

Mr. Nathaniel J. Criss T.42186



Re: Inhumane DBI Sentencing

4.3.22

Dear Honorable Members of the United Nations,

My name is Nathaniel Josiah Criss. Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts and experiences, and of those who share the likeness of my situation. Before you hear my thoughts and experiences, I ask that we all please take the time to acknowledge the life of the 18 year old young man, I along with three others murdered, Mr. Reed Quesenberry. To Mr. Quesenberry and his family I devote a life of service towards humanity. I will never lose sight of my actions, so that I'm in a space of humility and empathy. Furthermore, I humbly ask that it be understood I am not a victim in this conversation, and that we recognize the humanitarian need to end Death By Incarceration sentencing.

In 1997, I was also 18 years old when I murdered Mr. Quesenberry. The resulting sentence was life without the possibility of parole (lwop). Any hope I did have in life at that point evaporated. My beliefs internally were that I was irredeemable, worthless, and the worst of the worst. I wanted to die. Contemplating suicide, all I could hope for was death by cop. At the age of 18, I read a quote by the then Governor of California Gray Davis: "With a sentence of 15-to-life or better the only way you are leaving prison is through a pine box." In my eyes there was nothing left worth living for. Not even me. I had no hope, only death.

My father became depressed after my incarceration and

sentencing. My actions and the resulting sentence, took years off his life. I did not only bring my father great shame, but also an immense amount of pain. His spirit, or nature, died long before he physically did in 2008. Together, during that time, we both lost hope. He acquired a heart condition, so when he would come see me, he had to bring his "nitro pills". His skin tone would begin to pale into a grayish hue, as my mother would run to get his pills outside of visiting at the front desk.

Before my incarceration my mother believed in the criminal justice system. Today she does not trust it. This is because my mother had to dissociate herself from the thought of me. Once at a visit in 2006, she sat across a table and told me: "Do you know when I think about you? When I have to write you, come see you, or send you money or packages. Other than that it's too painful to think about you." To this day any endeavors I have of trying to gain freedom, I hesitate to explain as it is always a jolt to her heart. She cannot imagine her son spending the vast majority of his life in prison to die.

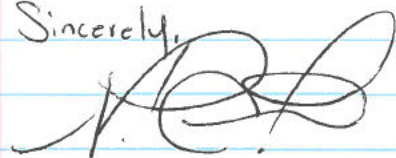
Death By Incarceration sentencing is not a misnomer. This term is currently applicable. I personally know people who are waiting to die as they have no hope and want this period of their life to end. I use to identify with them in my earlier years of incarceration. The prison system has slowly changed for those with the chance to go home, due to bold and innovative leadership of both Governor Brown and Governor Newsom. As the system changed so did I. In 2009 I received my G.E.D.; in 2017 I received two A.A. degrees; in 2018 I received a degree as an Alcohol & Drug Specialist; in 2020 I was certified with the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCCAP); in 2021 I was certified with the California Association for DUI Treatment Programs (CADTP). I am currently six units away from an A.A. in psychology with a 3.5 GPA. Upon parole I intend on acquiring a B.A. in psychology as my goal is to become a director of a treatment center. Some of this was achieved without

any hope, and some was achieved from a reconstructed hope filled vision. I am living with my profession in prison at the age of 43. With my work experience and life experience, I undoubtedly would be an asset to my community, just as I am now.

The changing of DBI sentencing is imperative due to the innate human ability to change. Some 25 years ago when I committed my crime against the Quesenberry family, I was not aware that I was part of humanity, nor did I recognize that this horrendous crime was against humanity. Today, I know that I cannot stitch up the hole in the blanket of humanity that I and three others created with our actions. Today, I now see my responsibility within this specific commonality we all share — Humanity. This is ours to reinforce, cherish, and to teach to future generations. There is an air of collaboration within humanity that is like no other species on earth. That is due to the level of empathy that we are able to give in working together. It is these matters of the heart that I humbly place before you today. I am proof that through education, self-help, and spirituality that change can happen even for those who are waiting to die in prison. Therefore, there is a lack of humanity in Death By Incarceration sentencing.

In closing, Death By Incarceration sentencing needs to be changed because people are inclined to change when environmental factors are indicative of such change; and because humanity expresses all people have worth. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter. I humbly and respectfully submit this missive.

Sincerely,



Nathaniel J. Criss, NCAC-A, SUDCC