

Dear *United Nations*

I'am more than humbled and so encouraged by this opportunity to be apart change in the war against oppression for all human beings in and outside of the penal system. My name is Sarita Miller, I am a fifty three year old African American woman who has been serving a DBI sentence since October of 2004. Before my incarceration the full extent of my existence was cloaked by secret childhood abuses, mental health traumas and every form of addictions that had become my abnormal "norm" as I transitioned into adulthood. I shuffled through out my young life in chaos and disorder, a depiction of worthlessness, abandonment and shattering, years of pain developed into hatred and hatred into rage. My lack of empathy and disregard for another human's life landed me in prison on a DBI sentence for the past nineteen years. Stepping into prison for the first time immediately erased the facade, the deception of my external appearance had been exposed yet it was virtually impossible for me to face myself. Not only had I destroyed my victim's family and loved ones, but my very own family as well. For many years of my incarceration I suffered through a suffocation of damnation, trying my best to overcome the blood guilt and shame with any and everything possible that the prison had to offer, including it's culture. Although I had successfully completed numerous therapic programming relative to my crime and mental health traumas, truthfully it wasn't until I stopped running from myself and fell down upon my knees in full submission to GOD, seeking HIS forgiveness and direction that I honestly with all sincerity began the process of self confrontation. It was then and only then that I was able to take full responsibility for all my wrongs and damage that I had caused throughout my life, especially my CRIME.

Today I don't hide from my past, hoping that no one will discover my former deeds, instead I openly share my labor pains, in my day to day tussle with overcoming the negative residual effects of addiction and childhood physical, sexual violence. However awkward this may sound to people who have never been to prison, but I no longer feel isolated in my struggles as I once felt on the outside before my incarceration. Here in prison I have met many women of all ages and colors as well as backgrounds, but the one thing we all have in common and can relate too is the unhealthy and negative, unproductive senses of low self-worth and low self-esteem woven into our lives by the demons of our abuses. Taking the reign in my life I knew that something needed to be accomplished out side of the box of prison regiments that would hopefully draw much needed attention to the needs and issues of women incarcerated.

My journey in advocacy began in 2018 while at SCI Cambridge Springs, When I organized and founded a peer-support group for women serving DBI sentences. In 2020 I founded and became the editor of DAUGHTERS a thriving and growing magazine published by The Let's Get Free Organization. Our publication is dedicated to the deficiencies and concerns of women incarcerated. As editor of this wonderful publication I get a front row seat into these women personal lives as they eagerly and willingly share their pain with an insatiable need to be heard. AS WE SHARE WE HEAL THAT'S THE PROCESS OF TRUE SISTERHOOD! The agenda of the Department of Corrections is to subliminally keep the mind set of spiritual defeat among the prison population. There are many ways to acheive this objective, the most common way here at SCI Muncy is by the unnecessary taunting by correctional staff, the snickering and cruel jokes of much of the staff (correctional officers medical) can be heard clearly by the women here. Many correctional officers sit around in their offices looking up people's cases, spreading hostility among the masses. A serious lack of care can be found on the daily basis within the medical department. Women are left sometimes to starve. Either they are too sick to feed themselves or as punishment for whatever an officer may deem appropriate they can be denied a meal and go without proper nursing care.



After my time spent working in the prison infirmary, I am still haunted by the pleas of some of the women as they ~~cry~~<sup>cry</sup> out for help from pain and are purposely denied because most of the nursing staff feel that we are all faking our illnesses in our attempts to be medicated, however I know this to not be accurate and far from the truth. The Department of Corrections purposely keep women so medicated and so high off of unnecessary psychotropic medications that far too often women who I have seen <sup>to</sup> ~~had~~<sup>lose</sup> all their facilities, now walk around laughing and talking to themselves, some find it hard to be paroled timely because of their mental health status, find it hard to find a center to take them or just to live outside of prison is a struggle for a lot of women with drug dependence problems when they find everything they need within the prisons. It is a travesty and a disgrace to think that some of these women and men incarcerated become addicted to drugs freely and legally given to them by the department. Psychological torture is repeated in various ways constantly within the prison, women have been found hung in shower stalls, closets and their cells.

Officers and medical staff who are genuinely concerned with the well-being and rehabilitation of prisoners are usually forced with some heavy decisions concerning their jobs. EITHER THEY QUIT AND FIND WORK ELSE WHERE OR JUST SIMPLY GIVE INTO THE HERD MENTALITY OF EXPLOITING AND ABUSING PRISONERS. I've seen a lot of good staff members leave their jobs within the prison because of the inhumane cruelty they have witnessed. However regardless of the opposition that we face as incarcerated citizens, we continue to thrive and grow beyond the process of convalescence. I, myself and countless others serving DBI sentences are revived as we witness and become apart of the rejuvenescenced reinforced by this mighty growing movement to end mass incarceration. It is my duty and calling to give back it is my calling.

Part 3

I fear for future generations, even if I don't make it out of these confinements, I must stay diligent in the fight against mass incarceration waiting to suck in our youths. Because of my many years of battling drug addiction, along with trauma issues I desire to give back to my community by helping and advocating for those in the grips of drug and abuse issues. Do we deserve punishment for our crimes?

Does the victims in our cases and their families deserve justice?

ABSOLUTELY YES TOO BOTH QUESTIONS!

However when is enough, enough?

We aren't the personification of evil, non redeemable. We are men and women who have made grave mistakes, however we have spent countless years through personal choices of our own without the guarantee of release to rehabilitate ourselves with remorse and accountability by helping, sharing and pushing our fellow peers in positive directions along their journeys.

Thank you

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