

Mrs. Cabellero,

I am sending a response to the letter you sent to me.

1. What my life was like before my incarceration?

I came from a dysfunctional family and had no sense of direction. I became addicted to drugs and was in multiple abusive relationships.

2. What has my life been like while incarcerated?

Prison has been a profound impact on my ability to maintain not only my sanity, but also my spirituality and hope. In a system that oppresses women and offers very few outlets for individualism or imagination, I have found much comfort in being able to view and partake in art, poetry, song and performances with the women I share these walls with. I am a Peer Assistant in a Therapeutic community here at DCI Cambridge Springs and have had the pleasure of creating artwork myself as well as watching these women perform song, dance and paint in such a way that helps me appreciate and see all the talent I am surrounded with. Even though I am in prison, my mind, my heart, and spirit can still be free.

Since my incarceration I have obtained my D. E. D., an Associates degree in Business, certified as a Braille Transcriber, and completed multiple groups and am involved

in organizations to help better myself. I recognize and live by making healthy decisions and choices. I make conscience decisions every day to be a better person to those around me. I have maintained above average housing unit reports as well as work reports. I have been misconduct free for 22 years and lived on the honor unit for over 13 years. I attend Protestant church every Sunday and bible study twice a week. I have learned how to forgive myself for all the wrongs I have done to others and also to those who have hurt me.

3. What are my hopes and goals for when I am released or get commutation?

I would follow the policy of the commutation / parole board and during this time I will work with supportive agencies to assist me in obtaining employment. When I'm not working I welcome the opportunity to serve the community in a volunteer capacity such as recovery groups, food parties, churches, soup kitchens etc. I have to get acclimated back into society, but I would love to work with the youth to share my experience to hopefully steer them away from getting caught up in the justice system. I would like to spend some quality time with my family. I also will be attending NA/AA groups and one on one counseling to help me cope with re-entering back into society after being

incarcerated for over three decades. I just want to live a simple life.

4. Should laws that allow DDJ sentenced be changed, why and how?

Yes. I believe everyone deserves a second chance depending on the nature of the crime. The co-conspirator sometimes gets more time than the person who actually committed the crime. Everyone's situation is different. Life sentences should have it to where they're eligible for parole or a set date. For example: after serving 25 years we would be eligible for parole. In the majority of other states life doesn't mean life. Only the commonwealth states require life means life. People do change as they grow up in the system and are remorseful for the crimes they have committed. I believe that the government should take a closer look at cases and stop looking at us as a number and see us as human beings that made some horrible decisions.

I would love to have the opportunity to go in front of the parole board and let them <sup>make</sup> the decision on if I'm ready to be placed back into society instead of waiting on the long process of commutation that takes at least four years before they decide if you get a merit review or not.

I hope I was of some help on answering your questions.  
I look forward to hearing from you again. Take care  
and God bless.

In Solidarity,

Marsha Scaggs