

OUR LIVES DO MATTER

By Aswad Syed

Today is Sunday, January 29, 2023. Although my beloved 49ers lost to the Philadelphia Eagles, that is not the main topic that is ruling my thoughts.

On Tuesday evening (January 17, 2023) here at Santa Rita Jail ("SRJ"), another prisoner was found dead in a cell. His name was Stephen Lofton, and he was a human being whose life had worth. Death and despair are common around SRJ.

For us inside, it's as if the local community of activists, journalists, and politicians have forgotten about us. Sure, they may greet you with a bottle of water, a healthy snack, or make a phone call or two once you are released, but who supports those who fight these oppressors?

We hear some spout words such as "SHARED HUMANITY" and "INTEGRITY." If you truly believe in these concepts, then show us by amplifying our struggle to be recognized as humans.

I cried when I saw the Tyre Nichols' video. What I saw there was the absence of humanity and the perpetrators were Black men – BLACK, LIKE ME!

I saw a glimmer of hope inside SRJ a couple weeks ago.

On Thursday, January 19, 2023, I saw a young white prisoner attempt to take his life. He was around 26 or 28 years old; a handsome dude who looks like that NFL quarterback with the Jacksonville Jaguars – Trevor Lawrence. This prisoner's body was absolutely still and lifeless when the SRJ Deputies pulled him out of his cell by his feet. The prisoner's name is Brendan E. Thompson.

It looked horrifying, and I thought the worst. Inmates die at SRJ!

However, there was this one deputy. His name is Koski. Deputy Koski was adamant about not giving up on Brendan, who looked to be DEAD. While Deputy Koski's colleagues stood around doing nothing but waiting on the Emergency Medical Response Team, Deputy Koski knelt down close to Brendan and would not stop trying to revive him. Deputy Koski kept rubbing Brendan's chest saying, "Come on back, man; come on back, buddy – we got you." As I

watched, I thought...FOR ONCE, HUMANITY!! Guess what? Brendan began to slowly move!!! HE LIVED!!

COMMENT FROM DESTINATION FREEDOM:

We are all human beings regardless of what profession or job we perform on a daily basis, where we live, what car we drive, or the color of our skin.

On January 19, 2023, as Aswad witnessed, I was elated to hear from Aswad that Deputy Koski was concerned about another human's life (even though he was a prisoner), began CPR and did not stop, and he revived Brendan.

Destination Freedom advocates for prisoners' rights, but the human and civil rights of ALL matter to us. We are all fed up hearing about mass shootings and the loss of lives...whether law enforcement or civilians... no matter what type of incident it is. In attempting to turn the tide of hate, harm, and hostility, we decided to create "HIGHLIGHT ON HUMANITY" on our website and in our soon-to-be-out, newly created Newsletter.

Our first HIGHLIGHT ON HUMANITY is Deputy B. Koski, Badge No. 2676, Alameda County Sheriff's Office. We wish to publicly acknowledge and thank him for his HUMAN KINDNESS and willingness to help a fellow human being. Without Deputy Koski, Brendan E. Thompson would not be alive today.

HEARTS TO DEPUTY B. KOSKI!