

MY NIGHT

As I sit and think day and night,
Lying here wide awake,
In this quiet

Pictures of you; sights of the sea
Daydreaming of what should be
Pictures of you & me.

Seasons have gone and the climate has changed
Without you it seems so strange
Though my thoughts remain the same.

I know that love is a ruthless game
Even though I choose to play
I wish we could go back to that 1st day.

In this cell I sit;
My wicked love I cannot quit
I am tattered & torn;
Broken by the evil Glare
My passion is the only thing there!

To and fro my soul is tossed
Till even my guardian angel was lost
In this struggle I am alone
Fighting, crying, trying to get home!

Pushin', pushin'! I'm almost there
Even physical exhaustion
won't subdue my despair

I'm a trained soldier in love warfare
There is no exercise for this pain
Or an answer to why I cry when it rains.

My mind and heart are in a dance
There can be no truce!
My solitude is despair,
In this darkness I'm just here
Does anyone care?

I may wither
I may not
But fail I cannot!

You say, "Love, seeing is believing"
But what I'm seeing is Demons

Twisting, Turning, trying to fight
Will I make it thru the night?

by Nicholas Hulsey

LETHAL INJECTIONS:

Some Cases Stayed Other Executions Proceed

Four death row inmates on the verge of execution were granted last minute stays in recent weeks. At the same time, other executions have been allowed to go forward. All of the executions have been by lethal injection, and almost all of the inmates raised similar legal challenges to the lethal injection process.

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case of Clarence Hill and has ordered briefs to be filed by April. Hill's challenge to lethal injection was in the form of a civil rights suit. The court below refused to consider the merits of his claim because it held that his claim was more properly part of his death penalty appeal, and that it was thus barred for its lateness.

Those raising lethal injection challenges (both those executed and those stayed) are generally claiming that the drugs used in the executions cause extreme and unnecessary pain, and that the combination of chemicals masks the pain being experienced by the inmate from the sight of those administering the death penalty. The appeals assert that this is a violation of the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishments.

In commenting on the Supreme Court's granting of some stays while allowing other executions to go forward, Douglas A. Berman, an expert in criminal sentencing law at Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law, said: "I am sure the court is trying to apply some sort of sensible standard. But they need to do a heck of a lot better job explaining why."

BOOK REVIEW

SWEET FREEDOM - The American "Injustice" System - This New Book Unveils the Untold Story Behind a Wrongful Conviction That Captured International Media Attention



(Chicago, IL) An African-American prisoner and a White middle-class journalist defied color barriers to form a powerful friendship. After Maurice Carter sought the help of Doug Tjapkes (pronounced: Chap-kes) to get out of prison for a crime he did not commit, their story made international headlines. Yet, behind the media frenzy surrounding this case, an unyielding brotherhood between these two men developed. Now, in his new book, *Sweet Freedom: Breaking the Bondage of Maurice Carter* (Faith Walk Publishing 2006), Tjapkes takes readers through a vivid and heartwarming account of an interracial friendship that transpired in the face of outrageous injustice.

"This is a powerful, moving tale, one from which we can all learn. It is a story of crossing boundaries, of reaching out beyond the familiar, and of fighting for what is right and just," said Alex Kotlowitz, author of *There Are No Children Here*. "Tjapkes' passion proved to be contagious," said

David Protess, Director of the Medill Innocence Project.

"Every prisoner needs a Doug Tjapkes in his life," said Dr. Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, activist and former middleweight boxer.

For 29 years, Carter barely survived behind bars in the place of a criminal who freely walked the streets. While Tjapkes worked tirelessly for ten years to help Carter redeem his freedom, he still suffered injustice. Readers will share in the unmerited and emotional moments that inspired Tjapkes and stirred the country, such as:

- **The "snitch" that dug Carter's ditch**-Despite false testimony, no evidence, motive, weapon, or fingerprints, Carter was still convicted and sentenced to life in prison.
- **Carter's downhill spiral**-For eight years, prison physicians did not disclose to Carter that he'd contracted Hepatitis C. After collapsing, he was finally informed of his bout with liver disease which was in its end stage.
- **The exhale**-Nearly ten years of building a bonded friendship with a man behind bars, Tjapkes was overwhelmed when he joined Carter as he walked unshackled from prison a free man.

"Our friendship evolved into something rich, deep, and intimate. I've never experienced anything quite like it. He called me the brother he never had, and I did the same," said Tjapkes. "He was my hero."

About the author: Doug Tjapkes is a former broadcast journalist, radio station owner and founding director of INNOCENT!, a nonprofit prison activist organization. He is winner of the prestigious Advancement of Justice Award presented by the State Bar of Michigan.

Product Information: *Sweet Freedom* by Doug Tjapkes Price: \$12.99
ISBN: 1932902562 In-Store Date: March 2006

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Saint Tookie (Continued from page 1)

redemption and reform to those we deem socially unqualified. The path to sainthood is paved with the worst of our human frailties - from our greed to our predisposed self-centeredness. Saints are not born without these traits, nor are they untouched by them. To be sure, saints are molded by the sowing and reaping of many types of seeds until they learn to harvest wholeheartedly the fruits of the Spirit. It is a path that leads us from darkness to light, from cruelty to compassion.

Therefore, the real issue for me is not whether Tookie Williams should have been executed for the four brutal murders that occurred in 1979, when he was 25 years old. The real issue is how should we view him in light of the 24 years he spent on death row transforming into the man who wrote books that stirred many to begin rethinking their own lives. Those who supported his execution were right to remind us to not forget the crimes he was convicted of. Yet, equally true, those who supported his clemency were right to remind us to not forget the work he did to reform himself.

This distraught mother also reminded CNN viewers that the gang, The Crips, he cofounded is responsible for thousands of murders. Therefore he is actually guilty of many murders! Can we realistically hold Tookie accountable for gang violence committed 25 years after he was removed from society? Is he really responsible for what others do? Most of the Crips today weren't even born the day Tookie was arrested.

To say Tookie deserved execution for the murders he was convicted of is a matter of how we view crime and punishment. To say his change was insincere is a matter of how we view his personal reform and spiritual transformation. I believe that if we do not take his transformation seriously then as a society we create a spiritual caste system of the moral aristocracy - those who haven't sunk too far - and the left out those who are permanently remembered for their crimes and whose changes are never acknowledged enough to gain them admittance into the upper class of "Good People." That

position is at odds with a nation that voted for George W Bush because he claims he prays mightily and says he believes abortion violates the Bible, especially when you consider that the Christ of the Bible invited a condemned thief to a place of honor as both were being executed.

Of course we prefer our saints to be without moral blemish and without a criminal record. While these type of saint are great for canonizing and praying to, they don't offer the rest of us morally bankrupt people much hope as examples of what we can become because they've never sunk as low as we have. Where are those saints who wrestled with drug addiction and transformed themselves into perfect, free beings? Where are those enlightened beings who spent half their lives being scoundrels, thieves and, yes, murderers? I believe that if there are none then there is no hope for the rest of us. I don't need another never-been-in-trouble dead person to pray to about my shortcomings. I need living examples of men and women who, like me, have been lost in the jungle of moral depravation, but who emerge a new creation. I need a society that still believes in and is receptive to personal reform.

Where are the saints? They're all around us, struggling to transform themselves in this criminal justice society that still holds to the primitive belief that severe punishment for long periods is the necessary debt that must be paid before reform can even be considered, although the history of mankind proves this to be absurd.

Tookie Williams was a living example of the spiritual ambiguities in the human psyche and the conflict of good and evil that is waged in every human soul. He proves that evil can claim a person's life and liberty, but also how good can transform and restore us to a place of honor and human dignity. We are not born a saint; we are reborn into sainthood.

Written the day "Tookie" Williams was executed ■

DO WE ACCEPT OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

"We take on a burden when we put a man behind a wall. That burden is to give him a chance to change...to deny him...is to plant the seeds of future anguish."

Justice Warren Burger

SLAPPED BY REALITY

By JOSE BUSANET

I woke up this morning and was slapped by a cold reality. The slap had the force of a hard blow that almost knocked me back to sleep. I felt the fear and dread of those American soldiers captured in Iraq. The thought of the possibility of being executed at any moment must terrify them.

I know what it feels like to be stranded in a foreign land, thousands of miles away from home. Living day to day on Pennsylvania's death row, I'm terrified by the thought of never gazing into my wife's beautiful eyes, and of never embracing her again. Or the simplest fatherly duties like tucking my children under the covers and reading them a bedtime story.

The difference between mine and the U.S. soldier's fate is that I cannot anticipate the hope of being rescued. I've heard people say that the saddest things on earth are the tears of a clown. Have you ever witnessed the tears of a lonely man condemned on Death Row?

I awake each day inside the belly of the beast unable to reach my full potential. This is a slow, agonizing death within itself. The death of dreams; the death of ambitions; the death of the living spirit and of everything I hold sacred.

Have you ever been sucker punched by reality?

BELIEVE

Mistakes I have made are many,
Yet none so great that
I can't seek forgiveness.

They made me seem
as though I'm insignificant,
That I won't ever amount to anything.

For the most part,
They were right!
That was my impression.

But now I know the way.

It wasn't some startling revelation
It's just that now I have pride & dignity
Knowledge of self-esteem.

If it took years of stumbling
to find a treasure such as this,
Then so be it

The end does justify the means.

Anonymous

Violence (Continued from page 3)

were forced to live together in the same pod, it made for lots of fights. The friction only increased when many of our privileges were taken away or severely reduced as punishment for behavioral problems amongst these younger prisoners.

At the Warren facility the visiting hours were cut back, means to earn money were severely limited and many new vague and ridiculous rules were implemented and enforced. However, as time went on, we became acclimated to the new facility and its odd rules.

Then the staff decided to enforce some rules they had earlier neglected. According to them we were getting too "comfortable". When we first moved in, we were given some leeway in the way we maintained our cells. I had pictures of my family on the table along with books and correspondence from friends and relatives. Then one day out of the blue, we were ordered to put everything in our footlockers. Furthermore, we were told our footlockers must be placed under our beds. Everything we owned had to not only fit in the locker but also must be kept there. No pictures of family anywhere but in a photo album kept in my footlocker. Their excuse - correspondence, books, magazines, newspapers and pictures are fire hazards. By the way, if an item is not a fire hazard, then it is a security threat.

This is a new seventy-seven (77) million dollar prison with top of the line fire sprinklers system in each cell as well as the latest fire sensors and smoke detectors. The prison in Thomaston was more than one hundred years old and had none of these fire detection gadgets. Yet in the old prison we had a space on the wall for pictures of our loved ones, posters, calendars, and drawings from our kids, nieces, nephews, grandsons and granddaughters - our memories. Not here, nothing on the walls - nothing to remind us of our loved ones - just bare concrete - a "concrete jungle."

However, visit some of the offices here and you will find proud displays of calendars, pictures of family members, sports stars, team memorabilia, posters, plants, etc. No fire hazard? If officers, who are here only for eight or nine hours a day have a need to personalize their offices, make it more like home, feel human and comfortable in a place of hate and violence, why shouldn't we be allowed to feel the same way? We live here twenty-

four hours a day, seven days a week and some of us are never getting out.

These things may seem very trivial for people who are free or those who are serving smaller sentences but it is very important for us lifers. You can't expect people to live out of a box. These cells are our home and these pods are our neighborhoods. We should be given some freedom to create a safe place to rest our heads and calm our hearts. Each of us has a need of a place, no matter how small or how humble, that can offer us sanctuary where we may replenish body and soul.

Poorly trained guards and their hotheaded supervisors are another factor that has led to an increase in violence. Officers are encouraged to take on the responsibility of punishing inmates for their sentenced crimes. They believe that inmates won't come back if they make prison difficult, frustrating and inhumane. They treat inmates, older and younger ones alike, as punks (a very derogatory term used in prison vocabulary). The officers perceive treating prisoners humanely as not part of their job description. They harbor a secret fear of losing their authority and overcompensate for it by being irrational and arrogant. This problem is further compounded by the fact that some inmates do not know their rights and therefore are victimized repeatedly. Left unchallenged, these guards, in turn, believe that they can get away with anything on anyone. To top this all, some guards not only victimize inmates but they encourage or allow inmates to abuse one another - victims are turned into victimizers.

To grow we need to feel safe, secure and comfortable in our environment. Also, to have certain stability in our lives we need some structure and order in our lives so that we are not overwhelmed by chaos and stress. This chaos and stress in our environment plays havoc on our day-to-day life and leads to anger which may turn into violence. Allowing prisoners to create a little comfortable, relaxing, safe space for themselves, especially in their cell, gives them some sense of dignity and control over their own lives. They feel human - this is jailing.

Anonymous, Maine State Prison, Warren, Maine

RIP Son

The towers overhead
I rest under upon my concrete bed
It's all to the good if we stick to our script
Stick to our plan
Neither a follower nor a leader,
Just our own man
People with their views,
Their paths, their own sin
Just part of the spider web
I don't get entangled within
There is death that walks these tiers
Those still trying to overcome old fears
Inside time passes,
Programmed without skipping a beat
Whether a spring's clear sky, fall's scent,
A winter's chill or an Indian summer's heat
Blood still spills and these doors
Still lock behind us in our cells
Everyone is living their individual hells
But through it all lessons are learned
You realize and see life for what it truly is
And that respect is earned
To speak with meaning
Is to mean what you say
Regardless of the next man's choice
Do it the right way
Warriors who would not stand just to fall
But we will leave here spiritual warriors
Knowing that patience and virtue
Is worth it all!
Tribulations will still come
Even with all this revelation
A piece still scrapes the floor
Those who have committed atrocious crimes
Or turned sour and just couldn't live solid
Their worries will be no more
For some like wolves await them to feast

To feed their passion,
Their carnality to claim the beast
That's just the chaos we live
As the steam ascends
From our hot water pots
Sipping on our coffee,
The bright sun accompanied
With the mini 14's shots
And yet again the hate is let loose
Some don't make it in these dungeons,
They drown themselves in addiction
Or simply make a noose
The weak buckle,
The strong survive
And though it's dim at first
We must still walk out alive
Through our loved ones,
Care, support, and contact
One never forgets the simple fact
That amidst seeing all this distortion
There is still much to live for
Our families, our little ones,
The woman who've stood by us
We will make it out of the man's key grip
No longer walk under the muzzled of a gun
Instead of being on a mission of warfare,
On a mission of life
Perhaps with our daughter or son
We just need to sharpen our minds
And lay down our direction
Open our eyes
For when finally we leave this wasteland
That part of us that grew dark
And merciless over time,
Let's hope that part of us remains behind
Let's pray that part of us dies.

By Nicholas Novelo - California

Submissions: We are looking for articles, short stories, opinion, poetry and art written by prisoners for publication.

Send submissions to: **Cell Door Magazine**
12200 Rd 41.9
Mancos, CO 81328

HARD-LEARNED KNOWLEDGE FROM A FALSELY CONVICTED MAN

by Jay B. Van Story

I can't go back and tell the young man I was many years ago how things really are. I want to tell him just how vulnerable any one of us can be to suffering false imprisonment and even execution. I can't do that. It's way too late for that one. However, I would like to try and impart this hard-learned knowledge on the young men and women out there now.

I grew up pledging allegiance to the flag, "with liberty and justice for all," and I believed it wholeheartedly. I was in for a rude shock at the age of 24. I was falsely convicted of sexual assault and given a life sentence.

After a very long, very difficult struggle for justice, overwhelming new evidence of my innocence has finally come out. All three main state witnesses have now admitted that I am innocent including the alleged victim. They had been coerced by investigators and prosecutors into falsely implicating me.

I would like every young man and woman out there to know that you could be in danger of suffering the same nightmarish fate. Don't naively assume that as long as you have not committed a crime, you cannot be charged and convicted.

The main point I would like to make is that if you get into any kind of trouble at all, whether it be using drugs, shoplifting, vandalism, burglary, or any other offense, you will forever be suspected of committing other crimes including much more serious ones. You will often be investigated when crimes are committed in your area, or whenever there are descriptions of suspects that even remotely resemble you. Your picture will often be shown to alleged victims and witnesses, if you have committed certain kinds of crimes. You will forever be in danger of being accused and convicted of something you didn't do.

Even if you never commit a crime, you are putting your freedom at great risk if you hang around the wrong crowd. If one or more of them commit a crime, you could easily be falsely implicated. It happens all the time. Just ask

Randall Dale Adams, who was almost executed before the truth of his innocence was finally uncovered. His case was the subject of the award-winning film "The Thin Blue Line," by Errol Morris.

As we have all seen in the last decade or so, hundreds of innocent people have been exonerated and freed, largely due to the scientific advancement of DNA testing. This has made us all more aware that false convictions can and do occur with sickening regularity. We continue to see a stream of former prisoners walking out the prison gates and into the open arms of their joyous families. Some who have been freed were as close as a few minutes from being executed.

What you may not know is that the ones who have been freed represent only a fraction of all of those who have been falsely convicted. Statistics prove that literally thousands, if not tens of thousands, remain illegally incarcerated in the U.S.A. Most never receive the help they need to prove their innocence. There is very convincing evidence that dozens have been executed before they could prove their innocence.

Some had clean records before they were falsely convicted. However, in most cases, they had one or more prior arrests or convictions on their records, and were therefore automatically suspect. Usually, the priors were minor, but it was enough to make it easy for a more serious false charge to be pinned on them.

Your freedom is much more priceless than anything that has been depicted in a credit card commercial. Think about everything you have endless access to right now — family, friends, church, career, home, the outdoors, travel, good food, nice clothes, cars, computers, music, movies, recreation, shopping, etc. Now picture yourself losing **all** of that in a harrowing instant. You don't have to commit a crime to be convicted of one. That is the harsh truth. If you value your freedom, you must not only stay out of trouble, but also stay completely away from trouble.

Good luck to all of you and God bless you. ■

Warning (Continued from page 2)

dollars go into its employee's pockets. The CDC's daily meal allowance today for each inmate is \$2.20! That's for the entire day, not just one meal. And most prison kitchens take no pride or care in the preparation of meals -it's assembly line work. The quality and quantity of the food that is served is deplorable and revolting, and lacks almost any nutritional value whatsoever. Inmates instead rely on family and friends and even their attorneys for basic nutritional needs by providing money for them to buy foods from the prison canteen as well as quarterly packages from the outside vendors. Those without outside help go hungry and slowly waste away.

The medical treatment given in the CDC prisons is not just bad, it is downright dangerous! Many prisoners die each year from malpractice, or simply from no treatment at all. Every day prisoners are being overdosed or under-dosed, but in most cases just not treated at all. Recently here at San Quentin Prison, the Warden was fired from her job for instructing medical staff to lie to the Federal Investigators who were looking into the recent deaths here. After her firing, medical personnel went ahead and lied to the investigators anyway. They just resented being told which lies to tell.

As for life inside a CDC prison cell, here's a brief view. I was brought here to San Quentin's Death Row in December 1985, the 178th person to be put here, and was assigned to a 4½ ft by 10½ ft. cell. The "row" is simply a structure within a building that is five levels (tiers), tall on each side, with a total of 54 cells (all the same), on each tier. I am in this cell 24/7; except for the times I'm allowed out to the exercise yard. Before being allowed out of my cell, I am strip searched and then handcuffed (behind the back), then escorted to a concrete slab 40 ft. by 60 ft. in size, that's surrounded by chain link and razor wire. This is the "yard". The same goes for returning to my cell. It's daily life, and it is a living hell.

The simple fact is that for every inmate inside the CDC prison system there was a crime committed that put each one in there. Today there are 650 inmates on death row and over 170,000 in the general population prisons. Not one of those prisoners ever intended to go to prison, but there they are. Don't become one of them, a faceless nobody in an orange jumpsuit; do something today to change the way your life is heading. If you have difficult issues seek help with them either with a minister, (any church!), or with a counseling center.

Do it today! God bless you. ■

Violence in the Maine State Prison: An Inmate's Perspective

A recipe for an environment of violence: mix poorly trained guards with ridiculous prison rules, add violent and nonviolent offenders, mental health patients, delinquent kids and confine them in a small space. Over the course of this essay I am hoping to show a connection between prison violence and not being able to do what I call "jailing."

First, please let me explain what I mean by the term "jailing." Jailing simply means being able to settle in and do time peacefully. Jailing is very important to the prisoners serving long sentences. I am one of these individuals.

I have come to realize, as do the majority of inmates who are serving long sentences, that being in prison is our punishment. Also, we accept the rules which help this prison run smoothly. However, it is not the Corrections Officer's responsibility to punish inmates while in prison for crimes which put them in prisons. Simply put, individuals are here in prison as punishment, not for punishment.

When we moved to the new prison in Warren from the old prison in Thomaston, it was a big shock to many of us. The move brought together two different prison populations - inmates with long sentences and prisoners sentenced to one or two years. The prisoners coming from Windham Correctional were usually younger and serving short sentences; prisoners from Thomaston were old-timers doing more time. When these different inmate factions - the old-timers and young kids -

(Continued on page 4)

Cell Door Magazine

Publisher - Laird Carlson

Editor - Willie Tucker

Mission: The Cell Door is written by prisoners or people who are closely associated with the prison experience. Open the **Cell Door Magazine** and you will meet the men and women behind bars.

The content of the **Cell Door** runs the gamut from poetry to short stories, from art to op-ed commentary. There are self-help and self-pity articles. **The Cell Door** contains current topics, insight, empathy and pathos. But most of all it is always focused on the effects of life behind bars.

Our goal is to acquire readers who choose **THE CELL DOOR** for its quality and educational/entertainment value, learning in the process that **prisoners are intelligent, personable, talented human beings.**

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Publisher's Notes:

This is the beginning of the 6th year of publication of the **Cell Door Magazine**. There was a hiatus between December 2003 and Feb 2006. We apologize for this gap in publishing. We have rejuvenated the magazine on 3 levels.

1. Willie Tucker who has been a prolific contributor to the **Cell Door** has recently been paroled and was drafted to be the editor of our magazine.
2. The format of the hard copy of the magazine has been changed to a folded 8 1/2" x 14" format.
3. We will be sending out hard copies to the many prisoners who request them.

A WARNING...

To all potential criminals! I am seeking to expose and cast light upon all those who are incarcerated and on the conditions in California's Prison System.

The CDC, California Department of Corrections, and the Guards Union are now the most powerful organization in the state of California. Some say they are essentially a third political party. This tremendous power has been accomplished by lobbying other special interest groups and many millions of dollars in campaign contributions. In the twenty-plus years I have been incarcerated in this prison I have watched as the CDC and the California Prison Guards Union have grown into the hugely powerful entities they are today. The union has now become such a force on the political stage that most Politicians fear it and cater to all of its demands. As for the CDC, its budget has now exceeded **six billion dollars!** Much of which is lost to waste, payoffs, and corruption.

Even though many new prisons have been built in California in the last 50-plus years, the living conditions and life itself have changed little. Each prison, and the entire system, is run much like a medieval feudal system; with its feudal lords (wardens), overseers (guards), and peasant workers (inmates), and little or no attention is given to proper management, responsibility or accountability throughout the system. For the most part, staff and guards in these facilities are obsessed with their own agendas; i.e., devising schemes to milk the CDC money cow, covering one's own ass, and inflicting petty torments on powerless prisoners. The one golden rule of the entire system however is to keep the voices of prisoners within from being heard. This is done through careful control and manipulation of the media."

Inmates within the system mostly live in Stone Age conditions. Experts estimate that the cost to house one prisoner in the system is upwards of \$25,000 a year! Yet the CDC continually strives to do it on the cheap, preferring that the vast majority of budgeted

In the Hole

I'm sitting here thinking
In my nine by twelve cell,
Where the isolation and emotional torment
Feels like a living hell.

I've been thinking about reality and
Wondering where I went wrong,
Knowing for all my stupid actions
All my freedom's now gone.

Trying to keep myself together
And keep my head clear.
Wishing every waking day
That my wrap up day was near.

Locked down 24-7
With not much to do.
Been given orders by people
Who don't give a damn about you.

Hoping each day for a decent meal
To be slid through my trap,
Sometimes the foods OK,
Sometimes it taste's like crap.

Trying to do my bid in this concrete cell
One day at a time,
Wondering if I'll ever get out of this place
Without losing my mind.

I'm hurting deep inside
From all this pain in my soul,
Knowing that this way of life
Has taken a great toll.

I'm trying to find strength and courage
To get me through this jail hole life.
And prevail over my influences
That cause me sorrow and strife.

Sometimes I think I'll make it,
Sometimes I just don't know.
So I spend all my time writing
in the mother F... Hole.

Locked down in Massachusetts

Prison Rape (Continued from page 1)

The link between overcrowding, the drug war, and prison rape is clear. Overcrowded facilities make it harder for officials to maintain safety and security, and nonviolent drug offenders often become targets of violent inmates and are more likely to suffer sexual abuse behind bars.

Drug war prisoners now have an opportunity to speak out and help break down the culture of violence that governs our prisons and jails. SPR is seeking nonviolent drug offenders who are survivors of prisoner rape to tell their stories.

We will honor requests for anonymity, but hope survivors will consider that using their names and photographs will give their story a powerful impact. A SPR representative will conduct face-to-face interviews with survivors who agree to go on the record, take their photographs and make an audio recording of their story.

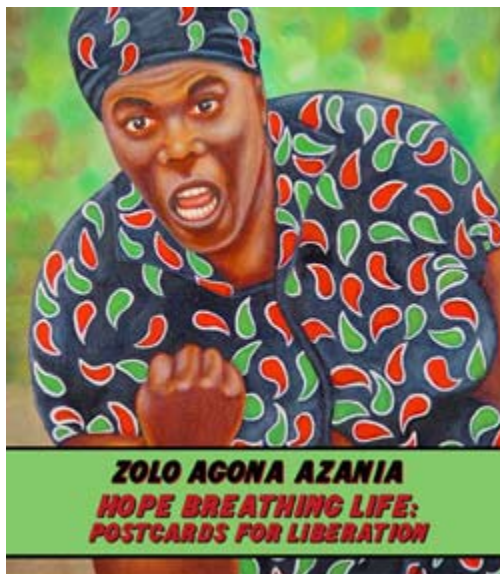
We'll also help survivors prepare for the advocacy campaign that will accompany the release of *Stories from Inside*. When it is released to the public, the project will help shatter stereotypes about prisoner rape and break down the commonly held perception that drug defendants "get what they deserve" while in custody.

The project will show that prisoner rape and sexual abuse affects all of us, inside and outside of jails and prisons.

By taking the courageous step of telling their stories, nonviolent drug offenders can help to break the cycle of violence and prevent rape behind bars.

If you would like to participate in *Stories from Inside*, or know someone who would, please contact Andrea Cavanaugh, SPR's Public Outreach Associate. Write to SPR at 3325 Wilshire Blvd. Ste. 340, Los Angeles, CA, 90010, call (213) 384-1400 x106, or email acavanaugh@spr.org. ■

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POSTCARDS
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36 page booklet containing 16 full color 4" x 6" postcards

You can purchase these postcards at Justseeds

A fabulous collection of 16 full color postcards of paintings by political prisoner Zolo Azania. Zolo has been fighting for his life on death row in Indiana for over 20 years. His death sentence was recently overturned, but the prosecution is appealing and still trying to kill him almost 25 years after his initial trial! Zolo has been an artist his entire life, and this postcard book collects a cross section of his amazing surrealist Black power artwork (for lack of a better description) since he has been in prison. I have to admit I love Zolo's art and helped produce this collection. Funds from the sale of this booklet are used for his support campaign.

How You Can Help

As Zolo's third death penalty trial approaches, his friends and supporters are building a campaign to raise awareness about his case. Join the fight against a death sentence for Zolo.

Contact Zolo's support committee for more information about how to get involved and for Zolo's current address:

No Death Penalty for Zolo
PO Box 478314
Chicago, IL 60647
zoloazania.org

We get hundreds of requests from prisoners for hard copies of the **Cell Door Magazine**. We do not have the funds to do this without your help. Please send a small donation to:

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12200 Rd 41.9
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Checks Payable to: **NDRAN**
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Saint Tookie?

by Paul Jay Reed

The days and final hours leading up to the execution of Stanley "Tookie" Williams gripped the nation and, as with most issues, revealed how divided people are on their views. It was not, however, the debates over the issue of whether the death penalty should be abolished that gripped me. After all, no matter how strong a position I take for either side, my own mind comes up with reasonable arguments supporting the opposite side. Neither was I moved by the political, legal and social issues surrounding this event. In fact, after listening to all the rhetoric from all sides, I must ask, "With all this talking, what has been said?" One particular statement made by one victim's mother did grab my attention. She announced, "People are viewing Tookie Williams all wrong. The man was not a saint."

She said this despite Tookie's nomination for a Nobel Prize, despite his efforts to end the violence perpetrated by the very gang he cofounded, despite his obvious character reform and despite the fact that we live in a predominantly Christian society that in theory believes no human being is beyond redemption's grasp.

The path to sainthood is not some smoothly paved, obstacle-free road. The day we conclude that saints cannot emerge from the deep, murky waters of moral depravation is the day we can nail Faith to the cross and seal Hope in the Tomb of Despair with no chance that a better society can be resurrected. It is to close the door of

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Non-Violent Drug Offenders Offer Insight on Prisoner Rape

By Andrea Cavanaugh

In the vitriolic debate over U.S. drug policy, politicians often overlook the real casualties of the "War on Drugs" - the many nonviolent drug offenders who suffer savage sexual brutality in our jails and prisons.

Stop Prisoner Rape, the only organization dedicated solely to ending sexual violence against men, women, and youth behind bars, is embarking on a groundbreaking project. *Stories from Inside* will show how U.S. drug policy and three-strikes laws have added to prison overcrowding and fueled a dramatic increase in prisoner rape.

U.S. prison populations have been affected by the War on Drugs more than any other factor - in 2000, roughly 20 percent of state prisoners and a staggering 57 percent of federal inmates were incarcerated on drug charges. In 2003, state prisons were 16 percent above capacity, and federal prisons were overflowing with 40 percent more inmates than capacity.

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Cell

This cell, once bigger
gets smaller every day
I wonder how they do that
taking a little more
each day.

By Derrick Corley