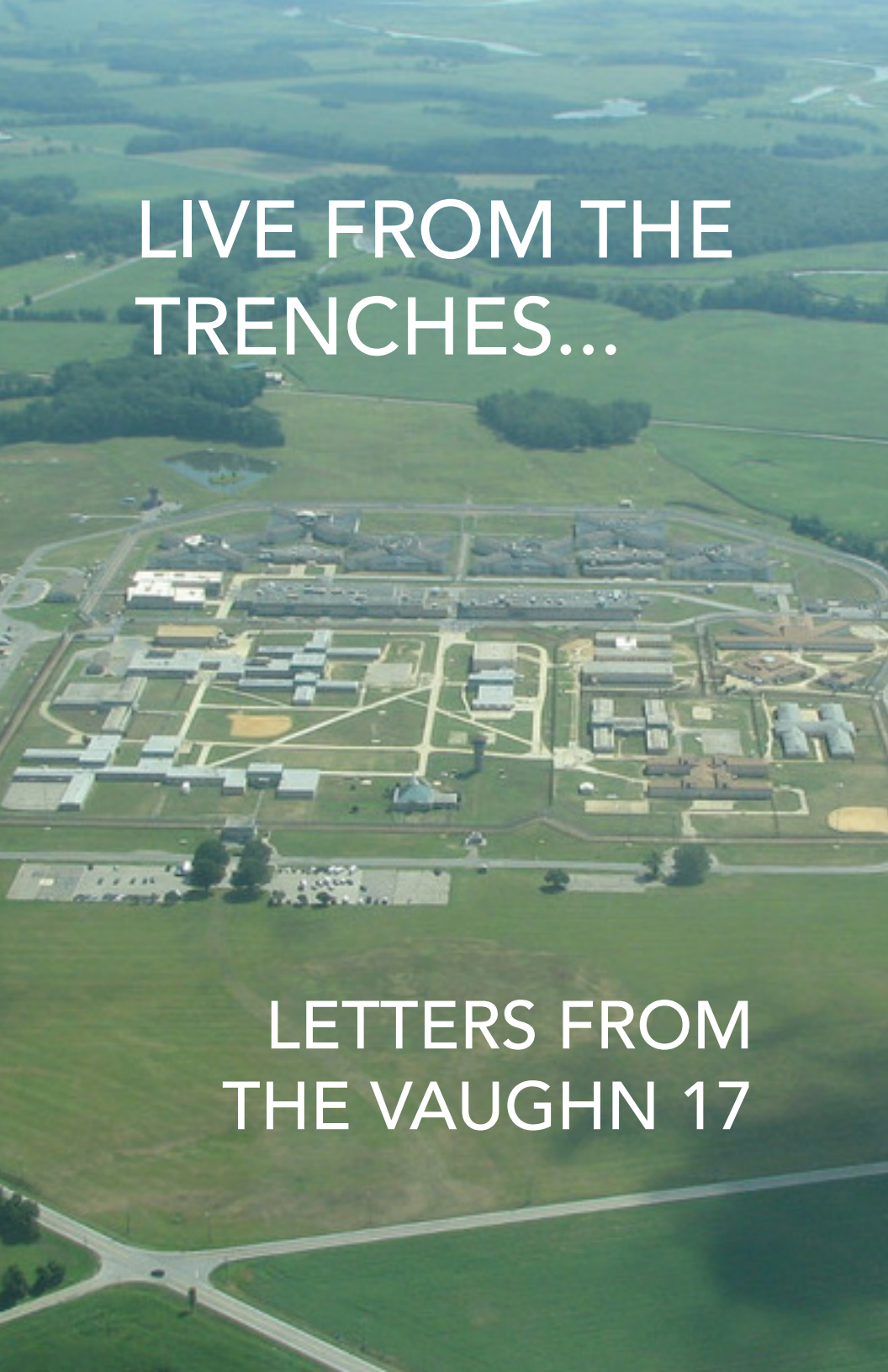
LIVE FROM THE TRENCHES...
LETTERS FROM THE VAUGHN 17

"Vaughn and Building Support for Prison Rebels" was taken from https://itsgoingdown.org/bloc-party-vaughn-building-support-for-prison-rebels/

"Interview with Former Vaughn Prisoner Thomas Gordon" was taken from https://itsgoingdown.org/bloc-party-interview-for-mer-vaughn-prisoner-thomas-gordon/

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LIVE FROM THE TRENCHES:

LETTERS FROM THE VAUGHN 17

Between the months of January and June of 2018, a small group of friends in Chicago reached out to the 17 individuals charged with involvement in the February 2017 uprising at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Delaware. This zine is an attempt to share the thoughts and experiences of these comrades as they shared them in their letters. We asked for and were generously given their consent. We hope that reprinting them for others to read will deepen our connections with these individuals and help to multiply our acts of solidarity and support. Contact information for the Vaughn 17 may be found throughout and at the end of the zine.

TO THE VAUGHN 17: Stay strong, stay united. This world is built to divide, segment, and isolate. It's a world built on the politics of fear. With you, we say FUCK THAT. You are in our hearts and our hearts are with you.

A NOTE ON FACES: Mugshots are intended to be humiliating, but that's just the surface of their political function. They present the most expressive parts of our bodies–our faces–in the most degrading way possible. They capture us in a moment of capture, in which we are most exposed to the violence of the state, so as to record and expose this capture to the world outside, which needs prisons to keep its shit together. Mugshots demand their viewers to see us as the state sees us, that is, as *disposable*. Thus, it is with some hesitation that we have included mugshots–state propaganda in themselves–here. For despite the style that state photography reserves for its enemies, these are still faces. If we had more time we would have loved to have photos of the Vaughn 17 that were taken by friends or family. We ask that you look into these faces *politically*. Refuse to look at them either as guilty criminals or as passive victims–refuse to look at them like *prey*.

SNITCH DISCLAIMER: While there are 18 individuals charged with some form of connection to the uprising, one individual–"Royal Diamond Downs"–has collaborated with the authorities by giving statements against other prisoners. As such, in this zine, we refer only to the Vaughn 17. May Royal Downs and all snitches get what they deserve…

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Vaughn and Building Support for Prison Rebels

itsgoingdown.org

On February 1st, 2017, inmates in the C-building at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC) in Delaware took control of their unit and held staff hostage in an uprising that lasted over 18 hours. They called the media, released a list of demands, and explained their actions as motivated by their conditions of confinement as well as the election of Donald Trump as President. One prison guard, Steven Floyd, was killed by inmates during the uprising.

On February 1st, prisoners connected their daily struggles for humanity and survival to the broader political context we entered collectively as a nation. Much in the same way that hundreds of people took to the streets for deeply personal reasons on January 20th, using the inauguration of Trump as a way to highlight all those myriad reasons for resistance, the prisoners at Vaughn used the president and his policies as a means to highlight their own deeply personal struggles for liberation.

The uprising came after numerous nonviolent protests by prisoners had failed to lead to the prison addressing their grievances. In the aftermath of the uprising, corrections officers alleged that prisoners had been staging inmate-on-inmate fights in the prison yard to find vulnerabilities in the guards' emergency response. On the day of the uprising, prisoners covered their faces with masks and rushed the two officers letting them back in from the prison yard—a key moment of vulnerability when the prisoner-to-guard ratio is at its lowest.

After more than eight months, on October 17th, an indictment was handed down by the Delaware Department of Justice that charged sixteen prisoners with murder charges for the death of a correctional officer. Those sixteen along with two other prisoners are also looking at counts of kidnapping, conspiracy and rioting.

As of this writing, six of these prisoners have pled "not guilty" and demanded jury trials. Of these six, five are charged with first degree murder. The court has also determined that the prisoners cannot be granted public defenders due to "conflicts of interest." Instead they will be appointed private attorneys.

Death Penalty in Deleware

With the murder of the corrections officer at Vaughn during the uprising in February, there has been renewed support for the reinstatement of the death penalty in the State of Delaware, which had been ruled unconstitutional in August of 2016. The repeal of the death penalty was strongly opposed by the union representatives of both the police and corrections officers, who are currently using the death during the Vaughn uprising along with the death of a police officer in April 2017 as a cry for a return to capital punishment in the state:

"There are some truly evil people who commit heinous crimes against innocent citizens in this state," said Lt. Thomas Brackin, president of the Delaware State Troopers Association… You do need to have the ultimate punishment for the ultimate crime."

We're reminded of the truly evil Delaware police officers who shot and killed Jeremy "Bam Bam" McDole, who was a wheelchair bound Black man murdered in 2015. The same police who are calling for "the ultimate punishment for the ultimate crime" all walked away without any indictments related to McDole's death.

As recently as November 9th, 2017, prosecutors in Delaware have stated in court documents that they intend to seek the death penalty in this case if it is indeed reinstated. While the final state senate vote has yet to occur on this matter, it is important to keep a keen eye on this as it develops. It is also worth noting the way that the prison, police and prosecutors are collaborating to use what happened at Vaughn as a means of bringing a more totalitarian vision of so-called law and order to the state. Where there is resistance, like what we saw from within the walls at Vaughn, we can naturally expect repression to follow. In this case, repression could have deadly consequences.

Why We Support Prison Rebels

Taken as a whole, prisoners across the U.S. right now are actively engaging in some of the most passionate, consistent and effective rebellion in the country. Month after month we read news of prisoners getting together to fight guards, attack the physical infrastructure that confines them, attempt escape, issue demands and make threats to back them up. They are actively linking up with each other and reaching out to those on the outside in search of accomplices. This is happening right now and it will continue to happen. The only question is whether we will be a part of it.

Adding to this storm are the inevitable forces of reaction that are working hard to push society back toward more overtly brutal forms of punishment. Jeff Sessions' "law and order" strategy as well as those seeking to reinstate the death penalty in Delaware are only contributing to the chaos of the current moment.

The incarceration system is being further destabilized by pandemic levels of overcrowding and understaffing in U.S. jails, prisons and detention centers. As of early November, the Delaware DOC "confirmed that the agency currently has 265 vacant correctional officer positions. [Correctional Officers Association of Delaware President] Klopp believes the real number to be much higher." These conditions continue to exist ten months after one of the largest prison uprisings in the last few years, despite Delaware elected officials desperately scrambling to address these problems. Unfortunately for them, the only solution to this crisis is to convince the public to pump even more money into prison budgets, which they are increasingly reluctant to do.

None of this means that the world is about to get better. What it may mean, though, is that one system of control is weakening and those in power are being forced to consider how to replace it (their intention, likely, being to replace it with something more effectively repressive). But this moment of transition may be an opening in which a hard push could topple the already stumbling giant.

As the U.S. prison system finds itself on unsure footing, prisoners are doing an admirable job of shaking the ground it stands on.

This is the key element that could create the "Doomsday Scenario," Ward Churchill suggests. As David Fathi, Director of the National ACLU Prison Project, aptly pointed out during a press conference on the Vaughn uprising, "Prisons function with the consent of the prisoners. Staff will always be greatly outnumbered by prisoners." Increasingly, prisoners across the country are withdrawing that consent. If these currents continue to deepen, the prison system in the U.S. could cease functioning.

Published November 21st, 2017

Interview with Former Vaughn Prisoner Thomas Gordon (Excerpt)

itsgoingdown.org

IGD: It's great to hear your perspective in general and your personal connection with these guys. If you could also tell us overall how they're doing with the charges, or ways that you are seeing them be supported by friends and comrades inside and outside of the prison.

TG: Yeah, as far as these guys go they get enough support, granted I always think that they should have more support, especially more support from other activists or other people associated with anything pertaining to the anti-prison movement–anyone associated with any of these movements, such as the workers' party, people like that should be in contact with these guys, just to ensure that they're getting a fair trial, that they're getting treated fairly. I think it takes a lot for people to care, a lot of people don't want to be associated with everything that went on, but at the end of the day when you look at it and boil it down to the facts as assumed by the media, these are people that people are associating with a crime against a correctional officer who has a history of abuse within the facility, who has a history of mistreating prisoners within a facility, who has a history of just going out of his way to do everything in his power to make hard time harder. This is a guy that I personally know. I know Sargent floyd personally. So I can speak on that. But these are people who are in this building with this guy [and he] pretty much got, to be honest, what everyone knew was coming. This guy ended up getting what he had coming for a long time for a lot of mistreatment that he did to people while they were in the SHU. But the counselor who was also in the facility at the time and who was also allegedly, according to the media, one of the hostages, was never touched. And I think that speaks volumes. She was never touched, like this is a woman, first and foremost whose in a prison with men, and men who have nothing to lose, men who have just, you know, took over a building, and she was never touched. She was never touched, not raped, not punched, not assaulted in any manner whatsoever. These guys, yeah they're good. As of right now the prison does what they can do to try to oppress these individuals. You know they separated everybody. They moved

several of them to one jail in delaware which is Howard R Young Correctional Institution, and then they moved the other half of the individuals to Georgetown, which is Sussex Correctional Institution. They put them on their own tiers and stuff of this nature. They tried to just, really restrict who they could converse with, you know, tighten restrictions on their mail, phone call privileges, stuff of this nature. But other than that I think they're doing fine.

IGD: Moving on though we are always really interested, those of us paying attention to the resistance happening within prisons, we're always really interest in the conditions that lead to prison uprisings. And the independent review of security issues at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center which was commissioned by the governor of Delaware, highlighted the mismanagement of the prison and the way those factors contributed to the uprising. You Thomas, did a good job in your open letter of highlighting those factors for people. These failures on the part of the prison administrators are getting a lot of play in the media that's been focused on the uprising of last February, but prison uprisings are not only the result of prison conditions. They are also created by the bravery, the political and social consciousness of prisoners, cooperation, and the strategic planning of prisoners involved. Can you tell us about the action and initiative on the part of prisoners themselves that led to this uprising?

TG: First and foremost I would like to say that what led to the incident that happened in Vaughn was no different than what led to the incident that happened at Attica. Which was no different than what happened in any situation that led to a prison uprising in any state in america. It's simply just when you treat human beings like animals for so long and sometimes they start off being okay with that, like they allow that to take place, and then, slowly, they begin to wake up and just realize that they're not animals. And that they're not anything less than a human being. And they start asking, they start making requests for specific things that should be right. It's foolish to have to ask you, to beg you to not treat them like shit. Somebody shouldn't have to ask you and shouldn't have to beg you not to tamper with their food, like somebody shouldn't have to ask you or shouldn't have to beg you to not assault them while they're in cuffs, in shackles. Somebody shouldn't have to ask you to feed them, because you just simply feel like not feeding them today.

When people start to realize that they're actually human beings and not animals, they begin to act like human beings and a part of that is you start asking questions and then turning them into demands. You demand to be a human being. You have to be able to look someone in the face and say this is what I am and I expect to be treated as nothing less than this, and you gotta stand firm in that. And sadly in an institution that is run solely off of fear and solely off of aggression and solely off of violence, the only way that they'll listen is if you, in return, apply some sort of force or some threat of force yourself. And that's just the nature of the beast within the present institution because they respect nothing else. They respect nothing else. You know, people in the jail have done non-violent protests for years, trust me I've been in that jail from 2006 until 2013, at which time I left briefly for two months and I was back again and I've been in the SHU the entire time I was incarcerated. Every single time I make it to that jail, I land in the SHU. And I've met all the people who tried to just simply–they call it a code 6, which is a refusal to lock in and stay congregated–say, listen, we're not locking in until we speak to the lieutenant about such and such. They don't pay any of that any mind. They come, and they come with force or the threat of force and they use that to control you and they get people to listen up. You know, things have to be done and it's sad–but it's true.

IGD: Well that also reminds me of the way you said "the uprising was not sparked by any one event, but by a series of events that, with time, began to slowly boil over." In your open letter you mentioned a nonviolent protest that took place on January 2nd, 2009 regarding unsanitary conditions in the showers. The independent review of the security issues at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center talks about a protest that took place on January 15th. Tell us about these previous events or any other protests or times where you or others collectively defied the prison administrators?

TG: With that situation there was a problem with recreation. The COs who were running the building, which was seargent Floyd [and] some of his other co-workers, were denying or refusing to give inmates their entire period of recreation. And not for any security reason, which would be understandable, but just simply because they didn't want to do it. They just simply didn't want to run rec for as long as they have to run rec now due to the

Community Legal Aid Society v. Commissioner Coupe recent court settlement.[1] So recreation time periods have been extended and they really simply don't like that and they really try to be as lazy as they can be. And it's a simple job, you just let people out, you let them go outside, you stand around and make sure no one's harming anyone or harming themselves and then you open the door and let them back in. But yeah it started because of that main thing which caused everyone to put their foot down and say listen look we need to speak to the higher ups because this has been happening every single time you work, we've been getting shorted an entire half period of recreation. So, it was just something that was done to try and get the attention of the higher ups who came and just really didn't care and that was just what it was it was just simple lock in or everybody's gonna get fucked up and thrown in the hole. You know, again, they just choose to be deaf to any type of plea for help or any type of plea for fairness.

IGD: You know it's been difficult thus far to find stories or perspectives about the uprising from the point of view of prisoners involved as opposed to the point of view of the state or the prison administration. Now obviously we want to take care not to incriminate yourself or anyone else but we were wondering if you might be able to share a bit about the events of that day.

TG: You know, I really can't share the events of that day. What I can say is a lot of people were shocked, a lot of people were surprised but on behalf of the convicts, the prisoners, the ones who are actually locked up, a lot of people were happy. A lot of people were happy that something finally happened drawing attention to everything that was going on. You stop programming in a jail, you stop programming? Who stops programming in an institution that's considered the department of *corrections* and that claims to be about rehabilitation. They got rid of literally almost every single

1 On September 1st of 2016, the US District Court for the District of Delaware ruled in favor of the Community Legal Aid Society's claims that Commissioner Coupe of the Delaware DOC had violated the mental health needs of DOC inmates, particularly those subject to solitary confinement. The ruling requires dozens of improvements to prison conditions in the Delaware carceral system. The DDOC continues to violate this agreement. See Robert Hernandez's statement pp. 29-30.

program in this jail. And then for years, in the SHU you couldn't go to the library. If I am to honestly believe, or stupidly believe prison was meant to rehabilitate me why I am being denied access to a library? Like it should't matter what my security status is. If I want access to a book, something educational for me to read or for me to learn and to possibly better myself in my own cell, why am I being denied that? They deny mail in college courses simply because you're in the SHU, you're in max. You're classified to max and you're not allowed to pay for mail in college courses, I can't pay out of my own pocket to go to college. So what do you want me to do in the SHU, like what reflection do you expect me to have, what growth? But they did a lot, they did a lot to me, not just those CO's that happened to be there on that day but the administration in general which is I think the biggest problem, the people who are in the higher positions who just don't do anything to correct anything or change anything. But yeah, a lot of people were surprised, a lot of people were shocked, but a lot of inmates were happy. What happened, happened. And I think it was understood that what happened needed to happen. There was nothing else that could be done. And I know I am and a lot of people are glad because once that did happen I can honestly say that you did start seeing changes– not drastic big changes overnight, but definitely things that people have been asking about for the longest period of time. At the end of the day, we understand that there are simply people who are going to be incarcerated, who are not going to leave, who are not going to be fortunate or lucky enough as I was to walk out of that prison. But even starting from the nature of wanting to control a group of people, I always agree with the Greek philosophy that says if you wish to control your cattle just give them a large pasture. They don't even do anything to appease people in the jail who have life. They'll stick them in a cell with someone that's literally one week away from going home. They'll be in a cell with a guy who has double life who's miserable, who has no programs, no job, nothing he can do within the jail. He's just stuck on a tier and stuck in a cell all day long watching TV and eating fillings, and he's mad. And a lot of times what happens in that prison is that prisoners take anger and frustration out on each other, instead of people refocusing that negative energy back on the correctional staff and the administration, because they're the ones in positions to actually change a lot of the stuff we beef about. But I just really can't speak too much about the incident in general.

IGD: That makes sense and is super reasonable for you to answer questions in whatever way feels best to you. You know, I like what you were saying about how when people directed that frustration instead of horizontally at each other they directed it at the people actually causing the conditions that are causing the conflicts amongst one another. And then you have the possibility to get the things you need to improve the conditions that you are being forced to live in. Its good to hear that there have been some small changes and improvement but we have heard out here that there have been also some violent responses from the guards and prison staff, seemingly in retaliation for the uprising and the death of that guard stephen floyd. We've heard that guards wore masks while they beat prisoners and tossed their cells, making it possible for them to do so anonymously. So tell us about what happened after the uprising, about the repression and about the impact of that repression.

TG: They lost their minds. They lost their minds. They wanted to beat everybody. That's just simply what it was. They wanted to beat anybody that they felt as though they could possibly beat and get away with, they wanted to fuck somebody up. And it was simply just to show who has control. But again, more importantly, things like that don't go down without the higher ups knowing about it. Like to come around like that on that large of a scale, to just randomly beat people up and fuck people up the way they did. And just to completely disrespect and violate and trash and shred and destroy peoples property and personal belongings and stuff of that nature, on that big of a scale? Oh yeah, everybody knew about that. The warden approved that himself. I'm willing to bet on that. There's no way that he didn't know about that. Or whoever was running the prison at the time, the way it went down. Nobody could order that type of search like that without the wardens approval so I know he knew. And them having masks on? Oh that made it worse because you couldn't even report it. You couldn't even say who assaulted you, because they didn't even have ID's on when they came around. When they came around to the tiers to shake down. And they would fuck you up. They would literally assault you simply because lets say they told you turn around to face your wall and you look back over your shoulder again. They were throwing tear gas canisters in the cell, boom! And they were running in there and whooping your ass. They did it completely unrestrained which is how I know that the

warden had to approve that. But it did nothing but make people hate him even more. It's like come on man, you just had such a drastic incident take place because of a guy who disrespected people and assaulted people years ago, years ago. I can honestly say when thinking about last year, Floyd didn't assault nobody like he used to assault people when he worked in the SHU. Like a guy just got killed! This is what you do in response? Go back to treating people like animals and treating people like shit and just randomly fucking people up for nothing? So they started off on the wrong foot. 'Cause they could have used the opportunity to repair some stuff from before, and correct some of these officers who they know have a tendency of violating the rights–the human rights, the constitutional rights–of prisoners within a jail. They could have started relocating some of these officers. They could have still done the searches but done them with a little respect and decency. They had them coming into cells telling people to completely strip down to strip completely nude, to lift up their testicles to squat down and cough while they're holding their testicles in the air and then bend over at the waist and use both their bands to spread their butt cheeks. And after they asked you spread your butt cheeks they'd tell you to take your hands and run them through your mouth, around your gums. And it's like come on man, you know that you fucking up maybe like one out of every five inmates because people just refused to do that. They beat a guy, broke his rib cage and broke his nose, because he asked to wash his hands before he put his hands in his mouth cause he just got done spreading his butt cheeks with his hands, and they fucked him up. I don't know, people act so surprised when something happens and they act like...I don't know, are you really not paying attention to whats going on? Are you not paying attention to not whats going on just in the prison system but the country as a whole? Especially when it comes to prisoners, because we have no voice. Some people believe all prisoners are rapists or murders or whatever the case may be so when they hear about anything that happens to a prisoner it's like 'oh fuck them they got what they got they committed a crime', and people don't look at us like we're human beings, so we really don't have a voice and when you don't have a voice sometimes people can you whatever they want to you.

Abednego Baynes

January 13th, 2018

How have you been holding up? Myself, I would have to say well and hard at work getting ready for my criminal trial to make sure I do all I can to prevent any injustices that may come my way. I would like to thank you and all those who work with you to send your love and support to all those in need. This world that you envision may one day become our reality. In hopes that everyone who has ever been oppressed find their strength and stand tall. If you ever want to write again feel free, it would be greatly respected and even more so appreciated.

In full solidarity, support, and respect,

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Kevin Berry

May 24th, 2018

I hope this letter reaches you in the best of health. As for myself, I am good under the circumstances. I would like to apologize for taking so long to get back to you. There has been a lot going on with this case that I had to focus on, such as the prosecution putting a protective order on all the witness statements, so basically we won't know what was said about us until the day of the trial (SMH). Our lawyers will get the statements but they cannot show, send, or tell us anything about these statements until trial. This whole case is built on these statemetns, so witholding them from us is bullshit. The lawyers that we were given by the state aren't doing shit for us. I filed a motion to dismiss my lawyer but it was denied by the judge. They are forcing us to use these lawyers. I'm writing some things separately for the zine that are to be published for the "Innocent 18." Another thing, one of the dudes out of us 18 decided to turn informant (SMH). I wrote about it on the page for the zine.

Yes, this whole case is bullshit and they really are about to try and railroad us (SMH). Plus, we are being oppressed daily by these

guards and forced to be locked down 23 hours a day since we were indicted. The zines and letters we get from groups like y'all help us out during these harsh times. And we really appreciate it a lot. Also, if there is anything in the letters that I wrote that you think would be good for the zine, you have my permission to publish it, and you can use my name. I have nothing to hide…

Love and solidarity,

Kevin

June 11th, 2018

I want to ask everybody that reads this zine a question. This question is directed mainly to black people, but all colors know what I'm talking about for sure and can relate. Why must black people continue to be house niggers in this day and time? My definition for house nigger is: a black person (male or female) that oppresses and abuses (mentally, physically, and sexually) their own people to appease their owner (slave owner). At the end of the day, a house nigger will always be treated like the rest of the niggers on the plantation by its owners. So there's no real benefit for being a house nigger.

Why did blacks become house niggers if there is no real benefit for being a house nigger? I still haven't figured it out yet. Is it to oppress and abuse their own people for their own benefit or pleasure? If that was the case that's sad. Yes, house niggers still exist. You probably talk to one every day. Whether you know it or not, they are out there. We call them snitches, rats, informants, cops, etc. They are the new modern day house niggers. They will turn their own people over for nothing (SMH). Dudes turn rat for no reason at all. They lie on other dudes just so they can get off on a nut-ass case they committed, then they go home and either come back, turn addict, continue to rat to be free, or be killed in the streets like they should be. All of that's not worth sending innocent dudes to prison, locking them down, taking them away from their family, and having them placed on these modern day plantations to be abused mentally and physically by these pigs (police). Why must black people–matter of fact, people in general–continue to do

this to each other to appease the white man (judges, prosecution, police, and C.O.s) that wants to keep us in chains?

I speak of all this because this is what I see going on. How many real and good dudes do you know who are on lockdown because a rat decided to do the white man's job for him? We are putting each other in here–and we keep killing each other–for what? To all the brothers reading this, we must stop oppressing each other to appease the white man. These plantations wouldn't be so full of us if we stopped putting each other here, and if we would let the police do their jobs themselves without any help. Think: would you be where you are at if it wasn't for a rat? No, right? A lot of good dudes wouldn't.

Another reason I say all of this is because the "Innocent 18" has a modern day house nigger within the 18. You all should know about our situation. If you ain't familiar with it, well here it is. Basically 18 dudes was charged with the uprisings, or the riot that happened in Delaware in 2017. A guard was killed and several others were injured. Now, we put "Innocent" in front of the 18 because that's what we are. Well a dude out of the 18 (Royal Downs) decided to turn snitch, rat, informer, and become a modern day house nigger. The crazy part is he is a 50 year old grown ass man, with life in prison. Instead of holding his nuts like a man, he would rather help the white man bring his own people down, who he knows to be completely innocent. But because he mistakenly told on hisself, he lied on the rest of us to get off, but still got charged at the end of the day–stupid nigga. Not only did he tell on hisself, he made up lies to bring dudes down–innocent dudes at that (SMH). He told them (the prosecution) that he only wants to get moved to another prison! What!?! He is lying on us, putting our lives in jeopardy, just to be moved to another prison. He would rather keep lying on dudes that are at the end of their bids to try and leep them in this plantation for life, but that's not gonna happen. We gone fight 'cause we are innocent.

Kevin Berry

P.S., Innocent 17, hold your heads up and stay strong. Love, loyalty, and solidarity. Remember: Real Niggaz stand up and rumble. Bitch Niggaz fold and run.

June 11th, 2018

I'm writing you this short note because I want to give you an update on me and why this letter didn't get out on time. Hopefully I make the cut for the zine. The drawing is included for the zine. [*See the drawing on the topic of rats on the inside back cover* -ed.] Look, I had the letter ready to be sent out, but before I could send it off, I let this C.O. knock me off my square, so I ended up getting shot up, shocked with the electrical shield, and jumped by the C.O.s twice. I have been healing up, trying to get right and better. I have been on a hunger strike for six days now. I don't plan on stopping until I get what I am suppose to have. I got beat up on June seventh and eighth. I will give you updates on that. I am okay right now. I am still in the fight. My mind is stronger than my body, so I have the will power to go for a long time. Again, I am sorry for taking so long to get back with you. I just got my property today, so I'm in the hole as we speak. I wanted to make sure that you got this. I hope to hear back from you. Take care of yourself.

Solidarity, love, and loyalty,

Kevin

P.S., There are brothers that are looking for lawyers that will take their case pro bono. A few of us are going to represent ourselves–including me. That's because we refuse to use the lawyers that the state gives us, since they are working against us. Please check Delaware Online under 2017 Smyrna Prison Uprising for our info. Please contact any of us.

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John Bramble

January 17th, 2018

What's going on? I just got your letter today and it's good to know I'm not alone. You know in times like this I need all the support I can get. I'm sure you already know some of my comrades have received letters from ABC and I was in the process of writing you guys but then I got this today. I've read your 2018 resource guide and I believe that we share a lot of the same beliefs. In the resource guide I was looking for anything about John Brown. I didn't see anything so if you could send me some things on him. For now I can't talk about the uprising due to the case still being open. I hope you can understand that. But I would like to give you a little insight on what we're going through now.

Well they split the 18 of us into two groups of 9. Each group is in different jails. They've cleared a tier completely and housed us on it. They're in the process of installing 10 new cameras. Each one is being installed right outside all 9 of our cells. We believe that the cameras are not just video but audio as well. They want to see and hear everything we do. They've written a whole new policy just for us, our tier has a whole different list of rules from the rest of the jail. Aside from that we've got to deal with the

c/o's talking stupid and every chance they get to they hold it on us. It really gets to them when they see us sticking together, they can't stand it. They're trying their best to break us, and they can't do it. All this stuff just helps me get stronger. All I do is workout, study, and draw. Every once in a while talk a little shit with the guys. But that's about it. There isn't a tv or radio and we only get one phone call a week so I have to look at it like it's a chance to get sharper, right? But no matter how I try to look at it eventually reality sets in and that's when I look at all the people that reached out and showed their love and support and I understand it isn't over! So thanks! If you could please pass my info along to anyone who would like to write. Also feel free to write back. Until next time, keep your head up and stay safe cause the fight isn't over.

In solidarity,

Johnny

John Bramble
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Date of birth: 09/01/1989

Robert Hernandez

January 25, 2018

I would rather die a free man in prison than a broken slave to a United States that falls divided by race, color, and class. This is only what I alone feel. James Baldwin wrote this: "People who shut their eyes to reality simply invite their own destruction, and anyone who insists on remaining in a state of innocence long after that innocence is dead turns into a monster." I wrote this for DOC, for law enforcement, that so called government of Amerikkka that continues to victimize, brutalize, and condemn people like me. You created me, now you must learn to deal with me. If you kill me then you become that which you created.

A Rising Storm Cloud

Fear is the momentum shifting our ambition

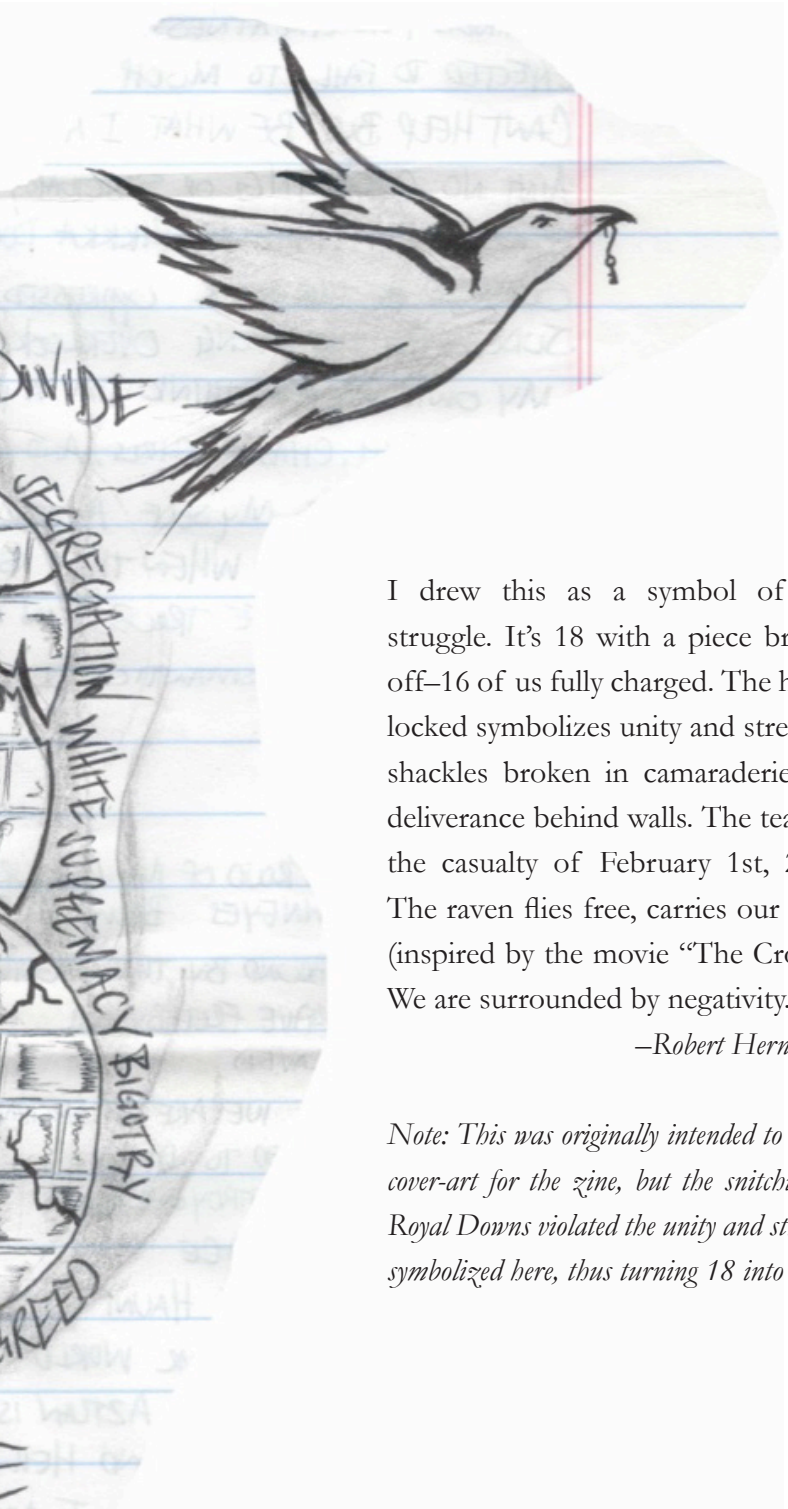
Driven by pure neglect, deceit, and torment

I find no safe haven to run and hide

For the wind is blowing fierce and with it comes purification

In my weakest moments I found strength
Through pain, abandonment, and isolation.
The innermost fragile pieces of my thoughts
Twisted by the darkness from my captors
Squeezing the very breath out of my lungs
I am a muse to your deception
Beyond your control
The bright blue sky has lost its
Rays of innocence and light
The darkness has consumed its view and
Now comes the beginning of the storm
Your very tools of destructive force have given
Life to a new reality Fear has become anger
Isolation brewed numbness
And pure hatred has enfueled its power
Rising storm clouds have blossomed
Lightning is its beauty
Now here to consume us all
None is pardoned by this
Event of natural beauty
We are but its pawns

THE WALLS BUILT TO
OPPRESSION HATRED
ISOLATION RACISM ENVY
2:17
CONTROL VIOLENCE FAIDOM
DISCRIMINATION SLAVERY
HAVE COME TO UNITE



I drew this as a symbol of our struggle. It's 18 with a piece broken off–16 of us fully charged. The hands locked symbolizes unity and strength, shackles broken in camaraderie and deliverance behind walls. The tear for the casualty of February 1st, 2017. The raven flies free, carries our souls (inspired by the movie "The Crow"). We are surrounded by negativity.

–Robert Hernandez

Note: This was originally intended to be the cover-art for the zine, but the snitching by Royal Downs violated the unity and strength symbolized here, thus turning 18 into 17.

In the Dark

Be careful what doors you open

And what you pursue

Because even the most timid

Can touch you

After all it's not what you

See in the light

Its what you don't pay attention to

In the dark that will

Haunt you

March 1st, 2018

I am currently fighting for my life in Delaware. This experience has totally changed me. There is so much I feel inside I want to put out there and just to speak with someone I can identify with in my struggle. I come from the streets, I was born in Tolare, CA. I lived in El Paso TX, Albuquerque NM, Las Cruces, NM. Most my life I spent most weekends in Juarez, Mexico.

My life has been crazy since day 1 but I never understood til now the reality of oppression, racism, and this fucked up country! I am Xicano, I don't consider myself Mexican or American, I'm my own breed. My ethnicity is minority I guess, if that makes sense. I'm reading your literature on abolishing policing in Oakland. I consider my life in anarchy. I have an anarchy symbol tattooed on my left shoulder blade since when I was young. Not fully understanding the war we are in, I was introduced by a judicial system that is far from fair and by incarceration surrounded by prejudice, hatred, and violence. I ain't perfect, I done my dirt, but what I came to realize is I was fighting for the reasons and conflicts that meant nothing but the destruction of my own existence…

I feel awakened now, and I know whether my life consists of being incarcerated for life or freedom on the streets my agenda remains intact. I believe in equality and a world without borders or status, a life worth living without the lies and deceit by a government that is formed by white supremacy, power, greed, and teaches us to be content with an illusion of freedom! I'm tired of being stereotyped, seen as an illegal alien, cartel member, rapist, gang member. That is what I'm always questioned about and I aint no cartel member, I was born in Cali, I aint never raped anyone and would not, I don't believe in rape and how do I look at 36 gang banging?

My ancestors, my culture, my family were raped, tortured (genocide), violated every way by Spain, Europe, the white pilgrims that came to this country and brought slavery, greed, and destruction to Native Americans, the same superior whites that invaded Africa and brought people to this country as slaves. I don't look at the color of skin or gender, I look at the person! For that is who we are, a people ambitious, determined to belong, to live our lives. I don't hate white people, I aint a hypocrite, I will embrace white, black, Chinese, gay, straight, short, tall with love if you stand for what I stand for. I ain't embracing no man nor woman that looks down on me or teaches racism like trump and the right wing nationalists out in the world recruiting and totally armed against me!

I want to live for much more, fight for much more. I aint looking up to God to save me, I'm looking inside myself! Help me to understand and learn so I can arm myself mentally. I want to learn and study. This jail don't teach me shit but one thing: to never surrender, never give in, never fall. I know these pigs want to see me dead and suffering. I feel their hatred, I see it in their eyes! I don't care to hate these punk police, they hate me! They continuously kill and get away with murder cause they wear a badge. They go out their way with parades, memorials, plaques, but we get shit! Toss us in a hole, see ya! I heard a kid maybe 20, 21 was shot and killed in Las Cruces by police, they dragged his body like trash! That's how Amerikkka sees me, as trash, my family and children. I'll gladly spend eternity in a cage for what is right than hit a world (free) that will try to kill me or dignify locking me up again! I'm already free anyway in my mind, my spirit it soars even while I'm locked in a cell. You can take my life but you won't take my voice!

I wrote these a few months prior:

I Cannot Find Shelter

I cannot find shelter, cannot feel love,
All I see is pain I try to look above
Am I forgotten can I be found
Is god a mystery is salvation around
I do not want to die, but it's hard to live
The devils at my doorway I have nothing left to give
Gave everything away
Only for the moment
God can you hear me can you free me from
This torment
Maybe I can find redemption
Learn to dismiss all temptation
The soul is eager to fly
Yet my body is ready to die.

I Am Mexica

I am Mexica proud of my culture
Brown skin Brown eyes Brown pride
Warrior spirit bound by the jaguar
Humble but brave free by will
Not to be enslaved
Olmeca Tolteca we are an ancient race
Their white world tried to destroy us all
Betray my people destroy our homes

Label us a disgrace

May Huitzilopochihi haunt your thoughts

Quetzcoatl devour your world

Aztlan is my paradise Aztlan is my home

To the heavens above and hell down below

I let it be known

I am Mexica

March 7th, 2018

...Let me break down what is going on now. 18 of us were indicted Oct 17 2017. There is a lot of propaganda put out by the local media. (The stuff I send you have my blessing to use. If you think it will help by all means use it.) Our attorneys complain about the money they only get $70 an hour to represent us so we get the poorest defense. My attorney was a district attorney I can't even talk with this man, don't trust or confide in anything he says or does. Its been over a year to build a case and still nothing. I and other co-defendants have no discovery no idea of what is going on. The state refuses to provide anything but excuses. I ain't felt the sun or fresh air since Oct 17, 2017. We are treated very differently. We would get searched twice daily our property always trashed or taken. It's sad really because their punk police don't care about the pig; it's all an illusive act to get a better paycheck. They got that, but everyone else ain't getting anything. If you read the local newspaper and hear the local news radio station its crazy how this is still going on, corruption in its purest form. Hatred not for the death of a man but for the stereotype, the fact that we are seen as inmates, another word for slave.

I know that my days are numbered for I am a breed of unity, power. I have a voice and I know many want it shut. Assholes want to see me under control, but rebellion is a part of my identity. Be strong and courageous in this war, cause what we are fighting for is life the right to live, free.

I want the world to know that as long as there is a Prison, Capitalism, Donald Trump in office, Racism, Police Brutality, Oppression there will be rebellion in the few that have become liberated.

The books I want to read are about history, culture, and education. I really want to read the Che Guevara books, etc. I need to feed my mind and sharpen my sword (that is my tongue). Words are sharp and I want to educate and liberate as many as possible, Billy Graham style.

As the issue with fighting these false charges, it's more political than anything. We are sacrificial lambs led to a slaughter. No evidence provided or release of autopsy, discovery only so called witnesses collaborating a false story to empower the Dept. of Corruptions. I wanted to ask if you could look into books written by Carlos Castaneda.

I am also searching for pen-pals that have the same beliefs and ideas that we share. The more the merrier. Out of the eighteen individuals one was and is a confidential informant he is not longer among our presence. Royal Diamond Downs. This coward made six remarkable statements pure lies and this deceit was devastating, however there is no excuse for his weakness and destructive character. This was one I considered an ally and we had a strong camaraderie. Yet there is still 17 strong militant brothers here. No matter what lies ahead there is power in unity there is loyalty and honor in selflessness and sacrifice no matter how small. I thank you greatly for your camaraderie and in saying "bad ass," brother for real I am but a man struggling like the next. We are very ambitious and determined to stand for what is right, we are equal and share that identity I guess.

There is about six of us that were ready for release in less than three years these pigs dangle our freedom in front of us like we dogs in a kennel. Still they can keep it for I may be physically confined and entombed but mentally, and spiritually I am free. Our struggle is real and we always hear that these fuckers want revenge and bla!bla!bla! I don't care how they feel or want cause

one day the truth will be seen and heard, one day the hidden will come to light and people will know that we 17 individuals wrongly accused and criticized will continue to stand firm. I truly believe this and I hope this is understood. And again thank you for your support it is greatly appreciated and felt behind these walls. April 16th, 2018

Twice daily we are handcuffed/shackled for a simple window check. It takes 3 times the time to secure us than the actual window check. We are continuously forced to terminate phone calls which are prepaid so the "security team" can shake us down. TWICE A DAY. We are completely isolated from the population. We have no contraband!

We are cuffed so regular pod officers can do a window check. Yet we don't have to be cuffed during recreation when they come around. This is idiotic. We are not permitted to go outside, yet there is a rec yard outside the tier newly outfitted with cameras that we are not allowed in.

On several occasions, the heads of security: Lt. Kruetz, Captain Hernandez, and Major Holinsworth have showed prejudice and acts of retaliatory aggression.

1) Shutting off our cells drinking water because we refused to eat.

2) Stepping into an inmates cell, without a camera, with a weapon, and pointing it point blank range in his face (a paintball gun that shoots stun balls).

3) Officers covered all windows with magnetic covers to stop us from witnessing any violation done by DOC.

4) Threats of letting the canine officer release his dog on us while we are shackled.

These are only some of the incidents. It's an everyday thing with us being antagonized, trying to get us to react so they can hurt us. For example, the canine officer has been known to aggressively sing the "Cops" theme somg while letting his dog jump and bark on our windows.

Three out of eight of us have been QRT'd (Quick Response Team), maced, beat, and deprived of all rights. Both constitutional and ones granted by the CLASI Agreement. We have been enduring harassment since being charged without merit with being involved with the Smyrna uprising on 2/1/17. We get harassed regularly. The security has come with a shock shield and paintball gun just to do a standard shakedown. My property has been destroyed numerous times. My mail has been tampered with, lost, or destroyed. I was seen by the Deputy Chief of DOC in May and he said "my officers have the green light to do what they got to if you step out of line." Then I was told that "officers had the okay to take me out since I'm a suspect on this level."

I wakeup daily not knowing if today is my day to get seriously hurt or killed. I know all of my co-defendants feel the same way. This is why we need support in this matter. We need as many people as possible to call and shed light on the fact that we 17 are under a tremendous amount of retaliation. We need the people to call, complain, ask questions, and speak to the Delaware branch of the News Journal.

Thank You

May 29th, 2018

Fourteen years, I have spent incarcerated, throughout that time I have experienced more than some. I came in a boy and have grown into maturity… mentally, spiritually, and physically. Behind these walls lies another world many cannot understand. It's a world of segregation, oppression, and corruption. This world thrives on hatred, superiority, and racism. It is a den of affliction built on overpowering the minds and hearts of men. These prisons are not meant to rehabilitate but to break the spirit, control, and to ensure the financial wealth of a certain few. This journey through torment has awakened my mind and heart to seek out the purpose of my existence… a reason to correct my mistakes for now I can see the overflow of injustice, the importance of revolutionary understanding and projecting to the world outside the significance of change and truth. To whom chooses to pay attention for a second, and for those who see the trials, tribulations, and sacrifices of so many that have come before us. They that were not succumbed to

the beast and liberated so many minds inspired us all to selflessness, brotherhood, and equality.

I choose to do better for myself, for my family, and for humanity. So many men and women enter these institutions corrupted by drugs, gangs, material possessions, violence, and far too many are overcome by poverty (but you really don't have to be in prison to be imprisoned). Without rehabilitation, education, or a chance to truly overcome these challenges how can you truly expect to eliminate the criminal factor. These stone walls become a second home a security blanket for so many that can't handle a fast moving world outside. Mental health issues arrive from prison, you create more chaos than change. Prison is a kingdom of mental illness hidden, and it's hard to ask for help from the system that oppresses you! Incarceration in the United States has been at an all time high leading the world in incarcerating it's citizens. This is the free world? It costs more to keep so many locked up, why would you keep doing it? Now this presidency believes in locking up "illegals." They build a wall to keep individuals out, all those that seek opportunity to support their families. Is everyone truly a criminal? There has to be a better way. Prison walls only create and manufacture more crime, violence, and hatred. This heart is alive and it's hungry! It's time to wake up, it's time to do better, and lead the way for those ahead to follow.

May 29th, 2018

I've come to believe that the thoughts of men have harvested many intentions throughout time. They have flourished, grown, and planted seeds in the hearts and minds of others by their actions, their words, and their legacy. They leave behind a way of life, traditions and the traditions our ancestors that carried on whether good or bad, right or wrong, have passed on through all mankind. Oppression, hatred, and racism are well rooted in the American traditions. These characteristics that are alive and well today hidden behind the American dream, yet for too many this is no dream but a nightmare. See too many are quick to point fingers with chastising one another, this or that, for the choices we have made and the direction of our lives. It may carry some truth however we are human and we will make mistakes. We may

fail and lose from time to time. We are allowed to do these things, naturally. That does not mean I should not be allowed the same equal opportunity to correct those mistakes, all men and women alike deserve that chance. Regardless of who you are, what you believe, or your appearance. We can correct, learn, and evolve. We can better ourselves, our communities, and our world. Do we truly need to carry so many of those traditions? These thoughts that have poisoned our environment for so long? Let not the idealism of the past come to shape our future. It's time to choose to do better to challenge and defeat the doctrines of segregation, superiority, class, and financial worth or benefit. We don't need to live selfish but learn and choose to live selfless.

Now I am no doctor, professor, politician, or a well-educated man. In the eyes of this system set by the United States Government I am a convict, criminal, I am but a prisoner suspended in a world of overflowing injustice. I have a GED I earned in prison. Many officials believe I don't deserve more education, rehabilitation, or vocational training. I spend my time in a cell twenty-two hours a day. I do not have financial stability or a wealthy family. I don't have a pot to piss in or a window to toss it out of. My mind cannot be confined or controlled, I have the ability to learn, to understand, to fight, and overcome the challenges and barriers ahead of my life. I believe in brotherhood and equality for all. I want to pass on a new tradition, a better idealism through my actions, my character, and my words. Words are powerful, sharp as any sword, and they cut deep. Men will fail, pass on, die, and we will leave something behind. What will it be? Will it benefit or hurt? I leave words that hopefully can inspire, speak to the hearts of men to be selfless. To do better. My dream to be realized is brotherhood, working together, unity. Maybe one day. I believe one thing, si se puede, yes we can! Let the walls come down that segregate each and every one of us mentally, spiritually, and physically.

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Wilmington, DE 19809

Date of birth: 09/25/1981

Lawrence L. Michaels

January 18th, 2018

First, I would like to thank you for the care & concern you've shown through your actions and words. I send this appreciation on behalf of myself and any of my comrades. Personally, I had prepared myself mentally, for a long and lonely battle. A battle against a system accustomed to using every means to destroy individuals such as myself. This is one of the clearest displays of classism and oppression I've ever had to face. Honestly, I've realized that I just have to come to terms with the worst possible scenario and only then can I truly fight back freely. You hit it on the nose as far as going through hell right now. I think that's an understatement. Everywhere we go they have about four guards with a K-9 dog or officer with a somewhat heavy duty paint ball gun. It's good to see that somebody out there cares. Sometimes it can feel like youre alone with no one by your side. But getting a letter or even a card can make a polluted environment become potent with nothing but fresh air to breath. Your letter cleared the air. At this time I can't say much due to the ongoing trial phase but what I can and will do is once I get my Rule 16 (discovery), (which should be this month). I'll send you copies so you can see for yourself what they got,

and then you can spread it around to groups around the country/ world. As for me, I'm 31 years old from North Philadelphia where I've lived all my life. My mother and father was both murdered (at different times), when I was young. I've spent a little more than half my life in this system, so from my early teens til adulthood I've been locked up. I NEVER got to enjoy what they call life but godwillingly I'll walk away free of these crazy charges and finish up the last of these 5.5 years I have left in here. Other than that, I love to read, write, and learn new things. I'm working on my communicative skills which I lack. But corresponding with new people now is advancing my ability. And I'd be happy if you can be a penpal...But again thank you very much for taking time out of your life to reach out. It's highly appreciated. Sitting here going through this and now just getting info that the state is pushing for the death penalty to come back before we go to trial. They broke the trials down to (5) five groups. The first trial starts in Oct of this year. I'm in group 2 which starts in Jan of 2019. But please write back when you find time. Until next time be safe and always firm.

Peace and Solidarity,

"L"

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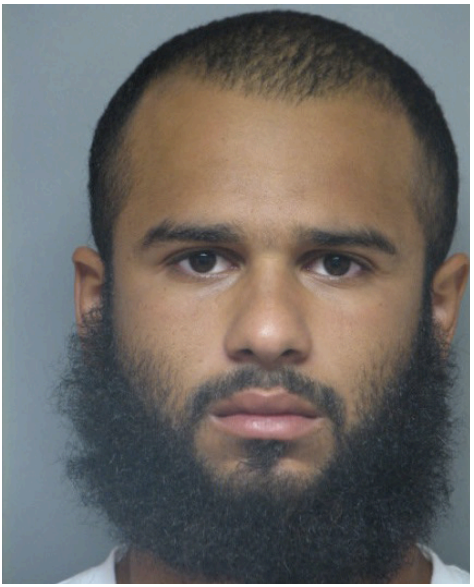

Luis Sierra
(*Abdul-Haqq El-Qadeer*)

January 24th, 2018

Salutations Comrade!

Before I begin, allow me to express my appreciation for your passion, dedication, and effort against oppression and the injustices we face as Amerikkkan prisoners. Not only is your struggle mutually shared within my heart but so is the love!

To proceed...You know most prisons require a book limit that doesn't allow 4-5 books at a time for fire hazard purposes. So, for ya'll to have paper form books available at no cost, I had to sieze that opportunity! Anyway, you wrote me in reference to my perspective on my case. Me personally, I'm truthfully innocent of these charges so unless they have some manufactured evidence against me, I'm more than optimistic about my chances at trial. However, not only is this Delaware, but this whole situation is politically motivated which means there could be a few vacancies if they don't find us guilty! I believe our chances are slim when it comes to selecting a fair and impartial jury.

First and foremost, this was the biggest story of 2017 in the state of Delaware and I know for a fact that there's going to be juror members with hidden agendas who claim that they don't have any knowledge of this story just to serve the interest of the state. I'm not sure if you're in tune with the controversies surrounding this particular story but the DA seems adamant about bringing back the death penalty as well. So, not only are they trying to make sure that we don't see the light of day again but they're actually trying to kill us! The only way to counter this attack is by building a nationwide support team! Not only do we want to change the narrative of what's already been said about us but we want the world to know what led up to this and how we were handpicked by jailhouse snitches expecting leniency. Starting a blog is genius because that will give us a voice and help us create the support team. Our main objective is to fill up that courtroom so the presence of our support can be felt by the jury in its entirety. They need to know that we aren't sacrificial lambs and that we're going to fight for our lives! As we all know, there's strength in numbers and it's my hope that our combined strength will be enough to overcome the powers that be who wish to continue their reign of oppression.

It seems like the more I learn of the injustices done to us as people, the more I become inspired by yall's own Fred Hampton. To be so young, he had a way with words that could fill you with hope and passion at the same time. That was a baaaaad brother by the way. If you can provide any literature on him I'd greatly appreciate it. Before I go, I want to leave ya'll with some words from another comrade… "Faint hearts never win decisive battles" –George L. Jackson. Once again, thanks for the love and I hope to hear from you soon.

-Louie

March 21st, 2018

Salutations comrade! Before I begin, please allow me to apologize first for taking so long to write back. As you already know, not only am I being thoroughly investigated for the death of a corrections officer, but all my in-coming and out-going mail is being censored. Therefore, it's taking longer than it usually does

for me to receive my mail. You're wise enough to know how these things go, especially when the government's involved. They're just doing whatever in their power to hinder my communication so I can be behind schedule on building my support team. Don't worry though, because this matter has already been addressed to my judge through my attorney, so I'm expecting some progress. If not, then just continue to be patient with me and know that the moment I receive your letters, I will write back asap!

You mentioned to me in your last letter about sending me some books, and will I be able to share the literature amongst the brothers? Of course I will! But this is the thing, the rules here at the prison state that the book can't exceed 8.5 x 11" and it can't weigh over 5 lbs. Also, but for some strange reason, they don't accept books from amazon or ebay. I keep tryna wrap my head around why but I haven't come up with an answer yet. As a matter of fact, I did! I believe it's just a lighter form of oppression. Think about it. How in the hell do you not allow books to come from the country's number 1 distributor? There is no logical answer for that other than that they're trying to deprive us of educating ourselves. So you know, most people in prison are broke! Therefore, whenever we do come across some money to purchase a book or two, we go for the cheapest option available. And guess what company is the cheapest? AMAZON! You know what's going on with these people? They might get these other brothers fooled, but not me! To be honest with you, brother, I would recommend that you keep your good hard-earned money because despite me having the ability to pass the books to the rest of the brothers, we're actually not allowed to borrow and lend. Understand? If one of these C.O.s catch me or somebody else trying to pass a book, then not only could this result in a write-up which could possibly affect our phone calls, but the book would be considered contraband, which means they have the authority to confiscate it. Also, depending on the size of the book, it might have to be destroyed and broken down into sections so it can fit under the doors. If you didn't know, despite us being on the same tier (9 of us), we're all isolated to where we can't pass each other anything by hand. It's a very, very complex situation we have going on here...If you had something you wanted to me to read, is it possible you can photocopy a few chapters at your public library? I know this may be a little time consuming, but it's only an idea, feel

me? For me, it will be great because not only will it be easier to pass but I might be able to hold onto it due to the fact that it will be just paper. I don't know, it's totally up to you, brother!

–Louie

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Dwayne Staats

January 27th, 2018

Peace and Greetings! The energy, efforts, and devotion you extend towards the struggle is saluted and most appreciated. Solidarity is a universal language that's conveyed through sacrifice or selflessness. These acts are usually committed in pursuant to a good that's greater than individualized gratification. This philosophy is the mecca of most rebellions, revolts, and uprisings. When the threshold for discrimination, inequality, or oppression is surpassed, resistance becomes a viable mechanism for thwarting these miscarriages of justice. Unfortunately when concerning humanity or civil rights, history reflects that tragic events often precede the implementation of "real" change. That's the narrative that should be applied to the uprising at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center. When "absolute control" is the desire of the nefarious hierarchies, emasculation along with physical, psychological, and emotional abuses are a few devices used to forge their subjugative culture. From my experience, prison is a microcosm of society, there's a class caste system, politics, economics, and hearings for those accused of violations. All these facets are tainted by corruption, but the overseers still managed to thrive underneath a veil of concealment. The paradigm is shifting on all fronts. The fascists, elitists, and

sadists who incumbent positions of power that enable them to influence policy or to merely impose their will on the vulnerable never imagined that their cloak of invincibility would evaporate. It was unfathomable that amongst the chattel, passive and docile, a few valiant hearts would emerge. Not only to expose indiscretion but to liberate the conscience of the collective.

Live from the trenches,

D. Staats #believinginmyself

March 5th, 2018

MEMORABILIA

"This is the free-est I've felt in dam near two decades man!" That purport was declared by an ol' head in passing, as I stood enthralled inside a realm of tranquility. In that moment I'd become oblivious to the inundation of water slowly ascending beyond the sole of my sneakers. Gleaming through the dense smoke permeating the atmosphere was celebratory exchanges by revitalized spirits who'd been tamped into an asphyxiating obscurity. While simultaneously, empowered souls performed in unison to expeditiously assemble barricades. In that moment the flickering of fire hazard lights illuminated the burgundy stains vying for attention as they streaked down the pale surface. People traveling en-route from one tier to the next. Faces were covered to circumvent the inhalation of fumes. Regardless of if I recognized individuals as acquaintances or had no association with them. In that moment there was a familiarity in everyones eyes that conveyed a reciprocated sentiment to an ineffable emotion...

June 4th, 2018

James T. Vaughn Correction Center is located at 1181 Paddock Road. For those unfamiliar with the word "paddock," it's defined as: an enclosed area for pasturing or exercising animals. Their method of operation is evinced before one steps foot inside the facility. Fortunately, there are some who refrain from acclimating to domestication… I recently read an article pertaining to the prison riot in South Carolina. A few brothers allegedly confessed

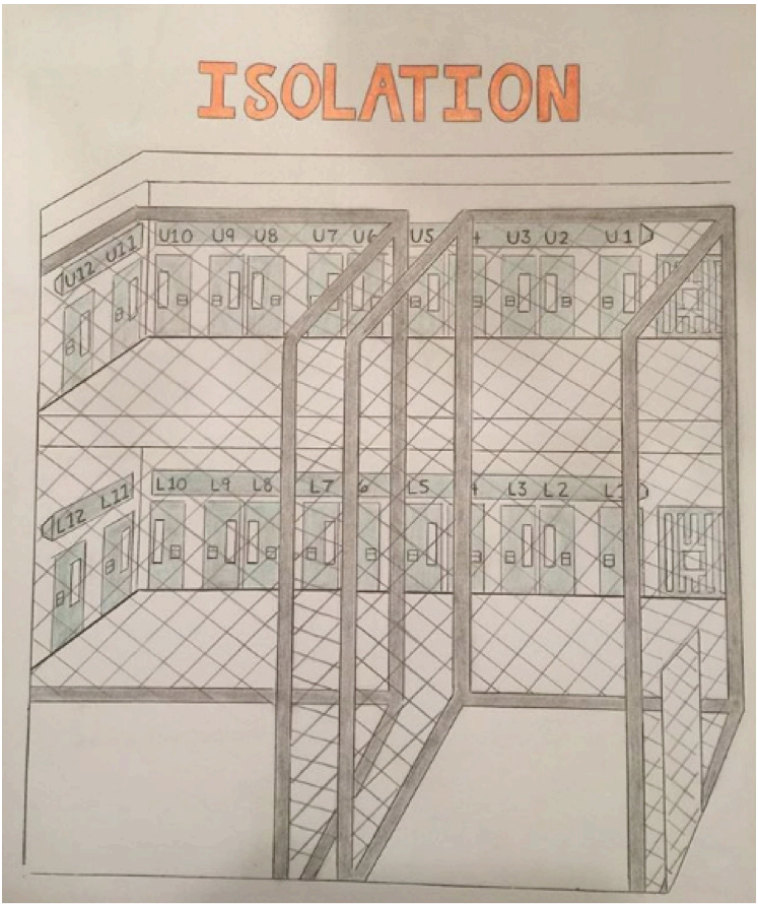

Illustration: "Isolation" by Dwayne Stats.

to murdering inmates because they'd rather be executed than have to spend the rest of their lives in that prison. Is death synonymous to freedom when one's existence is submerged within the bowels of a manufactured hell!? In my case the district attorney is lobbying legislators to re-enact lethal injections. The rationale is under the guise of seeking justice, but this retaliatory measure only substantiated their propensity to kill. This isn't my concern, because personally I don't believe death is a penalty. No one can definitively tell me otherwise. Furthermore, when one's mindset morphs to a "by any means" mode, death no longer is a deterrent towards accomplishing the "necessary." I'm not what

one considers orthodox. What these minds perceive as being a worst case scenario. My interpretation depicts the transition from physical to spiritual, where one can congregate with ancestors while being fitter for their wings. Those bearing false witness against us have disgracefully knelt in front of the same persecutors who use captivity as a device to destroy our families/communities. They've come to barter their souls in exchange for leniency. I've elected to go pro'se (represent myself) so I'll get to cross examine these rodents. It's unfathomable as to how these opportunistic parasites could exploit an act of righteousness to pursue selfish agendas. That in itself should be a crime against humanity. These leeches ain't compromising their integrity for the sake of adding to the quality of life. Most possess no viable skill that'll result in a legitimate means of providing. There ain't no professional spades or Pinoche leagues. So how they gone survive? James T. Vaughn Correctional Center has conditioned them to be sufficient at one thing and one thing and that's "contributing to the recidivism rate." Personally I feel this trial is an extension of the uprising, in the sense that J.T.V.C.C. is going back under the microscope for the dissection. With a surgeons precision, I must implant into the juries conscious that rebellion was the only antidote potent enough to counter a malignant evil destructively exacerbating a culture of subjugation. Of course the state will flaunt the murder, assault, kidnapping, and riot charges for inflammatory purposes, but that still won't discourage me from "standing in my truth and letting the chips fall!"

B.I.M.

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Write a letter! The addresses for the individuals who have written to us may be found throughout the zine and you can find the addresses of the remaining individuals below. Writing to prisoners is one of the easiest ways to show solidarity. All of these individuals would love to hear from you. As stated by Lawrence Michaels, "It's good to see that somebody out there cares. Sometimes it can feel like you're alone with no one by your side. But getting a letter or even a card can make a polluted environment become potent with nothing but fresh air to breathe." Your letter need not be long or extravagant. You don't have to become pen-pals if you don't want to. A simple card saying that they are not alone can mean the world (we've also included their birthdays so you can send birthday cards). These folks may be behind bars but they are friends and comrades and are part of our movements just the same. Put together a letter writing night in your town or simply hang their addresses somewhere you hang out and let people write them on their own. A printable poster with addresses can be found here:

> https://itsgoingdown.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/vaughn.pdf

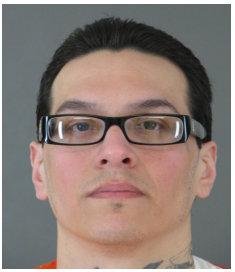
Help publicize their case! The more people know about this case, the more people with different capacities can be drawn in to various support roles. Publicizing the case can be as easy as making copies of and distributing this zine, dropping a banner in your town, or holding an event to publicize the case. Such an event could entail reading some of the letters in this zine, listening to part of the Bloc Party podcast with former Vaughn inmate Thomas Gordon, a discussion about ways to support them, and/or letter writing. Be creative! The Bloc Party interview with Thomas Gordon can be found here:

> https://itsgoingdown.org/bloc-party-interview-former-vaughn-prisoner-thomas-gordon/

Show up for court! Trials for these individuals are set to begin in October 2018. It is imperative that we pack the court to let these folks know that when they rebel they will have support. Keep an eye on It's Going Down and other news sources for updates and calls to pack the courtroom. If you have solid connections in or

around Delaware, get in touch with them or have them email us at chicagoanarchistblackcross@riseup.net.

A number of these prisoners are seeking lawyers certified to practice in the state of delaware who are willing to represent them *pro bono*. A number of them have expressed concerns about their state-appointed lawyers having bias against them. Please get in touch with these prisoners if you are willing to give them legal advice or represent them *pro bono*.



Pedro Chairez

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Janis Mathis

SBI# 00492275
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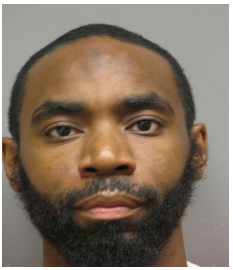
Date of birth: 04/24/1992



Jarreau **Ayers**

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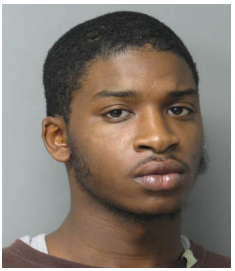

Obadiah Miller

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Alejandro Rodriguez-Ortiz

SBI# 00515700
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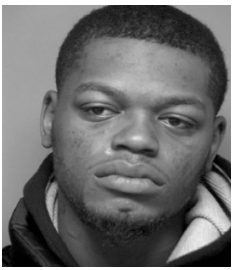
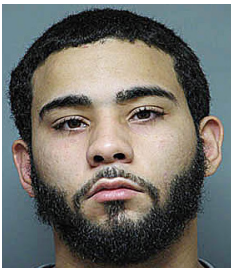
Date of birth: 12/17/1989



Deric Forney

SBI# 00485314
Howard R. Young Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 9561
Wilmington, DE 19809
Date of birth: 02/06/1989



Jonathan Rodriguez

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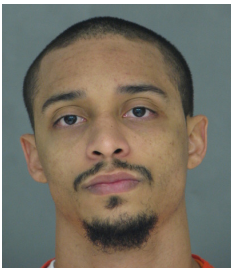

Roman Shankaras

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Kelly Gibbs

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ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS
CHICAGO