

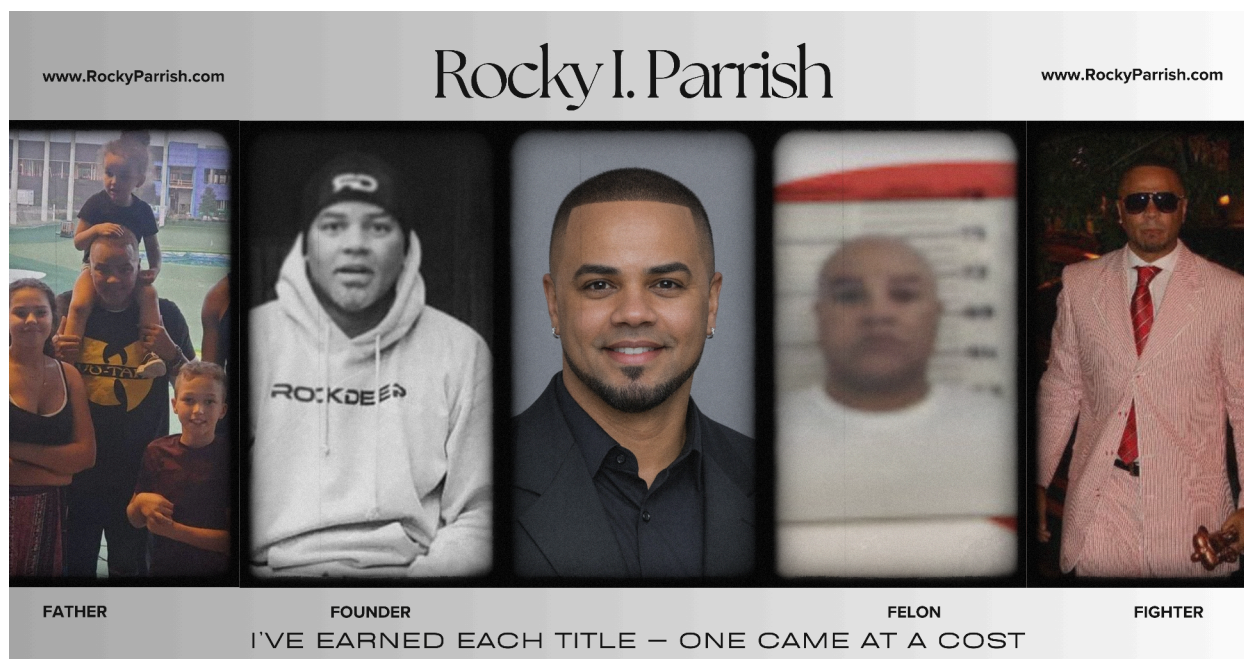


## MyStory

# Incarceration Changes Others

3rd Blog Entry

By Rocky I. Parrish



So in two previous blog entries I touched a bit on what [really happened and why I was incarcerated](#) and behind the scenes stuff that took place when working on [Shaq's custom sneakers](#).

For this entry I wanted to address a few things specifically, and give some deeper context on “the whys”, but I really wanted to touch on how my incarceration changed **others**.

When I say others I mean a bunch of others. Others, like family, “friends”, customers, loyal customers and how it changed some dynamics with my own children.

*“Money doesn't change you, it changes people around you.”*

- Bow Wow (Lottery Ticket Movie)

I would venture to say out of experience that incarceration does the same thing; changes others.



Of course being locked up changes you as a person, and I don't mean anything that has to do with the traumas experienced by others when locked up. I didn't have any traumatizing experiences when in Lewisburg.

This is not to be confused with scary moments that took place like the potential race war my first week, or a Case Manager trying to get me hemmed up after I found out I was being released, (*I'll cover those in different blogs*).

## **Customers: The Loyal, the Fickle, and the Hurt**

**When support turns to silence, and silence speaks volumes.**

I realized pretty quickly once it became public knowledge that I was convicted of Bank Fraud, that people can flip immediately. Was it surprising? Of course not, because I had experienced things like that in my past simply from trying to be successful and do my own thing, but this? This was a different type of flip.

Let's start with ROCKDEEP customers and those who weren't even customers. I have loyal customers who are really cool dudes and they knew for me, it was more than just a customer thing, who are STILL in my corner, like my guy Paul, Taj, Rashad, Justin and his Auntee who became my Auntee. I had really nice customers like Ronald, David, Yelli and the list goes on that always had positive things to say.

There are great customers like Larahn who STILL support and buy items from our Ebay Store. Childhood friends Rayfield and Bridgit who even helped set our first store up! I could name tons of others just like them, but what I won't do is call the names of those who were like them at one point, but immediately switched it up. They'd love the attention, poor miserable folks.

If anyone knows me or has for ANY small amount of time, you know I give back to the communities I came from and also ones that I didn't. Every year I invite people to come out with me and my family to give free kicks and clothes to the homeless and less fortunate. I only ask one thing if you come with us. Don't bring any cameras out to "capture the moment" or show others that you are doing something for the community.

One reason is so those we are giving to can maintain their dignity and what we do isn't for show. I had customers like Mike and others who would help us.

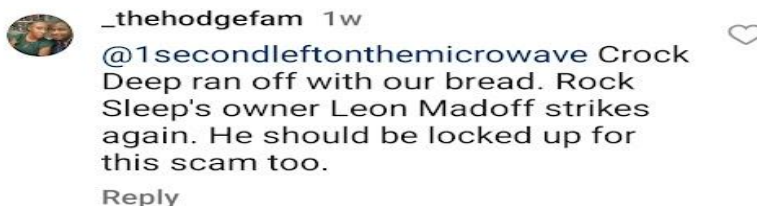
I tell that brief story to say, I have not only had some customers in my home that either played the fence when it came to me, but customers who I've called when their mother passed away to let them know I was thinking about them and hope they were good say some pretty foul ish.



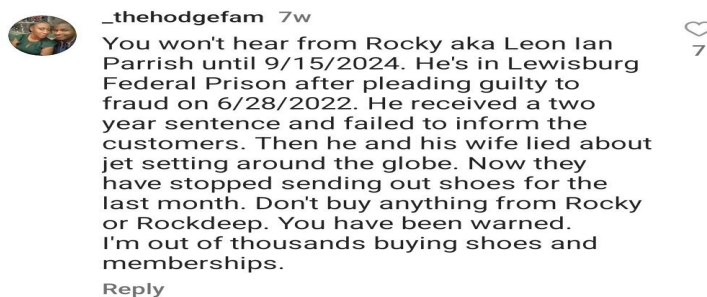
Yes, I send free stuff out to some, and make sure others are taken care of when it comes to product, but that's not something I brag about or think is something great. It's the way it should be.

To see how some customers immediately went to calling me a scam artist, or saying I stole millions of dollars from people was both nonsensical and ignorant.

One even chose to post my case for all to read on social media, and EVEN then people chose NOT to read it and see that all the accusations were wrong. Others attacked my wife and my family, but I got updates and once I got home saw screenshots of all the f\*ckery spouted by any and everyone.



This particular dude was something else though. I admit he spent thousands of dollars with ROCKDEEP, as he had with other Black Businesses, and gotten free product, because I appreciated his support and even had his number in my phone. But he was one specifically that went off the deep end and other than stating falsehoods took things very personal.



Now don't get me wrong, I understand disappointment. Hell I was disappointed in myself for putting my family in that situation. I know there were those who felt disappointed, and even said I should have been upfront about my situation and they would have been more understanding. But here is where I tend to disagree and need to be clear.

I treated my customers like a second family, doing video lives sharing unreleased products, sharing stories about my family and giving insight and advice to those who asked. I mentored anyone who wanted it and rarely turned down an opportunity to assist other footwear designers.



*But I didn't owe anyone my entire life and business.*

Apparently when I came home sooner than the 24 months I was sentenced to, some of the fake bullies got real real quiet. Some don't even realize they have surprises still in store for them, as you can talk as much stuff about me as you'd like. I can handle it, but when you come for my family, you make it personal.

## **Customers: The Loyal, the Fickle, and the Hurt**

**When support turns to silence, and silence speaks volumes.**

But let's move on to how others changed, like friends and family. As I said, when you get to be my age, you either become less shocked by things that happened, or not shocked at all by the actions of those you know.

I will preface this next stage of unrealness, by saying I have never, and will never EXPECT anyone to do anything for me or EXPECT anyone to give me anything, as my father made me the type who hated to ask anyone for help in any capacity.

However - when some of the people share your last name and folks you've been close to or would call a friend treat your wife like the plague when she reaches out to them about doing a GoFundMe to assist with my lawyer, you feel some type of way.

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## **Let's Get Rocky Home....**





Some may think it's petty or say as I did, they owe me nothing, and you'd be right, they don't. I just said that. But when you are quick to come to my home anytime I have an event and not only take whatever free stuff I offer, BUT also ask if there's anything else you can get. . . . . Well - that's craazy.

When you have someone you treated like a brother, not donating a dollar, you feel some type of way.

When you have someone you've given stuff to help their business and they ask your wife when they think their stuff will arrive AFTER she's made announcements about getting things in order, you feel some type of way.

Then seeing my cousins Nat and Renee and their mother my Aunt Susie Donate \$1000 damn near made me cry.

Seeing my cousin Sheryce (we affectionately call her Bay-Bay) donate \$5000 really broke me down.

My high school classmate Kathy who was going through her own thing donated \$25 dollars and that meant the world to me, because I KNEW she had her own things going on, but she donated.

Now mind you in all, 17 friends, family and even "anonymous" folks donated all different amounts. To all of them, I am truly appreciative and I don't discount their donations in any way at all, because honestly I was surprised THAT many chose to donate, because they didn't have to nor were they expected to. But they know that and because of who they are, I don't have to worry about them not being mentioned by name.

You might say, it's hypocritical to be upset at certain people who didn't donate if I didn't expect anyone to in the first place, but if you don't get it, you either don't want to get it, or the accurate terms you can choose from would be: *willful ignorance*, *disingenuous*, or my favorite *obtuse*.

My Mother and Sister Tina who may get on my nerves at times, like Mothers and Sisters do, but some folks wouldn't have gotten the refunds they did had it not been for them. Hell I'd probably be homeless if it weren't for those two and my wife's Father and Step-Mom also helping us out.

I know for a fact, that my success upsets people. I also know for a fact that my failures have disappointed other people who supported me and believed in me. For those who stood by and weren't judgemental, you won't be disappointed again, and you will be proven right in standing tall.

For those who weren't even customers to begin with but still had many things to say, keep being mad but also try not to and seek therapy. I know folks who spend so much time trying to down and demean another don't have much going on in their own lives and they are either jealous or disappointed in their own life.

I feel sorry for you and hope you are able to find it within yourself to forgive yourself, or find something that makes you happy.



I have and I will keep finding things to make me happy. Will my journey ahead be easy? Not at all. Nothing worth achieving ever is.

For those who say “don’t even pay them any mind or give them your energy” I don’t, and it makes them angrier for some reason.

## **Lessons from the Inside**

### **Final Thoughts**

So here’s where I’ll leave you for this entry.

When it all comes down to it, had none of the ignorant folks gotten personal with my family, I probably wouldn’t have learned some of the really great things I did while incarcerated.

I could have gone completely **Oxon Hill** (PG County) on some people and would have been very justified in doing so, but I knew my freedom was important and the things I learned in Lewisburg would be invaluable in responding to these foolish actions.

While in prison, you don’t just meet the dudes who have done drug related or other street level stuff, you also meet lawyers, businessmen and the like. I may have taught business classes while incarcerated, but I learned how to do quite a few things the way they do in the white collar world (*legally of course*).

### **So there’s that.**

Incarceration changed me, yes, but it also kept revealing the truth about others no matter who they are, good and bad. Some showed me so much support it almost brought me to tears. Others showed me who they really are as a person and that would have broken most people.

What I’ve always known is this: people will reveal who they truly are when life becomes real for others, not even themselves. I imagine it would hurt if I expected more of people, but life's experiences have prepared me not to expect much at all..

I’m thankful though, because I know my mistakes don’t define me, even ones this big and I will never give up on people in general. Those who could potentially disappoint you by their actions or inaction do you a favor by showing themselves who they really are. It’s simply one less person to think about moving forward.

So the journey continues.

***Every chapter, good, bad, and heartbreaking, is building the road I was meant to take.***