

Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and National Lifers of America, Inc.

Michigan

# Lifers Report

NOVEMBER 2022

Newsletter

## CITIZENS ASK: WHY DO PEOPLE COMMIT CRIMES?

### WHAT CAUSES CRIME?

Willis X. Harris

With the steady increase in crime and mass incarceration, citizens are asking the two above questions. Being a student specializing in criminal justice, criminology is now an important topic, a topic many of our politicians attempt to ignore.

You may ask: What is criminology? Criminology is the scientific study of crime as a social phenomenon and includes research of criminals and the penal system. Criminologists study crime and criminals, but also attempt to determine the origins of criminal behavior. Could psychological conditioning of individuals cause crime or is it one's societal conditioning? Perhaps it's not psychological, but genetics. Maybe one's social class status causes criminal behavior. Or could it be a combination of all these factors? Can anyone commit a crime or are criminals predestined by factors in their background to commit these criminal acts?

I asked Ronald Mellen, Ph.D. the following questions:

- 1) What are the major factors contributing to chronic recidivism in America?
- 2) Is recidivism an economic, social, moral, or psychological problem--or all of them?
- 3) Why can't criminal justice and correctional professionals solve this tax-burden problem?
- 4) What is being done to resolve racism in law enforcement and the legal system?

Let's learn about Ronald Mellen's background prior to his answers to the four above questions. Prior to joining the faculty at Jacksonville State University in Jackson, Alabama, ... (Cont. on p. 3)

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**MICHIGANS LIFERS REPORT  
NEWSLETTER**

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**SPOILED FRUIT**

Gina M. DeAngelo

Sometimes a fruit falls from a tree and rolls so far away from its roots that it's no longer of the tree. The hard fall, and long journey, bruises the fruit so much that it totally changes it. It's the same way for some of our people. This is why some can't be awakened regardless of how much truth you present to them. This journey has totally brainwashed them to such a degree that they're no longer the original tree.

-- Malcolm X

The above statement by Malcolm X is reflective of our prisoners today who fell from the tree (civilized, law-abiding citizens in society). They have repeatedly been in and out of prisons and youth facilities and have been rotten fruit (chronic recidivists).

This is why Willis X. Harris tries to awaken the prisoners to the current state of society and our criminal justice system. As he has always said, we have many "rare" prisoners who will not change, regardless of the circumstances or penalty of continued criminal behavior.

Many prisoners nationwide have been brainwashed into believing there is a profitable future in criminal activities, i.e., robberies, selling drugs, sex trafficking, etc. They have been watching movies in theatres and on TV about actors acting as gangsters who rob banks, wealthy people, people on buses, airplanes, markets, churches, drug stores, to name a few.

By saying they are no longer of the original tree (structured society), they are now called social outcasts, outlaws, dangerous criminals, and career criminals.

A severely bruised fruit (prisoner) cannot re-attach to the original tree because he or she has now been extricated from the healthy tree and placed in an environment with no way out. He or she has a life sentence with no possibility of parole.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reading Ms. DeAngelo's comparison, I first thought about those prisoners who are "rare" and who can't be awakened from their state of criminality. Do we at least try to awaken them? Or do we skip them and move to those who desire change? What happens to those who can't be awakened but desire change after several decades in prison? Can we ever discover what caused them to desire change after several decades in prison? Does corrections officials owe law-abiding and tax-paying citizens an obligation to help those who desire to change from a criminal to a law-abiding citizen? And if you believe they do, should they be required to help them return to society as a law-abiding citizen.

Please send your opinion as to those prisoners who can be awakened and the role corrections officials must play in recognizing them.

(Citizens Ask, from p. 1) ... he was Clinical Director of the Special Programs Unit (Mental Health) and staff psychologist at the Maximum Security Unit and the Super Max. Mellen's research has focused on the use of the Alpha-Stim, a cranial electro-therapy device, with impulsively violent offenders. His results have repeatedly proven positive.

Below are Dr. Mellen's answers to the four above questions.

1) What are the major factors contributing to chronic recidivism in America?

(Mellen) An important question that has a complicated answer. I address issues like this using the BioPsychoSocial Model. That are these three domains, Biology, Psychology, and Sociology which must be addressed when trying to understand why an individual committed the crime.

The social factors are many but here are a few:

- \* The offender re-enters the free-world with the label "felon" and has difficulty gaining employment.
- \* The offender has limited job skills and the future look bleak.
- \* The offender has a low educational level due to academic programming not being designed to meet his early individual needs.
- \* The offender has limited community support. The conscious and unconscious bias is "He is Bad". The bias is exponentially worse if he is African-American.
- \* The offender returns to his original neighborhood where old street friends provide him emotional support, excitement, and a way to earn money (e.g., selling drugs).
- \* A home environment where drugs and/or violence were dominant factors in daily living.
- \* A bi-level legal system that protects the wealthy. For example, we had 15,000 inmates in the Arkansas Department of Corrections and, to my knowledge, only one from a wealthy background.

Some biological factors that can contribute to recidivism:

- \* History of head trauma.
- \* Genetic predispositions to engage in offender behavior such as a strong family history of criminal behavior.
- \* A diagnosis of ADHD, organic-based depression and psychopathy, learning disabilities, etc.

Some psychological factors that can contribute to recidivism:

- \* Being a psychologist, I am aware that this category is a bit tricky. That's because psychology is an epi-phenomenon, in that it arises out of the two earlier fields noted above, biology and sociology. Psychology provides terms that represent behaviors related to offender behaviors. These behaviors are driven by personal belief systems, e.g., psychopathy, environmentally-driven depression and anxiety, ineffective interpersonal relationships, narcissism, excessive introversion, etc., that are not working for the offender because of unexamined personal belief systems, etc. For example, while for some the anger is biologically driven, others can be generally angry to protect themselves from facing their inner fears. That being said, psychological services such as personality assessment and counseling are frequently essential to helping the offender regain his/her life.

2) Is recidivism an economic, social, moral, or psychological problem--or all of them?

As you clearly suspect, recidivism will involve all the variables you listed plus biological ones. At the inmate level to gain sufficient information on all these issues is a necessary component when creating an individualized treatment plan. This strategy added to what we can learn from humanistically-driven offender rehabilitation strategies used in Denmark and other Northern European Nations will bring significant and positive change to America's efforts at rehabilitating offenders.

3) Why can't criminal justice and correctional professionals solve this tax-burden problem?

... (Cont. on p. 8)

# MICHIGAN'S HIDDEN DEATH PENALTY

## DEATH BY INCARCERATION

Abe Van Durmen

To die for your crimes is not a new concept for the American people, as it has been ingrained into our psyche for hundreds of years. But what is new is Michigan's hidden agenda of Death By Incarceration (DBI) coming into the light. In Michigan the death penalty is prohibited by the State's Constitution. The harshest penalty is life without the possibility of parole (LWOP). This is given exclusively for first degree murder, so why are the State's elderly prisoners being confined for 3, 4, 5, 6 decades until DBI? This DBI has created a new and harsh statistic: Michigan now houses the oldest population it has ever housed.

Historically, less than 25 percent of all convicted prisoners serving LWOP in Michigan died in prison. That is until the 1980s. Michigan went from being only one of 11 states that prohibited the death penalty to being only 1 in 5 states that hold 80 percent of all prisoners serving LWOP in the United States. So, 80% of 80% of the world's population is split up into 5 US states!

Sadly, Death By Incarceration (DBI) is synonymous with LWOP in Michigan; however, it resists transparency, as many of the elderly prisoners that were incarcerated in the 70s and 80s are serving DBI. And, even though these prisoners were promised an opportunity for release if they kept their "noses clean," they languish in to their final years without the slightest compassion.

So, where are the humanitarian CAPS on Michigan sentences?

Capping life sentences is not a new concept. The feds did it until 1984. They did away with their 30-year cap when they passed the Sentencing Reform Act. Notably, various states cap life sentences with varying degrees of success. Minnesota is said to have a 30-year cap on life sentences and New York's

15-55 law (15 years served-55 years old or older) is an eye opener in sentencing reform.

A horrifying reality is alive and well in this state. If you are serving a LWOP or a long-indeterminate sentence (basketball score), you are one of the many walking dead languishing in an antiquated sentencing system. It is time to put an end to the madness. For example, a man is sentenced at the age of 22 to LWOP and has now served 46 years in prison. At the age of 68 he is given another 5-year "No Interest" from the Parole Board. Is he the same minded person that committed the crime nearly 5 decades ago? Has he aged out from that mind-set of a 22 year old?

Prison populations are declining in a number of states. Nevertheless, prisoners aged 50 or older are on the rise. It is predicted by 2030 a third of the prison population will be the languishing elderly.

The feds, along with at least 17 other states, have Compassionate (or elderly) Release Statutes in place. These laws combat the rising health-care costs connected to keeping elderly prisoners in prison. They allow the release of elderly prisoners serving life sentences. Recently, the feds gave their Compassionate Release Law more teeth by passing Second Chance Legislation. (Note: California and 5 other states have passed similar 'second look' laws).

Michigan has none of the above, as its prisons are filled with elderly prisoners who have served 30, 40, 50, 60 years. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan prisons housed over 2,000 elderly prisoners between 60-69 years old. There were 414 elderly prisoners between 70-79 years old, and 43 elderly prisoners over 80. The State of Michigan has a tight-fisted hold on its elderly prisoners, and just using the word CAP in the political arena ... (Cont. on p. 8)

# HATRED, RACISM, MASS INCARCERATION, TERRITORY RESTRICTIONS Injustice Everywhere

Dion DeAngelo

Many of your readers have read articles by my sisters Gina and Angelina. I have known Willis X. Harris all 21 years of my life. He is like a second father to me. In a way, I "live" in his personal library.

The border problem our nation alleges to have is similar to the mass incarceration problem we are having. At the federal level, i.e., Joe Biden and Congress, there is a factor they won't openly admit, at least Mitch McConnell, Ted Cruz, and several other Republicans, that is the race factor. These immigrants come to us in search of a better place to live. They come from South America. The key word is America. They want a better life, free from the criminal elements in their native country of birth.

As we witness today on television, see and read in newspapers and magazines, these immigrants are people of color, regardless of shade--black, brown, bi-racial. Let America tell the truth. If these immigrants were Caucasian seeking asylum for identical reasons, there would be no "border control problem" they would be welcome with "open arms."

On the prison front and mass incarceration in America, we witness too much hypocrisy in our criminal justice "two types" system. One for people of color and one for Caucasians. The informed segment in society can see the planned extrication of people of color out of society via mass incarceration by any means necessary. This includes males, females with multiple violent offenses, children mostly male, the mentally ill, elderly, and all male multiple male offenders. They are given very long prison sentences with the expectation they die in prison, wrongly convicted or not.

Like our southern borders, nationwide our prison system is packed like sardines with people of color, mostly black males. The men and boys receive no meaningful or authentic rehabilitation, no vocational nor academic training, no workable therapy nor

medical care. This is by design, no mistake.

Just like the immigrants en route to America for a better life and become contributing members to the betterment of society, black people in America, since 1865, have tried to do the same, but have met--and still meet--opposition to every effort to enjoy the "American Dream." I hate to say loyal, dedicated, free slaves. In their effort, life southern immigrants, to enjoy freedom justice and equality, black people experience horrible nightmares life murder, lynching, rapes, false charges and convictions, and regular denials of equal justice.

Further, like southern immigrants crossing the border, people of color in America still, after 157 years, are still suffering from racial, social, healthcare, and criminal injustices.

Because of color, the new black U.S. Supreme Court Justice was asked by Senator Ted Cruz some questions irrelevant to her confirmation like "what is a woman?" She is the first black woman ever appointed to the highest court in the nation.

America spends billions of dollars helping her race-related friends in Europe and Israel always run short of money to help our American friends over here at the southern border. They are shipped like slaves to New York, Washington, D.C., and a few other states.

Can you see the correlations? Racism is deeply entrenched in the U.S. Congress, religious institutions, the economy, and the criminal justice system.

As I said when I started writing this article, racism, hatred, territory restrictions (border control), and mass incarceration are the order of the day.

On the other side, please pay close attention to Willis X. Harris' articles. I was at his home recently reading one of his books written by James Baldwin titled, *The Fire Next time*. Baldwin stated that God gave Noah the rainbow sign. No more water, the fire next time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dion DeAngelo, like his family, is a lifelong friend of Willis X. Harris. He is a senior student at Eastern Michigan University and lives in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

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SUPPORT SECOND LOOK SENTENCING

# THE MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE VERSUS THE MICHIGAN CONSTITUTION

Willis X. Harris

Article 4, Section 46 of the Michigan Constitution, 1963, states "NO LAW SHALL BE ENACTED PROVIDING FOR THE PENALTY OF DEATH."

Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 750.316 runs contrary to Article 4, Sec. 46 by having a prisoner spend the rest of his or her natural life in prison. As said in previous articles, a mandatory non-parolable life sentence is a sentence longer than a prisoner's life expectancy which has been illegally authorized by MCL 750.316. Such statute was enacted contrary to the Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article 4, Sec. 46.

The Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. has written to current legislators, the Michigan Supreme Court, and the Michigan Attorney General, who is the chief constitutional lawyer of the State of Michigan. We showed the discrepancy between the State Constitution, Art. 4, Sec. 46, concerning the death penalty and the constitutional prohibition on enacting any law that carries the penalty of death. We clearly showed that MCL 750.316 was a challenge to the State Constitution because it carried a penalty of death by a parole-less incarceration. In short, it is Death-By-Incarceration (DBI).

We asked Dana Nessel, Attorney General, for an opinion regarding the constitutionality of mandatory, nonparolable life sentences under Michigan's Penal Code, specifically, MCL 750.316.

My letter was referred by AG Nessel to Joshua O. Booth, Division Chief, Opinions Division, for his opinion.

Booth stated: "By statute, it is the duty of the Attorney General 'to give (her) opinion upon all questions of law submitted to (her) by the Legislature or either Branch thereof, or by the Governor ... or any other State Officer. MCL 14.32.' Unfortunately, because private citizens are not among those listed in the statute, this office is not authorized to give the opinion you have requested."

We asked the Michigan Supreme Court

the same question. The Court stated they only give legal opinions on cases before the Court and prohibited from giving legal opinions to private citizens.

We received no responses from Governor Gretchen Whitmer nor the Parole Board.

As we have previously stated, the imposition of a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole is not within the constitutional grant of authority to the Legislature under the Michigan Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46. The determinate sentence provision and the indeterminate sentence provision under the Constitution of 1850, Art. 4, Sec. 47, Constitution of 1908, Art. 5, Sec. 28, and the Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46, never authorized the Legislature to enact any statute providing for a penalty of death life the mandatory, non-parolable life sentence which expires only after a prisoner's death. (Emphasis added).

Both the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc., and the National Lifers of America, Inc., strongly assert that the first degree murder statute, i.e., MCL 750.316, under the penalty phase must be found to be unconstitutional because specific limitations, contained in the Constitution itself, restricts legislative power. We find such a limitation is clearly mandated by Michigan's "NEW" Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46, which prohibits enactment of any "statute" providing for the "penalty" of "death". The Constitution empowers the Legislature to enact laws unless it has been prohibited. The Michigan Supreme Court held: "In declaring a statute unconstitutional, a court must be able to (lay its finger) on the part of the Constitution violated, and the infraction should be clear, and free from a reasonable doubt. See, *Bowman v. Sheehan*, 242 Mich. 95; 210 N.W. 69 (1929).

To conclude, in all matters of constitutional law, the "SUPREME LAW" is the Constitution, state or federal. See United States Constitution, Art. 6, Sec. 2; Michigan Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46; and Michigan Constitution of 1963, Art. 11, Sec. 1. Every clause in every Constitution is held to express the "intention of the people" who ratified it. Be it known that the intention of the people is law and not the interpretation of the Legislature. ... (Cont. on p. 7)

(The Michigan Legislature, from p. 6) ...

There is no statute enacted by the Michigan Legislature which specifically mandates a termination of a life sentence before a criminal defendant, i.e., non-parolable life, dies in prison (Death-By-Incarceration). MCL 750.316 was enacted without any consideration of Sec. 46 by the Legislature because a life sentence under MCL 750.316 set no specific limit on the amount of time a criminal defendant (lifer) must serve, but left this very important sentencing aspect up to the Executive Branch of government (Governor).

The Legislature has determined under MCL 791.234(4) (now 791.234(6)) that a defendant who is convicted for first-degree murder does not come under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Parole Board, but must serve a mandatory, non-parolable life sentence (Death-By-Incarceration).

This misinterpretation has denied persons convicted of felony murder parole board jurisdiction.

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## THE MDOC CONCEALS PRISONER DEATHS

Dwight Henley, M.B.A.

Prompted by a recent murder at Macomb Correctional Facility, MDOC spokesperson Chris Gaultz gave a public statement on FOX 2 Detroit News. Gaultz admitted a prisoner had been recently murdered by his cellmate, proceeded to the dining hall for breakfast, and stabbed a second prisoner while returning to his housing unit. Gaultz went on to say this was the second murder at the Macomb prison in 2022. From these statements the public has no reason to question Gaultz, but the facts suggest the public should question him.

Gaultz significantly understated the problem. This year 9 prisoners have died at Macomb Correctional Facility. Contrary to what Gaultz said, three prisoners had been murdered at the Macomb prison in 2022. Additionally, 2 or 3 other prisoners committed suicide and the remaining deaths came by way of drug overdose. Per capita, Macomb prison has been the deadliest prison in Michigan history! Given these facts, why did Gaultz choose to characterize the situation as he did?

As MDOC's Public Relations Director, Gaultz's job is to create and maintain a

positive public image of the MDOC. So was he trying to manage the MDOC's public image or does he simply not value the life of prisoners? Or is Gaultz trying to hide an even greater problem from the public? Evidence suggest its the latter.

Over the past year a couple of Macomb prison staff have been fired for smuggling drugs or cellphones into the facility. Former officer Priest was recently caught operating a mobile distribution center from the trunk of his car in the Macomb prison parking lot. Apparently, Priest would come inside the facility, take drug orders, go on break and fill the order from his trunk, and then return to work and make the delivery. Gaultz doesn't want these facts tied in with the death because a closer investigation would reveal 2 of 3 murders were related to drugs and the numerous drug overdose deaths--drugs provided by staff!

To address these issues, MDOC director Heidi Washington has removed Macomb Warden George Stephenson, Deputy Warden Donald Ricumstrict, and Assistant Deputy Warden Allen Greason. The Director is implementing random searches for Macomb prison staff and she is contemplating installing a TSA scanner at the facility to address the drug problem. However, the removal of the Warden, Deputy, and Assistant Deputy, as well as Director Washington's other contemplated actions, are simply a deflection tactic. Since Warden Stephenson departed and staff searches began, prison staff have found more drugs, cellphones, and rumor has it, even some saw blades.

If Director Washington wants to get Macomb prison back in line, she may want to step down herself and take Gaultz with her. Director Washington has knowingly turned a blind eye to Macomb until it became the deadliest prison in Michigan history, and Gaultz continues to show he is more concerned with covering up the problem than being forthright with the public about it. Although Director Washington and Public Relations Director Gaultz will most likely keep their jobs, the family and friends of the deceased prisoners, as well as the public, deserve greater accountability.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dwight Henley (Prison No. 246521) is serving a LWOP sentence at Macomb Correctional Facility, 34625 26 Mile Rd., Lenox Twp., MI 48048. While incarcerated Dwight earned ... (Cont. on p. 9)

(Citizens Ask, from p. 3) ...

Great question! Probably because the answer to the problem of offender behavior is beyond the scope and power of the criminal justice system alone. Only one example here, our political lawmakers are heavily influenced by corporate contributions to fund their election and re-election campaigns which can impact new laws. Private prison corporations gave \$1.6 million to congressmen in 2016 alone. For insight let's look at the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). It is a company that owns and manages private prisons and detentions centers with an annual income over \$1.7 billion. They are not evil people but they are stuck between rebuilding lives on one hand and the business of creating profits on the other. Reducing recidivism would damage their profit margins. The year before I joined the Arkansas Department of Corrections the state dropped their contract with a private prison system. The private prison corporation could only make profits housing minimum security inmates.

Another example, life all of us, many in our free-world communities want simple answers. Unfortunately the solutions to the important question you raised are quite complex. As more and more young people go to college, I believe we will eventually see significant willingness and ability to address complex problems like the one you asked here.

4) What is being done to resolve racism in law enforcement and the legal question?

Another great question. An important step was President Johnson's signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Small steps have been successfully taken since then to implement this law. However, because of the power of social media, protests erupted world-wide drawing our attention to this significant problem. These protests did not die off quickly which forced elected officials from the local to the federal levels to focus their attention on the problem. Now it will be up to the people to find ways to keep elected officials focused on solving this problem.

These have been my opinions and are not truth written in stone. I hope they add to all the important research you are reading. The brain is our most important

tool in that it creates beliefs based on the data we are given and that which we choose to embrace. When we put researched informed data into our brains we are better prepared to create a tomorrow that is, individually and collectively, superior to today's world.

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(Michigan's Hidden Death, from p. 4) ... can cause a severe backlash. This political fear of 'backlash' has forced the elderly into serving DBI.

Obviously, Michigan is a death penalty state, which is also obvious by the death rate of the elderly serving decades past the aging out of their crime. Inoperable brain cancer and a year to live... "Don't ask, you're going nowhere." "But, I have served 53 years and have accepted full responsibility for my past crime and only have six months to live." "No. Don't ask. We'll see you in five years." There are hundreds of these horrifying examples in Michigan.

In 1847 Michigan abolished the death penalty. From that time until 1980, life sentences were commuted as a matter of routine. Only about 25 percent of all life sentences resulted in DBI.

Ready for this fact... One of the best kept secrets in the politics of criminal justice reform is that non-violent prisoners who get released from prison come back to prison for a violent crime way more often than violent prisoners who are released after 'aging out of the crime.' Less than 2 percent of elderly prisoners released after serving 30 or more years have returned to prison. Only 1 in 400 come back with a violent crime. Compared to returning non-violent offenders, it isn't even close.

A proactive Governor Gretchen Whitmer could address the rising number of elderly prisoners by placing a CAP on life sentences. I am not suggesting an open-door policy, as that would make us uncaring as the state's lawmakers, no, I believe there should be some form of control, such as an intensive and mandatory 6-month program and a period of appropriate conduct to qualify for relief under a cap. And, with today's technology, we can use electronic monitoring to assure lifers are where they are supposed to be. It is time to use that technology ... (Cont. on p. 9)



(Michigan's Hidden Death, from p. 8) ... for more than spyware, social media, and video games. Cap life sentences and strap a n ankle monitor to every elderly prisoner released on parole. At least they are out of prison living the remainder of their life in society. Let the elderly pass from this life surrounded by family and friends.

It is time to distinguish between the people we are actually afraid of and the elderly who we are mad at.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The author of Michigan's Hidden Death Penalty is incarcerated. The facts he uses in this article are based on his opinion. He does not have access to the internet to get precise data.

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(The MDOC Conceals Prisoner, from p. 7) ... a MBA from Adams State University and become educationally eligible to take the CPA exam.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since the author wrote this article, two nurses were escorted out of the facility, further contraband has been discovered, and a YouTube video was made by RTP Unit residents showcasing their rapping skills.

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## WORD FROM THE WISE

My name is William "Bill" Sleeper, my prison number is 116539. I was incarcerated October 16, 1965, at the age of 17. I served 44 years and was released on May 19, 2009, at the age 61.

I was initially charged with first degree murder. On June 9, 1966, I pled guilty to second degree murder and one month later (July) I received a life sentence under the second degree lifer law.

I've been asked to give some insight for the beginning lifer and the one hopefully coming up to the end of their sentence. For the beginner, put your gang affiliates and your guns behind you, put your street smarts behind you, you are now in a city within a city. It has its own rules, its own laws, and before you set out to be that guy, shut up sit down look and learn. I don't care how smart you are, how tough you are, or how angry you are--the 1,000 other men feel the same way.

As for the men who are getting close to that hopeful public hearing, I've lost some very dear friends because when they went to the public hearing they minimized their

guilt, justified their actions, and even blamed their victims for the crime they committed. The Parole Board knows what you did and they have granted you a public hearing so you can admit your guilt, take responsibility for your actions, and express remorse for the harm you have caused. Attempting to make yourself look good fails every time!

Public Hearings usually last 1 hour to 1½ hours. Personally, on February 4, 2009, my Public Hearing lasted 5 hours from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. They tried to make me blow up or lie or in some way justify my actions. It wasn't the Parole Board using these tactics, it was the representative for the Attorney General's Office. If you are granted a Public Hearing, tell the truth. Those present conducting the Public Hearing already know what happened and what was said in your court proceedings. If you try to manipulate the facts already known, the results will not be favorable.

As a personal exercise, I did what the Parole Board asked me to do before my Public Hearing. I was told to write a letter as if I was the victim writing to me, the person who just killed their family member. It took me a month to reach down into my soul to truly understand what I did, and in doing so, I discovered true empathy, which is an understanding of the dynamics of my crime.

Men and women, all I can do is wish you good luck. I'm only allowed space for 600 words. While your serving your sentence, keep in mind that no one put you in prison. Your actions put you there. Don't blame anyone but yourself. You have to do your time. Educate yourself, mature, and do your time as peaceful as possible. There is light at the end of the tunnel. You just have to make it there to see.

I wish you well.

-- William "Bill" Sleeper

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## "THE ONE-PERSON MENTALITY

Mario Cavin

Like it or not, prison is a community. We live together, eat together, and share the same restrooms. A person's selfish ideology and behaviors ... (Cont. on p. 10)

(The One-Person Mentality, from p. 9) ... has long-reaching consequences for all those around. Whether someone ties up the phones all day or leaves the restrooms a mess, everybody suffers. So when I hear people justify these behaviors with "there's only one person on my I.D.," I have to ask myself if I'm missing a larger picture, or is that individual truly oblivious?

We don't live on deserted islands apart from one another. We are literally crammed into cells the size of a parking space. Everything we do affects someone else in some way. When a person smokes in their cell and the smell lingers into the hallway, others are affected because 1) they have to breathe it even if they have asthma, etc., and 2) everyone is at risk for shakedowns if staff decides to locate the source. Isn't number 2 the definition of "dry snitching"?

When an individual dies--whether by self-infliction or someone else's hands--everybody suffers: Units are locked down, mass searches are conducted (resulting in loss of or damaged property, visits get cancelled, you name it. All because of the actions of one person occupying his I.D. card.

So if you believe that person on your I.D. card isn't responsible for or to those within the community, maybe you should find that deserted island and do your time away from people in general. Or, perhaps, we must concede that some people simply don't see how their actions impact others, and this selfish attitude is why people are in prison and people in society want us to remain in prison.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Mario Cavin (#326204) is serving a 37-year sentence in the MDOC and is housed at the Macomb Correctional Facility, 34625 26 Mile Rd., Lenox Township, MI 48048. He is a board member with the Local NLA Chapter and an active member of The Adolescent Redemption Project (TARP).

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## UPDATE ON SECOND LOOK SENTENCING LEGISLATION

After speaking to Alexandra Bailey at The Sentencing Project on Thursday, November 17, 2022, I was informed that the

Second Look Sentencing bill will most likely be sponsored by Senator Stephanie Chang and Senator Jeff Irwin. The proposed legislation does appear to have bipartisan support.

The reason Second Look Sentencing legislation has bipartisan support is because it does not open a floodgate for prisoners to be released. Second Look Sentencing allows men and women sentenced to life without the possibility of parole (LWOP; Death-By-Incarceration), life with parole, and long-indeterminate (virtual life) to motion their sentencing court to consider re-sentencing them after they have served 10, 15, 20, or 25 years in prison. Of course the consideration would be based on rehabilitation, educational achievements, and ability to follow prison rules. The Second Look Sentencing legislation permits the judge to review whether change has occurred in the individual and whether a sentence reduction is warranted based on that change.

The Second Look Sentencing is smart legislation. It can save the State of Michigan hundreds of thousands of dollars giving many elderly prisoners a chance to return to their families after spending decades in prison. These savings can be effectively used to fix the roads and improve education in our state. The Second Look Sentencing is smart, fiscally responsible legislation that has a safety valve to always keep the safety of society in mind.

-- Jamie Meade, Editor

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## SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES

We are sad to inform you that Daniel "Danny-Boy" Jones passed away on Saturday, November 19, 2022, in the City of Detroit. He was a victim of a senseless shooting. Danny-Boy was recently hired by American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and worked with Nation Outside. He was advocating for criminal justice reform in Michigan and had become a huge voice for many of us left behind. We are praying for all his family, friends, and loved ones. Danny-Boy will be greatly missed. We are so grateful for his work and presence in the world.

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**HAPPY VETERANS DAY!  
HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

## SUBSCRIPTION FORM

The expressed purposes of the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and the National Lifers of America, Inc. to publish the "Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter" are to educate and uplift the lifer population, to seek changes in laws that restrict clemency and parole, to educate the general public, and to encourage criminal justice reform, especially in corrections.

### PRISONERS

PRISONER'S FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### CIVILIANS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ APT. \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NO. -(     ) \_\_\_\_\_

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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