

MASSACHUSETTS INJUSTICE

"JOE LAB"

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Joe "Lab" served his country proudly as one of the first wave of Marines who went over to Vietnam to fight in the jungles. For Joe's service there, for saving the lives of fellow Americans, Joe was awarded the Bronze Star with Battle "V" for Valor. Valor! How many of us can say we have been recognized for our valor? What does that say about a person? It bodes well toward good character. Joe retired as a Marine Corp sergeant and youngest recruiter of the time.

Joe was convicted in 1973 of first degree murder. No criminal record, no past anti-social past behavior, nothing but his proud and honorable war record. In Massachusetts if you are convicted of first degree murder there is only one sentence option: life without parole. The judge could not take Joe's war record into consideration. His only option was to lock him up forever. Draconian and inhuman; especially in Joe's case.

Joe is in his 40th year of incarceration. He is wheelchair bound and needs to have all his daily needs tended to by others. His spirit is strong, and his will is powerful, but the body is weak. Joe has COPD that was caused by his exposure to agent orange, the Vietnam military defoliant. In short Joe's war service is slowly killing, but the state is killing him even slower: one life draining cut at a time.

When is enough, enough? When does it become counter-productive to keep a man locked up? I think Joe's case is one of the more obvious instances. He is no career criminal. He is no sociopath. He is a flawed human being who deserves justice tempered with mercy. Isn't 40 years in prison justice enough?

I'm not here to retry Joe's case. I am not here to disavow victim's rights. In fact Joe himself is a supporter of victim's rights. I'm just here to say that our country, and this fine state, remain in the dark ages when it comes to crime and punishment. Life without parole sentences promote crime as they foster a prison system of hopelessness. Justice tempered with mercy is the only way. No other civilized country in the world incarcerates without hope like we do.

Your voice needs to be heard on this. Please get in contact with Joe at his website. It is time for the citizens of the Commonwealth to "Free Joe Lab" as he fought for your freedom so proudly. Please go to;

www.freejoelab.com

Please also leave your thoughts and comments here for me. I am very anxious to hear from everyone.

Timothy J. Muise