What’s The News?

Mumia Abu-Jamal Faces US Supreme Court as New Book and Film Expose Injustice
By Hans Bennett

(Abu-Jamal-News.com)

On Monday, Oct. 6, in a ruling unrelated to death-row journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal’s upcoming appeal of the recent Third Circuit decision denying a new guilt-phase trial, the US Supreme Court rejected his Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) appeal, which was asking the courts to hear newly discovered testimony from Kenneth Pate and Yvette Williams. (read the

Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist— Black Youth and the Culture of Violence.

My grandson has always been a good person since he was a young boy. When he was a teenager, he was the only person that would help me tend to my vegetable gardens. That boy loves the earth! And my grandson always made it
Editor’s Note

Greetings!

Welcome to THE MOVEMENT – the new and official newsletter of the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) organization.

As many of you regular readers of our newsletter may have noticed, very quickly, is that we have changed the name of the newsletter. We believe the new name of our newsletter perfectly reflects the attitude of HRC members and what we are trying to do for our oppressed prisoners, families of prisoners, and communities, in the state of Pennsylvania and nationwide – that is, working to build a grassroots economic and political movement to champion the struggle of prisoners and our communities!

Every step of the way, we have explained that it is the families of prisoners, ex-prisoners, and prisoners themselves that must run the HRC, as well as lead the movement. Thus, we felt it necessary to improve the newsletter's format to make it more “family-centered” instead of “prisoner-centered”.

To that end, we have created entirely new sections within the newsletter for the families of prisoners and prisoners, which are geared towards: (1) exposing Amerika's phony systems (police, courts, prisons, and legislature) (2) educating the families of prisoners and the public about the real issues (3) organizing the community around community and prison-related issues and (4) mobilizing coalitions of grassroots organizations and communities into a powerful economic and political bloc in Pennsylvania to obtain relief for prisoners and our communities. We ask that prisoners get as many of their family, loved ones, and friends in society involved. And we encourage prisoners to become actively involved as well. Prisoners can begin getting involved by forwarding all of your family and friends' contact information to the HRC's 'Newsletter Subscription Department' that they may begin receiving THE MOVEMENT newsletter at their homes.

We encourage you all, families and prisoners, to check out the new sections ‘Love Knows No Bars’, ‘The Human Rights Coalition Report’, ‘the Home Front – Serving Our Community’, and ‘Your Legal Corner’, to name a few. And we also encourage the families of prisoners – especially the teenagers and young adults – to join the ‘HRC Newsletter and Internet Committee’ to assist in the creation of our newsletter and website as a volunteer, to write and send more personal articles with pictures to be printed in THE MOVEMENT, and to join the ranks of the HRC as an active member to help further our struggle of getting brothas and sistas FREE, and to stop the modern enslavement (through the prison-plantation system) of generations of our born and yet to be born children.

Families of prisoners, ex-prisoners, and prisoners, come join the HRC Movement and get actively involved in the struggle. You have everything to gain, and nothing to lose but the chains around your minds and feet!

All Power to The People!!!

- Bro. Shakaboona   Co-Editor In Chief
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Mumia Abu-Jamal Faces US Supreme Court as New Book and Film Expose Injustice

(Read the affidavits here). The appeal had been filed in July, after it was rejected by the PA Supreme Court in Feb, 2008, and in 2005 by Philadelphia Judge Pamela Dembe.

Upset by Monday's news, Dr. Suzanne Ross, Co-Chair of The NYC Free Mumia Coalition argued: "The courts, from Judge Albert Sabo's outrageously biased rulings and court decorum; to Pamela Dembe's ridiculous rulings, including her disregard of the significance of Sabo's infamous 'I'm going to help them fry the Nigger' remark; to the PA Supreme Court's rubber stamping of Sabo's and Dembe's rulings; to Judge William Yohn's refusal to examine the question of innocence, to the Third Circuit's 'topsy turvy' violations of their own precedents in considering the Batson issue so that they could deny Abu-Jamal the trial he is entitled to, have all shown a callous disregard for the life of a man who is obviously innocent, and have done everything in their power to assure that Mumia Abu-Jamal will never see the light of day from other than the twisted prism of a prison. This last decision is yet another outrageous chapter in a 27 year history of a conspiracy to imprison, kill, and silence Mumia Abu-Jamal."

With the court's PCRA rejection, Abu-Jamal's upcoming appeal to the US Supreme Court of the Third Circuit decision (the filing of this appeal is due by Oct. 20 unless a 60 day extension is requested) is now more important than ever, because this is now his last chance for a new guilt-phase trial. Fortunately, this crucial moment for Abu-Jamal coincides with two new media projects that expose injustice in his case that extends well beyond the narrow issues being considered by the courts: the British film In Prison My Whole Life and the book The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal, by J. Patrick O'Connor.

Both projects merit extensive coverage from the mainstream media, and are being utilized as tools by Abu-Jamal's supporters for both education and fighting what they see as a long history of mainstream media bias against Abu-Jamal. Supporters are currently organizing for a major demonstration in Philadelphia on December 6, organized in solidarity with other actions around the world.

New Bill Seeks to Abolish Sentencing Child Offenders to Life Without Parole (LWOP) in Prison.

Justice Accountability and Improvement Act of 2007 (H.R. 4300) was recently introduced in the House of Representatives 110th Congress, 1st Session by Representatives Mr. Robert C. Scott. Be it The enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, this bill would effectively abolish sentencing child offenders to the death sentence of Life Without Parole (LWOP) and establish a meaningful opportunity for parole for each child offender sentenced to life in prison, and for other purposes.

The U.S. Supreme Court have already abolished use of the death penalty for child offenders in Roper v. Simmons, 125 s. ct. 1183, and sentencing children to Life Without Parole is indeed a death penalty as well. Sentencing children to die in prison is cruel and unusual punishment and is in violation of the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and of U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Every citizen should contact their U.S. Representative and tell them support the bill HR4300.
**What's The News!**

**All Things Censored**

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC), under Secretary Jeffrey Beard, has banned all books written by former Black Panther and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The PA DOC has also banned all history/political books written on the 1960s Black Panther Party (BPP) organization, claiming the Black panthers to have been a terrorist organization, and thus cannot be read by prisoners. All literature on the Black Panthers is now declared “illegal contraband” by the PA DOC.

To date, the PA DOC has banned over 1,500 books from their prisons, including The Mis-Education of the Negro, Message to the Black Man, and 100 years of Lynching.

The PA DOC has also banned the Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN) channel is Pennsylvania’s version of C-Span. The PCN channel reports what is going on in the Pennsylvania Legislature. The PA DOC continues to violate the constitutional rights of prisoners in its role as “thought police” by prohibiting the free exercise of speech or of the press as guaranteed by the 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. If you want to keep people in slavery, keep knowledge away from them, to keep them ignorant of the fact they are slaves.

**The PA Prison Industrial Complex Expands**

The Pennsylvania General Assembly is trying to authorize the construction of four new Pennsylvania prisons at a cost of $200 million each – that’s $800 million dollars being spent of tax payer’s dollars for prisons! However, we know of no new schools that have been built with tax payers dollars over the past 50 years.

The projected Pennsylvania State Prison population for 2008-2009 is 48,731. By 2010 State Prison population will have increased to 52,000 at a cost of $34,245. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections receives a budget of $1.67 billion dollars, and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole receives $117.2 million for its budget. And, their budgets increase each year!

We must keep in mind that a diabolical scheme is being run on American citizens, because while crime and arrest have decreased for the past 10 years, prison population and prison construction has steadily increased. We must understand that the white ruling class in Amerika are using the legal system as a tool to incarcerate (enslave) more and more poor people into the prison industrial complex to bolster the American economy, get corporations - who service prisons - richer, provide employment to poor rural white Amerika, and to destabilize poor communities of color. Don’t fall for the con game. It’s always about the money with them – it’s economy, stupid! So while the rich get richer, the poor gets slavery (prisons), suffering, poorer, and death!
The Official Newsletter of the Human Rights Coalition for the Union of Prisoners’ Families

Love Knows No Bars

The love stories of HRC members offer ample evidence that love can survive, even bloom, despite laws that separate and challenge families for agonizingly long periods. The human spirit rises for above prison walls, as you'll read in these stories that members generously shared with us.

I Love You, Man

In 1992 my husband Eric “Man-Shareef” Riddick, was unjustly convicted of a murder that every facet of the facts proves he did not commit. Nonetheless, following this mock trial that could only be compared to a modern lynching, he was sentenced to life in prison.

I have witnessed this manifest injustice bring out the best in my husband, and in turn, he has brought out the best in me. Our love has been perpetually tested. Yet it prevails every time and continues to refine itself—moving tenaciously against the growth of injustice. The bars, walls, barbwire and distances that seek to forever sabotage our togetherness will fail because I believe in the power of authentic love which is fully capable of overcoming all wickedly constructed obstacles in our path including the wrongful conviction of my beloved husband. We are in this fight together and I support him 100%! I love you Man-Riddick.

- Monica Long Riddick
Philadelphia, PA

A Grandmother’s Love

I’m a 85 year old grandmother and I haven’t been able to see my imprisoned grandson in a long time because of my health problems and the distance of the prisons. Fortunately, after seven years, the Lord has blessed me to see my grandson Kerry (Shakaboona) once again.

The family and I visited Kerry at SCI-Houtzdale and we had a wonderful time together. We talked about everything - our family history, politics, and the community. And as usual, that boy always make me laugh and feel good, and he’s still a good person.

My grandson has always been a good person since he was a young boy. When he was a teenager, he was the only person that would help me tend to my vegetable gardens. That boy loves the earth! And my grandson always made it around to the house to help me out. That’s why he’s my favorite grandbaby.

My grandson has been in prison for 20 years now. Those police framed my grandson and they just lynched him in court. He never got a fair trial. They are doing all of our black men like that now, just lynching them in white folk’s courthouses. My grandson is not perfect, but no person is. No child should be put in prison for life to die. I love my grandson, and I will continue to support my grandbaby for as long as I live. May God bless my grandson and all of you.

Grandma Ruth

Love Knows No Bars - If you are a family member, loved one, friend, or prisoner and wish to submit a brief article with family visiting photo to the section ‘Love Knows No Bars’ about the love or friendship you have with someone incarcerated. Just forward your article with family photo to the HRC’s ‘Newsletter Department for possible printing.
WHEN PRISON IS GENOCIDE

BY: John Frederick Nole
A Life Potential Statement

There’s genocide taking place in Pennsylvania, and it’s Life Without The Opportunity For Parole, (LWOP) specifically crafted for children. Without consideration whether a child is capable of amending at a future point in time, these babies are being locked away until they die.

Though the United States Supreme Court, stopped short in its Roper Vs. Simmons, decision in 2005, of calling life in prison a Death Sentence. When given to children, it’s just that, DEATH!

The mitigating factors that apply to adults sentenced to death by lethal injection, and other measures, and will prevent that sentence from being carried out, mitigating factors are not applied to children who commit the same crimes, and are sentenced to LWOP. Factors of poor up-bringing, lack of education, family abuse, sexual abuse, alcohol and drug dependency, can and do keep one from lethal death sentences, but these same circumstances do not prevent babies from being sentenced to LWOP.

In the United States, it’s estimated that billions of dollars are spent yearly on alcohol consumption, as well as treating its addiction. Alcohol, in and of itself acts as a depressant on the central nervous system. It affects areas of the brain that impacts comprehension, self control, and judgment. Brain cells are literally destroyed by alcohol. It makes no exception whom it victimizes. It’s a disease! The affects of alcohol in combination with other drugs on the undeveloped brain of adolescents are intensified, through alcohol and drug combinations, causing more damage, killing brain cells before they are fully formed. Such contamination leaves children victimized from the various affects of these stimuli. The ability to reason and make decisions are immediately impaired. Sound judgment is questionable in a child who’s not begun to come into full bloom, where the affect of alcohol and drugs diminish the potential function of the brain, under control substances.

Infants, Children, Juveniles, by any other name, are babies, and in the new genocide, they’re prey for the lions of our political arenas. These political lions to amuse disenchanted voters, create intolerant citizens. In the coliseum of our courts’, the mitigating circumstances impacting children as contributors to their delinquency, are dismissed as casualties of incorrigibleness, and sweep under the proverbial rug of mandatory sentencing laws. Once these babies are cut of sight, they are out of mind.

The sentence of death, that passes through the conduit of LWOP, does not begin with the sentence, but with the prejudices, and intolerance of law structure. The future potential of these LWOP incarcerated babies, speaks directly to an indifferent political system, where the concept that these children might have a brighter future, is totally negated by the nature of the crime. Without the morality of its’ creators, law merely reflect the wretchedness of its makers.

Thousands of infants are born to young girls and boys who suffer impaired judgment, the inability to comprehend the full significance of their actions, under the influence of either, alcohol, drugs, or both. The affects of what alcohol and drugs do to the infants they carry, has manifest itself in a genocide thru the practice of, lock’em up and throw away the key, no matter the reason or cause of their behavior or possibility of amenability.

Children are influenced by their various social environments. There’s a difference, according to their surroundings, in what one learns as their survival mechanisms. The survival skills of the poor and uneducated are often more about how to escape problems and pressures, than learning how to cope.

The cure-all to addressing the behavior of children cannot be a prison genocide program of LWOP, where the poor, minorities and uneducated are specifically targeted. Killing children under the death sentences of LWOP does not address the promiscuous behavior of society’s babies. LWOP for children, is just wrong! In order to become a truly just society, let’s begin with Just-Children.
CHILDREN SENTENCE TO LIFE IN PRISON TO DIE IS CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT

By: Kerry ‘Shakaboona’ Marshall

I. Pennsylvania: A Symbol of the Cradle of the Right to Life, Liberty, Justice, and Equality for ALL.

Early in American history, Pennsylvania was the birth of the nation, and was considered by many the political center of the newly founded American nation. In 1774, the Continental Congress was established and headquartered in the city of Philadelphia, and had written the historic Declaration of Independence. In 1787, fifty-five men gathered in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention to draw up the United States Constitution, which included such renowned figures as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton. In early American history, the cities of Harrisburg and Philadelphia had been the nation’s capitol. Betsy Ross weaved the national flag of the United States of America in Philadelphia, and the Liberty Bell and the Underground Railroad – both representing freedom – has its home origins in the city of Philadelphia as well. Our great state of Pennsylvania historically represented the cradle of the American people’s right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness, and the city of Philadelphia the symbol of Freedom, Justice, and Equality for all people.

Today in the 21st Century, however, we unfortunately find that Philadelphia and Pennsylvania’s symbols as the cradle of Life, Liberty, Justice, and Equality for all people have been greatly tarnished. Over the past two decades much national and international media attention has brought Pennsylvania’s cruel, inhumane, immoral, and unconstitutional legislative and legal policy of imposing a death sentence of Life Without Parole (LWOP) in prison for children to the fore which is currently destroying our city and state’s world image as being the principal city of Life, Liberty, Justice, and Equality.

The Pennsylvanian Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of state government must now immediately act on this serious matter by abolishing the unconstitutional and human rights violation of imposing on children under the age of 18 a death sentence of Life Without Parole in prison. A sentence of Life Without Parole (LWOP) in prison is actually a de facto Death sentence of “Death by Incarceration”, imposed on child offenders. The United States Supreme Court has abolished the sentencing of child offenders to death by execution in the historic legal case of Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 557, 125 S. Ct. 1183 (March 1, 2005), declaring the practice as excessively cruel and to severe a punishment for children under age 18 and as such being in violation of the United States Constitution.

II. The United State Opposition to Signing the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (C.R.C) Article 37 (a), states in relevant parts:

“Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without the possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age.”

Unfortunately, the United States and Somalia are the only countries in the world that has adamantly refused to sign the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Under the U.N. Covenant, sentencing children to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole is considered inhumane and inconsistent with the evolving standards of a civilized society, and thus is fully rejected by the rest of the civilized nations of the world whom signed the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child Treaty. The United States have over 2,300 children in prison serving a sentence of Life without the possibility of release. A sentence of Life without parole (LWOP) in prison is simply another form of the death penalty. Instead of a sentence of death by execution, it is a sentence of “Death by Incarceration”. Of all states, Pennsylvania lea the nation in the number of children it has sentenced to Life without parole with 445 children (and counting) currently in

(Continued on page 8)
prison sentenced to LWOP, even though Pennsylvania ranks sixth in population.

The United States is out of step with the rest of the world in the treatment of children within its judicial system, and it is up to the world’s leaders and organizations to assist the citizen’s of America with influencing the United States to sign the U.N. Covention on the Rights of the Child Treaty. World leaders, organization, and human rights advocates must also petition the U.S. Supreme Court Justices to abolish sentencing children to life without the possibility of release.

III. The U.S. Supreme Court and children Sentenced to Life Imprisonment Without the Possibility of Release.

In March 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Roper v. Simmons, 125 S. Ct. 1183 case that, the execution of child offenders under the age of eighteen when they committed their crimes, constituted cruel and an excessively severe punishment which violated the United States Constitution.

According to the U.S. Supreme Court the immaturity and irresponsibility of children their susceptibility to negative influences and peer pressure, impulsive behavior, and their greater capacity for change, makes child offenders categorically less culpable than adults. The U.S. Supreme Court acknowledge that its ruling was influenced by the overwhelming international consensus against the sentencing of children to death and the fact that such sentencing violates international human rights laws relating to the Rights of Children.

While the U.S. Supreme Court has abolished sentencing children to death by execution in the Roper v. Simmons case, other forms of imposing a death sentence on children under the age of 18 have not been abolished, such as sentencing children to Life imprisonment without the possibility of release (Death by Incarceration). Child offenders whom received a death sentence of Life imprisonment without parole for crimes committed when they were under the age of 18 are currently seeking relief from that form of capital punishment from federal and state courts and legislatures, on the grounds given in the Roper v. Simmons U.S. Supreme Court case that has abolished the imposition of the death penalty for child offenders.

IV. Pennsylvania Legislature on Children Sentenced to Life Imprisonment Without the Possibility of Release

In the light of emerging data supporting the contention that children charged with murder are legally less blameworthy than their adult counterparts. Roper v. Simmons, 125 S. Ct. 1183 (March 1, 2005). The Pennsylvania Legislature must change the current law that prohibits children serving Life imprisonment without parole (LWOP) from being eligible for release. The Pennsylvania Legislature can create the opportunity for parole review for child offenders serving Life imprisonment without parole (LWOP) by amending the “Parole Act of 1941” to a language establishing parole release after serving a total of 20 years of imprisonment, and making such law retroactively applied to all child offenders serving LWOP.

The Pennsylvania Legislature has the absolute power and authority to enact law that establish release of parole for child offenders sentenced to LWOP for crimes committed when they were under the age of 18. However, there is no legislative effort in Pennsylvania for abolishing sentencing children to Life without parole, and establishing law that will give such child offenders parole release eligibility. Pennsylvanian politicians are highly reluctant to advocate abolishing the sentencing of children to LWOP or of granting parole to children sentenced to LWOP, due to their paralyzing fear of being perceived as being “Soft on Crime” by political opponents during election time, so they remain far away from advocating [any] criminal justice reform of our laws for fear of committing Political Suicide. Due to this harsh reality the political climate for legislative change of Pennsylvania law in sentencing children to LWOP in prison is not encouraging in the Pennsylvania Legislature at

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this time. However although the Pennsylvanian Legislative body does not have the moral or political fortitude to enact law that would abolish sentencing children to Life imprisonment without the possibility of release or make such children eligible for parole, the political climate can be changed and is currently changing now to one more favorable to our position. All parties who advocate the abolition of sentencing children to Life imprisonment without the possibility of ever being released, must organize on the levels of grassroots, statewide, nationally and internationally to bear down political and economic pressure on the Pennsylvania legislature, by calling a National Economic Boycott on the State of Pennsylvania to bring it into conformity of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child Treaty.

V. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court on Children Sentence to Life Imprisonment Without the Possibility of Release

In the U.S. Supreme Court Roper v. Simmons case, the Supreme Court rejected imposing the death penalty on child offenders whom were under the age of 18 when their alleged crimes were committed. Since that time many child offender prisoners who received Life imprisonment without parole are seeking legal relief from their sentence in the Pennsylvania courts on the same legal grounds stated by the U.S. Supreme Court Justices din the Roper v. Simmons case. Many of Pennsylvania’s child offenders serving Life imprisonment without the possibility of parole release, have already been in prison for 30 and 40 years now and need immediately release.

Currently there are several legal appeals in the Pennsylvania courts arguing in essence that sentencing children to Life imprisonment without the possibility of release is in fact an imposition of the death penalty on a child, and is therefore in violation of the U.S. Constitution as it relates to the U.S. Supreme Court Roper v. Simmons case that ruled capital punishment for children is “unconstitutional”. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court, above all the lesser Pennsylvania courts has the absolute power and authority – using the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in Roper v. Simmons - to declare imposing sentences of Life imprisonment without the possibility of release on children is in direct violation of the Pennsylvania Constitution and the United States Constitution. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court must be made to understand that sentencing children to “death by execution” or “death by Life imprisonment without the possibility of release”, are both an imposition of the death penalty (capital punishment) of children, and as such are both equally “unconstitutional”.

VI. The Secular and Religious Moral Principal of Sentencing Children to Death by Execution and Death by Life Imprisonment Without the Possibility of Release

Whether one’s morality is based in secular or religious philosophy, we recognize that both are derived from our own humanity, and that it is our humanity and the knowledge that no human beings are infallible which gives us our internal moral compass to guide us in life.

There are moral questions that must be answered when dealing with the legal issue of children serving a death sentence of Life imprisonment without the possibility of release. Such as, should a highly advanced and civilized nation like the United States of America continue to impose the most severe punishment against children by sentencing them to death by Life imprisonment without the possibility of release? Are child offenders not amenable to the rules of society? Can child offenders be rehabilitated? Should child offenders be made to die in prison? Should child offenders be released after serving 20 years in prison? Should sentencing children to Life imprisonment without possibility of release is abolished? Should the United States continue to align itself with a failed nation like Somalia as being the only two nations in the world whom refused to sign the 1990 U.N. Convention on the Right of the Child Treaty that forbids the act of executing children and sentencing children to Life imprisonment without the possibility of release?

VII. Pennsylvania’s Racial and Social Discriminatory Practice of Sentencing Children to Life Imprisonment Without the Possibility of Release

There are more than 2,300 child offenders sentenced to spend the rest of their natural lives in prison in the United States of America, out of which, there is an estimated 60 percent of child offenders whom received the sentence for their first criminal conviction. Pennsylvania leads the nation in child offenders serving a death sentence of Life imprisonment without the possibility of parole release, with more than 445 (and counting) child offenders serving Life imprisonment without parole release.
What is not being reported is that approximately 98 percent of child offenders sentence to Life imprisonment without parole in Pennsylvania are African-American children from the cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburg, which are majority African-American populated cities.

Although the city of Philadelphia is the sixth largest populated city in the United States, with the state of Pennsylvania being a majority European-American populated Pennsylvania rank #1 of the states in the nation of children sentenced to Life imprisonment without parole.

In addition to the racially applied practice of sentencing African-American children to death by imposing a sentence of Life imprisonment without parole release all of the child offenders sentence to Life without parole in prison come from a poor/working-poor class economic background that originates from the institutional economic inequalities of American society that causes the poverty and crime in these children lives. Consequently, Pennsylvania lead the nation with 445+ children serving Life imprisonment without parole, 98 percent of Pennsylvania’s child offenders serving Life imprisonment without parole being African-American from majority African-American populated cities, and all whom are from poor/poor-working class economic backgrounds. The sentencing of child offenders to Life imprisonment without parole in Pennsylvania is being applied racially and socially in a discriminatory fashion.

A Life imprisonment without parole sentence is the harshest sentence available for child offenders in Pennsylvania. Life without parole means a sentence of imprisonment until death with no review by a parole board or consideration for release.

Official HRC Chapters

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www.thomasmertoncenter.org/fedup/

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

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

EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK

These days being arrested, jailed or imprisoned is an all too REAL POSSIBILITY for ANYONE! Anything from a routine traffic stop, to civil disobedience, being held because you fit some agencies’ “PROFILE”, all the way up to being wrongly charged with murder, the criminal justice system may subject you to its TWO TIER system: one tier for those with money and another tier for everyone else.

The MISSION of the Families and Friends of Prisoners - Emergency Response Network (FFP-ERN) is to provide immediate help and comfort to loved ones and friends, as well as to helpless prisoners, who find themselves in that situation.

The FFP-ERN will respond to such situations in the following manner:

1. When individuals find themselves needing EMERGENCY help from people while in jail or prison, s/he can activate the FFP-ERN.
2. The family member or friend will in turn work with other FFP-ERN people to find ways to immediately start getting help to the PRISONER, and
3. In return, each request and every effort made to bring relief will expand the NETWORK of people who can work together to stop the criminal justice system from isolating and dehumanizing any of their loved ones and friends.

ALERTS CAN ONLY ISSUED FROM FAMILY OR FRIENDS ON THE STREET!

Check out the new website at emergencyresponse.cc

* Emergency Alerts
* Prison News and news feeds
* Resources for navigating the prison bureaus, getting support, how to file grievances and a tool for alerting editors of your local papers of emergency situations going on in the prisons.

JOIN OUR EMAIL EMERGENCY ALERTS LISTSERV
This is a low traffic listserve, strictly about ERN related emergencies. To sign up, go to emergencyresponse.cc/list

GET IN TOUCH
Emergency Response Network
PO Box 9476
Philadelphia, PA 19139
or leave message: 215.604.1759

http://emergencyresponse.cc
I AM heated!! The polite term would be upset. But I’m beyond that, I’m f***king pissed. Me, my brother, my nice and nephews (ages 5, 6, and 13) went to visit my son – who has been incarcerated at SCI-Houtzdale for the past five years – and as we pulled into the parking lot we were approached by two guards telling me they needed to search my car. I saw the guards randomly pull over five other cars filled with families arriving in the parking area to visit their incarcerated loved ones, and proceeded to order them with threats to search inside their cars as they were doing to me.

My first reaction was to say “NO” - NO YOU CAN’T SEARCH MY CAR AND FOR WHAT! WHAT ARE YOU SEARCHING MY CAR FOR? WE’RE SEARCHED ONCE WE GET INSIDE THE PRISON AND WE GO THROUGH A METAL DETECTOR AND A DRUG ION SCAN!! The guards went on to say superiorly, “Well Miss, if you don’t sign this form giving us permission to search your car then you don’t get to visit today.” My next reaction was – I’M NOT SIGNING NOTHIN, I’VE GOT A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT UNDER THE 4TH AMENDMENT TO BE PROTECTED AGAINST UNREASONABLE SEARCHES AND YOU CAN’T BLACKMAIL ME INTO SIGNING NOTHIN. HOW ABOUT YOU SIGN MY BLACK ASS! – but I didn’t say any of that because really what could I do. We drove 5 hours to get to SCI-Houtzdale. And to get this close to be denied a visit with my son would be just crazy. So reluctantly, due to their threat, I consented to the unlawful search of my car.

So they searched under the floor mats, between and under the seats, the glove compartment (I was holding my breath praying they wouldn’t plant something in my car), opened my trunk and looked through all the stuff we had thrown back there including inside the cooler that held fruit and cold drinks for the kids. Our personal belongings were ransacked as if we were the prisoners. I was livid! What the hell is the purpose of all this? I felt and still feel like my civil rights and privacy under the law have been violated. And what if my car was a borrowed car or a rental car and there was something like an unregistered gun in it that I was unaware of? Then what? And what if I did have a cold beer or “whatever” in my car; what has that got to do with my visit inside once I’ve been searched and cleared to go in for my visit?

My son, Kerry Marshall, was livid as well. So he filed a grievance complaint to SCI-Houtzdale’s administrator claiming they were intentionally violating visiting families’ (citizens’) 4th Amendment rights of the United States Constitution against unreasonable searches without probable cause, when they randomly subject visiting families’ cars to unreasonable searches and force visitors to sign consent forms to the search of their cars under duress. In the initial review response to my son’s grievance complaint, Doretta Chencharick – the Superintendent’s assistant and grievance

(Continued on page 13)
coordinator – arrogantly replied: “Vehicle searches are in accordance with department of Correction’s policy. Probable cause or a warrant is irrelevant. The visitor has the right to refuse a search; however, refusing to consent to a search results in a denied visit. Your grievance is frivolous and is denied.”

What a show of arrogance and impudence by SCI-Houtzdale’s Administrators! They think and act as if the department of Correction’s policy is superior, and not subject to the United States Constitution! They truly believe that they are above the law now and can do whatever they want. This arrogant and impudent attitude is epidemic in Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Headquarters and throughout its State Correctional Institutes, and is generally displayed in their hostile/anti-family policies towards prisoners and the families of prisoners.

Families, this has got to stop. As a parent and role model to my niece and nephews, we (my brother and I) were belittled, humiliated, and demoralized in their young eyes. Every time I go to visit, it gets more and more ridiculous and repressive. They’ve got the dogs, the drug machines, the metal detectors, and the physical searches – how far are they going to go? Will the search soon extend to what we do in our private lives where we are allowed to visit or only if you have a job or only those without tattoos or those without parking tickets– how about – no men over 200 lbs. What they’re doing shows prejudice. We’re guilty by association, since only family members are treated this way – not lawyers, not delivery men, guards, or anyone else who visits. We work everyday. We pay our taxes and when you think about it, this means we pay their salaries. We are paying them to be bigots. We are paying them to harass and threaten and humiliate us! Can’t people see that this is insane? Why are we letting them get away with this?

We pay taxes – each and every one of us – so we should run this show, not them. What they’re doing is illegal under the law. The 4th Amendment of the U.S. constitution clearly protects our constitutional rights as citizens when it says “The right of the people to be secure (protected) in their persons, houses, papers, and effects (cars), against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated.” I say all of us family members who have loved ones incarcerated, must come together to defend our rights by filing a State Class Action Lawsuit against the PA Department of Corrections for the violation of our state and federal constitutional rights to be protected against unreasonable searches (PA CONST. ART.1.38; U.S. CONST. AMENDMENT 4). I encourage everyone who has gone through the same unlawful searches to contact me. I also encourage any lawyer who is willing to stand with the families of prisoners to protect our constitutional rights to please reach out to us by immediately contacting the Human Rights Coalition, C/O Lava Space, 4134 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19147.

We’ve got to do something. We can’t let them get away with this. This is our constitutional right! We live in America, not a concentration camp. And we will not be judged and sentenced as GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION.

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist

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

Brotha Richard Tut Carter
A Chester Native Son
hrcheaster@yahoo.com

FYI-Fall 2008

“A Child is born with a heart of gold
ways the world makes the heart cold.”

Earth, Wind and Fire (mid-70’s)

Within the past twenty years we witnessed many parents, religious leaders, teachers, social workers, elected officials, some grass roots shift their agendas from being advocates for at-risk youth to mimics of mainstream America. Today it appears that more blacks reflect the opinions and sentiments which call for greater restrictions and harsher punishment for the children of the poor experiencing troubles at home, school and their community. These are very children society openly admit “fall through the cracks” when social policies fail to work effectively to protect them. Observations reveal that those same parents, religious leaders, social workers, teachers, elected officials and grass root groups went from loving to hating our children. Many don’t connect what’s happening with respects to a globally culture of violence. Furthermore, it's becoming increasingly difficult to find audiences that aren’t “anti-at-risk youth” nowadays because of the attention against youth violence, drugs and troubling schools.

Within the past two decades we have witnessed our world growing more violent. We watched in horror as 200,000 Rwandans were ethnic-cleansed in one day in the Motherland. Many miles away we saw evidence of massive graves claiming tens of thousand more lives in Bosnia who too were the victims of ethnic cleansing. We seen 911 and, just recently al-Qaida is blamed for killing at least 53 in Pakistan. Here in the U.S. we seen Columbine, Jonestown, Virginia Tech and many other upper and middle class students committing horrendous acts of violence against their classmates and teachers. And, within the Black American Ghetto we see the same rising rates of violence. What should really amaze Black people more than anything else regarding understanding what is behind the nature of violence effecting our communities is, with all of the “Stop The Violence” rallies and protest we have had over the past ten years – we have not see fit to put more efforts in attacking the American strain of this global Culture of Violence. Our children grow up in an environment which is saturated with violent stimulants; they see murdering and assaults on televisions. Listen almost 24 hours a day to gangsta rap and parents allow them to

(Continued on page 15)
play violent prone video games. And yet, in some way society shrug its responsibilities to protect our children by hiding behind weak excuses which blames the victims (our children’s generation) of violence in our cities and towns.

I think parents, religious leaders, social workers, teachers, elected officials and grass roots must begin working to destroy the culture of violence in our community in order to reduce violence. A few years ago we started hearing parents saying troubling things, like: “I know those juvenile centers and prisons are historically bad for black people but, I still think my son (and increasing numbers of daughters now) is better off in prison. At least I can sleep at night because I know where they are.” Instead of trying to unscramble the mystery of delinquent behavior we simply seek to warehouse our children. At the same time, we hear little girls (now) getting arrested for fights in school and we hear them threatening violence almost as if its the normal reaction to kiddy-relationship problems in the hood.

We should all agree, not because I am saying this but because it’s the truth that, no child is ever born criminal-minded. Criminal behavior, of which violence is just one form of criminal behavior exist before and will exist after our and our children’s generation. To start to attack the culture of violence we must focus attention to where are children get their initial ideas about violence. Today’s communities seem so violent because too many “react without thinking” to the impulse that makes us feel that, in order to address personal problems, we must strike at those who we “feel” offend us (with nasty name calling, screaming, throwing things and hitting one another). Many tell you not to hit back if someone hits you. Yet, our government bombs nations and brags about death rates of those we think hit (us first). Some parents beat on each other and their children when they get angry or feel they’re losing control. Some parents curse out and threaten neighbors daily. Then plead surprise when their toddlers repeat what they heard. Police shot criminals. Our nation manufacture weapons whose only purpose is to kill other human being at increasing higher death tolls. Some of our children our violent because society has taught them violence as a means for obtaining power to destroy those that threaten them.

Many refuse to connect the nature of “our global culture of violence” with urban-behavior. Society tolerates a violent world but, just wants our children to stop the violence in our community (as if society really believe that our children are in control of “all this violence in our world.”). Many who ask for more police in our community, tougher punishment for offenders and less help at-risk (Black) children – represent the very same group that refuse to speak out against the school-to-prison pipeline. They also refuse to complain about rising rates of urban Black children failing both “socially and academically.” (BBBS) We have seemed to have forgotten altogether that: “A Child is born with a heart of gold ways the world makes the heart cold.” Id. This essay is not to suggest that we shouldn’t hold our children responsible for their behavior, its to say, we must also begin to understand why some of them express themselves through violence and to begin organizing to address the cause as much as the effect.

The Black-Community must return to the righteous mission of destroying the root cause of poverty; school-drop outs, homelessness, unemployment and all of the many crises pledging our homes and schools to save “all” of our children. In effect, its time to stand up for our children and against the American Culture of Violence. To ignore this righteous mission is to continue to give birth to babies just to allow the ways of the world to mold more and more criminals. **BE BRAVE AND READ THIS ESSAY TO YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS.** Harambee (“Lets Pull Together!”)
How to rob a bank........, you can start by owning it; but if that option is not available to you, you will need a minimum of three persons. The first by far must be your most courageous, you see this is the person who will sit in the get away vehicle. This is the person who must not let their imagination run away with them, the courageous one. The one that can contemplate prison while their waiting and not run. The one that can listen to the siren (of an ambulance) and not break.

Next comes the intimidator, the one who keeps the overpowered guards and potential heroes in line. The one who is slightly unbalanced, at least that's what it seems like to the frightened and confused patrons / employees of the bank. There's always one who'll dare to grab at a gun or dial 911. It is the intimidators job to discourage such behavior.

Finally comes the thinker, the one who must account for every contingency. The one who knows it must be assumed that the panic button was pressed the moment they walked in. Average police response time 4 minutes, the task force is on the way. With this being your first assumption you are limited in time and scope, the vault is off limits to you. Which leaves the teller drawers, how much does the average drawer contain on a Friday afternoon?

Well I don't know, but I can't see the average drawer holding more than five grand so that being the case, lets double it. $10,000 per drawer. Now, how many tellers are we looking at in the average bank? Small banks average three tellers, large banks average about ten. So lets take the middle ground and go with six. We don't have enough soldiers to take a ten teller bank anyway.

Okay, six drawers no ink packets........ payout approximately $60,000.....lets bang it up to eighty grand just on the strength. Anything else is really unrealistic, I mean the powers that be have been thinking through these scenarios for decades. There are security personnel and bank executives who get paid very nice salaries to contemplate and foil such robberies.

To be honest with you they've be thinking these things through since the early days of Scotland Yard. All of Americas laws have their roots in British jurisprudence. The Yards history dates from 1829 through today that's 179 years. The FBI originated from a force of Special Agents created in 1908 by Attorney General Charles Bonaparte during the Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt.

That's one hundred years of crime fighting expertise and virtual unlimited budgets arrayed against you.

Walking into a bank in this country with a three people team and walking out with more than eighty grand, while avoiding a hostage situation and murder...... in most cases is really just a Hollywood fantasy.

So what's the count for our get paid crew, $80,000 divided by 3 is roughly $26,000. Again we'll bump it up to 30 grand...... you know, round numbers. Alright, what do we do with our thirty? Can't buy a house, they cost too much. Can't buy a car because we don't have enough to buy the kind we want. You know Ferrari, Mercedes, Porsche.
Okay so we buy a smaller car, do some partying pay some bills and look out for some family members and acquaintances and now..... theirs no cash left.

In short order we need another score...... we do it and we have another thirty grand. This is the crux of our problem, you can't get enough cash to make the risk worth it.

You would have to pull about five jobs to earn 150k, which is less than many people make in a year. You can however buy a small home which would leave you broke.

Inevitably you'd have to rob another bank and you still would not have the capital it takes to retire well off.

Which brings us to a few reasons guys get caught:

Dumb luck or bad luck (some guys have it to spare)
Disagreement with a wife, relative or friend (people snitch)
Too much partying (drugs / alcohol)
Lavish spending (IRS / Cops)
Jealousy

Greed

Robbing a bank in the hopes of it solving your problems will inevitably only add to your problems.

A Splash of Thought........

By: Dwaine ‘Money’ Howard
Husband and Father
HRC Supporter
Prisoner Activist
Ex-Prisoner
October 2, 2008

One Small Step with Big Consequences

Look at these baby boys; the faces of our future. Innocent, enjoying a birthday party. Life at this time in their young lives is sweet. But we all know, life for our young Black boys could get a little more bitter with each passing year. Statistics show that our prisons are over flowing with, predominately, our Black boys who’ve dropped out of school as early as 8th grade and who’ve most likely witnessed a crime, came from a single parent home, have a loved one in prison, and/or is living in or near a drug infested neighborhood to the degree that they think that violence, drugs, single mothers and dead beat dads are the general way of life. But today October 2, 2008 I’ve witnessed “HOPE”.

I witnessed one small step in the scheme of world events, today in the heart of West Philly. A Charter school opened its newly renovated doors of the once ‘Transfiguration Church’ that, in 2006, was destroyed by fire. This school welcomed parents, grandparents, and guardians to an “Open House” showing of a school with clean freshly painted walls, stairwells, classrooms, lunch room. The school showed off its computer room where rows and rows of high end computers were lined up ready for use, and its new desks, class rooms and offices. And did I mention that this is a Black school in the “Hood”; in the heart of Southwest Philly, 58th & Pine? It’s an all boys’ school consisting of 98% all male teachers dedicated to inspiring our young boys from 9th to 12th grades to learn.

This Charter School ‘Boys Latin Charter School’ offers something different to our young Black boys. A predominately all male staff provides role models especially for those with no male role model in a single parent home. The teachers are young Black males themselves and can relate to the needs of a young Black boy in the hood; and, the boys can relate to their teachers. The boys are taught English, Latin, Math, Biology Literature, and are prepared for college. But more importantly the boys are taught how to be men, by men. Their taught what should be important at this point of their young lives and they’re taught values and good judgment because these men – from the CEO/Founder, David Hardy to the coaches – actually care. The teachers show their love by working long hours; the boys are in school from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. which stops the practice of our young ones being home-alone, unsupervised and open to getting mixed up in things that are not in their best interested. Everybody knows that working mothers or fathers don’t get home from work until after six and this school understand this and keeps all the boys at school from 3 – 6 p.m. and assist them with their homework or give them tutoring. The boys even have the teachers’ home phone numbers and are encouraged to call them at home if they have a problem.

(Continued on page 19)
I saw something different in this school as I visited the classes in session during the “Open House”. First, most apparent, there was no metal detectors to walk through, no searches of the kids and their belongings. The teachers only spot check to make sure that the boys uniforms (white polo shirts and slacks or – for the seniors – jackets, ties, white shirts and slacks) are straight, making sure that shirts are tucked in and ties are straight. The second thing I noticed was the boys weren’t afraid to speak in public; the boys addressed the crowd of parents and teachers; the boys gave us a tour of the school and described the functions of each floor, classroom, and teacher and did it with pride and a little hood-s swagger. The third thing I noticed right away was that the boys weren’t afraid to shine. I’ve seen in most public schools that the students are criticized by other students when they speak clearly or show that they’ve got some brains. In this Charter school, the boys competed with each other to answer questions in class and show off their public speaking skills.

With this small difference I saw the beginning of a new generation of young Black boys with a desire to learn, with pride in themselves, and not afraid to get knocked down and then get back up. I saw young Black boys who will grow into strong Black men because they are seeing and interacting with positive Black men who were once walking in their very shoes, fighting the very same battle, and yet succeeded. I see these young Black boys not dropping out of school, not giving up; but men who will have a real education, pride in themselves, confidence, and understand how to be “men”. My war cries go out to Brothas at the ‘Boys Latin Charter School’ who’ve taken the job of being the foundation for our next generation. This is a tall order, but I see in this school, one small step in the right direction.

By: Patricia Marshall Vickers
Prison Activist
Mother/Grandmother of Nine Black Males

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Your Legal Corner

WE ACCEPT LEGAL ARTICLES THAT EDUCATE AND EMPOWER FAMILIES OF PRISONERS THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND LAWS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THE POLICE, LAWYERS AND THE COURTS ON BEHALF OF THEIR LOVED ONES JUST FORWARD YOUR ARTICLE TO THE HRC’S NEWSLETTER DEPARTMENT FOR POSSIBLE PRINTING.

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Our Mission Statement

We believe a society of social and economic inequality leads to a cycle of crime and incarceration. We work to reverse the dehumanizing effects excessive punishment inflicts upon individuals, families and communities. Books Through Bars sends quality reading material to prisoners and encourages creative dialogue on the criminal justice system, thereby educating those living inside and outside of prison walls.

Books Through Bars | 4722 Baltimore Ave. | Philadelphia, PA 19143
215-727-8170 | info@booksthroughbars.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.

Kerry Arnold Marshall

Jurisdiction: Philadelphia County, PA
Offense Charge: Robbery, Homicide
Prior Convictions: None
Date of Sentencing: 1990
Sentence: LIFE (Without Parole), Plus 15-30 Years

In November 1988, Kerry worked as a stockperson at a supermarket in New Jersey, and had just enrolled at Temple University College in Philly. A few weeks prior to Kerry’s eighteenth birthday, he was illegally arrested one afternoon around the corner from his home in southwest Philly, for a robbery—murder of a white female merchant whom happened to be the daughter of a decorated Philly police officer. As a result of the ethnicity of both persons, the ugly head of white supremacy (Racism) surfaced within the arresting police officers, local media, and court system.

Kerry had been illegally arrested, detained against his will, denied a requested lawyer and phone call, interrogated without an adult present, and later falsely charged with robbery and murder. Soon thereafter, a fourteen year old juvenile turned himself over to police, and confessed to committing the crime. He was later given a plea agreement deal by the D.A. to name Kerry as his accomplice and the murderer, for a lesser sentence of 15 years in his case.

The Philadelphia Daily Newspapers, upon Kerry’s arrest, acted as prosecutor—trial judge—and jury and convicted Kerry without evidence in their local newspapers, and demanded that he be sentenced to death. Kerry was later given a sham trial in a kangaroo court in which his defense attorney and trial judge worked in cahoots with the D.A. for his conviction. Kerry never received a fair trial; instead his trial was infected by racism, politics, fabricated police evidence, unlawful jury instructions, racial discrimination of Black jurors, and all white jury, judicial and prosecutorial criminal misconduct, and other unlawful actions by the court. The evidence and court records reflects that an obvious injustice of criminal proportions have been done onto Kerry, and that he received more of a racially and politically motivated court lynching than an actual fair and impartial trial by his peers.

Kerry has maintained his innocence throughout the entire ordeal, and is struggling to overturn his wrongful conviction in order to regain his freedom and return to his loving family that awaits him.

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

Kerry “Shakaboona” Marshall
SCI-Houtzdale/BE-7826
PO Box 1000
Houtzdale, PA 16698

Eric Riddick

Jurisdiction: Philadelphia County, PA
Offense Charge: Homicide
Date of Sentencing: 1992
Sentence: LIFE (Without Parole)

In November 1991, Riddick owned and operated a variety store in southwest Philly, and was with his wife and their child. One day while leaving home to take his wife and daughter to a family outing, he was abruptly arrested by police and charged with the shooting death of William Catlett.

Riddick had been wrongly accused by a lone male who stated that he saw Riddick at night on a 20 foot balcony of a building with an automatic rifle, aim the rifle down at Catlett, and began firing. Catlett was said to be struck by five bullets, none of which traveled in a downward angle that caused his death. Although the accuser stated the shooter fired several shots, the balcony was never secured or investigated for evidence by detectives as a murder crime scene. Later, the sole accuser and prosecutor’s star witness would go on to recant his statement saying that he never saw Riddick shoot anyone and that it was dark.

In 1992 Riddick was given a mock trial that was fraught with prosecutorial criminal misconduct, serial ineffectiveness of legal counsel, and horrific abuse of authority and discretion by the judge. In a conversation to his family during trial, Riddick was quoted as saying, “What we face in these courtrooms is no less than judicial terrorism cloaked in false legal legitimacy.”

Riddick was wrongly convicted of taking the life of William Catlett, and was sentenced to Life imprisonment for a crime he did not commit. He has always maintained his innocence of the unfortunate murder of Catlett. Riddick’s case is saturated with evidence that confirms his innocence and proves that the judicial system is being used as a racial and class weapon against the poor Black, Latino, and White people in Amerika.

Riddick is currently seeking legal redress within the appellate courts to overturn his unlawful conviction, clear his name, and regain his freedom.

Do you think that Erik Riddick was wrongly convicted of this crime?

Erik, “Man-Shareef” Riddick
SCI-Houtzdale/BV-9474
PO Box 1000
Houtzdale, PA 16698

The Criminal Injustice System – In Pennsylvania, a Life sentence by the court is actually a death sentence! In Amerika, its judicial system is one-sided when it comes to dealing with poor people, especially with poor Blacks and Latinos. The public must be made aware that the judicial process is inherently racist, classis, unfair, unbalanced, and corrupt. Outrageous injustices like the Jena 6 fiasco occurs daily in the court rooms throughout Amerika. Brothers Shakaboona and Man-Shareef are just two of many politically conscious prisoners who have chosen to resist Amerika’s judicial repression through court lynching.

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THE MOVEMENT
The Official Newsletter of the Human Rights Coalition for the Union of Prisoners’ Families

OCTOBER/DECEMBER 2008
The Babylon System -

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.

This must stop!

By: Sinbad

Greetings, my Afrikan souljahs and souljahrettes. As I fall back in my cell behind enemy lines, I pick up a Philadelphia Daily News and don the front of this paper it shows a kkkop with big letters over his picture that says, “This Must Stop.”

This paper is dated November 1st. The city of Philly police departments are in fear because officers have been getting murdered and shot, and in almost every kkkop shooting or murder of a kkkop the media glorifies this killer of our people. And when I saw these head-lines “This Must Stop”, I thought about how we have been telling these murderers this for decades. Stop killing our children in the street who are shot down like dogs! This must stop!

A young brother who pleaded guilty to first murder recently to killing a kkkop, he took a deal. They told him that if he pled guilty to first degree they wouldn’t seek the death penalty. A sentence of life is also a death sentence here in Pennsylvania. Another young brother from Philly who was accused of killing a kkkop two months ago was caught in Florida, in a shelter. On page 4 it says in bold print that four kkkops were shot in just over a month.

Peep what Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson says: “Officers are being basically assassinated by armed and violent criminals. The availability of guns is really completely out of hand in the city of Philadelphia. Legislators have to realize that we have gun problem.”

It’s always been a gun problem in the Afrikan community because these very people he is telling about this gun problem is the very people who are responsible for letting this madness continue. When the guns are used to kill one another, there’s not a problem, but as soon as these guns are turned on the boys in blue, they have a gun problem.

Michael Nutter, who is a modern day house Negro, had this to say: “I think Stevie Wonder would see, or Jose Feliciano would see that there’s obviously a problem here. We have people who are actively and aggressively taking on the Philadelphia Police Department.”

Young Brothers wouldn’t be committing crimes if they had opportunities like the young white male

All of a sudden there’s a gun problem because the kkkops are going down, but when Blacks kill Blacks with guns, we don’t hear this cry. As soon as the Panthers armed themselves for self-defense against the boys in blue and went to Sacramento with gun in hand, what was the cry? “We need new laws,” and the lawmakers agree with this cry because and in actuality this is the case here.

Even though these young brothers are committing crimes in most of the cases where the kkkops are called, they are not just putting their guns down any more because they know that the kkkops will kill them in a heartbeat. They know even if they try to put the gun down that it’s a possibility they still can be shot and killed. They are aware of this by other people who have been killed by the kkkops. Some of these brothers know the person or people who have been gunned down by killer kkkops.

So those days of throwing down the gun when the police arrive are over. These young brothers wouldn’t be committing crimes if they had opportunities like the young white males. They wouldn’t have to do these things if a system of racism, mis-education and media persecution hadn’t been placed upon them – diabolical methods used to destroy these young brothers.

Therefore Amerikkka created this type of behavior because of the wrongs and unspeakable crimes committed against a race of people. These young brothers are products of their environment.

So as I sit back in my cell behind enemy lines, I respond to the headline “This Must Stop” with “What about the Afrikans murdered by the police department in Philly?” Thousands and thousands have been taken away by killer kkkops! What about them? So if anything should stop, it’s the killing of young Afrikan brothers and sisters across this kkkountry called Amerikkka.

Some of these young brothers and sisters are killed for the sole fact of being Black. And if a trigger happy kkkop kills us with really no reason, and even if these trigger happy kkkops make a mistake in killing our young ones, they lie and the cover-up follows the lie and use terms such as “suicide by kkkop” or “justifiable homicide.” As if you and I can commit suicide by somebody else’s hands.

And the Black kkkop is just as worse than the white kkkop, because he is not trained to think for him or her self, but act according to what they learned and was trained to do. So they don’t think what they’re doing to their own people or looking at why their people do the things they do, and what is the cause of them doing it.

When Martin L. King Jr. organized his people to integrate in these institutions with white people, he wanted them to integrate in white institutions to help their people, not help the enemy to kill their people. With that, I end this letter with peace and love, my brothers and sisters.

Write us: Brian Griffin, AS 2054, 1100 Pike St., Huntingdon, PA 16654
The Home Front: Serving Our Community

Stop Max Conference May 30, 2008
Juvenile Lifers September 22, 2008
Hi everyone, Xiomara and I are just back from the 5/30 to 6/1 STop Max conference sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia- They have been planning this for almost 2 years in response to the expansion of SHUs nationally. At least 400 people came from all over the US--bus, train, plane-- and lots of survivors of torture in US control units, and family members. The conference was deeply moving and also full of contradictions-- Robert King Wilkerson of the Angola 3 and former political prisoner Laura Whitehorn said my two favorite quotes that I hope will be the bookends for the article we write-- King said: "Morality and legality are not the same thing. There are things that are legal but are totally immoral. Prisons are not moral. "Stop Max" should not be our final goal. We need to raise the bar and think about doing the moral thing. We need to abolish all prisons. We need to tear them down. Because prisons are an extension of slavery." And Laura Whitehorn said: "When I go to visit men in prisons, before I went to prison myself and now that I am out, all of the visiting rooms are full. When I was in prison, the visiting rooms were not full. Women stand by their men inside. Men need to stand by their women, and support all women in prison. Guess I am lucky I was a lesbian. I had my girl-friend and a lot of women supporting me." AFSC Oakland has just issued a new report on the state of SHU in Calif. We brought back 2 copies. I spent quite a bit of time with Laura Magnani from the Oakland office of AFSC, and with Georgia and Andrea from CFP. We should meet with all of them-- whether we decide we can be part of the national campaign or not, because I think we could give them more and richer understanding of issues for women at the VSPW SHU and death row. And AFSC is working on Marsy's law already and I told her we are also working on it and should sit down with them for sure. Overall, women were hugely marginalized and almost invisible in the whole conference-- We knew this would be so, and that is why Naima Black from Philly AFSC was so happy we came. About 25 people came to our workshop and it was a good gathering, but they had shortened all of the afternoon workshops since the survivor panel was so intense and went over and should have been scheduled for much longer. Numbers of young women who were already doing work around men in prison, or no work but wanted to know about how to start. Yes we got a sign up sheet with contact info, but I am sorry our time got cut short-- and we did show the whole film. It was important that our workshop said out loud that prisons in general, but especially the SHUs, are about humiliation-- and for women that is a lot about sexual abuse and degradation-- using our gender against us. I don't think anyone else had said that out loud. Laura Whitehorn ended up repeating it in the SATurday night keynote-- SO that was good. I met Mara from SAnTa Fe (I will send her contact info to Robin and Cebastien) who has been doing prison work for decades (a woman in her late 60's early 70's) who puts out a monthly newsletter-- and subscribes to FI already-- who hopefully will come for CR 10 and hang with us-- Also met Sister Munirah El-Bomani, who was one of only 2 women on the SHU survivors panel and founder of My Sisters Keepera in Newark, NJ (the other woman on the panel was Karima Al Amin, Imam Jalil Al AMin's wife, who talked about the impact on the whole family as well as her husband's case).

Above: Ham 'Diya Mu (Mother, HRC Member and Office Secretary) reads wall of letters. This mock SMU cell was created with letters from prisoners in solitary confinement. It represents the small confined space where prisoners are held 23 hours a day.

Munirah works with AFSC in Newark, which my old friend Pat Clark (used to be dir of Death Penalty Focus here) has just started to work with them to rebuild their prison outreach work. And Munirah also works with WOMen Who Never Give Up from Penn region, who we also met and have contact info for. And I met the young Queer/Trans CR 10 organizing group from Bklyn who will all be here in the Fall, gave them some of our FI stuff and said we hoped to hang in Sept. Also met and spent a bunch of time with Daniel Hazen , the guy doing the workshop on mental illness and the SHU in NY. He is a survivor of SHU and psych SHU, and opposes the new law-- for some of the reasons we were concerned (about medical-izing mental health and denying people self determination) and was great to talk to. He is coming out here in July to do work around the new UN convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (yes I will definitely be connect-ing with him on that) but I would like to see if he can do a PE time with us and just talk about the issues. X and I actually ran around to a lot of different workshops, so we met twice the number of people, and I know she will have more to share. Xiomara has some good ideas about a new column in the FI focused on the Companeras sisters and we had a good time talking about the work possi-

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bilities. For me it was also very moving to meet so many people I knew only through years of writing and sending books through the Real Dragon Prison Book Project-- I met Paul Wright, Lorenzo Kamboa Ervin, and finally the first face to face with Ray Luc Levaseur. We had a very close writing relationship, that meant a lot to support for each of us. When I was going through all of the pre-trial stuff and on trial Ray et al were doing all of their pre trial stuff. We passed messages and letters back and forth and the support meant a lot to me- When you are being directly targeted and stomped by the Gvt and the FBI, sometimes those seemingly little things really stay in your heart. So it was really big to finally be able to hug each other and hang out. I do have some photos-- Thanks to Urszula reminding me to take a camera! But also Paulette from the NY Jericho Campaign emailed me some photos of the SHU survivor s panel, because I could not get close enough to the stage, and they are cool. Look forward to seeing everyone soon. Have a ton of literature from the conference--including a whole report on mental health from the Michigan office of AFSC. Pam -- Pam Fadem pfadem@gmail.com
The HRC is looking for a few good men and women to join our ranks as members or volunteers in order to advance our righteous cause of Freedom and human rights for all!

We are looking for people willing to be activists in our movement and wants to be directly involved in doing the following activities:

- Help rally to make a change by organizing and participating in protest rallies.
- Help conduct community meetings for our cause.
- Help produce the HRC Newsletter.
- Work on the HRC Website Committee.
- Help distribute HRC flyers & newsletters.
- Come join ‘the movement’.

In the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr., Come Join Us!

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