



March 2023

Volume V: Issue 12

NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to another edition of Second Chance Quest's newsletter. SCQ was founded by several prisoners with the vision and drive to reduce the recidivism rate nationally. To achieve our goals, we strongly believe in alternative sentences for nonviolent offenders. So, we call upon our readers to contact their state officials and advocate for changes in our sentencing laws. We call upon you to let your voices be heard; via letters, emails, phone calls, etc. The time of sitting back and just watching things unfold is over; we (the public) have to take the bull by the horn, as they say. For far too long, the public has been sitting on the sideline, trusting that our officials have the answers to the problem of high crime in our nation. What have they delivered in terms of tackling the problem? They have given us the largest prison population on earth, and more broken families than any other civilized country on the planet. It is clear that we have a major breakage in the system. What sense does it make to continue to apply the same failed techniques hoping for a different result? I strongly believe that there continues to be a lack of a true earnest effort on the part of our politicians to eradicate this cancer, whose conception is linked to racism. We don't have more crimes than other civilized counties; however, we lock up more of our citizens, for far longer periods of time, than anywhere else. Another reason for mass incarceration is the introduction of major business industries into prisons.



eventually turn to your children and grandchildren in becoming prisoners of the near future. It is no longer an issue of crime and the prevention of crime, it has now transitioned into purely the greedy business practice of the few. This must end, Canada is not like that, Mexico is not like that; in Europe, Africa, and Asia, you will not find the stench of mass imprisonment anywhere in the world but in the United States of America, to date, imprisoned over two million men and women. We can and must do better! How dare we turn our noses up at any country for their treatment of their citizens while we throw always ours by the tens of thousands daily to a prison cell, destroying the lives of countless families and children. If that doesn't spell hypocrisy, then I don't know what else does. Get involved, and end that inhumane practice. Do join Second Chance Quest today by becoming a member of this vastly growing nonprofit organization together, we can make a difference. I will end with our motto: "The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no farther than yourself, but the ends you serve that are for all in common, will take you into eternity." (Marcus Garvey)

Mr. T. Bravo
President SCQ

The public cannot afford to continue to let "The Powers That Be" continue to seek out the residence for their prison complexes, as their eyes will

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COVER STORY

I Was Sentenced to Die in Prison. But After 27 Years, I'm Finally Free

By: Bobby Bostic

When I went to jail in 1995, I had never used the internet. As I play catchup, the simplest things are everything.

SHYAMA GOLDEN FOR THE MARSHALL PROJECT

For almost three decades, my life as a Missouri state prisoner was a matter of numbers. I was only 16 when I took part in robberies that resulted in 17 felony convictions. I was just released on parole a little over three months ago, at age 43. And one thing I can honestly say is that life is beautiful on this side of the fence. Without the tyranny of the numbers, the simplest

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things make me feel liberated, like being able to reach into an ice box and choose what I want to drink. It's a celebration every time I open the refrigerator door and see the light shining on all the food inside. Then there's the joy of getting up and taking a bath with no time restrictions. I even hear birds chirping in the morning.

I can fully appreciate how precious everyday moments are because I lost my freedom so long ago. No one was killed or seriously injured in my crimes, but they took place in 1995, during the youth "superpredator" panic. Among my 17 felonies were first-degree robbery, attempted robbery and armed criminal action. I will never forget the moment at my sentencing hearing when the judge told me, "...Bobby Bostic, you will die in the Department of Corrections." I was 18.

Technically speaking, I didn't get the death penalty, or even life in prison — a sentence that would have made me eligible for parole in 15 years. Instead, the judge ruled that I would serve my sentences consecutively for a total of 241 years. As if it mattered. I wouldn't be able to even apply for parole until age 112.

Thankfully, that didn't happen: In 2021, the Missouri state legislature passed a law inspired by my case that gives people who committed their crimes before age 18 a better chance at parole. They did so with the blessing of the judge in my case, who had retired and apologized for imposing such a long sentence on a teenager.

I walked out of Alcoa Correctional Center in Jefferson City, Missouri, on Nov. 9, 2022 — exactly one year after my successful parole hearing. The weather was great, and my family was waiting for me. So were my attorneys and Evelyn Baker, the retired judge who had sentenced me.

Although I'm out of prison, I'm not totally free. I lost my final appeal in 2018, so I still have to serve the remainder of my sentence. I will probably be on parole for the rest of my life.

But prison taught me to never take anything for granted. For instance, I love seeing my 2-year-old

great-niece running around, and I listen closely to her chatter. I can't understand her words, but we are still able to communicate with one another. I often think about how her mother — my niece — wasn't even born when I was arrested. Another one of my great nieces just had a daughter of her own, named Miracle.

Because almost everything in the world is new to me, sometimes I feel like I'm the newborn. Many of the places where I used to live or hang out have been torn down or stand vacant. I've lost count of how many of my peers are dead or incarcerated. The little kids I babysat before prison have children taller than me. It might be hard to imagine, but when I went to prison, I had never used the internet or a cellular phone. I still don't know how to swipe my credit card without someone's help. Things like GPS and Alexa also leave me dumbfounded. While prison slows everything down, time flies in the free world. I can feel my perception of time shifting. There just aren't enough hours in a day to get everything done.

I am not complaining; I'm grateful for my full days. I have my own one-bedroom apartment, and I drive myself everywhere I need to go in the car that I purchased. I work at Dear Mama, an organization that provides basic needs to poor mothers, which I co-founded with my sister. I am also a motivational speaker, a published author, and I own a publishing company called Mind Diamonds, LLC.

Now that I know how to use the internet, I run the Instagram and Twitter accounts my loved ones started when I was in prison. Besides the human body itself, the internet is the most amazing creation I have ever seen. I can't believe how much easier it has made life on earth. Soon, I will release a new book, "Humbled to the Dust: Still I Rise." It's a fitting title for a memoir by a man who is living in gratitude, a man who is finally in the free world.

Bobby Bostic, a St. Louis native, was released on parole in November 2022. During the 27 years he spent in prison, he wrote 13 books, including "Dear Mama: The Life and Struggles of a Single Mother" and "Life Goes on Inside Prison." Follow him on Twitter and Instagram using @FreeBobbyBostic.

VOICES BEHIND THE WALL

I'M FROM NORFOLK

I'm from Norfolk, "South." I've been in and out of foster homes and detention centers since I was 13. I've recently been reunited with my siblings and the rest of my family over the past few years. We've developed a strong relationship within that time.

Being incarcerated takes something away from us, not just us; it harms our entire families, especially our kids. We have to be smart about the decisions we make. We cannot continue to press the issue of who is the freshest or the baddest in the streets. I know most of us jumped into the street life for different reasons, some to put food on the table or to get even with someone for the loss of a homeboy, etc. We have to break this destructive cycle we find ourselves in, regardless

of the circumstances. I feel your pain. I've lost my closest friend and many of my homeboys too. and I can't do anything to bring them back, and neither can you.

I want my kids to have everything I didn't have, including me being physically out there for them, because I know

how it feels when you don't have nothing. My experience in prison, for the most part, has changed my outlook on how I view many things. One can find good even in a bad situation such as prison. I'm thankful I've grown to realize that at a young age, to be able to take it in and learn

from everything. The key to this knowledge is that I can apply it to the real world when I get home. To all my young brothers, I understand how you grew up and the things you had to do to survive in the process. However, be mindful that not everyone gets a second chance. My advice to you is that

you don't become blinded to second chances. The constant thing in life is change, so take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself to better yourself, and always keep your head high and chest out. Don't be discouraged. Much love, peace!

By: K. Gray, aka "Sko"

FOOD FOR THOUGHT- PRISON ELDERS

In all great societies throughout history we find they have primarily two things in common: 1) They always protect and teach their youths. 2) They care for and gain knowledge from their elders. Several of our prison communities follow that philosophy, but as a whole we do not. Make no mistake about it, we are a society lock away behind these walls none the less. As unpleasant as our conditions are, we are still under the same ruling body as the rest of society and have certain rights as does everyone else. I challenge you readers to begin to take on the characteristics of great societies, protecting and teaching the youths. And, start caring for and gleaning knowledge from our elders.

On a personal note, I started the Parole Peer Support Group following the principle of helping our elders through the difficulties of being denied parole. The motivation first and foremost came from the heart God placed in me. Also, being grateful for the lessons taught to me by the elders in the prison communities when I was new to the system.

I entered the prison system and was sent directly to a prison called Sussex 1, which was

a level 5 state prison, level 6 being the highest security level in the state of Virginia. I was young and green as they come. I would not have made it without God sending me guidance through these elder guys. For some reason, they saw something in me that told them I was worth their time and effort. Most of those men were under the "old law", they gave me the education I needed to protect myself and even excelled educationally in the prison community. Starting the Parole Peer Support Group was a way in paying them back.

Most of us don't take the time to consider the elders in our mist. After serving as much time as they have served, they often no longer have the family ties and the support of friends due to fatigue or simply death. They suffer the same exact way we all do without the familiar voice to hear or the email to read. Often I'm sure they feel like giving up. Some of these men have received parole denials for as many years as some of the young men have been locked up. Repeatedly, asking, by those who support them, if parole was granted, only to tell them it was denied, yet again. These men walk amongst us as they continue to push

forward in the hope of being free one day.

Another thought comes to mind, I consider the amount of changes the world has undergone since many of our elders came to prison. Some of these men came to prison in the 80's and 90's. I was locked up in 2004, and nothing in the world is the same since then. I find it very difficult to understand half the things my kids are talking about. If I'm lost where the technology is today, I can only imagine what the elder population of the prison is going through trying to understand the many changes.

What the elders do know and have mastered is; how to survive and adapt to changes that prison life presents. Those men and women are a major source of all types of prison survival information, and it would do us best to tap into it. So, my challenge is to our prison societies all over will be : Take the time to have a conversation with our elderly guys and gals (for those in female institutions). It could be as simple as a "How you doing?" It won't cost you anything but a bit of your time. In building small conversations we could be inspiring hope in a person's life who wanted to give up. Our elderly

have traveled the road that await many of us, so they have earned your respect. Perhaps there is even some wisdom for situations we may find ourselves attempting to overcome. In closing, I'd like to share one example of how it helps me.

A man here I call Uncle Rick has been a barber in the system for many many years. He is respectful, charismatic, and easy going, unless you push his buttons, at which time the attitude of a former boxer comes screaming to the forefront. Uncle Rick does not really do a lot of cutting himself anymore, but he is trusted to care for the barber equipment for the institution. However, on occasion, I will make it my business to go get a hair cut from him. During those times we talk and he often educates me on all sorts of helpful subjects. We may talk about his family, prison life, or something as simple as lunch, and over time I have began to see him as a real family member. Sure, maybe my cut is a bit slower, but the occasion is always filled with laughter and good conversation. In the exchange I've gained and I believe he enjoys giving me the jewels from his life experience.

We are a society like it

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PRISON ALERT

There has been a startling uptick in stretchers being pushed down the boulevard of Buckingham Correctional Center, as well as, countless facilities across the nation. Family members have been forced to hear the dreadful news of their love one being hospitalized or in some cases, died from drug use. The Covid-19 pandemic and all its restrictions are difficult for anyone to go through, especially in the case of those who are incarcerated. Nonetheless, we must not allow it to conjure up old destructive habits. We are now seeing many of the Covid-19 restrictions being lifted from the prisons across the country. So we would hope that with that, the up tick in FENTANYL use among convicts will subside as the depression brought on by the

many restrictions are finally lifted across the country.

Fentanyl was created as a pain reliever for those who developed a tolerance for morphine. It is 200 times the potency of morphine and



often can't be studied or identified because the lethal amount for humans is not enough to be detected in blood work.

With this substance it's not a matter of if you can handle the

"high", the danger is that it slows your heart and lung functions down to an unlivable pace. We all have our struggles and coping mechanisms, but consider the eventual consequences if that substance ever crosses your path. And remember those who love you and have been your greatest supporter throughout your bid, they don't deserve you coming home in a body bag!

To those who have witnessed a comrade or in some cases a friend being pushed down the boulevard on a stretcher, reach out to us here at Second Chance Quest and become an advocate for change using your God-given ability to write and share your experience with the public. Together, we can and will make a difference.

NJ CLERGY PUSH FOR STATE TO LET INCARCERATED PEOPLE REDUCE BURDENSOME DEBT WHILE IN PRISON: ASHLEY BALCERZAK NORTHJERSEY.COM

JERSEY CITY — More than one hundred clergy and community leaders celebrated Hudson County's commitment to help incarcerated people petition the courts to address outstanding fines, fees, warrants and detainers while they are jailed, and some spoke out during an event Wednesday to urge the state to follow Hudson County's example.

Hudson County leaders said they will widely publicize in prisons a "request for relief" form that allows people to schedule court appearances over Zoom or in person while incarcerated, request that fines or penalties be converted into jail time, and have the court grant a person credit for the time they have served, recall a warrant or vacate fees, among other things.

"This enables people and informs people that they have the ability to get a judge to deal with these penalties while they are behind bars, as opposed to having to deal with them while they're trying to put their lives back together," said Michael Stanley, lead organizer for New Jersey Together, a community-building coalition.

Posting info on every floor of jail

"Inmates were saying they didn't know about it, so we're posting it on every floor so the inmates can



"It's amazing that something this simple can have such profound effects," Stanley said.

see it," said Edward Nestor, deputy director of the Hudson County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, during Wednesday's gathering at Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church in Jersey City, designed to pressure New Jersey to eliminate burdensome fines and fees for those who are detained.

Cora Simmons, a retired postal worker, said sheriffs knocked on her door because her son did not appear in traffic court. She explained he was arrested and being detained in the Hudson County jail. "My son was diagnosed with cancer while in custody and being transported to a hospital for cancer treatments, so I wonder why they couldn't take him back and

forth to court," Simmons said. "He could have come home and started getting his life together."

Fines pile up while in prison

Boris Franklin said he had left prison owing around \$10,000 in motor vehicle fines and \$35,000 in child support payments that had ballooned over the 11 years he was incarcerated.

"Poor people are coming out poorer than they were before they went in," said Franklin, lead organizer of Jersey City Together, a chapter of New Jersey Together. "I have friends who owe \$100,000."

People returning from incarceration can have difficulty maintaining employment, because they must continually return to court for outstanding matters, or cannot obtain their drivers' licenses because of outstanding fines, said Al-Tariq Witcher of the Returning Citizens Support Group.

Policies on fines that protect people's rights

The National Center for Access to Justice at Fordham Law School identified policies on fines and fees that "best protect people's rights" and graded state laws in a nationwide study in 2022. New Jersey

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**FROM THE ARCHIVE OF
SCQ SUPPORT GROUP**

STUDENT ESSAY:

I'm from Norfolk, Virginia and I'm 24 years old. I've been incarcerated for the past three years, my release date is November of this year. Most of my memories on the outside lay in the southside of Norfolk, affectionately called the "South". I've been in and out of foster homes and detention centers since I was 13 years old. I've recently been reunited with my siblings and the rest of my family in the past few years. We've develop a strong relationship within that period of time.

Being incarcerated takes something away from us, not just us, it does something negative to our entire families as well, especially to our kids. We have to be smart about the decisions we make, we cannot continue to press the issue of who is the freshest or who is the baddest in the streets. I know most of us jumped into the street-life for different reasons, some to put food on the table or to get even with someone for the lost of a homeboy, etc. We have to break this destructive cycle we fine ourselves in, regardless of the circumstances. I feel your pain, I've lost my closest friend and many of my homeboys also, I can't do nothing to bring them back, neither can you.

I want my kids to have everything I didn't have, including my being out there for them, because I know how it feels when you don't have nothing. My expedience in prison for the most part have changed my outlook on how I view a lot of things, one can find good even in a bad situation such as prison. I'm thankful I've grown to realize that at a young age, to be able to take it in and learn from everything. The key to this knowledge is that I will be able to apply it to the real world when I get home. To all my young brothers, I understand how you grew up and the things you had to do to survive in the process. However, be mindful that not everyone gets a second chance, my advice to you is that you don't become blinded to second chances. The constant thing in life is change, so take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself to better yourself, and always keep your head high and chest out. Don't be discouraged.

Much love, peace!

By: K. Gray, aka "Sko"

NJ CLERGY PUSH FOR STATE TO LET INCARCERATED PEOPLE REDUCE BURDENSOME DEBT WHILE IN PRISON continued from page 4

ranked third-strongest, tied with Colorado and New York, though with a failing grade of 48 out of 100 points.

The organization recommended that New Jersey make changes such as barring the use of private debt collection agencies to collect fines and fees, stopping the practice of suspending drivers' licenses for failure to pay fees, and adopting "individualized fines" that are scaled to the severity of the offense and a person's income, among other measures.

NJ bill eliminates some fees and fines

There have been recent efforts in

New Jersey to tackle the issue. In January 2022, Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation that eliminated fees, fines and penalties imposed on those under 18 years old in the juvenile justice system. And last May, Attorney General Matthew Platkin issued a directive ordering police not to jail people who didn't appear in municipal courts or failed to pay fines for minor offenses.

In his budget address, Murphy proposed eliminating the fees charged for public defender representation, which can sometimes reach \$1,000. The measure would have to be passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor to become law.



Al-Tariq Witcher speaks during the New Jersey Together Celebration of Criminal Justice Reform Progress, in Jersey City.

LEGAL RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE IN PRISON IN NEW JERSEY**NJ Office of the Corrections
Ombudsperson**

P0 Box 855
Trenton, NJ 08625
[www.state.nj.us/
correctionsombudsperson/](http://www.state.nj.us/correctionsombudsperson/)
1-555-555-5555 (Inmate only toll
free number)
(609) 633-2596 (Main)

Serves: NJ

Focus area/description:

The Office of the Corrections

Ombudsperson provides a mechanism for the continuing resolution of issues, problems or complaints of "State" sentenced inmates within New Jersey's Correctional System regarding their living conditions and treatment.

With status appropriate to the requirements of the position, the Corrections Ombudsperson investigates complaints where the inmate has failed to get satisfactory results through

available institutional channels.

Serving as a designated neutral, the Corrections Ombudsman is an advocate for fairness who also acts as a source of information and referral, aids in answering individuals' questions, and assists in the resolution of concerns during critical situations. In considering any given instance or concern, the interests and rights of all parties who might be involved are taken into account.

New Jersey Parents' Caucus
275 Route 10 East
Suite 220-414

Succasunna, NJ 07869
[www.newjerseyparentscaucus.
org](http://www.newjerseyparentscaucus.org)
908-994-7471
(973) 989-8870

Serves: NJ

Focus area/description:

Providing education to parents, family members and youth on their rights and responsibilities and the advocacy skills needed to navigate child-serving systems.

Providing free legal advice and representation to parents and youth by a qualified attorney.

Supporting attorneys at trial.

Providing leadership opportunities to system-involved

youth through the NJ Youth Coalition.

Providing peer support programs for parents, family members and youth.

Increasing awareness through public testimonies and legislative advocacy.

Training juvenile justice professionals and providers.

This national resource may also be helpful to people in prison anywhere in the country:

Equal Justice Initiative

122 Commerce Street
Montgomery, AL 36104
<http://www.eji.org/>
(334) 269-1806 (fax)
334-269-1803 (phone)

Serves: National,AL

Focus area/description:

EJI litigates on behalf of condemned prisoners, juvenile offenders, people wrongly convicted or charged with violent crimes, poor people denied effective representation and others whose trials are marked by racial bias or prosecutorial misconduct. EJI works with communities

that have been marginalized by poverty and discouraged by unequal treatment, and serves the state of Alabama and the Deep South in general, working nationally on selected issues. EJI also prepares reports, newsletters and manuals to assist advocates and policymakers in the critically important work of reforming the administration of criminal justice.

RESOURCES FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS WHEN A PARENT GOES TO PRISON: A FEW GUIDELINES

When a parent or family member goes to prison, often, the family's first reaction is to protect the children by not telling them the truth ... or to tell them only part of the truth. Perhaps, the parent in prison is afraid of what the children will think of him or her. Afraid they won't love and respect them anymore. The reality is that children usually find out the truth anyway. They hear adults talking, or a friend may tell them or simply figure things out for themselves. So, what is the best thing to do? While every family must decide for themselves, here are some key things keep in mind.

A. Children need to trust the adults who take care of them. You build their trust when you tell the truth – even if it hurts. Besides, if they find out you lied about a loved one in prison, they'll be hurt twice as hard ... about the imprisonment and your deception. 19 Also, if you lie about this, what else are you not telling the truth about?

B. Children are smart. While you may believe that you can explain a loved one's absence with a vague answer, (they are in the hospital, working for the state or away at school) children usually find out. Phone calls and letters declare when someone communicates from a correctional facility, or the children see the barbed wire when they visit, or their loved one never comes home – even if they beg or it's a holiday. These are just some of the clues that even the youngest of children can put together.

C. If children aren't given an explanation that makes sense – they will tell themselves something to fill the gap. That something may be worse than the truth. If you want them to come to you for information or comfort, you must demonstrate the “door is open” for honest communication. Be open and patient when they approach you.

D. Children need to hear explanations they can understand. Keep in mind their age and experience. Keep it simple. It's not a one time discussion. Often, once children have had an opportunity to think about things, they'll come back with other questions or feelings. Be open to talk about the crime, prison life and the safety of their parent or loved one ... for most children, the number one priority is knowing that their parent or loved one is safe! 20

E. Provide children with guidance about what to tell people outside the family. Should they say, “you're separated” or “he's away” or “in prison”? Every situation is different – so help children prepare for questions, teasing or offers of support from others.

F. Holidays, Mother's Day, Father's Day and birthdays are especially difficult. Schools may do special projects. Be proactive. Talk to your children about what's coming up and ask them how they want to handle things. Provide guidance in advance.

G. Prepare your children about what to expect during visits, phone calls or letters. Children experience time differently than adults. Help them understand how long someone will be gone or when the next contact may be.

H. Separate how you feel about the imprisoned adult from what the child may feel or want. It's normal for children to want the adults in their lives to be good caregivers. Many children believe that once a parent comes home from prison they will be the mother or father they always wanted. Listen to their hopes and fears. Let them know what they may realistically expect, without bias or judgment.

I. If possible, include the imprisoned parent or loved one in the discussions. Discuss what you want to say in advance and practice with one another. Children feel better when the adult who is imprisoned says he or she is safe and cared for – and that the child is not at fault for anything. Reassure them that even 21 though prison is not a place where anyone wants to end up – the adult will be okay.

J. Finally, just because an adult does a bad thing doesn't necessarily mean he or she is a bad person. Separate the two. The incarcerated person made a mistake that he or she must be accountable for. Although walls may separate them, they still can love one another very much.

*excerpt adapted from *WHEN A PARENT GOES TO PRISON A guide to discussing your incarceration with your children 2007 Prepared by: New Jersey Department of Corrections Divisions of Programs and Community Services Office of Transitional Services

or not, so let's take on the traits of a great societies. Instead of just walking by or making an

assumption about our elders start a conversation and see where it leads.

Thank you for your time.
Calvin

SUFFERING FOR ILLUMINATION

Throughout history there are many accounts of oppression resulting in great suffering. There was the Civil Rights Movement which dealt with a certain type of oppression that to this day, Black people is still suffering from both directly and indirectly. Though there's many accounts of oppressions and sufferings, it's surprising to find how quickly those accounts have been either undermined or forgotten altogether. The cause of the oppression and suffering somehow gets swept under the rug and those responsible sometimes evades due justice.

Saying that though, I'm not writing this article to scream from the hills for justice. On the contrary, I'm writing this article to shed light on the possibility of one becoming Great due to one's oppression, or due to one's suffering.

Suffering... Some of the most profound people ever recorded in history have underwent some sort of suffering in resemblance to ours. To name a few: Malcolm X, who have spent several years in prison. Nelson Mandela, have spent over 20 years in prison. And Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., have been beaten and jailed on several occasions. In reflection, it's safe to say sometimes suffering is needed in order to strengthen one's mind, body and soul. False pride and false ego holds no merit and runs from suffering because it's the death

of false attributes that one may possess. Painful and difficult times as well as failures and loses can be perceived by some, including yours truly (me), as purification and preparation for personal heroism.

This heroism can be looked upon as minute to those who are unable to see the silver lining due to their actual suffering, but I assure you, you are a hero to someone out there that you may be overlooking. In this era there's eyes everywhere watching everything. To most of us we see that as a bad thing, but there's always another side to the coin. Someone watching you suffer and still held upright doesn't always mean or coincide with the notion "Misery loves company". That person watching, knowing you're suffering could possibly be drawing strength from your ability to withstand your pain and anguish.

It's prominent that you never give in and give up, if not for your sake, then maybe for your fellow comrade, children, parents, grandparents, etc. We tend to forget that our loved ones sometimes look to us for strength. So never take that for granted and succumb to whatever suffering you may be experiencing today or tomorrow.

Know that there's no such thing as a forever storm, storms do subsides. You will see a brighter day and have ample opportunities to brighten someone else's "Midnight Rain". To give someone a brighter

day is rewarding in many ways but the most rewarding is knowing that you didn't allow oppression and suffering to rob you of your humanity and good will. Be that light for someone's dark days, and in the same breath show that you are resilient, unwaivering, and show you are everything your oppressors feared, tried to break, and have you succumbed to. Show that you are someone's (no matter who it may be) illumination in the dark.

May God (whatever name you may call on) supply you with the strength which my words could not. With the start of every day comes ample opportunities to be your own version of the hero. Do now allow someone else to write your special story. The story you have to tell may be that lifeline for another.

I've just recently found that special person who made me believe this wholeheartedly and I would feel that this article would be incomplete if I did not acknowledge her in some way and perhaps give someone some type of light similar to what she has shown me. Love you to the moon and back, Dasha. 2 Faces, 1 Tear.

God Bless and may your path be one that you could find yourself proud of and be able to keep your chin held high.

By: Bang-Ru

SOUL CRY

Sensing the presence of God within me as I walk these last miles through this underground railroad, the reality of Freedom has become profound.

I can see what our ancestors felt when they were liberated from slavery and oppression after all those years. All they had was hope, faith, and each other.

Overwhelmed with anxiety and a sense of disbelief that this day, which haunted their dreams and kept their drive for liberation alive, has now coming full circle to touch the lives of the convicted masses.

I am humbled - my spirit is full of tranquility, yet my mind wonders like a new born baby that sees the world for the first time - excited,

scared and curious. I feel like a virgin all over again, born again; Al-hamdulillah- meaning all praise and thanks are due to Allah (God).

This incarceration period has shaped and developed me into God's plan for me. I had to die from my old self in order to become the greatest version of His greatest vision of me, through adversity

and struggle - my mind, body and soul formed Godliness.

Free at Last! No longer am I a slave to myself. How many people in society appears to be free? Looking the part on the outside but yet their mind and soul are incarcerated. Trap Stars, their only audience in pain and misery, get it? Trapped!

I love me some me! You are your first love and through the love of God, who shows you how to love, you learn not only how to truly love others, but also, how to forgive and become one with the universe. Keeping in mind, that the flow of life has already been breathing your air long before your existence.

Signs and symbols in the earth communicates the need for us to slow down and pay attention, what is the rush if you are missing the signs? How many times have we been repeating that? Who are you and where are you going? Why is that that one song on your album of life is constantly being repeated?

You missed the signs! Heedless to the moments, blind to the reality of your destiny because you lack awareness and vision, you want more while giving nothing in return. It may feel good but its short lived. The lust of your desires crave, you feed the flesh, but the spirit is void of nutrition and died as a result - you ain't complete. All alone, making desperate moves, the hole deepens, sinking fast, whose going to save me? I love myself! Do I really do? I'm confused, I need some help, help is here...

My life purpose is to answer the call of the Soul Cry - I connect to the hopelessness because it is my friend and teacher. We, as people within this society have a responsibility towards one another, to connect, feel the shine of the light of knowledge in a world that sometimes seems unfair. The answer is Justice! Our future is Freedom! Soul Cry.

**By: Nadir Abdullah-Salaam,
F.O.E. President**

THE HOLE

In this place 23 HOURS A DAY the conditions are just perfect, I must say to see a man in disarray - soul and body being displaced a mind attempting to break a spirit in search of escape...

the hole. the hole.

Nearly blinded, the assignment of two sleep-depraving fluorescent lights extend the fight - the days where the struggle for sanity seems to spike the portion of night shortened out of spite Delirious, I fall from consciousness; curious, I awake wondering in what ways would death ease this fate...

the hole.

No rest for the weary; what rights deserve the wrong? officers dulled to the edges of insensitivity, do their best to stifle segregation's song: the CRIES, the WAILS, the anguish one must expel the anger with which one yells TELLS. The tale of a mind warring within itself...

the hole.

Often heard and often ignored are the screams unnerving - scratching at the surface MERCY a HUMAN BEING hurting to be seen wounds spanning lifetimes emotional scar tissue fatigued. Who has heart enough to respond to such a deep-seeded need to be treated?

Who employed here is even qualified to take on this sort of task? without a degree, without a calling leading, for anyone, this is too much to ask...

the hole.

A mental infection contagious spreading cell to cell every inpatient afflicted entered underneath its spell held under, beneath the swell discarded were parts of me, I thought surely retrievable tossed - off at sea imagining the inconceivable every second this battle wages it becomes more probable, losing myself...

the hole.

These two eyes, I have seen men die, hanging from vents like clothing left to dry knowing it Did Not have to BE. I witnessed half a dozen more try, failing without God's permission to leave...

the hole.

Never have I felt closer to death than the time I spent going through hell too long a length of time I spent isolated from help canned in a holding cell banned from open air unable to breathe the scene seems uninspiring to those who supposedly care...

the hole.

The side effects of loneliness have their way with the mind whispers spring quietly from silence yet loud enough to be seen as a sign demanding a response, however, undefined messages unintelligible, the conversation increasing the greater the distance of time...

the hole. the hole.

In this place, 23 HOURS A DAY the conditions are just perfect, I must say to see a man in disarray - soul and body being displaced a mind attempting to break a spirit in search of escape...

The Hole.



304-878-3727
P.O. BOX 855
MAPLEWOOD, NJ 07040
www.secondcq.org

"The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no farther than yourself but the ends you serve that are for all in common will take you into eternity."—Marcus Garvey

Hi SCQ Supporters!

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support over the past year. We have gotten to know many of you as well as your family and friends. We value the contributions that were made. Many of you submitted writings for our website and newsletters, participated in our Annual Social Media Takeover, and became official members. Your support and involvement is extremely important to us and very much appreciated.

In order to budget our costs, we are reserving Newsletters for paid members. If you missed registration last year then now is your chance! Check out pg 8 to read about some of the benefits of being a member. We hope that you'll take advantage of this time and become an official member and remain a part of our community. Signing up is easy- just fill out the form below and send it in with your \$10 membership fee.

Kind regards,

Name, Number	Date
Facility, Address	Do you have a JPay account? Yes / No
Comments	

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SECOND CHANCE QUEST Annual Membership Drive

SCQ'S - "PRISON" MEMBERSHIP DRIVE Greetings, Second Chance Quest Supporters:

Good news! You can now become an official member of Second Chance Quest. We are approaching our Annual Membership Drive. For an annual donation of \$10.00, you can become a member of SCQ.

Here are some of the benefits of becoming a member of SCQ:

- Four (4) issues of Second Chance Quest Newsletters per year
- Email and Phone Access to Second Chance Quest Head Office
- Receive Periodic Updates to all Second Chance Quest Activities and Annual Social MediaTake-Over
- Your short stories and/or articles published in SCQ's Newsletter, Website, and Social Media Pages*
- Second Chance Quest's organizational support such as letters, interviews, and phone calls to name a few*
- Backing for legitimate grievances
- 4 free phone calls

*Per our discretion

You, as a member, have the full weight of this not-for-profit organization on your side and in your corner!

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Yours Truly,
T. Bravo
SCQ President

To register as a member, fill out this form and mail it to PO Box 855, Maplewood, NJ 07040. Must include a \$10 donation or 1 book of brand-new stamps.

We also accept Cash App @2ndcq and Zelle 304-878-3727

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Facility, Address.	Do you have a JPay account? Yes / No
Comments	



PO Box 855
Maplewood, NJ 07040

TALITHA TURNER
SECOND CHANCE QUEST
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

www.secondcq.org

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Help Us
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SECOND CHANCE QUEST CONTACT INFO

Mailing Address:
Second Chance Quest
P.O. Box 855,
Maplewood, NJ 07040

Phone:
(304) TRUE SCQ
(304) 878-3727

Email:
scqemail@gmail.com

Website:
www.secondcq.org

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