

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

Just a little mercy

By Raymond L. Carr Jr.



I just watched the movie "Just Mercy". I feel encouraged and inspired. I also feel saddened, because I know how it feels to fight for your life to only be told "No" when you should be getting relief from an unjust conviction.

I don't know what it's like to be on Death Row, however, being sentenced to life without the possibility for parole is equivalent to being on Death Row. Instead of getting a date to die, they are waiting for me to die, death by incarceration.

Over the years, I can't help but to think about all the cases I read about or witness firsthand, of how misconduct took place to obtain convictions and how people didn't receive a fair trial.

I think about the Central Park Five (aka Exonerated Five) and all of those who are actual innocent. In the movie it was said, "It is better to be rich and guilty, than to be poor and innocent."

I thought about a case I read about in 2019, "Man sentenced in death of girlfriend in casino hotel. A 34-year-old suburban Detroit man has been ordered to serve between 12 and 20 years in prison in connection with the death of his 27 year-old girlfriend whose body was found in a casino hotel room."

Daniel Michalak, of St. Clair Shores, was sentenced Wednesday in Wayne County Circuit Court in Detroit. He received the 12 to 20 year sentence for assault with in-

tent to murder and 5 to 10 for assault with intent to maim. The sentences will be served concurrently. A charge of assault with intent to do great bodily harm was dismissed.

Tia Vellucci's body was found May 29 at the MGM Grand Detroit. Vellucci, of Davison, suffered multiple stab wounds. Her nose also was bitten." (Source: Detroit Free Press) I can only surmise that Daniel Michalak had the financial wealth from the city he is from (St. Clair Shores), but how do you explain the charge of assault with intent to murder, when his girlfriend is dead? I think money played a role somewhere in the process.

I think about how I sat in a holding cell with the Highland Park serial killer, who killed 13 women and how I received the same punishment (sentence) as he did.

I think about how prosecutors fight to re-sentence Juvenile Lifers who were teenagers at time of the crime to Life again and make deals with adults for similar offenses to a term of years.

I think about how convictions that relied on tainted evidence are ignored, when it is presented to the courts and allowed to stand, because some feel we had our day in court.

I think about how the integrity in our justice system has been breached and life decisions are made not on the basis of law, but because it can.

I think about how often people say, "The Justice System is broken" and how little is done to repair it.

As I think about the good, the bad, and the ugly of the justice system, all I can think about is, Just a Little Mercy.

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Some of the world's greatest minds are in prison

By Bobby Bostic
Jefferson City, Missouri



Prison is a place where you can find scholars of every kind. The system can lock up a person's body but they can't incarcerate our minds. Right here, we have some of the world's greatest minds. We have scientists, mathematicians, and preachers. In fact, many of you have excelled in the most difficult

of all politics, prison politics. These politics can get deadly and messy. But people in here network to make things happen on scales great and small. We must continue to apply ourselves and not settle for a label that society has placed upon us.

The mind can accomplish what it will. It is stronger than concrete, razor wire and steel. The mind is an architect that constructs the plans that build the structures that house the institutions that change the world.

Throughout history, it has been right here in these prisons where scholars have used their minds to change the world. For documented evidence of this, we have the example of Nelson Mandela and how his words from his jail cell shook the world. It has been from these dungeons that some of the greatest words ever written have originated. These works came from the ink of a scholar's pen.

Look at the famous letter that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote from the Birmingham jail cell that changed the course of the Civil Rights Movement and helped change the course of Kennedy's presidency. Angela Davis was interviewed in a California jail, inspiring a generation of Americans who wanted freedom for their communities. Paul wrote some of the New Testament of the Bible from a jail cell.

I declare today that some of the world's greatest minds are in prison. We can do what we

put our minds to, and even these walls can't stop us. We can train ourselves to be legal scholars in order to obtain our freedom. We can get laws changed to benefit us. We can change this prison culture. All we have to do is put our minds and energy into it. Through self-rehabilitation, we can transform ourselves. I am not a model prisoner because prison does not model me. Still, I am determined to be the best that I can be.

We have excellent examples of prisoners who have come before us. Jon Marc Taylor got his Doctorate degree while in prison. Just think of the fortitude that it took to get a doctorate degree in a violent chaotic place such as prison. Imagine the hurdles that he had to overcome with the prison administration to get this done. Reflect on the obstacles that petty guards and small-minded inmates put in his way along the course that he was traveling on. Picture the tens-of thousands of dollars that he had to pay for such a degree. Ponder a minute on the violence and ignorance that he was surrounded by in different prisons while he pursued his degree and studied for his lessons with all the noise of these jails. The challenges that he faced would have been insurmountable for some people. Yet in his own right he was a prison scholar. His efforts and accomplishments prove that some of the world's greatest minds are in prison.

We must not allow our talents to go to waste. We have to organize our creative energy with haste. The library is full of hundreds of books that we must start reading. Right there in the library, we can train ourselves to be scholars. We are not meant to be crooks. We are sitting in prison because we were not great criminals. But we are psychologists, accountants, and professionals of all kinds. The world has locked up some of its greatest minds. Once we tap into our own greatness, we can free ourselves from prison.

The smartest people do some of the dumbest things. That's how so many great minds end up in these prison wings. We came into prison as the problem, but now we can be the solution and help to heal the world. We have to succeed against the odds and claim the greatness that each of us possess. It is from the lowest depths that greatest of people has risen. Some of the world's greatest minds are in prison.

A Mother's Love



By Jawan Hayes #426663
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

The world is in a crisis amidst the COVID-19. I am thinking of and holding close to my heart all those who are suffering in any way at the hands of this invisible object. I myself has been suffering, but I smile each day when I hear my mom's voice and I thankful that she gave me life. We all owe this to our MOTHERS.

So I would like to say Happy Mother's Day to all Mothers far, near and wide. Thanks for teaching us to strive to be the best and reach for our dreams. Thanks for sticking with us through the good times and the bad times. Thanks for loving us when we didn't love ourselves. Thanks for understanding when nobody else understood. Thanks for being patient and waiting on us when others were so quick to leave. Just because

some of us made bad decisions during this journey of life, if you have questions as to whether you are a good mother, the answer is you are the BEST MOTHER and just look at what you have helped us accomplish. There is no greater love than this, the love that penetrates to the center of your heart and soul. This love will find a way to you no matter where you are. This love is beautiful. This love stands through the good and bad times. This love gave us life. This love will go on without end. This love is what it is and it has found its way back to you. There is no greater love than a Mother's Love. May this day bring all mother happiness, smiles and joy and a special phone call from their children just to say Mom you are the best. HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY.

A voice for everyone
Detroit Native Sun
celebrating 15 years
October 2020