

[REDACTED]  
Kevin Jones, EC-5243  
[REDACTED]

February 28, 2022

Mr. Jonas Caballero, Legal Advocate  
Abolitionist Law Center  
[REDACTED]

RE: DBI and the United States

Dear Abolitionist Law Center:

I am writing this letter to share my experience since serving this DBI sentence. I fully give my consent to your organization to use this letter, my name, etc., as you may need to effectuate the advocacy you are doing. I also I am available for any follow up if needed.

A summary of my experience is as follows:

As I sit here trying to figure out how to start this letter, the question concerning racism comes first to mind. This comes as I watch the news and hear the frustration, etc., about the atrocities that are occurring with the Uruguay people in China. Amongst other things they are speaking of slave labor, beatings, i.e. a complete disregard for their humanity.

As for the labor, I automatically think of the words from the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime**, shall exist within the [U.S.], or any place subject to their jurisdiction." I guess because it is in the Constitution that makes it okay it to be done in America, but its an atrocity in China, or any jurisdiction outside of the U.S.? I also see how America is appalled at the actions of Vladimir Putin concerning his invasion of Ukraine. Maybe I'm tripping, because to me this invasion looks eerily similar to scenes of America invading African and/or Middle Eastern countries? I see black men killed and beaten on American land by police officers, "concerned non-black citizens" and few and far between do you see a conviction. Yes, recently there has been some, but come on, a conscience mind knows that the reason it even happened is because of systemic, institutionalized racist ideologies that make a people believe that them committing these acts are justified due to their belief in racial superiority. This is also a normality in the PADOC, and

justified due to our status as convicted imprisoned felons. Please don't get me wrong, I am not saying that the issues mentioned above are right, I just note the hypocrisy of what is condemned when others do it, but excepted/respected when it's done in America. "When you point finger at someone else, you have three pointing back at you." To bring this back full circle to the issue at hand, I talk to prisoners of every ethnicity in here, and I note that the majority of white prisoners who have a DBI sentence either have multiple homicides or a case summary reminiscent of a "Lifetime" movie. Those that don't usually have a sentence that affords parole, the contrary for black prisoners.

I recently seen the story of the man convicted in Norway of killing 77 people have the "opportunity" to be considered for parole. He's been in prison about 10 years, and he has the "opportunity to be considered" for release.

I was sentenced 12/13/99 to the same sentence as mob boss John Gotti and cartel boss Juan "El Chapo" Guzman (DBI). Even the notorious Charles Manson was given multiple "opportunities" to be considered for parole, but Kevin Jones is not. A description of how my life has been since I was sentenced to DBI would best be described as total and complete misery, pain, sadness, loneliness, humiliation, frustration, and in a nutshell the term living an "American Horror Story" sums it up. I often wonder why they didn't just give me the death penalty. I'm "walking dead" anyway. The only difference it seems in PA is that I have to deal with the day to day nonsense on the prison compound, and dwell in a cell with someone else. I'd much rather suffer this fate by physically alone. I'm already alone in every other aspect in here.

I sit with a DBI sentence in approx. a 6X9 cage with another adult male existing in conditions that if you were to keep a dog in you would face some type of ramifications. This prison, like most, is nestled in the crevices of rural Pennsylvania with about 97% of white rural employees. These are your members of the neo nazis, proud boys, oath keepers, klu klux klan, i.e. white nationalist groups (if you can, check their social media accounts), and they proudly display their disdain for black people. Furthermore, I've been in 8 different prisons, with two being by cities, but the institutionalization of the mind of these employees remains the same. Different form, maybe masked, maybe even told in a joking manner, but the overall hatred for me is always felt. I have been called a nigger, had monkey references made toward me, etc. I am fed things that I literally would not have given my dog. But somehow I'm still standing.

My family suffers greatly, albeit due to my terrible decisions. At their detriment they have traveled in these mountains to visit me, and had to deal with the same hatred and bigotry I do when they've made the trip. The sadness they feel with me being in here is heartwrenching. I'm my mother's only child, and my grandmother's favorite. They are getting older and the things I



should be there doing for them and with them, I can not. Dealing with their health issues and the ills of everyday life weighs on them heavily, then add me being in here and their pain is tenfold. They've worried themselves in to health ailments, but they are resilient, supportive, and just beautiful people who don't deserve the pain they feel because of my mistakes. Again, I often wonder if I was given the death penalty would it be easier on them. Instead they have a constant reminder of me, and the feeling that they did something wrong.

While in here, I am surrounded by a lot of other prisoners who have developed severe cases of Stockholm Syndrome. Those that try to gain favor with the employees here by being the butt of their jokes, the theoretical punching bag when they've had a bad day, their personal servant, etc. It's like a scene out of a slave movie in here. Prisoners work their fingers to the bone for between .19¢ and .42¢ a hour, seemingly looking for acceptance from those who will never accept them. A book called "The Making of a Slave" by Willie Lynch comes to mind. They can't be as overt, but the tactics have been modified to fit the guise of today's world. For example, not long ago in this prison a prisoner "allegedly" killed another prisoner at the "alleged" direction/permission of a guard. Surprisingly the guard was arrested. I guess things went too far, because prisoners assaulting other prisoners at the behest of guards is a regular occurrence. Oddly enough, the only guard that was charged was the LatinX guard who worked that unit, none of the white guards. So I sit locked in this cell about 18-23 hours a day, depending on how they feel, with that and other things on my mind, while serving a DBI sentence. Moreover, after the handling of COVID by the prison employees, and having contracted the virus multiple times, the thought dying at the purposeful negligence of these people is a constant thought.

Through this journey I have grown a lot. I have come to realize the errors of my ways, and have put forth a valiant effort to stand on integrity, morals, strength and resilience. What keeps me focused is my family and my fiancée. They give me strength when I feel I have no more. Since being imprisoned I have had my hiccups. However, with age, maturity, and a firm desire to be better and help others in my position make better decisions in life, or at the least provide them to mental tools needed to do so.

Since being in prison I have participated in and accomplished the following: GED/High School Diploma; Basic Stained Glass; Advanced Stained Glass; Stained and Leaded Glass, Advance Level; Citizen Group; Stress and Anger Management Group; Anger/Aggressive Behavior Group; 12-Step Facilitation Group; AOD Relapse Prevention Group; AOD Education Group; Business Administration college courses; Criminal Justice "Inside out" course through Temple University; Money Smart; Building Trades vocational program; Conflict Resolution; Motivational Enhancement Therapy; Cognitive Restructuring Group; Therapeutic Community;



Participation in National Crime Victims Week; Smart Recovery; Thinking toward Reentry Group; Parenting Class; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; Hustler Anonymous; Accounting Class; and currently enrolled in Business Occupations Class.

My overall goal is to get home to my family, marry my fiancée, and live a productive life that instills mentoring those with mental health issues, the disease of substance abuse, i.e. those who are traveling down the paths of destruction that will lead them to prison or the grave. I dream of attaining my certifications as a Certified Peer Assistant, Certified Recovery Specialist, and a Forensic Peer Specialist. All needed to effectuate my understanding of issues so many people face. I will use my experience in life, this system, etc., to hopefully steer people away from the ills I once indulged in. I filed for commutation over two years ago. I do have the hope that I am granted this opportunity. However, the process is bleak. As with most things in this system, having your humanity recognized from the people in power is minimum at best. It is rare that black prisoners in this prison even get the institutional support needed to get you to the next level of this process. Then once there, who knows the reasons you'll be told no. Nothing beats a failure but a try, so with that in mind I am trying my best to be granted commutation. Thus, receive a second chance at life.

I firmly believe the laws concerning DBI sentences should be changed. At the bare minimum there should be an opportunity for those serving DBI sentences to be considered for parole. The opportunity to show responsibility, accountability, and growth from the person who he/she were, when they committed a crime, to who they are a set term of years later. Most states, and other countries have a process set forth for these instances after usually 20-25 years. To those who may not realize it, 25 years is a lifetime. I am not negating the pain, agony, nor feelings of the victims families in these instances. Just looking at this situation from the standpoint that most people convicted of homicide do not receive DBI sentences. When you look at the case summaries of most of these cases, you see the same crime, same acts, but a different sentence depending on the race, social economic status, municipality, selection of jurors (I had an all white jury selected from an all white jury pool), etc., of the defendant. The disproportionality of convictions/sentences by race is blatant, but masked as "judicial discretion." However, the numbers don't lie. As stated in multiple case law that laws will be changed to comply with the evolving standards of decency in society, this issue should be at the forefront. Mass incarceration is real, and it has affected the black community gravely. Through commonsense legislation to reflect the ever evolving standards of decency in society this can be done.

In closing, thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts, feelings, and pain with you. I know this letter is all over the place, but that is exactly how DBI makes one feel. Feel free to contact me about anything.

Sincerely,

Kevin Jones