

Tyreem Rivers (#DK2865) – Statement on DBI

March 1, 2022

My name is Tyreem Rivers. I am from Philadelphia Pennsylvania, and while serving the past 26 years of my life incarcerated on a LWOP prison sentence (for a unintentional criminal homicide) that resulted from a senseless purse snatch robbery, I can honestly say that "BEING SENTENCED TO DEATH BY INCARCERATION HAS BEEN A VERY SLOW BUT STEADY THREE DIMENSIONAL MEANS OF PAIN & TORTURE FOR ME". Even after making significant life changes such as developing a new sense of educational growth, discovering self-worth, and becoming an advocate for those wrongfully victimized/impacted by crime, I continue to suffer from the daily (intentional, or unintentional) assaults of my psychological, physical, & spiritual well-being. Rather it be through experiencing the lost of a love one on the outside/not being able to attend their funeral, or may it be through witnessing (another inmate in the prison died a sad death), I am often times reminded that IF I AM INELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE, AND OR NOT COMMUTED BY THE STATE OF PA., I TOO WILL SUFFER THE UNMERCIFUL FATE OF DEATH BY INCARCERATION!

With no parole eligibility for LIFERS in the state of Pa, there's no fair chance for men like me to demonstrate rehabilitative change, or redemption after having served nearly 26years of incarceration. Although I could've remained committed to life of ignorance, substance abuse, & crime (while incarcerated)... I freely decided to choose a different path that entailed developing a more prosocial thought process which inevitably helped to transform me into becoming a better person. Through educational programming, prescriptive programming, vocational training, and a passionate desire to become a better human being... I HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED MY GOAL OF BECOMING A BETTER PERSON!

After having served over two decades in prison, I've finally discovered change, & a very bright sense of purpose. Unfortunately, many of America's Incarcerated are now dying (preventable deaths) without any 2nd chances of redemption.

For me, and thousands of men & women like me (here in Pa) currently serving (Life without Parole), aka ("death by incarceration prison sentences"), the pain and torture only intensifies as each new year passes. Often times this pain is mental, physical, & spiritual. NOTHING HURTS MORE THAN BEING LOCKED UP, & FOREVER SEPARATED FROM YOUR FAMILY & COMMUNITY. While the need for punishment for(crime)is well understood, it's often wondered HOW MUCH PUNISHMENT IS ENOUGH PUNISHMENT? Is serving nearly 26 years of my life in prison, & making significant changes herein not worthy of a 2nd chance consideration? And why is it that so many other criminal offenders get a 2nd chance BUT NOT REHABILITATED INMATES LIKE ME?Is it not sad to see that so many others i.e. drug dealers, robbers, child molesters, rapist, and even (SOME COLD BLOODED KILLERS) (GET A 2ND CHANCE AT PAROLE REVIEW/ELIGIBILITY)BUT NOT INDIVIDUALS LIKE

ME? I admit, I made some very bad choices as an (18 year old teenager);HOWEVER, I AM NOT A BAD PERSON!

And at nearly 45 years of age in this (year of 2022)... I AM NOT THE SAME PERSON I WAS BACK IN 1997

WHEN I WAS SENTENCED TO LWOP! During my sentencing process, my judge noted that he considered me a thief rather than a killer (considering I was sentenced to LIFE)after being convicted of "wrongfully snatching

a elderly woman's purse", and being the cause of her death shortly after she contracted pneumonia, slipped into a comma, and later passed away. All evidence, witnessed testimony suggested NO PHYSICAL ASSAULT AND/OR NO ACTUAL INTENT TO KILL; however I was still punished with the same punishment handed down to some of Americas most nefarious criminals. Prior to my incarceration, I STRUGGLED WITH SUBSTANCE

ABUSE & ADDICTION i.e. (Heroin, Cocaine, Pills etc). My addiction played a huge role in my "flawed criminal thinking & behavior"; whereas, I am proud to announce that I NO LONGER USE DRUGS, COMMIT CRIMES, OR STRUGGLE WITH ADDICTION. I've been clean for over 24 years now!

Not only am I over 24 years in sobriety. I AM NOW AN ADVOCATE OF SOBRIETY FOR OTHERS who currently share the same substance abuse struggles, and flawed criminal thinking ways that I once had back when I was a teenager. I currently work here in the Prison of(SCI Dallas) as an Educational/AOD Peer Facilitator.

I facilitate groups dealing with Rehabilitation, Reentry, and Relapse Prevention. I am also currently attending school at Stratford Career Institute seeking to earn an educational Diploma in Drug & Alcohol Treatment Specialist Studies. Since my incarceration, I've 100% fallen in love with education. And even though the PA DOC, and/or SCI Dallas only allows a small 10% of its Lifers to enroll in its educational,

and vocational programming, I'VE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ALMOST EVERY CLASS OR COURSE MADE AVAILABLE TO Me! Such accomplishments include having earned my GED/High School Diploma, a Diploma in Paralegal Studies, a NCCER Certification in Custodial Maintenance, a Flaggers Certification and countless Certificates in Peer Assistant Training, Money Smart, Stock Marketing, Electronics/Basic Circuit Principles, Business Correspondence, Business English, Business Math, and more. I've also completed all my prescriptive programs i.e. Relapse Prevention, Violence Prevention, and Victims Awareness. Again, I'm currently taking up a correspondence course (and passing all exams) with Stratford Career Institute in order to obtain my Diploma in Drug & Alcohol Specialist Treatment Studies. And again, I currently work/give back as a Educational/ADO Peer Facilitator by facilitating groups, and helping other Inmates who suffer from the same (antisocial thought process) that I too suffered from before coming to prison. Needless to say, I am now a very Pro Social Mentor who's services could definitely be used out there in today's society!. In fact, I (TYREEM RIVERS) WOULD BE DOING OUR SOCIETY A GREAT INJUSTICE IF I DIDN'T HELP OUT & MENTOR OTHERS THE WAY I NOW DO

EACH & EVERY DAY!

For me, I've now (fully) come to learn & understand that rehabilitation is possible. I've also come to learn that just because a person may have committed a bad criminal act(@18 years of age) it doesn't necessarily mean that he's a bad person, and/or that he should be sentenced to die in prison for having wrongfully committed such an act. SCIENTIFIC STUDY NOW SHOWS THAT THE HUMAN MIND ISN'T FULLY DEVELOPED UNTIL ONE REACHES HIS OR HER MID TWENTIES. So if I did in fact do something senseless (like wrongfully snatch a woman's purse)at the age of 18, and wrongfully caused her death... I'M I NOT BEYOND ACCOMPLISHING A NEW SENSE OF CHANGE, GROWTH & REHABILITATION AT THE AGE OF 45?Does science/facts not say I can? I am 1 of over 5000+ in the state of Pa currently serving (LWOP), or a (DBI) prison sentence.MY CASE IS HIGHLY UNUSUAL CONSIDERING IT INVOLVED NO WEAPONS, OR PHYSICAL ASSAULTS.

Unfortunately a crime happened, & I was convicted of that crime. Many people reading this statement may feel that... "I SHOULDN'T BE SERVING A LIFE SENTENCE". And like them, I agree, I'm worthy of a 2nd chance consideration to be readmitted back into society; however, (of the 1100+ currently serving LWOP under our states brutal felony murder law), WE NEED THE LEGISLATORS IN PA, & AROUND THE UNITED STATES TO PLEASE STEP UP AND CHANGE THIS UNFAIR 2ND DEGREE FELONY MURDER LAW. We have Attorney's like Bret Grote & the Abolitionist Law Center advocating for a change of this law, & we have Sean Damon, the Amistad Law Project, & so many other Lawyers, Organizations, & now schools supporting this new call (for justice)in abolishing our states unfair 2nd degree felony murder law. This is truly a testament of their great humanitarian works;

HOWEVER, WE REALLY NEED ALL THE LAW MAKERS & LEGISLATORS TO PLEASE JOIN IN & SUPPORT THE BRAVE HUMANITARIAN CALL TO HELP END CASES OF DBI BY CREATING PAROLE ELIGIBILITY FOR THOSE WORTHY OF A 2NDCHANCE CONSIDERATION. PLEASE HELP "I'M DYING"!

Tyreem Rivers #DK-2865 @SCI Dallas