caley, lead organizer for New Jersey Prison Justice Watch, a coalition of social justice advocacy organizations that championed the bill. “It’s felt like we’ve been either dragging them along, or educating them at every step, or just outright wrestling with them.”

The bill, pushed by the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey, is considered a model that other states are looking to replicate, according to Amol Sinha, executive director of the state chapter of the A.C.L.U.

Mr. Murphy said the releases were part of a yearslong effort to reduce New Jersey’s prison population, and he said he rejected the claim that it had been handled poorly.

“We know we can’t just throw people into the ether,” Mr. Murphy said on Tuesday. “We’ve got to responsibly get them back integrated into society, and we’re working really hard at that.”

Justice Watch volunteers will be dressed in red and will be handing out bags filled with masks and information about area homeless shelters and social service groups.

To find the former inmates, volunteers will look for telltale garb: gray sweatpants and a gray sweatshirt.

“And they’ll be carrying a white mesh laundry bag, holding all their possessions,” Mr. Caley said.

Deb Johnson, 55, said she planned to be helping out at a bus and train station in Camden, N.J., and dreaming of the day her 30-year-old son, who was convicted of a weapons possession charge, walks out of South Woods State Prison. Under the bill, he is eligible for early release before Christmas.

“For me, it’s bittersweet,” Ms. Johnson said. “It’s sweet because it’s my child. I get to hold him a little sooner, especially during the holidays that we haven’t shared in five years. But there’s still a lot of other people who are incarcerated and could die.”

Since March, more than 252,000 people in jails and prisons across the country have been infected with the virus, and at least 1,450 inmates and correctional officers have died, according to a New York Times database.

“You have a child who has done something to get them incarcerated,” Ms. Johnson said. “But now you’re worried that you’re going to be getting a phone call telling you your son is dead.”

Jessica S. Henry, a former public defender who is now a criminal justice professor at Montclair State University, said the confusion accompanying Wednesday’s release underscored problems that existed with the prison re-entry process long before the pandemic.

“They are often released with \$10, a bus ticket and the shirt on their back, and wished good luck,” Professor Henry said.

Amid a pervasive virus that has left hundreds of thousands residents out of work, the challenges are compounded.

“You’re releasing people because of the pandemic, into the pandemic,” she said. “Unless there are safe places for them to go, what are we doing with all these people to make sure they can begin to build new lives?”

---

*(Continued from page 30)*

“Many people here including myself have been left in the dark,” said Donald Fickles Jr., an inmate held at SCI Laurel Highlands who was never told about his eligibility. “This makes me feel the same way I’ve always felt about our system, that they don’t have our best interest in mind or our safety. I’ve always felt they are the bad guys.”

---

"REMARKABLE." —HARRY BELAFONTE



PRISON LETTERS FROM A FREE SPIRIT ON SLOW DEATH ROW

TIYO ATTALLAH SALAH-EL

PREFACE BY MIKE AFRICA, JR.

"BETWEEN THE LINES, THESE LETTERS ATTEST TO THE TRANSCENDENCE OF INNER FREEDOM; THE POIGNANCE OF LOVE AMIDST DESPAIR; AND THE TRIUMPH OF ATONEMENT."

—CONNIE RICE

Tiyo Attallah Salah-El died in 2018 on "Slow Death Row" while serving a life sentence in a Pennsylvania prison. He was a man with a dizzying array of talents and vocations. An author, scholar, teacher, musician, and activist, he was the founder of the Coalition for the Abolition of Prisons. He was also, as is apparent from the letters written over a decade and a half that make up this book, an extraordinary correspondent.

Tiyo's missives present a vivid picture of the tribulations faced by those incarcerated, especially the nearly 60 percent who are non-white: habitual racism, arbitrary lockdowns, brutal beatings and repeated hospitalizations. Here too are descriptions of Tiyo's individual struggles with cancer, aging, and the sirens of personal demons.

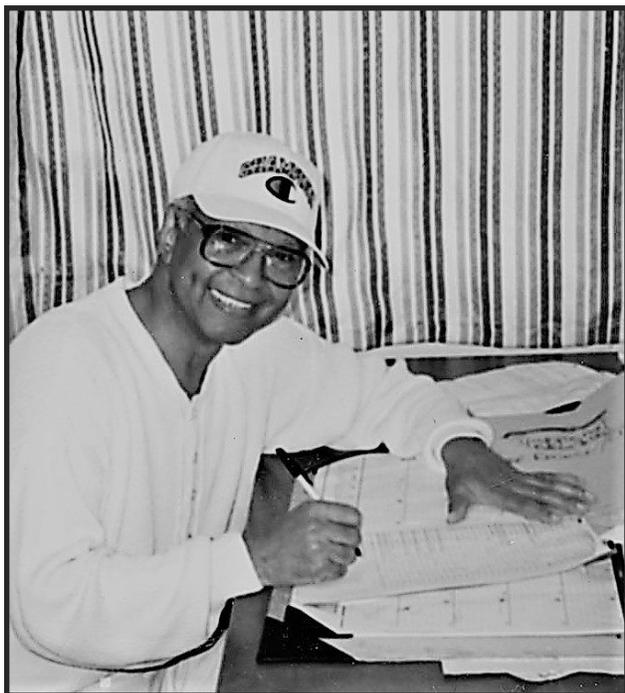
Tiyo's refusal to succumb to such hardships is evident in dispatches that are generous, philosophical and often laugh-out-loud funny. Through them we learn of his many friendships, including those with the historian Howard Zinn, a range of activist/advocate supporters on the outside, and two fellow people in prison who were leaders of the Black liberation group MOVE.

At a time when the appalling racism of America's police and criminal justice system is under the spotlight as never before, *Pen Pal* is both a vital intervention and moving portrait of an extraordinary free spirit.

OR Books  
www.orbooks.com  
Cover design by Antara Ghosh



Tiyo Attallah Salah-El



It's great how Tiyo's life and work are living on. That's what I had hoped when I asked if the Special Collections archive at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst if they would take his papers. I never would have thought that there would be this book. It is a labor of love by Paul Alan Smith, who like me and so many other received thousands of letters from Tiyo. Any money generated from the book will go to Special Collections. And, at some point (not sure when), Felipe Salles, a wonderful saxophonist/composer who lives here in Western Mass and who I met through a set of coincidences will be composing new music based on jazz tunes Tiyo wrote. And, we will be recording them. <https://www.sallesjazz.com/>. I am sure Tiyo is smiling down so happy to see how his life and work are being remembered.

-Lois Ahrens

Purchase price, \$20.00 at:  
<https://www.orbooks.com/catalog/pen-pal/>

THE MOVEMENT

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

# BOOK REVIEW

By: Shakaboona, © 2020

## ROAD TRIPPIN': Riding and Rebuilding through Resilience, A Memoir, by Crystal Wyatt.

Crystal Wyatt, author of the memoir book *Road Trippin'*, is a native daughter of the City of Brotherly Love - Philadelphia (Philly). She is one of Philly's social justice activists whom have focused her personal and professional life on community-based research projects, health services, and violence & mass incarceration. She is also the founder of a social justice prison transportation service and creator of a trauma-informed empowerment program, which has culminated into the Real Resilience P.W.L. Podcast that she hosts.

In *Road Trippin'*, Crystal shares her life's journey growing up in Philly, servicing the needs of families affected by health disparities, and helping women traumatized by having loved ones captured by mass incarceration. Primarily raised in a neighborhood in the Southwest section of West Philly, Crystal takes the reader on a Road Trip journey that allows one to see through her eyes, and perhaps live vicariously through her even, of what it's like growing up as a child into an adult in the streets of Philly, as a Black woman in human services Corporate America, as a social justice activist, and as a Prisoner's Wife under mass incarceration.

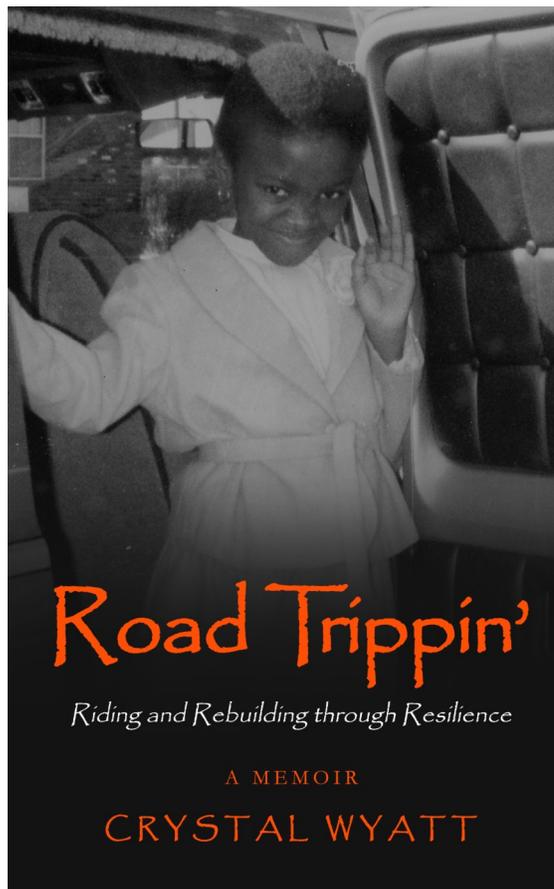
Crystal starts off her book with clever word play of the title *Road Trippin'*. *Road Trippin'* appears to have dual meanings, one being to take a road trip, and the other being a Black American slang term "trippin'" to mean a person who is making unwise decisions or acting stupidly. *Road Trippin'* seems to imply someone whose life is like a road trip and during their road trip in life the person was making unwise decisions, yet becoming wise from the process of learning from the experience of error. Thereby giving us our life's lessons to teach other people.

Crystal, coming off as a genuine around the way girl intermixed with a corporate professional, walks the reader through her life's lessons in romantic relationships, the War On Drugs & Mass Incarceration, Liberal's implicit racism & paternalism in Corporate America, Spirituality, and Women. She describes the dynamics in relationships, including its pitfalls, while showing what it takes to have a loving partnership by delving into her up and downs, in and outs, joy and pains, and intimate longings of love and companionship. She teaches life's lessons of the streets. How Black youth are compelled to engage, navigate, survive, thrive, and become successful or fail in communities that are filled with the social contradictions of good & bad people, friends & enemies, hope & hopelessness, life & death, wealth & poverty, law & crime, joy & painful trauma, and freedom & incarceration. She expounds upon her life in the Corporate human services sector dealing with liberal Caucasian's implicit

racism & affluent Black's obnoxious elitism and classism towards Black workers. She even details how she learned to use her Spirituality, not to be confused with religion, to guide her on the right road through some turbulent times.

Central to Crystal's *Road Trippin'* memoir is Women, and women's burden, as she relates it to racism, health, violence, drug addiction, mass incarceration, prison wife life, trauma, single parenting, and Black women basically having to be SuperWoman by being forced into the position as the cornerstone of Black America.

Ultimately, *Road Trippin'* will have the reader riding on an emotional rollercoaster, in bewilderment at the times she's actually trippin' in life, in tears of laughter with her wittiness & natural humor, and biting their nails in anxiousness while praying that she avoids the perilous situations before her - murders, crime, U.S. Marshals, and prison - throughout every chapter. Crystal makes *Road Trippin'* come off the pages as an admonitory tale mixed with a Sage's pearls of wisdom on life. Crystal's *Road Trippin'* keeps the Dedication & Maya Angelou's poetry quote parts at its beginning as a running central theme, which I think is part of the artistry of her memoir, making it a more pleasant read. The Philly native does wonders with her memoir *Road Trippin'* and readers will learn valuable lessons that can help them at times when they too are trippin' while on that road trip called life.



## **INTERVIEW WITH CRYSTAL WYATT** **REAL RESILIENCE AND PRISON WIFE LIFE**

By: Shakaboona, © 2020



**ROAD TRIPPIN':** Riding and Rebuilding through Resilience. A MEMOIR, By CRYSTAL WYATT (above)

*I was blessed with the opportunity to interview a well-known Philadelphia (Philly) native daughter, Ride & Rebuild Prison Transport owner, social worker, community activist, therapeutic healer, and now author Crystal Wyatt concerning her new book Road Trippin'. Crystal and I had a delightful conversation, which I now provide to all of you, to help you awaken from mental death and quench your thirst for knowledge by drinking from her well of wisdom. Welcome to THE MOVEMENT.*

**Shakaboona:** Hello Crystal. How are you doing? And how has life been for you since the release of your new book ROAD TRIPPIN': Riding and Rebuilding through Resilience, A MEMOIR BY CRYSTAL WYATT?

**Crystal:** Hello Shakaboona, I am doing well. And before I begin let me state that it's a complete pleasure to be able to conduct this interview with you. In response to your question: Life has been "freeing" since I released the book. I didn't realize until the first person told me what the book meant to them, did I realize that I had been able to cast out some dark parts of me and it felt good!

**Shakaboona:** Let me say Thank You very much for giving me a copy of your book Road Trippin'. I immediately began reading it, and couldn't put it down. It was that good. I felt like I ran a marathon after putting down your book from reading, that's how long I'd be reading it, and how exhausted I'd feel. You know, because it's a page turner. It keeps the reader wondering, damn, what's going to happen next. What moved you to write such a compelling Memoir about your life's experiences? And why did you choose Road Trippin' as the title of your book?

**Crystal:** You are quite welcome. I had read a couple issues of the MOVEMENT in the past and a fellow comrade on the inside suggested I reach out to you to share my book with your readers. But I knew there was no way I could do that without getting you a copy first. So, Thank You for receiving and reading.

I was moved to write my memoir because I had spent 7 years

traveling from Philadelphia to PA Prisons, transporting 98% women. On those trips I realized women bear the biggest burden in the war on mass incarceration and I needed to talk about it and the best way to do that was to share my own experience of the impact of incarceration by affiliation. I chose the title Road Trippin' because it resonated with my van service experience and all the roads we have to travel and all the trippy things we have to experience in order to heal.

**Shakaboona:** Well I'm glad the comrade you know from inside put you down with THE MOVEMENT magazine and directed you to me for an interview, because the life experiences you share in your memoir book Road Trippin' is something incarcerated people and people in society can learn life lessons from. Now Sistah, in your book you say that WOMEN bare the burden of mass incarceration, as they're the anchor that holds incarcerated people down. In Road Trippin', what are some of the burdens you identify that women face, what should incarcerated people specifically, and people in society generally, know about the burdens women face? And what can they do about lessening or eliminating these burdens?

**Crystal:** Yes, Women bear the biggest burden in the war on mass incarceration. Some of the burdens I identify in my book are financial, physical, mental and emotional. Financially, women are funding the backend of the criminal justice system by paying bail, lawyer fees, commissary and even vending food on prison visits. They are also dealing with the emotional loss of their loved one and the grief shows up physically with health disparities like high blood pressure, anxiety and depression. For someone who is incarcerated being supported by a women (grandmother, mother, daughter, girlfriend, wife, etc.) my hope is that they will understand the toll prison life has on her and be willing to do the work to decrease her trauma. That work specifically is to decrease the amount of "asks"—from the first call she received stating that you had been arrested, her stress level has been high. So, asking for more than is necessary during the bid is an added burden. Also, once the support is given, do the work! If that means staying out of trouble, taking classes or more importantly managing your mental health while inside, will let her know that her support is not in vain and she's done her part to help reduce recidivism. In regard to society, I'd love for the stigma of supporting an incarcerated loved one to be mitigated. Women who support are not responsible for their loved ones crimes and should not be judged for it because they chose to bid and not walk away.

**Shakaboona:** As incarceration has increased, in particular for Black and Brown peoples as a means of America's attempt at social control and arresting our collective advancement in this nation, so many young women between the ages of 18-25 y.o. are now coming into the same burden of Riding for their Man that's incarcerated like their mothers and grandmothers before them did for their men. What wise words of advice would you share with such young women who are just experiencing this situation?

*(Continued on page 36)*

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

(Continued from page 35)

**Crystal:** First, I'd say, you can't help who you love. So, love. Most young women who find themselves in love under the predicament of incarceration are merely acting out the norms of a society. For many of us intertwined in the criminal justice system, the norm in our society is poverty, inequity and inequality. Therefore, we can only select and love from within that paradigm. There's no judgement here. However, if these young sisters find themselves supporting a young brother who doesn't see the gift of love in her support, then by all means she should choose herself over the bid.

**Shakaboona:** Another major message you speak of in your book *Road Trippin'* is "Riding, Rebuilding, and Resilience". What is that message all about? How did you get to reaching that message in your life? And how does a person begin to activate Riding, Rebuilding, and Resilience in their life?

**Crystal:** Well in the book I explain how I came up with the name of my prison transportation service Ride and Rebuild and the name of my women's empowerment group Real Resilience. So, readers will be intrigued on how that came to be. But in regard to the message of the title, I will say that throughout my life I had to journey through many experiences; some strengthened, and some weakened me. The ones that weakened me, caused me to rebuild. Many of us don't know how to rebuild after a loss or hurt and in my story I share what that looked like for me. It was messy, chaotic, and hard but also therapeutic--literally. Each time I found myself on the other side of the rebuild, I knew that it was my resilience that got me there. I trusted myself enough to know what I needed to do to heal and I activated. This same formula can work for anyone wanting to activate the riding, rebuilding and resilience in their own life.

**Shakaboona:** Crystal, hold up, before we go any further. In response to what you just said about Riding, Rebuilding, & Resilience. Let me just say, Sistah I was cheering for you throughout the pages of your book. I wanted you to overcome, succeed, and win over life's trials & tribulations set before you. You didn't always have a person(s) there to cheer you on, support you, and guide you thru life. Yet you acquired supportive people in your life. How essential is it to have such people in our lives today? Also, how can we identify and develop such a supporting cast for our lives to better balance ourselves and heal from generational socio-racial trauma in America, the Home of the Braves, and the Land of the Enslaved?

**Crystal:** Thanks for cheering for me, good brother. It means a lot. I want to touch on the word "support" for a second. Support looks different for everyone. It may not have seemed like I had support at times, but it was always there. People can only support from within their human capacity and I learned to accept that early on. For instance, (spoiler alert) when my mother was struggling with her addiction, with tough love, she still ensured that I graduated from high school. Sometimes we have to allow people to give how they can and when they can, but also be willing to be that same understanding resource for others. I operate from a space of reciprocity. I support those who are able to receive the

kind of support that I can give within that moment for that situation and I in turn receive the same. That is where the balance is and that in turn is where the healing is.

**Shakaboona:** Another supporting thing you identified for yourself is Spirituality. In your book *Road Trippin'*, I thought the way you gave readers a glimpse of your religious experiences to show how you arrived at accepting Spirituality as your center of gravity, was so hilarious that my stomach hurt! But through your spiritual process you became familiar with one of the many Laws of the Universe that seemed to be of great benefit to you in your life - The Law of Attraction. How does understanding the Law of Attraction work in your life and other peoples around you, positively or negatively?

**Crystal:** Yes, experiencing the different facets of religion definitely gave birth to my need for standing in the space of Spirituality. With my spiritual practice, the belief in the law of attraction is paramount. Simply put, what you think is what will be! Once I started believing in that concept it changed my mind and my behavior. I started to think in abundance, instead of lack and limitation. For many of us, we stay in the space of "I don't have this, or I don't have that" instead of believing that what we do have is enough and what we need will be ours. Once we acknowledge and accept that our thoughts become things and we attract what we believe, life takes on a new meaning, positively or negatively. It works every time, trust me. I firmly believe its best to keep your thinking in a space the provides you with the most God-sourced power to be a benefit to not only yourself, but your family and community.

**Shakaboona:** Amen Sistah. Take 'em to Church! So it appears you're a bit of a community activist too. You're well known for having built a successful transportation company for incarcerated people and their families serving the PADOC called Ride & Rebuild, you were actively part of the F.A.C.T. program at SCI-Graterford, and you worked solidly with the Philadelphia Mural Arts program. What other groups & programs were you involved with inside & outside of the prisons? And are there any community groups & programs you're currently involved with?

**Crystal:** Yes, I would say that I'm a community activist. Aside from the FACT program I haven't worked with any other internal organization. Most of my activism involves the Southwest Philadelphia community. I was a board member for a large non-profit that focused on outpatient and residential treatment for foster children. It was a solid experience and extremely rewarding. But the one group I'm currently working with as a Steering Committee member is the Philadelphia ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Task Force. This team works to expose all of Philadelphia to the effects of trauma and provides resources to heal. In my book I clearly describe the effects of unresolved trauma and how it shows up in our daily lives as well as our bodies and minds. So, this group brings me joy, knowing that I am helping spread the word that what happens to you as a child will inevitably chart the course for your entire life into adulthood.

**Shakaboona:** I understand you have a radio podcast now. What's

(Continued on page 37)

(Continued from page 36)

going on with that?

**Crystal:** Yes, the podcast is called Real Resilience: PWL (Prison Wife Life). It's a show for women to share their story of supporting an incarcerated loved one. I have, however, started to interview Brothers as well. It makes for a good balance. The podcast is available on all platforms (Apple, Spotify, iHeart Radio, Pandora, Google Podcasts).

**Shakaboona:** The Sun is shining on you and your future looks bright. What's next for you in life?

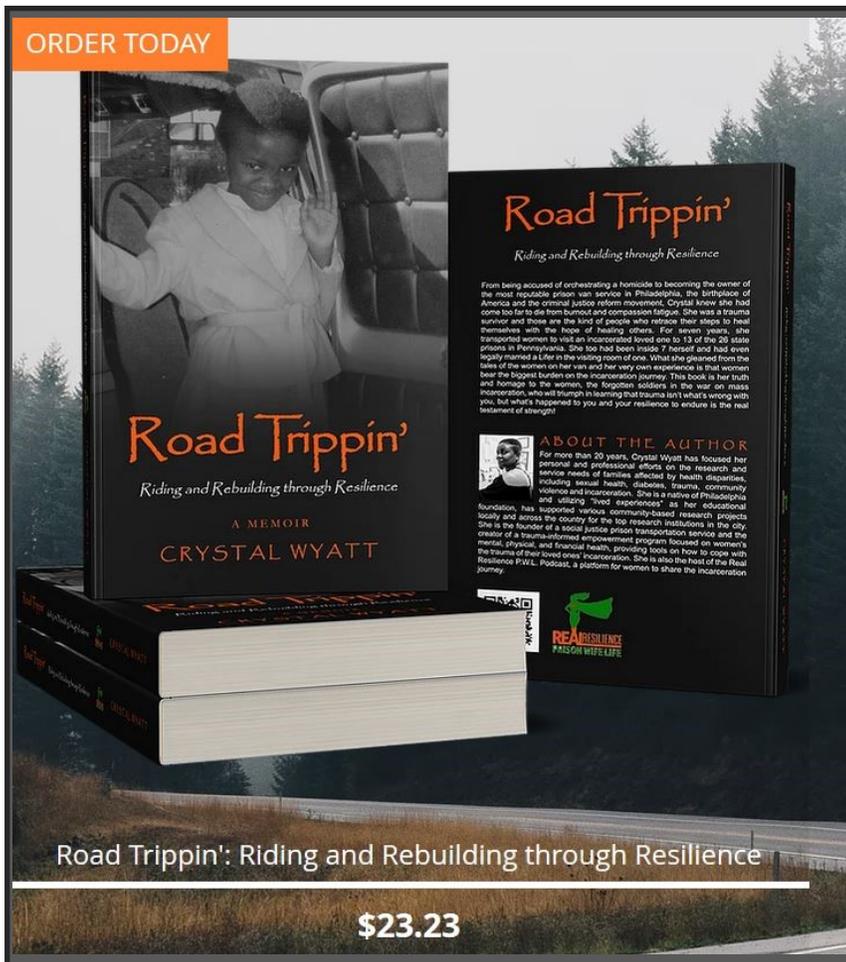
**Crystal:** Thank you for sharing that vision with me. What's next is getting this book out to the masses. Whether you are a lover, parent, sibling, friend, cousin, you name it, I think this story will resonate with anyone who has ever loved within the predicament of incarceration. So, my hope is to get this story out, and also create some form of curriculum around the content to help reduce recidivism. It's important for those who are incarcerated who will reintegrate into the homelife and community to understand what's at stake—freedom.

**Shakaboona:** Crystal, it was a pleasure to interview you about your book, especially since you're a homegirl from around the way and we're both from 56th. Street, Southwest Philly (lol).

Thank you for blessing us with your presence. Any final words my Sistah about Road Trippin' or anything else?

**Crystal:** Shakaboona, thanks for taking the time to interview me. This process has been extremely enlightening in regard to what it takes for you to get these interviews done within the confines of an institution. I applaud your tenacity and commitment to the culture. You are a blessing to us all. For the readers, Road Trippin' is a story about all of us navigating life post the crack epidemic. It's uncomfortable yet liberating. My hope is that you see your own resilience through my words. In the meantime, be gentle, kind, compassionate and loving to yourself, there are people who are watching how they should treat you, so show them the good stuff!

**Shakaboona:** Crystal I wish to thank you as well for allowing me the pleasure to interview you, for sacrificing your precious time to do the tremendous community work that you do for our besieged youth and women, and for writing your much needed book Road Trippin' that assist young women and men with navigating Life, especially under mass incarceration. I also want to say that Black & Brown Women in particular are not appreciated for the heavy lifting they do for our communities, they're forced to be SuperWoman, and so I would like to say to you and all women - You Are Appreciated. I Thank You All. Peace.



Road Trippin' may be purchase from Crystal Wyatt's website ([www.realresiliencepwl.com/shop](http://www.realresiliencepwl.com/shop)) which is reserved for individuals who would like to read the book at home. Or you may purchase it from Amazon.com which is reserved for individuals who would like to purchase the book for their incarcerated loved one.

Purchase price \$23.23

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

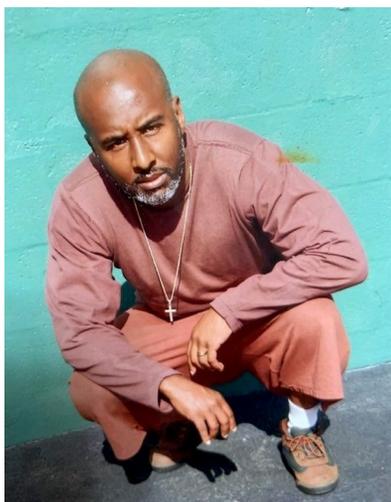
## **"Is Innocence Irrelevant?"**

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.

### **THE INNOCENCE OF WILLIAM DANIELS JR. (BROTHER CHILL)**

By: Shakaboona, ©2020

Every single day in America there are probably thousands of Innocent persons being wrongly convicted in Courtrooms across the nation, some are due to unintentional shoddy police investigations, inadequate defense attorneys, negligent prosecutors, and biased judges, while most are due to institutional racism in the criminal justice system by the hands of malicious cops, prosecutors, and judges intentionally breaking the law to legally convict a person by any means necessary. Such is the definition of a "Legal Lynching" in America which upends people's rights to Due Process and a Fair Trial under Constitutional law. The criminal conviction of William Daniels Jr. for murder is such a case that's a prime example of a Legal Lynching gone wild in the city of Pittsburgh's criminal justice system.



William M. Daniels Jr., nicknamed "Chill" as a youth, was born in 1970 in the city of Pittsburgh, PA. Growing up as a teen in the rough city of Steelers town Pittsburgh, where the streets run Black & Yellow and poverty, crime, and street gang activity is high, Chill managed to avoid the many pitfalls of the streets and graduated from Perry T.A. High School in 1989. Chill immediately enlisted in the U.S. Navy, completed bootcamp in the top 1%

out of 4,800 recruited soldiers in attendance, and was selected to "special duty" assignment on the USS Constitution referred to as "Old Iron Sides". Chill was sent into the first war theater in Iraq against President Saddam Hussein, called Operation Desert Storm, and honorably served the United States of America as a Desert Storm War Veteran. Chill have four beautiful children Malik, Tia, Mekhi, and Jayden. Prior to his arrest, trial, and conviction for murder, law enforcement argues, Chill also was a major Drug Kingpin in the city of Pittsburgh.

Chill doesn't deny that he once was a drug Kingpin, however, what he vehemently denies is murdering or conspiring to murder Mr. Ronald Hawkins in 1994. In fact, Chill has maintained his actual innocence throughout the past 23 years of his incarceration in the PA Department of Corrections, and has exercised due diligence in gathering the newly discovered evidence & facts that prove his innocence and would likely overturn his wrongful conviction -- only if he could get a fair hearing

since he has been so-called "Blacklisted" by biased Judges and a corrupt District Attorney within the Pittsburgh Criminal Justice System.

#### **THE CRIME**

On September 20, 1994, Mr. Ronald Hawkins was gunned down in the street. Initially, there was no evidence or witnesses that could identify the group of males that gunned down Hawkins, and the case was shelved in the cold case files as unsolved. More than one year later, three eyewitnesses appeared implicating Chill and two other men in the homicide of Hawkins, and the Pittsburgh District Attorney's Office charged William "Chill" Daniels with the homicide of Hawkins. At trial, A.D.A. Necessary argued for the Commonwealth that Chill and two "uncharged men" ran down the street and "ambushed" Hawkins car on foot, killing him with multiple gunshots. One eyewitness stated Chill ran down the street with two men and on foot killed Hawkins with a "sawed-off shotgun" at point blank range. Chill was convicted by a jury of 1st degree murder and sentenced to a death term of Life Without Parole for the murder of Ronald Hawkins.

#### **ANATOMY OF A WRONGFUL CONVICTION**

Coerced Eyewitnesses. Three eyewitnesses, Thomas Carr, Eric Ross & Tina Banks, appeared 1½ years after the homicide of Mr. Hawkins to identify Chill as the murderer. Thomas Carr testified that Chill and two uncharged men ran down the street on foot and killed Hawkins with a sawed-off shotgun at point blank range. Yet A.D.A. Necessary's expert forensic witness Dr. Robert Levine testified that no sawed-off shotgun was used in the homicide of Hawkins. Not to mention the impossibility of identifying a gunman from a dark alley, at night, from 150 yards (a football field & a half) in distance, unless you possess the eyes of an owl or you're lying.

Eyewitness Thomas Carr is a known member of the Detroit Black Mafia group, infamously known as "Best Friends", and was serving 3 Life Without Parole federal prison sentences plus a consecutive 75 years for multiple homicides and drug trafficking. Thomas Carr became a cooperating "Professional Eye Witness/Snitch" for the F.B.I. and D.E.A., and was used by Federal/State Prosecutors as a star witness giving false testimony at Chill's trial and in over 10 different trials of indicted individuals across 7 states. Thomas Carr is now a free man from prison; his reward for being a cooperating "Professional Eyewitness/Snitch" for the federal government.

Eyewitness Eric Ross is a rival gang member of Chill that was used by the prosecutor to testify against Chill. Ross testified that Chill shot him with a .40 cal. Smith & Wesson handgun just

*(Continued on page 39)*

*(Continued from page 38)*

three days before Hawkins was murdered, also by a .40 cal. Smith & Wesson handgun, although Chill had not been arrested or charged for shooting Ross. The importance of Ross testimony was to "connect" Chill to the .40 cal. Smith & Wesson handgun that someone used to murder Hawkins with. Later, Eric Ross recanted his trial testimony under a Sworn Affidavit, and stated that while he had been incarcerated at SCI-Huntingdon two Pittsburgh Homicide Detectives interviewed him about being shot, and told him he would be released from prison if he testified that Chill shot him with a .40 cal handgun three days before Hawkins murder. Ross's testimony would eventually be used by the prosecutor as a "Prior Bad Act" to be admitted as evidence against Chill to further plant a presumption of Chill's guilt into the minds of jurors. State's witness Eric Ross, after testifying at Chill's trial, was awarded by the state government by being released from SCI-Huntingdon at his next parole hearing.

Eyewitness Tina Banks' home was raided by Drug Task Force a year after Hawkins murder. Drug Task Force recovered 2 ounces of Crack Cocaine & a handgun from Banks' home, which, if found guilty, could cause her to serve 18 years or more in prison. The day of her arrest homicide detectives met with Banks and had given her a statement to sign stating Chill was one of the shooters in the Hawkins homicide. Banks signed the statement. At Chill's trial Banks testified the same as the government's "Professional Eye Witness" Thomas Carr did, that she too saw Chill shoot Hawkins from a dark alley, at 10p.m. at night, from 452ft. (150 yards) away, while looking into the head lights of an oncoming car! Incredible, one might say, but not so incredible when coercion is at play. Eye witness Tina Banks later provided a sworn affidavit recanting her false testimony given at Chill's trial, finally admitting that she never witnessed the murder of Hawkins and only identified Chill as the murderer because homicide detectives offered her a deal she couldn't refuse -- identify Chill as the murderer of Hawkins and she'll walk free or refuse to identify Chill as the murderer and they'll take her children away, prosecute her drug and gun charges, & put her away in prison for 18 years. Coerced eyewitness Tina Banks chose her children and freedom.

#### JURY TAMPERING

Tainted Jury. During the Voir Dire (Fr."to speak the truth") jury-selection phase of Chill's trial, where the parties preliminary examine prospective jurors to decide whether their suitable to serve on a jury, prospective juror Reginald J. White testified that he did not know Chill. Mr. White was selected as a juror and served as the jury foreman at the trial of which Chill had been convicted. Years after Chill's jury trial conviction of the murder of Hawkins, it was discovered that jury foreman Reginald White had known Chill all along. A private investigator had discovered and reported that jury foreman White went to Perry T.A. High School with Chill for 4 years, was a classmate that Chill bullied throughout high school, and both graduated high school together in 1989. Yet that is not all.

In an extraordinary turn of events, the same private investigation discovered that Homicide Detective Richard McDonald whom investigated Chill's criminal case also went to Perry T.A. High School, was best friends with jury foreman White, and also attended high school with and had known Chill. Now the plot thickens. Why did juror White falsely testify that he did not know Chill to get selected as a juror for Chill's trial? Why didn't Homicide Detective McDonald make the Court aware that he and juror White are best friends? Why did best friends McDonald and White fail to reveal to the Court their connection to Chill? Did Juror White fail "to speak the truth" at Voir Dire to become a juror on Chill's trial? Did Detective McDonald and juror White conspire to unlawfully compromise the Jury against Chill to provide a conviction for the prosecution? Such are the inquiries to be had at a PCRA Hearing, yet no hearing was held for Chill.

#### PROSECUTOR'S ILLEGAL ACTIONS

Withholding Exculpatory Evidence. Exculpatory is a legal term which means "to prove not guilty". The Prosecutor withheld exculpatory evidence from Chill's defense that could have helped prove that he was not guilty in the homicide of Hawkins, and hence, Innocent. The Prosecutor withheld exculpatory a murder weapon of a .40 cal. Smith & Wesson handgun was recovered on Rayco Saunders (a CRIP gang member) 3½ years before Chill's arrest for the murder of Hawkins. Prosecution's expert forensics witness Dr. Levine falsely testified at trial that he never recovered any weapons from the homicide of Hawkins. However, signed forensics reports by Dr. Levine proved he knew that a .40 cal. Smith & Wesson handgun had been recovered. Later, Dr. Levine admitted to private investigator R.J. Getmer that he filed the forensics report concerning the .40 cal. handgun and turned them over to A.D.A. Necessary 3½ years before Chill's jury trial. By withholding exculpatory forensic report evidence, the prosecutor unlawfully denied Chill's defense attorneys to present to the jury exculpatory forensic evidence that identified Rayco Saunders as a suspect since he was the possessor of the .40 cal. weapon used in the homicide of Ronald Hawkins.

The Prosecutor withheld exculpatory evidence of Police Reports of 911 Callers, in which 5 different 911 Callers had reported the homicide of Hawkins, stating they "heard gun shots and a car speeding away from the scene". One 911 Caller describes the killers' car, "a brownish Monte Carlo that shots were fired from". Another 911 Caller reported of a house that was shot around the corner from Hawkins murder where witnesses tell police he heard two cars racing then a lot of gunshots fired. Were the 911 Caller evidence not withheld by the Prosecutor, it would have refuted A.D.A. Necessary's trial argument and eye witnesses Carr & Banks' testimony that they saw Chill from about 150 yards at night run down a street and shoot Hawkins at point blank range with a sawed-off shotgun, and thereby raising "reasonable doubt" that Chill murdered Hawkins. Yet the Prosecutor withheld the exculpatory 911 Callers evidence from Chill's defense for trial, and the exculpatory evidence was only discov-

*(Continued on page 40)*

(Continued from page 39)

ered 10 years after Chill's trial & conviction when it was accidentally released to Chill's defense at a PCRA Hearing in 2008.

The Prosecutor also withheld exculpatory evidence of Court records showing that their Professional Witness/Snitch Thomas Carr, career criminal & Detroit gangster, perjured himself as the star eye witness in the homicide trial of Robert Bledsoe by falsely claiming he saw Bledsoe murder someone. Yet, Carr's medical record shown that on the day of the homicide for which he claimed he witnessed; he had been "bed ridden" in the hospital with a serious head injury. Consequently, Robert Bledsoe was found not guilty of homicide at trial.

The Prosecutor's withholding exculpatory evidence from Chill's defense of Thomas Carr being a professional government snitch and a known perjurer at another individual's homicide trial, would have totally discredited Carr as the government's star eye witness of the homicide of Hawkins, and creating additional "reasonable doubt" as to Chill's guilt. For a juror's mind would quickly ask, if Carr perjured himself at Robert Bledsoe's homicide trial as a star eye witness by falsely stating he saw Bledsoe murder someone of which Bledsoe was acquitted of all criminal charges, then is Carr currently giving false testimony in the homicide trial of Chill before the Court? And, did Carr also lie about not receiving the deal of a century from the Prosecutor for his testimony as a professional government witness at Chill's homicide trial?

#### NEWLY DISCOVERED EVIDENCE

Two new eye witnesses of Ronald Hawkins' murder has stepped forward at Chill's PCRA Hearing in 2017 and gave sworn testimony that Hawkins was murdered in a drive-by shooting, whom the eyewitnesses identified as Robert Robinson, and identified the car used in the drive-by shooting to be a brownish Monte Carlo older model. The two new eyewitnesses sworn testimony is pertinent to Chill's trial because it corroborates the 911 Callers' account of the crime, and debunks the Prosecutor's claim of events in the murder of Hawkins. Again, raising "reasonable doubt" as to the guilt of Chill, as the evidence doesn't match the Prosecutor's charge that Chill murdered Hawkins. And if the evidence don't fit, you must acquit.

Moreover, two Homicide Detectives handling Chill's criminal investigation were later "fired" for criminal misconduct and corruption charges, which relates to the police and prosecutorial criminal misconduct alleged by Chill that law enforcement also done throughout his case from beginning to end. Yet we know the poisonous seed corrupts the whole tree.

#### NO JUSTICE FOR WRONGFUL CONVICTION

After two decades of imprisonment, truth, fairness, and justice under the law has remained elusive for Brother Chill. After appeals to PA's Superior and Supreme Courts, Chill was granted some relief on his appellate claims that were remanded to the lower trial Court, only to be stymied by a historically corrupt Pittsburgh Judiciary and D.A. Office that ignores Chill's persua-

sive claims of innocence, newly discovered evidence, prosecutorial criminal misconduct, and a wrongful conviction. After all, truth, fairness and justice are mere hollow words uttered from the mouths of a wealthy elite good old boys club of Caucasian males in black robes. When has giving Black Americans justice ever mattered under America's laws? What seems to matter under America's brand of law is, regardless of whether Chill is innocent of the murder of Hawkins, he was a Drug Kingpin running a gang whom authorities wanted off the streets - by any means necessary.

Many Americans may be horrified of this revelation, but this is how the American criminal justice system operates -- by "hook or crook" the long arm of the law always get their man or woman. It's perfectly fine, however, since they're criminals anyway, right?! Chill understands this criminal thinking very well when he insightfully states, "I sold drugs on a large scale, and am not proud of that not one bit. I've learned the error in my ways, and now try to repair the damage I caused my community, from selling drugs. But I'm not a murderer. I never murdered Ronald Hawkins. I'm actually innocent of that. But since the government couldn't catch me trafficking drugs, they framed me for murder to put me away for life in prison. An immediate problem solved, a major drug dealer is off the streets, yet the real murderer (s) of Ronald Hawkins has remained free to probably murder some more people. That's the American way."

Yet it doesn't have to be the American way. We can imagine and create a better criminal justice system that really would be about seeking truth, being fair, and providing justice to all people regardless of ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, color, creed, gender, or that they are known to be engaged in crime. The old systems of government must shed its corrupt skin and come into a new governing system, which must start with shedding the skin of the "isms" of class, race & sex in the criminal justice system, and by righting the wrongs of innocent people cleverly entrapped in a huge crypt called mass prison confinement, like William "Chill" Daniels Jr., whom is among the innocent, criminally framed, and wrongly convicted in Pennsylvania. It's time to abolish the old criminal justice system and bring about a radically new criminal justice system. Free William "Chill" Daniels!!!

-----

To learn more about Chill's Innocence (or) if you would simply like to show your support, write to:

Smart Communication/PA DOC

William Daniels Jr. / DU-7194/ SCI-Forest

P.O. Box 33028

St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Or contact: Crystal Daniels at (206) 650-6096

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

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

From: Joynes, Kimberly  
Date Received: 09/10/2020  
From: Kimberly Joynes  
Subject: Pennsylvania's Human Throwaways

October 1979, the Philadelphia police and District Attorney's office denied me Due Process of law. They arrested me twice, arraigned me three times and gave me one and a half preliminary hearing's.

All of my arraignments were WITHOUT counsel except the third one that happen during my trial without counsel's knowledge.

Never arrested nor charged with 1st degree murder, I was found guilty of the charge by 11 jurors and the twelfth juror found me "guilty with reservations" that "no one" has heard what they were, 41 years to date, and this injustice was instructed by judge E. Malmed.

My indictment was for Voluntary and Involuntary Manslaughter, for stabbing a corpse that was bludgeoned to death by someone else who was found guilty of 3rd degree murder and released in 1999.

Judge Malmed, after sentencing me to LIFE changed the disposition of my case (charges ), made a finding of not guilty which was the sole province of the jury on my indictment charges for trial and never assured a pre-sentence investigation for me for a Capital Offense being under 21years of age.

I did not die in the street with the knee on my neck from "systemic racism", I was enslaved to the masses of the incarcerated in Pennsylvania Department of Correction where death is a slower process of suffering.

Ed Rendell, Frank Rizzo and so many more, swept up the streets with whoever was walking - whether you were guilty by association or innocent - to advance their own political agendas.

My name is Kimerly, a woman, human being, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, niece and granddaughter. When will the judicial system that DENIED me DUE PROCESS that this Country and State hold so dear, afford it to ME?!

For more information go to: [https://wcjn.org/Kimerly\\_Joynes.html](https://wcjn.org/Kimerly_Joynes.html)

Smart Communication/PA DOC  
Kimberly Joynes /OO6202 /SCI-Cambridge Springs  
P.O. Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

\*\*\*\*\*

September 03, 2020

Dear Human Rights Coalition,

After being presented with HRC' Summer Issue #41, I was reminded that I was once on your mailing list for many years and somehow down the line we got cut off.

While reading the magazine I came across articles by and about many close friends and associate's whom I had formed relationships with over the past 40 years of my incarceration and had eventually separated due to transfer's, etc..

This magazine rebooted my memory of the passion and purpose I once strove for in regards to radical black activism, mass incarceration, prison abuse by correctional staff, the human rights violations, and the systematic racism and implicit biases that are the foundation of the Criminal Justice System in America. That was before we were cut off (HRC and myself). And it's stunning to me that during the interim I got distracted by the quotidian BS of prison life and forgot where my focus is supposed to be.

Please place my name on your mailing list and know that you can count on me in any capacity that I can provide.

Thank you !!!

Smart Communications/PA DOC  
Omar Zigler/ BX-3588/ SCI-Somerset  
PO Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733  
\*\*\*\*\*

Michael (Zahribu) Dorrrough #D83611  
PO Box 5248  
SATF II, B3-6-4L  
Corcoran, CA 93212

Dear HRC,

I am a subscriber to 'The Movement' and I am writing to inform you of my change of address. I also wanted to say that you do magnificent and inspiring work. I am also an LWOP prisoner and I am a member of a LWOP that started in Solano Prison. It is called L.W.O.P which stands for "Lifers With Optimistic Progress". I was also a member of a group called, "M.A.N.U.P." while at Salano; it stands for:

M—Making rationale decisions

A— Acting with precision

(Continued on page 42)

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

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

(Continued from page 41)

N- Never giving up my position

U- Uplifting myself, my family, and community

P- Positive living

The mission statement is very similar to the Mann Up group in the issue # 40 of The Movement. Please know that however it is that I can contribute to the effort, I am here for you.

Maintain your spirit,

Take good care.

Strength and solidarity,

Zah

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Cover Letter

Dear Employer,

Here's my cover letter and I attached a resume. I hope my experience and talents will land me a job today. Doesn't matter the times I work, doesn't matter the pay. I just hope that you can see that I'm sincere, and that you hire me. I've seen your ad in the newspaper and I've read your requirements. I've noticed you required loyalty, and I possess a lot of it.

However, looking at my resume you will notice that I've spent time in prison, but notice when I've went. I was young and foolish and deserve a second chance. I promise that I am no longer him, and that I am a man.

I know me mentioning that I was in prison will have you bothered. But please I would be perfect at filling this position as a father.

Respectfully,

Edward Addison

Smart Communication/PA DOC  
Edward Addison /MH-0627/ SCI-Forest  
P.O. Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733  
\*\*\*\*\*

## SCI-Albion

The conditions at Albion's RHU are horrible. The staff there are so unprofessional, it's unreal. They will not feed you, let you shower. if you are trying to get something that you're supposed to have, because the staff is too lazy to get it for you, they will burn you for bugging them (example: paperwork, getting a grievance is impossible). The cleaning supplies are a joke (dirty toilet brush dipped in some watered down disinfectant that every cell is cleaned with), and that's just for starter's. The inmate workers never clean the pod's, or showers, maybe once a week.

Mental health there is the worst I have ever seen in prison. The psychology department won't even stop at your door if you ask to speak to them when they're on the block. Tell the C.O. you need to see the psych, you got a better chance of being released.

It starts at the top at that facility, you never see the higher ups unless you're on the list to see PRC. I was in the RHU there over 6 months and only saw the superintendent one time walk around cell to cell. I have been in a few RHU's in my time and none treat you like a human being. They treat you like a slave, all of them, but Albion is the worst so far. I thought prison was to rehabilitate people, not treat them like they're not human.

Pennsylvania needs to do what other States have already done, do away with the RHU...Period!

Anonymous

\*\*\*\*\*

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

## Dear Honorable Men of Faith: Governor Wolf, Secretary Wetzel,

You, gentlemen, have actively sought the helm of leadership. You believe you have the vision, temperament, courage and decision making skills to lead the people of the Commonwealth. We believed you, we knocked on doors, made calls, sent emails and voted that belief.

With larger than life ambitions come ‘buck’ stopping challenges. Today we are faced with a viral pandemic of biblical dimensions, threatening the very viability of democracy itself. Set to this backdrop you are summoned by circumstance to make life/death decisions juxtaposed by public safety vs. public health.

On the one hand we have a life threatening pandemic that could kill hundreds if not thousands of our incarcerated citizens; on the other, by Governor Reprieve, a potential for increased criminal activity: narcotics trafficking/robbery - pregnant with the potential innocent life could be lost. An honest question/consideration with an unforgivable margin of error. Damned if you do Damned if you don’t, i.e., the hard job; the Leaders job!

“An Acceptable Loss’ lies in the balance of this decision. Presently you have embarked upon a delicate dance upon the razors’ edge. You believe you have found an acceptable middle ground; a Reprieve for non-violent short timers. If one commits murder we have the shield of their non-violent criminal history to deflect harsh criticism.

‘An Acceptable political calculation’, perhaps, but Political criteria should not be the framework from whence humane public health decisions are cast.

‘An Unacceptable human tragedy’, will occur if every vulnerable prisoner susceptible to the virus is not reviewed and considered for Reprieve. The prisoners who could be safely released into the community should be. Listen to the experts, adhere to the science, hear the release evaluations of correctional personnel and make reasonable release decisions based on the facts.

Lifers, prisoners convicted of unjustifiably taking human life, are the least likely of all demographics to reoffend. A fact<sup>1</sup>. Science. Deserving prisoners of this category who are vulnerable should be granted Reprieve until reviewed by the commutation board.

Vulnerable Term sentenced prisoners serving lengthy sentences<sup>2</sup>, should be considered for temporary release until the pandemic is quelled or their parole review hearing.

Imagine the prisoner convicted of theft serving twenty years, with fifteen years served, dying of Covid-9. Did he deserve the death penalty? No prisoner who will eventually reenter our community, should have his sentence effectively converted to the death penalty. As our duly elected Leader, you actually know the imminent danger Covid-9 poses to extremely vulnerable prisoners entrusted to your ‘care, custody and control’; this is evidenced by the release decisions made for non-violent short timers. You have made a conscious decision who to release, deliberately exposing the remaining prisoners to a **foreseeable**, excessive and unnecessary (but politically expedient) risk to their health, safety and life.

The criminal justice system traditionally views incarcerated people as undeserving of compassion. Criminal punishment has come to express contempt. We do indeed harbor a strong natural tendency to perceive offenders as vile, dangerous and as a consequence we strike them hard.

In the wake of COVID-19, we must view prisoners differently. During this unprecedented pandemic; prisoners do not deserve to be abandoned. We must treat them with the same humanity as all other people.

It cannot be ignored that prison officials owe basic duties of care to the incarcerated, chief among them, the responsibility to provide adequate health care.<sup>3</sup> Prisons, by their very nature, are unable to care for an ailing population. This glaring deficiency has been rendered indisputable by the novel coronavirus pandemic. For this reason, vulnerable prisoners should be granted Reprieves forthwith. Anything less is profoundly inhumane and represents a colossal miscarriage of justice.

Most of the prisoners kept from view are there as a result of the so-called ‘War on Drugs’; a narcotic pandemic contained to Black and Brown communities. Our political response invoked the criminal justice system resulting decades of Mass Incarceration of Black and Brown peoples. When the drug (virus) pandemic broke containment and engulfed our White counterpart, our political response shifted from a Public Safety matter and Mass incarceration to a Public Health matter, and a disease in search of a cure with prescriptions including (almost) everything but prison.

*(Continued on page 44)*

(Continued from page 43)

For prisoners, “it is not a matter of if, but when coronavirus shows up.”<sup>4</sup> Prisoners are arguably the population most vulnerable to COVID-19 infection. Currently, prisoner infection rates outpace those of the general, un-incarcerated population by more than 150%, and prisoners are dying four times as often as prison staff who test positive. We are grateful and applaud your efforts to date. Pennsylvania prisons have not been hit as hard as Ohio. Yet we are on Notice and have been forewarned, it is only a matter of time. Let us not fail to act timely.

### “CONTEXT IS DECISIVE” HISTORY WILL JUDGE US HARSHLY

Civil War traitors were granted amnesty after thousands of American deaths, including the slaughter of emancipated Slaves captured in Union Uniform; Union concessions after the Tilden-Hayes compromise<sup>5</sup> of 1877, granted these racists traitors license to murder over a thousand Blacks; stealing democracy from ‘We the People’ ending Reconstruction with neck breaking (lynching) terrorism; With exception of top Government Officials, German Soldiers were granted amnesty after crimes against the Human Race where they butchered millions of human beings; not just Jewish people, but the mentally and physically disabled, Blacks, Gays and other undesirables.

The history of man killing man unjustifiably is inexhaustible, the mark of an uncivilized species.

It is universally acknowledged our criminal justice system is broken: or works precisely as it was intended; an instrument of exploitation and an extension of the founding original sins of America, i.e., Theft of Native land by extermination (God ordained Manifest Destiny) and God ordained (three fifths of man) enslavement of Africans.

Structural Institutional Racism has disadvantaged Black and Brown communities, all the while advantaging White communities, e.g., the Whites only G. I. Bill. Intentional deprivation of civil rights (further exposed by the virus) continue, documented by disparate outcomes in education, employment, housing and health care.

In the face of a pandemic, killing Black and Brown people at disproportionate rates, to subject these culpable victims (they did it) to the death penalty upon political calculation, rather than as a matter of measured public health considerations is “**An Unacceptable Outcome**”.

**PAUL MANIFORT - Context!**

As our most trusted Government Leaders you are charged with protecting us; from crime and death. That public trust includes a legal duty to protect incarcerated citizens. Your ‘political calculation’ treats fallen Americans worse than our government treated War Criminals, including but not limited to: Confederate Traitors, Southern Klan Terrorists, Nazis, and international Terrorists.

Finally, we ask that you reduce the prison population by at least a quarter, knowing prison closures could follow; we assert, public health decisions should be made on the basis of saving lives.

It has been reported in the year of our Lord, 1765, the most respectable Sir William Blackstone scholarly opined ‘**It is better 10 guilty persons escape than one innocent suffer.**’

‘**Context here is decisive**’. We ask – would it not be better to incur the possibility of an increase in crime than to have hundreds of vulnerable prisoners ‘suffer’ an extra-judicial Death Penalty? (An unreasonable presumption negating the stabilizing effect, known to prison officials and correctional experts alike – that is brought to bear in whatever environment these men/women inhabit, meaning their presence would deter crime)

Gentlemen, You my Brothers, wanted to lead – We voted for you to lead (twice). We now pray you will Lead! End political calculation and hear science. ‘Doing what is right’ is always the best politics. Do not shrink from this challenge. Our Greater Good demands no less - rise!

The rising infection rates (Note Huntingdon Prison) will inevitably lead to a rise in death totals. It is abundantly clear our prison system is ill-equipped to protect vulnerable prisoners during this pandemic. While the Governor’s Office has the absolute Power of Reprieve, Respectfully Sir, you have not exercised it dutifully to the extent Public Health requires – to keep us all safe.

History demands you reaffirm we are a civilized Nation. We call upon you to discharge your duty to Humanity and Reprieve ON-LY and ALL vulnerable prisoners whose prison conduct, would (after review by Department of Corrections’ penologists) qualify them for pardon or parole were they time eligible.

Very Truly Yours – We the People!

Yusef Jonas

<sup>1</sup> ‘Our work brings into question the commonly held belief that those incarcerated for violent offenses will reoffend. Here we have a group of individuals, all convicted of murder, with an approximately 1 percent reconviction rate.’ Tarique Daftary-Kapur Lead Study Author of the Montclair State University Study. ( Article from Philadelphia Tribune)

<sup>2</sup> “People who have been incarcerated for decades following offenses com-

(Continued on page 45)

# Justice “and” Humanity Not a tough question!

(Continued from page 44)

*mitted while they were young are especially deserving of a second look in the middle of a public pandemic that is crippling communities and economies across Pennsylvania and throughout the country” [it is] “irresponsible to allow any population of people who don’t need to be in close proximity to become a virus incubator, whether in senior homes . . . jails and prisons. The public safety of every one of us depends on stopping the virus from spreading everywhere.” Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner.*

*3 Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 102-03 (1976)*

*4 Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>.*

*5 Electoral College tie in Presidential race: Compromise was to remove federal troops from the South, licensing domestic terrorists to kill scores of Black/White citizen architects of Reconstructions’ experiment in democracy.*

## The Decision Making is all Yours!

My name is William R. Johnson. I am currently incarcerated for the wrongful conviction by an undercover police officer - Terrance Fumo.

Nobody sees or feels incarceration more than an innocent man or woman, I’m striped of my freedom, life and liberty; separated from my family and friends. Meanwhile being constantly being subjected to systemic racism and racial discrimination because of my skin color and the Thirteenth Amendment. I really believe that in this country you cannot subject slavery as punishment without racism. In the United States of America, slavery and racism goes hand in hand, issues that eat at my mental stability every day including being incarcerated; I’m fighting mental battles everyday. I am being treated like a WILD ANIMAL instead of a HUMAN BEING, no one should have to be treated this way.

When you are an innocent person, you come to realize that your reliance on HOPE is what helps you make it though each and every day, being of Islamic faith hope is a major part of my daily life, it helps me make it through horrific days and nights. With everything going on in today’s world, when God allows me to wake up every day. I takes step in the right direction, realigning myself with family, the law library or even exercising in the gym - anything to keep a positive attitude. Being incarcerated I have a tendency of pushing people that I love and care about away from me, feeling depressed 90% of the time, feeling aggression because of an all-day mental challenge.

What makes it even harder for me is that every interaction I have ever encountered while free was physical, being incarcerated every interaction is mental; the end result is, many men and woman fall victim. In order to survive a mental environment, you must first participate in mental growth and show adaptabil-

ity by not allowing any facility to dictate your achievements. Do not fall victim to the physical meds, gambling, or negative activities. I am not trying to sound like a psychologist, I just want to make it through each day. I need you to be dedicated to change because change is a major part of LIFE, it requires your full ATTENTION.

There is not one living organism on the face of this earth that does not adapt to change. So, I ask you from this day fourth to speak for the guilty and fight for the innocent and the weak. Do not allow yourself to become stagnant or complacent. Give yourself as much growth as possible. Do not be afraid of the progress, LIVE IN IT. Do not allow the people around you to have the mindset of “it is what it is”; for me that is a sign of weakness. Nothing is what it is. A true leader is one that builds leaders, not one that leads people. So with that being said I have to give thanks to three old heads: 1) Shakur from Real Street Talk who bestowed in me the political aspects of what the Black community dollar is really worth, how to utilize it and invest back into the community; 2) “D-NICE” who made sure I stayed on my case, helped me to stay grounded and gave me one of the best books I was able to read, ‘In the Company of Giants’. If you are fighting for your freedom this is a must read!; 3) I also would like to thank “Shakaboona” who not only allowed me the chance to be able to share my point of view, but also showed me what activism looks like while incarcerated and also how to cope with being a Political Prisoner. These three brothers showed me that while fighting for your life you make time to fight for others, as well.

I believe that everything, everyone and everyday is a test. The DECISION MAKING is all yours.

Smart Communications/PA DOC  
William R. Johnson/ JD5940/SCI-Rockview  
P.O. Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Or

Facebook: William Free Ju Johnson

## Compassionate Release, Not So Compassionate

I am writing on behalf of myself as well as the nonsense I’ve witnessed time and time again at Muncy. I am a young mother of one rambunctious 4 1/2-year-old boy. Back in 2016 I was charged with aggravated assault with serious bodily injury and became an incarcerated mother of a then five-month-old. I am now trying to master the art of raising my son behind these dirty walls.

(Continued on page 46)

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# Justice “and” Humanity Not a tough question!

(Continued from page 45)



Being incarcerated for the past 4 1/2 years, I've seen lady lifers with severe life threatening illnesses being released on this so called “compassionate release”. How is it compassionate when they are releasing these women after the improper medical care here at SCI-Muncy. These women basically have to come to terms that due to this improper care by staff, they will die prior to or after their compassionate release to the community. It is unjust that the prison system will wait 38 to 40 years to release an elderly inmate to society with poor illnesses. A normal life sentence expectancy is 25 years, so why do we wait 30 to 40 plus years to finally release someone. We as humans with feelings should be advocates for the

lady lifers, as well as men lifers, because any one of them can be our mothers / fathers and grandmother's / grandfathers.

I am a voice, as are you, who deserves to be heard... Speak up!

Smart Communication/PA DOC  
Kimberly A. Morrobel /OY-5722/SCI-Muncy  
P.O. Box 33028  
St. Petersburg, FL 3373

## From The Cell of Jeffery A. Shockley

Smart Communications/PA DOC  
Jeffery A. Shockley/#4796 / SCI-Fayette  
PO Box 33028, St. Petersburg, FL 33733/SCI-Fayette

## Do You Really Matter?!?

“If we could read the secret history of those we would like to punish, we would find in each life enough grief and a suffering to make us stop wishing anything more on them.”

...Source unknown  
*Sunbeams, A Book of Quotations, Issue #42*

Where does one stand in grand scheme of the prison industrial complex? In context some guess a place to hold some,

mold some, in this space of correction where the corrected, formerly rejected, return to a society a changed figure.

Is it possible to excel beyond the confines we too often find ourselves in? Can we rise above the stuff we may have fallen prey to through situational conditioning while resembling everything the news views as distorted thinking while inking just another name across the headlines our people fear to see?

Can society see me, embrace me for a chance possibility while being a model inmate on one hand, yet a man they can't stand because here I am in the midst of this never ending always changing stream of internal rules that are not laws that hold as much weight as public policy?

Some democracy in society where hypocrisy propels only expectation of a prison cell for those who dare not conform to the norm of some assimilation.

Whatever happened to the Constitution?

Just another illusion creating more confusion towards Black Masculinity or the Culture interpretations thereof. Because, how many more tears and years must we take on to awake on some other side of thinking negatively within this society when my own actions created distractions too ashamed to face in the reality of being too weak to see that man, I never quite learned to be?

The “hardened criminal” tag now placed upon me and some say “I will never be free” but freedom comes for some in this time behind the bars of scars discarded by precision decisions and elections of corrections to be the best today that I have always been able to be no matter who, now, may disagree.

As I see the possibility to believe beyond the yesterday that had me bound down to the underground of self-doubt without a hope of anything other than failure.

But how do you hold on to the hope that as you do the right thing everything will work out well when dauntingly the past in hauntingly held on the precipice of suspicion when decisions are made because you are held in the midst of everyone else?

There is a wealth of good within the system, should the system take time to define the elements of its own biased mentality; blacked transparency, negligent accountability. Making their inadequacy my responsibility that creates so much disparity within the confines called their home of CARE, CUSTODY and CONTROL.

Another soul yearns to be regarded as more than just some inmate with distaste in the dictates of the past...

I am a Black Man. We are Men.

A Man.

A Man that matters. We are men that Matter.

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

# What's The News!

## Delaware County moves forward on prison privatization

By Alex Rose, September 2020

The Delaware County Jail Oversight Board took the first steps toward taking back control of the county prison during a monthly meeting last week.

Delaware County Executive Director Howard Lazarus said during a Zoom meeting Wednesday that he intends to begin by seeking a “transition manager” and transition team that can assist the county with the process, as well as fleshing out the costs associated with such a move that can be included in the 2021 budget.

County Councilman Kevin Madden, who heads the board, said that the county wants to move expeditiously to bring the prison back under county management, but does not want to take action until it understands all that such an action might entail. Common Pleas Court Judge Jack Whelan, who formerly chaired county council, said he supports the county undertaking that cost analysis.

The George W. Hill Prison in Concord is currently managed by the private, for-profit company the GEO Group under a five-year, \$264 million contract signed in December 2018.

Taking back local control of the prison was a major campaign promise when Democrats were running for county council last year. With all five seats now held by Democrats, Madden said council is still working to effectuate that plan, but has been stymied by the coronavirus pandemic.

The company has come under fire from corrections officers recently for staffing shortages that they claim create a dangerous work environment. One guard was brutally beaten there last month and sent to the hospital with severe injuries.

Delaware County Controller Joanne Phillips reported that the prison is currently

staffed at 92%, though that figure includes those on various types of leave. GEO will pay the county a penalty of \$99,992.64 for the staffing shortfall in August, she said, as required by the contract.

Facility Administrator David Byrne said there is typically about a 30% turnover rate at the prison, but GEO has been working to bring on more staff and hopes to hit the 100% staffing numbers required by the contract within 30 to 60 days.

He said the company has brought in three additional regional human resources personnel to schedule interviews with potential hires, has eight new employees that have started since Sept. 1 and has 15 applicants in the background check phase.

“We have 81 applicants who are on the initial screening phase and will be scheduled for an interview within the next two weeks,” said Byrne. “We also have an additional 36 applicants in the queue that have not begun the initial screening process. We’re experiencing issues with individuals failing the background phase. Some don’t show up for their drug screening or they simply drop out during the onboarding phase.”

Acting Warden Donna Mellon also noted the prison computers “went down” Aug. 19 and the county information technology department was called in to help.

Madden confirmed the prison computers had been hit with what he deemed a “national-level ransomware issue,” but said the prison was not operationally impacted.

Corrections officers reported that a training computer at George W. Hill had been infiltrated by a hacker or hackers who threatened to release sensitive information stored on GEO servers unless the company paid a large sum of money, reportedly in the millions of dollars.

One officer said the computer was overnighted to GEO’s corporate headquarters and there was initially a worry that guards would not get paid. While paychecks have been issued as usual, some still worry that their private information including Social Security numbers and banking infor-

mation associated with direct deposits may have been exposed.

A GEO spokesman has not responded to numerous requests for comment on the hack or how the company plans to address any potential fallout for employees.

## CADBI Chapters

### CADBI Philly:

CADBI

c/o Decarcerate PA

PO Box 40764

Philadelphia PA 19107

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CADBIphilly/>

### CADBI West:

CADBI West

c/o Abolitionist Law Center

P. O. Box 8654

Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cadbiwest/>

Email is: [CADBIWEST@gmail.com](mailto:CADBIWEST@gmail.com)

Community organizer, Carol Speaks

### CADBI Delco :

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cadbidelawarecty/>

For information on **CADBI-Lancaster, CADBI-Reading, CADBI-Allentown, CADBI-York and CADBI-Coatesville** write to:

John Rowland

CADBI Statewide

PO Box 24062

Philadelphia, PA 19139

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

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

## Capitalism & Racial Equality: Exposing Fundamental Contradictions.

By: Sergio Hyland

With police brutality becoming more visible to the american public - and the rest of the world - a resistance has been forming. Groups, such as Black Lives Matter, the NAACP, and others have teamed up with sports figures, politicians, and celebrities, to amplify the demand for what they term as "racial justice". In this demand, there is a focus on the desire for economic equality among the black and white races in amerika. They point out how black people in amerika are at the bottom of every positive statistic, and at the top of every negative one. We're approximately 13% of amerika's population, but represent nearly half of its prisoners. We're overworked, underemployed, and suffer from diseases and other health issues that our white counterparts often resolve through the quality healthcare that blacks are routinely denied.

When a young woman filmed George Floyd being murdered by police, people were outraged. Now, we see messages painted across roads, on NBA courts and NFL stadiums; we even see television channels interrupt programming in order to remind their viewers that "Black Lives Matter". It's all very comforting and sentimental. But it's also all very misdirected! Like so many others interested and involved in the struggle for the liberation of black, brown, and oppressed people, we see the celebrities and sports figures standing next to their corporate donors, saying what they believe is the right thing. But when we fail to study history, we end up making the same crucial mistakes that keep us running in place. And the mistake that we continue to make is in our refusal to put racism, as a social phenomenon, in its proper scientific context. Nothing exists in a vacuum; everything in existence has a purpose. Racism is the creation of capitalism - in fact, racism is the most critical element of capitalism. Therefore, any attempts to critique and destroy racism are useless without also critiquing and attempting to destroy capitalism.

Racism propels capitalism by exploiting differences among working class and poor people of color. Before slavery began to spread in amerika, black and white bondsmen worked side-by-side, being exploited by the same group of business elites (what we know today as the 1%). Having a

common interest in toppling the ruling class, both blacks (including some slaves) and whites attempted to overthrow the elites who were benefitting off of their labor. The rebellion was crushed, and the white elites took steps to keep this from happening again. The most notable step was ending the indentured system, and utilizing all African slave labor. The next step was to give the formerly indentured whites slightly better living conditions than their enslaved African counterparts. Though the formerly indentured whites weren't much better off than the African slaves, at least they weren't slaves! Historians refer to this as the "racial bribe", because even though the white workers knew this was wrong, they were themselves desperate for any glimmer of hope that they would one day be able to pursue a life of meaning and comfort. To make such an arrangement more acceptable to neutral parties, Africans were misrepresented in early forms of media (newspaper and books), as being a subhuman race, needing to be always under the control of whites. By the so-called "end of slavery", all throughout the Jim Crow and reconstruction era, this racial bribe had calcified and become the bedrock principle of american economic security. Today, whites are still paid more than blacks, even if only marginally. Such preferential treatment, no matter how miniscule, motivates whites toward a misguided racial loyalty. When we look closely at society, we see hostilities by whites, directed at blacks, due to a mythical fear that black people are a threat to white existence. In reality, most whites have more in common with blacks than any other group of people.

The corporate elites of this generation are scarcely different from those planter elites who stoked the fires of racism and colorism amongst slaves and white overseers, all for the purpose of capital accumulation. Owners of sports franchises are a perfect example of this: they're often quick to punish a player for making antisemitic remarks, but they remain silent when their peer - Donald Trump - spews racially charged language, clearly meant to inspire his racist followers. When white politicians take a stance against immigration, they do so by making thinly veiled accusations that Mexicans are crossing the border to steal jobs away from "hard working" white amerikans. Capitalism then, is just a thing, and is only given life with the injection of racism. Therefore (and this may hurt some feelings), one cannot be anti-racist while being a capitalist at the same time! If you support capitalism, you support racism, since again, capitalism's foundation is the "racial bribe"! Throughout the years, economists and politicians have

*(Continued on page 49)*

*(Continued from page 48)*

attempted to reconcile capitalism and "racial equality", falsely claiming that the two can harmoniously coexist. And that is the contradiction which brings us to this point in history where consciousness is rising, and the masses are beginning to struggle against those responsible for their (our!) oppression. We, as a movement, may be a little behind in our analysis of capitalism than other oppressed people around the world, but when it comes to capitalism, patriarchy, imperialism, and fascism, we remain uniquely situated, since the nerve center for all of these operations are sometimes a mere stone's throw from our own neighborhoods. We have the knowledge and ability to interrupt these systems and draw them to a conclusion. The protests (both "violent" and "nonviolent"), recent mobilization of human rights defenders, work stoppages and more, represent an awakening which threatens the ruling powers of amerika.

Though appearing strong and invulnerable, capitalism is struggling to survive. Like a fire needs oxygen, capitalism can only flourish through nonstop consumption of the earth's resources, and the exploitation of human bodies (prison, sexual exploitation, manipulation of the census, wars, etc.). And when capitalism is threatened, the ruling class responds in extreme ways, invariably through the implementation of reforms designed to pacify the people and suppress any potential rebellion. We're witnessing this process take place in the aftermath of countless uprisings that are the consequence of unarmed black women and men being hunted down and slayed by police. Since then, local, state, and federal officials have teamed with political, corporate, and labor elites to enact numerous reforms, ostensibly to level the playing field and give poor black, brown, and oppressed people a real (false) sense of equality in a society founded upon inequality! Depending on your primary sources of information, fascism takes on several different meanings. But I agree with comrade George when he stated that fascism can be defined in one word: REFORM! Reform is capitalism's extreme response to real, credible threats. The goal of reform is to destroy revolutionary potential. Just look at any event throughout recent history in amerika, where the masses began to rise up against their oppressors; look at what followed any incident of police brutality against black and brown citizens. A pattern emerges: 1) a black or brown person is brutalized by police; 2) the masses mobilize and rebel - in one way or another; 3) the government enacts reforms; 4) the rebellion subsides and eventually disappears. Unfortunately, in most of these instances, these counterrevolutionary reforms were supported by our own elected officials. Furthermore, each stage of reform is stronger and more effective in redirecting revolutionary energy into "peaceful" (nonthreatening) displays of discontent.

Governmental regulatory agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, FBI, CIA, EPA, FDA, Department of Corrections, Police Departments, etc., are all examples of reform, because they all serve the singular purpose of destroying revolutionary potential, controlling the oppressed and working classes, and strengthening the grip of the ruling class, so that capitalism can spread like the deadly cancer that it is. Even our electoral system is one of reform, since by participating in it, we actually give it legitimacy, though it has never been of any significant benefit to us. Don't be fooled: the government's strings are being pulled by the ruling 1%. And each reform that is put into action, strengthens the ruling class's grip on power, and gives the masses a false sense of victory. Right now, the world is fighting a pandemic, in which poor, black and brown peoples are most impacted. Evictions and unemployment rates are at near all-time highs. People are realizing that their conditions are becoming more intolerable, and they're beginning to become ideologically unified through the principle of revolution. That ideal is steadily progressing from theory into practice. The ruling class is once again feeling threatened. It's no coincidence that despite all the hardships and suffering people are experiencing, the ruling class has given us sports to keep us distracted - just another tactic designed to render our revolutionary potential empty and meaningless. If our true aim is to defeat racism, we must have the courage, willingness, and desire to rearrange our relationship with capitalism. Like the former black and white bondsmen, we have more in common than we think. Whether it's the police officer or the so-called "criminal", the prison guard or the prisoner, the black academic or the white welfare recipient - we all have a vested interest in identifying and accepting the root causes of racism, so that we can strive to eliminate it.

The hardships of all oppressed peoples around the world have their roots in capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy (a much deeper problem), and fascism. Racism is a symptom of capitalism - and fascism is its final resort. Demanding "racial equality" within a capitalist system, amounts to demanding some form of black capitalism. Equality can never be achieved within this kind of system. Our demands must stretch beyond mere wage/economic equality, and toward an entire rearrangement of the relationship between the people, property, and the earth's resources. Anything short of this is reform - and reform is counterrevolutionary! We must continue to develop a world view based on cooperation and anti-oppression in our quest to create a new world community. There's no such thing as "racial equality" - there's only "equality for all". And as I've stated over, and over again, capitalism is antithetical to any kind of equality - especially when it pertains to the races. Too many of our white counterparts willingly remain attached to capitalism, mainly because they don't identify themselves as victims of it. But capital-

*(Continued on page 50)*

**THE MOVEMENT**

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

ism is a thing that survives on mass consumption. And when it consumes everything else, it will consume them too! As it stands, the imperial aspect of capitalism has allowed the ruling class to keep white america - for the most part - comfortable. Through the exploitation of foreign people and resources, the american ruling class has been able to manipulate capitalism's impact on americans, giving the racial bribe a temporary reprieve. Hence, the extermination of capitalism isn't merely "a black problem". If you remove black people from the equation, capitalism would still flourish through the exploitation of differences between whites. The fuel would move from racism to colorism - which is another false concept that affects black people in america. Capitalism is a creation; it must be thought for and told what to do.

Still, for the sake of argument, let's assume that black people in america were somehow able to achieve "racial equality" within a capitalist system, it would undoubtedly come at the expense of the WORLD'S nonwhite population, since again, capitalism can only thrive off of divisions, differences, and unequal relationships. Identifying the international qualities of capitalism is vital to its destruction. When corporations issue statements voicing their support for "racial equality" in america, they do so while simultaneously exploiting darker races around the world. And when you attempt to support capitalism, you're adding fuel to its

fire. Furthermore, if you consider yourself an activist against racism, you must also be an activist against capitalism. Anything else would be reformist and counterrevolutionary! We cannot continue to aid in our own oppression by demanding reforms which only strengthen the ruling class's clutches on power. Working towards a united front means that we must remain vigilant in the fight to liberate all of the world's oppressed people, because our struggle is uniquely linked to theirs, despite misguided loyalties to a false concept of "american exceptionalism". For those of you who are unfamiliar with the links between these social and economic phenomena, I urge you to do your own research by reading authors such as Angela Y. Davis, Maria Mies, Stan Goff, Silvia Federici, and others. We won't rest until all people are free! Onward...

**Follow** me on IG @uptownserg  
**Email:** sergiohyland8@gmail.com  
**Listen** to commentary @www.prisonradio.org

**I want to support the Human Rights Coalition by giving a Donation!**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institution/ID (if necessary):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

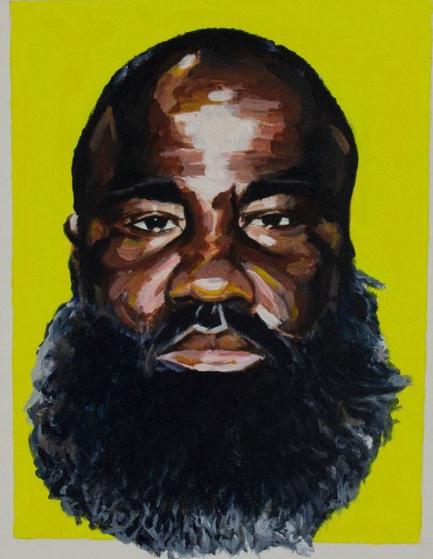
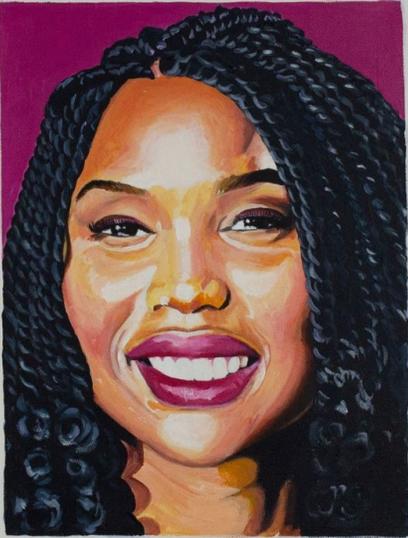
**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Donation Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$20.00 - \$40.00**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **\$50.00**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **\$100.00 or above**

Families, we rely on member support, any gift you make above \$25.00 helps us a great deal.

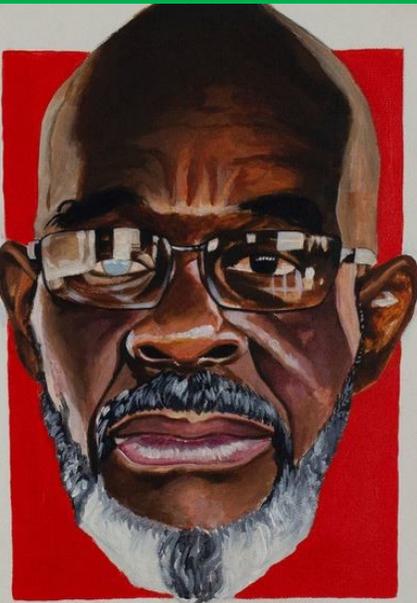
**Please make checks payable to the Human Rights Coalition and mail donations to:**  
**HRC, PO Box 34580, Phila., PA 19101, ATTENTION: Charitable Donations.**

## Art by James "Yaya" Hough



Portraits of *Points of Connection* created by James "Yaya" Hough, above from left, Juvenile Unit prosecutor Ebony Wortham, First Assistant District Attorney Carolyn Temin and formerly incarcerated returning citizen Darnell "Nell" Drinks.

Akeil Robertson/Mural Arts Philadelphia



Portraits of *Points of Connection* created by James "Yaya" Hough, above from left, formerly incarcerated returning citizens Michael "Smokey" Wilson and John Pace and victim advocate Dorothy Johnson-Speight. Read story on page 19.

**Human Rights Coalition**

**P.O. Box 34580**



“Owl,” drawing by Jorge  
Francisco “Frankie” Munoz

“Frankie” is serving time at the Pelican Bay “supermax”, a controversial facility that has drawn international criticism. Supermax facilities isolate each prisoner in individual cells, where they spend days on end, with no access to educational programming, group exercise, or other means of human contact, thus amounting to long-term solitary confinement. Psychologists around the world, and an increasing number of courts, have determined that this practice amounts to torture. Given this context, we are proud to print Frankie’s art, as it stands as a testimony to the need to create and to communicate, even when held in the worst situations.

To learn more about supermax prisons, see Keramet Reiter, “When Prison is Not Enough,” *Prison Legal News*, [prisonlegalnews.org](http://prisonlegalnews.org).

From: *Captured Words, Free Thoughts, Writings from America’s Prisons*, Volume 16.

Contact for art, poems, testimonials: Professor Stephen J. Hartnett, Department of Communications, CU Denver, 1201 Larimer St., Room 3016, Denver, CO 80204