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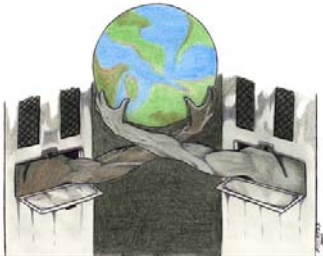
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VOICES FROM DEATH ROW

Reaching Out

Greetings to all of you who are reading my words.



Jermaine Herron has a pending execution date of May 17

May they open up your mind and give you a glimpse of my reality as I share it with you.

On May 17th of this year, an attempt on my life will be made, as it is the date set by a judge for me to be executed. Where I am currently housed at, are other human beings awaiting to have their own fate tested, meaning, dates of executions have been set for them too. Some are before my own, some are after, but let me speak on, in short, of those before mine, and of all the ones that have been carried out while I've been housed over here.

On the date of an execution, two guards come and get the human being who is to be executed and escort that person to the visitation room where he will visit with family and friends until it is time to be transferred to the facility where all executions are carried out here in Texas. When I see that human being leave on their execution date and not return, then later on that evening hear on the radio their execution has been carried out, a feeling of numbness envelops me... That feeling of numbness first grabs me when I see that

human being making his final walk from his cell on his date of execution, then fully sets in once I then hear that he has been executed. After a while that numb feeling will lift from upon me and that's when I come to see how vulnerable a lot of us on Death Row are to Texas' infamous act of so called justice.

This experience of having a date with death has given birth to a lot of thoughts and feelings, which used to be foreign to me, such as the numbness I mentioned early on. I've always been a strong individual with the mind mentality of never giving up on what I believe in and always striving to make a difference. But to see the ones with dates before me leave on their date to be executed and hear later on it was carried out, I feel that a little of my strength to deal with such a situation is being deleted, because that thought in the back of my mind of "my date is coming", will fully surface. When such a thought does surface, it slowly begins to take its toll, leaving me feeling very vulnerable and as if I am trapped with no way out... I once read, "Vulnerable is he whose mind is shackled, for to problems, he's one who's most easily tackled." If I let my mind become shackled from this of which I face, then no longer is there a way for me to prevail against the ones who want to take my life. But, I do confess, it's a very unique challenge to keep hope alive in this position, especially when I see those before me never return and hear they've been killed...

Jermaine Herron

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Society doesn't understand

By Elijah Joubert

To understand a convicted felon, one must really understand poverty, physical and mental abuse, neglect and bad parenting skills, which is what I call household problems, coupled with government problems which are racial profiling, economic affairs, lack of education. A person cannot shift that blame and fault all to one side because both sides are at fault and these are the problems that mold a convicted felon.

I came from a single parent home. I don't blame my mother as a person for the way my life turned out. I knew right from wrong. I had a choice in life but I chose to live the life I was raised around. But I did blame her as a parent for having poor parenting skills. I always thought parents should be more at fault but I was told you can't blame your mama for things she was never taught, like being here to show love and affection, how to be responsible... She smoked weed and drank in front of us, telling us to light cigarettes in the stove, letting drug dealers cut and cook drugs in our house. All this stuff was affecting me mentally. It was appealing to me. I felt like it was cool because my mama and her friends were doing it and I wanted to do it too...

So now, I'm stealing my mama's weed and cigarettes, drinking her beer while she is gone, trying to talk and act like her and her friends... I am also looking up at the drug dealers and hustlers, those are my role models in the hood. You don't see police, firemen, teachers or any other positive role models driving nice cars in the hood. So now, you wanna be like these katz and before you know it, you're stealing money out of mama's purse, granny's purse, your uncle's wallet and anybody else... trying to stay fresh dressed like these Katz... But mama was doing her best to raise us; we never missed a meal or went without light. But she wasn't showing positive parenting skills and she couldn't provide for us around Christmas and Birthday time; we never got gifts. Now, here comes that haunting and teasing from the other kids...

All these issues start weighing on a child mentally but a child doesn't know how to deal with that mentally, so he deals with it physically by stealing, fighting and being real disrespectful... I am

getting into so much trouble now that mama is whipping me every other day. I am already falling towards the streets and turning towards the drug dealers and hustlers in my community. And they embrace youngsters because they can take advantage of us being immature to the street life. But to use, those dudes got love for us to be showing us how to get money out there in the streets. You'll do anything those dudes ask you to do because you don't want to lose their love...

So now, I am holding drug dealers drugs in my mama's house, holding their guns, shooting people just to be cool and a part of them... That life of crime becomes a part of your life and once you become an adult, you turn into a convicted felon.

But society needs to understand that prisons don't work without rehabilitation. Once you release a convicted felon back to the streets without any rehabilitation, no money, no job, what else does he have to do but go back to a life of crime... By then, you're graduating in crime going from petty crimes to major crimes. Before you know it, you either get killed or have to kill somebody. You're either going to spend your life in jail or you're going to pay with your own life. But society doesn't understand that it all starts from government problems and household problems. If the government could create more and better jobs, that would cut down the crime rates, instead of spending billions of taxpayers dollars to build prisons all over America. Take that same money and build a rehabilitation program that works and will cut down crime rate.



"Society needs to understand that prisons don't work without rehabilitation."

Today my words just can't express

By Christopher Coleman

Today my words just can't express -
 All I feel inside and out
 So I let my silence speak to mask my doubt

Today my words just can't express -
 How they told me I would soon be no more
 Dead, deceased, murdered, executed
 Today my words just can't express -
 Anything more so I'll let my pen rest!

Not an option

By Kenneth Morris a.k.a. K9

Must rise above,
 This death trap,
 Although they anticipate,
 Seeing me get strapped,
 With a silver-needle
 Stuck in my arm
 On the gurney!

Not an option!

To just lie back
 And allow this system
 To inflict,
 Their so-called pay back
 By taking my life.

Not an option!

In my mind,
 I know,
 I must take the necessary steps
 To take back what's rightfully
 Mine,
 So many,
 Caught in the same predicament,
 Giving up the ghost,
 Unable to decipher life,
 Or see through the smoke,
 Surrounding their beacon of hope,
 Can hear it,
 In their words,
 See it,
 In their body language
 Feel it,
 In their energy...

Not an option!



Quantum leap,
 Comes to mind,
 I'm aware,
 This is against a race,
 Against time,
 Got to dig deep,
 Into my thoughts,
 Find a productive way
 To succeed.

Victory,
 Within these words
 I write, as this energy takes flight,
 I rise above,
 This death trap,
 Where a whole system
 Anticipates
 Seeing me get strapped
 With a silver needle
 In my arm,
 On a gurney.

But taking my life is
 Not an option...

My Question?

In the beginning was the word
And the word became flesh
Where then does the word go
When flesh returns to rest?

My Guess!
When flesh and bones
Return to rest
The word goes back
And starts afresh

When the screaming stops

Cruelty is what I see
Screams are what I hear
The truth is what I know
And silence is what I fear

I can't get past the screams
The sounds are in my head
But the day the screaming stops
Is the day we'll all be dead.

By Muenda

In my flesh

By James Jackson

First, there was the darkness, deep, black, enveloping, sweetness, barely visible were the principles of hope. It seems so complicated to some people, they just can't see it. I know life is not simple as long as I'm in the flesh. Clenched fists are straining at my chains, eyes flashing defiance, the doors of tomorrow closed or have they ever been opened? You, youngster were not out of the cradle yet when I went astray, tough guy, heart filled with longing for freedom. I only wish I were turned into a ray of sun which would open a hole in these heavy gray clouds around me and I would give light and hope unto you who are put in my path today. If I were a gentle rain, I would wash all you sorrows over board; and a wind, which would bring across the ocean a great deal of joy into all our heart. But yet how many souls slip away each second of each day? Their minds heady with the scent of sweat of their fear. But yet, it seems so complicated to some people to where they just can't see it in their way. I know life is not simple as long as I'm in the flesh.



Embedded

By Ray Jasper

Ever seen a man hate life
To hate to breathe
He hates people because they don't love him
He hates the silence, but hates to talk
Hates the night, hates the day
What is it
That makes a man hate this way
He hates hating the more he hates
Yet he can't escape
It's embedded, hate has its root
You see the tree and hate the fruit
You hate him because he hates you
You hate his sin, you hate his skin
He hates you because you hate him
You hate you can't eradicate the hate
Does he hate because of you?
Do you make him hate?
Or does he make you hate?
You fight fire with flame
But you hate the hate because the hate won't change
You hate the joy of the one you hate
But you don't hate the sorrow
He hates yesterday
And you hate tomorrow
Because no one chose to love
No one chose to love today
Love comes first.

A TASTE OF TEXAS

Photos C.P.



Death Row Pods, Polunsky Unit, Livingston.



Across the road from Polunsky Unit.



Across the street from the Execution Chamber, The Killer Burger, specialty of Huntsville.

To read previous issues, visit:
<http://www.abolition.fr/ecpm/french/article.php? sujet=166>

Don't forget to end us your feedback and comments at:
voicesfromdr@yahoo.com

Patience

By Obie Weathers

Death Row... if you can't sense the enormity in just those two words alone, then there is nothing else to say...

Greetings and a mass of respect, regard and best wishes to you and yours. It is always a treasured pleasure of mine to express thoughts of a young repressed man that's held hostage in a filthy game of political roulette. A game where the life is constantly being sucked out of all those who are forced to play, daily with the ever present fact that we are immured here for the sole purpose of being murdered. Harsh but extremely true.

18-year old and uneducated in the way of the "just-us" (justice) system, charged with capital murder and unaware of the fact that at such a young age you can be placed to sleep like a rabid dog for this infraction.

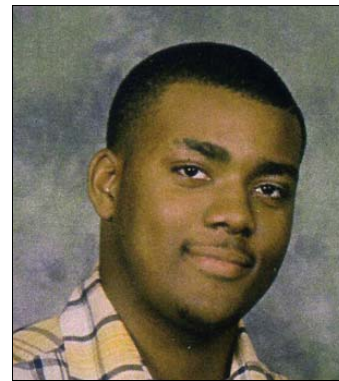
At 19-year old, before entering the courtroom, the downward pull stemming from the vortex of the American just-us system was already felt. At 20-year old... condemned, caged. Constantly I have tried but can't begin to convey truly how much I realize that this entire system is no a deterrent.

The actions of a youth not yet fully aware of

All Death Row inmates at Polunsky Unit are kept in solitary confinement in their individual cell 23 hours a day, except for one hour of recreation, 5 times a week, spent alone in a day room or an outside courtyard. They are not allowed to participate in any work program and thus have no means of sustaining themselves, except through donations. If you would like to make a donation, please address it to:

Trace' Bell
P.O. Box 69336
Killeen, Texas, 76549-0336
USA

how society supposedly conducts itself, are constantly thrust into my face by individuals that lack the faintest amount of patience. "This man" and "further threat" what? Can this actually be true? Though man



continuously accepts the actions of the Un-Savory-Asses, we can't lie to ourselves and even try to believe that it's morally correct to eradicate the lives of fellow humans, such as yourself and I who have gone against the grain of society. Because haven't we all, no matter how large or small, committed an infraction?

Thank those who have had patience with you because if it wasn't for them, there is a strong possibility that you would be here.

I have many questions and I am constantly searching for their answers. What I know is that with steady patience and with movement in a progressive manner, we will get somewhere. Where, however, is the question at hand? I want to elevate from my pit. How about yourself? You may not or you may find yourself in the exact type of pit that I'm in but we are all entrapped in one pit or another. We should not allow ourselves to be rendered to a state or inability to assist with constant patience for those in a deeper pit – from the deepest to the shallowest – until all of our fellow inhabitants are freed from their respective pits. It's a must that we constantly and patiently assist in whatever and however.

You see, in the pits of life, there are only two options: deny the needs of those who are around us or assist... because there are one of two outcomes and both depend on you – life or death – choose one!

"I realize that this entire system is not a deterrent."