

# Messages from the Mound



In 2007, I began my prison ministry where I facilitated my Relationship First Aid spiritual based personal development classes at Mound Correctional Facility in Detroit. After Mound closed in 2012, I continued to communicate with the inmates through newsletters, birthday cards and attending/speaking at events at various facilities. It is suspected that the facility got its name because of the many ancient mounds

that were found all over Detroit, and I believe the most concentrated and/largest ones were along what is now known as Mound Rd.

"Messages from the Mound" is named after the newsletters that I send out to the inmates since that is where we all initially met. Because the classes that I was teaching them focused on spiritual elevation allowing the negativity within them to die, thus ultimately elevating their consciousness, I thought it an appropriate name because a "mound" is defined as: an "elevation" formed of earth overlying ruins, a grave etc., a heap or raised mass. The following articles are from men that are currently incarcerated or released and this serves as an opportunity for the voiceless to have a voice. If you have a loved one that is currently incarcerated and would like for me to send them newsletters, please forward their contact information with a MDOC number to: Relationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com or contact me at: Relationship First Aid, Attn: Ma'at Seba, 15224 W. 7 Mile Rd., Detroit, MI. 48235. To help defray the costs of printing, postage, supplies, etc., donations can be sent to the address below, or, Cashapp: \$Moundministry or Paypal either: Ma'at Seba or Relationship First Aid

## A day in the life in prison

By Michael Chappell  
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

The following are the contents from a letter that were asked to me by a friend and I responded as honestly as I could and it is my hope that no one will feel offended. Q: Tell me about your life and your days in prison?

A: A day in life that includes "Being" in prison can be difficult for most prisoners to handle and that's because the energy that exists in prison is meant to test ones physically, mentally, spiritually, and psychologically. For most to experience prison in its totality for the purposes of "Rehabilitation" (So They Say) is met with SO many distractions that the lesson that one is supposed to obtain is now lost and replaced with childish behavior and psychological war-games. For the prisoners who are considered vets, we do our best to make a heaven out of words by creating a world where LOVE is the only inhabitant. S---!!! It's too late in life for me to listen to doubt. My tears have been transformed to faith and as odd as this may appear most men and women who are in prison or just in life in general have lost faith in "The Meaning Of Life" and their place in it.

Mental illness is very much real and for me to witness the personal battles that the men have to endure is painful for me as well, because I know that behind the medical term that diagnoses this energy as one being Bipolar or Schizophrenia etc., that there is an even deeper battle that has and continues to produce Pain, Hurt and Trauma within those who are suffering. At times I feel like I am a psychologist and it's not just with fellow prisoners but the same goes to staff as well but that's another story.

Being mentally strong is all that I know, but there are times when I am vulnerable and I give in to this energy and I may shed a tear or two when I am expressing my gratitude to the Infinite Spirit (God) for keep-

ing me..... or, when I am feeling remorseful about my actions that



led me to prison. My days start off by being mentally tough and ending with the same. Everything else is a byproduct of the mind to ward off negative and dangerous distractions such as fights (Prison knife a.k.a a shank is optional), homosexuality, bad behavior, conflicts with correctional officers or anything that would be detrimental to your positive direction in life. My work assignment, exercising (weight room) mentoring the troubled youth, furthering my education (Becoming a Chef) is all for the betterment of me and the heaven that I am creating so I can contribute to world in a meaningful way. If not, then I too will be just another prison fixture who is existing in a world that is fixated on living past experiences and moments that were already lived trying to re-live the past by rearranging events, people or circumstances that will justify ones "Reasoning", "Logic" for Being..... or maybe it's just a "Flawed Understanding" for what was meant to be.....

Overall I am blessed to see the type of man that I Am and I AM equally blessed to see the man that I AM Becoming.

I appreciate your question because no one really asks prisoners this question and really mean it. Spiritually, I AM evolving into heights of feeling my oneness with the Infinite Spirit (God), I AM..... In closing I would like to ask you to protect your spirit and guard your thoughts and have Faith in knowing that YOU ARE..

Peace. (Elevate & Evolve)

## Black Lives Matter still



By Bobby Bostic  
Jefferson City, Missouri

Black lives matter still

They always have and they always will

Who is it that has the authority to determine who's lives matter and whose don't  
In other words you want us to give up but I promise you we won't

Climate change polluting the air with all this injustice therefore like Eric  
Garner and George Floyd we can't breathe

All these world wars going on taking our sons and daughters so we hold vigils to grieve  
You tear gas us but we just wipe away the tears with our sleeve  
Freedom of assembly yet our First Amendment rights get violated with no reprieve

They wonder why when we protest sometimes we get loud and fuss  
At first they put us at the back but now they try to throw us under the bus  
Our generation was written off because we act wild and cuss  
Now we in the streets marching against racism, them against us

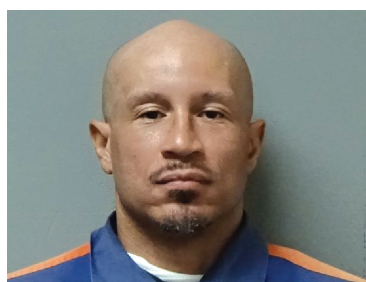
Black and white people united as one  
On strike against the corporations demanding a livable wage until we have won  
Next year we will recall the politicians as we come out to vote  
Like Martin Luther King Jr. said we can no longer cash your empty promissorynote

That great man also said to judge people by the content of their character  
and not the color of their skin  
No matter your race or nationality as humans we are all the next of kin  
Say that we are wrong and we say you aint right  
Michael Brown fell when Ferguson gave the call now we all stand up to fight

Hand in hand we marched across that bridge although you Bloody our Sunday  
We just pick up our fallen soldiers and elect John Lewis to Congress cause  
we shall overcome some day  
Hands up don't shoot as you watch our blood splatter  
United we stand but divided we fall because black lives matter

## The price of justice

By Raymond L. Carr Jr.  
SPECIAL TO THE SUN



It is said, 'If you can't do the time, then you shouldn't do the crime.' When someone is convicted of a crime, they must pay a

debt to society. But what if, they didn't do the crime, who pays that debt?

Recently, in the news there has been several cases where men and women are being discovered to be innocent after paying with years of their lives. With each innocent person, tax payers pay a heavy debt of roughly \$36,106 a year to incarcerate them, to only turn around and have to pay \$50,000 each year to the innocent person for being wrongful convicted which adds up to millions of wasted taxpayers dollars, while the real offender is left free in society.

In many of these cases, wrongful convictions are the fruit of misconduct, neglect, and willfulness acts of wrongdoing by those who took an oath to serve, protect and keep the law.

But what happens when the trust of society is breached and integrity is lost? I will tell you what happens, innocent people go to prison, some for Life.

The Detroit Crime Lab, was shut down after an audit found that 10% of its firearms cases had "significant errors". Officer David Pauch, was fired for his misconduct on the job. But, how many people were convicted because of those errors? A better question, how many cases that fell within that 10% error were corrected?

In 2003, the Federal Government indicted several Detroit police officers, for planting evi-

dence, filling false reports and lying under oath to justify illegal arrests.

There is a culture in our criminal justice system where, fabricating evidence, threatening and coercing witnesses to lie and commit perjury, to obtain convictions by any means has become the norm. And when convicted people find evidence of wrongdoing and present the error to the courts for correction, many prosecutors first step is to fight the facts or file an appeal or it is dismissed as a harmless error. I don't know how an error can be harmless, when people are in prison because of the error.

Before a person is convicted in some cases they have the burden of overcoming the 'unchallengeable narrative' of law enforcement and the weight of the prosecutor's office in front of jury of their peers. However, many are unable to overcome that burden and are left at the mercy of the system.

After an innocent person is convicted and sent to prison, they still have the burden of proving their innocence. But now, they have to do it as a 'convicted felon' and with all of the negative stigma that comes with being a 'felon'.

It is more than difficult for those in search of justice to redeem their life, when a system shields the truth, so it can say they got it right the first time.

Even, with the newly established 'Conviction Integrity Unit', in Wayne County that's lead by Valerie

Newman, which has had some success in getting wrongful convictions overturned. However, several breaches in the integrity of many convictions will go uncorrected, due to limited staff, resources, and funding.

The Price of Justice, has become a vicious cycle of loss where no one actually wins. Those who are wrongly accused, lose their freedom, family, friends, and community support.

As long as there isn't any repercussions and consequences, for misrepresenting the truth and violating people's rights, 'The Price of Justice' will continue to be paid by the tax dollars of citizens and innocent lives.

