

Papyrus  Collective
California Death Row



DEATHROW
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BACK COVER



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PAPYRUSCOLLECTIVE

WRITE
 **OR** 
DIE

FRONT COVER

Introduction

Several months ago, the Brothers at the San Quentin SHU / Deathrow contacted me about collaborating on a zine project as part of an educational outreach and networking project they were developing. This included social networking with email, facebook, twitter, a website and so forth.

This was right around the time that the first of two waves of hunger strikes, spearheaded by the SHU prisoners over at Pelican Bay was getting ready to become a very important reality. I was part of the support group, working behind the scenes, for that seminal series of actions. I knew these Brothers at San Quentin would also involve themselves with that struggle, as they are victims of clinical state torture, too.

So, we all had a "lot on our plates" mentally at that time. But, I knew this would prove to be a very fruitful and productive collaboration, once we had the time to focus on it. I immediately told them I was down for the zine aspect of their initiative, which will actually flower into a series of zines. After all, that's what I do - collaborate with conscious prisoners on zines and make them available to whoever wants to learn from them - not least of who is myself! I got into this whole zine distro thing in the first place because I wanted to learn and (hopefully) become comrades with those brilliant thinkers on the frontline trenches - the brilliant prisoners who have not only attained consciousness under brutal conditions but who also have the courage to share their wisdom with their fellow captives.

I'm a prison abolitionist because I detest crime. This may sound odd. You may say, "People are in prison because they have committed crimes!" I do not condone criminal behavior, whether perpetrated by an individual or carried out by bureaucrats following the orders and laws of a criminal state. Incarceration is composed of kidnapping and imprisoning, in this society under brutal and seemingly endless conditions. It "solves" *nothing!* It is mass criminality, on a daily basis by the state, protected by "law."

You don't pour gas on a fire and you don't rehabilitate people by torturing them and brutalizing them - and then spitting them back into society with little or no options to fashion a legitimate life.

As for death row, this is the ugly bed sore of a diseased society. How the hell does this society claim the right to slowly torture people - and then put them to death??? Oh yeah, I forgot - the Constitution says so. Well, to this day, the Constitution still insists that prisoners are nothing more than legal slaves! Read the 13th Amendment - and then read what these articulate Brothers write.

- @nthony Rayson -

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PAP
COLLECTIVE

"OUR GENERATION"



RUS
COLLECTIVE

"... OUR LEGACY."



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Learn the explosive truth from the gulags, both inside & out! ZINES

Prisoners
Anarchism
Abolitionism
Feminism

AGITATION



EDUCATION

A NEW GENERATION

by
Kzyzst

When I first was sent to Death Row, it was like the earth stopped spinning.

I stuck out like a sore thumb- from the way I wore my clothes, to the idea of what I considered to be a quality workout in physical exercise. It was like stepping back into the late 1970's and some dudes were even wearing the bottoms of their pant leg tucked into their socks: LOL- some still do.

In 2011, my observations included that most of us in "our" generation are coming to Death Row after graduating from high school or attending college, whereas most of the older brothaz graduated from high school or are in receipt of their GED from a prison classroom, many haven't finished school at all. I'm sadly reminded of my late father whom ironically enough, was in this same prison in the late 1970's and died last year not knowing how to read.

Most in "our" generation have had long term relationships and were married (or still are) before coming to Death Row, compared to the older brothaz who end up getting married while in prison and/or have never experienced a long term relationship outside of these prison visiting rooms.

"Our" generation are predominately computer literate and are part of the "hip-hop" culture- a culture know for its DJ'ing, recording music, and performing before live concert audiences. We have grown to move with the culture.

Because time in prison stymies behavioral maturity, it is obvious that the older brothaz are far removed from the serious culture gap with few meaningful encounters with Death Row youth- simply engrossed in societal stigma. It is time to rebuild the bridge.

It hit me one day when prison officials began allowing Death Row inmates to purchase both CD's as well as their respective players. One brotha asked me if he could remove the CD from the player, flip it over, and play the other side. I admit it was funny and yes I laughed but I couldn't help but think, "would this be me in the future?" How many little things have I taken for granted while out in society because I moved in the same direction as the growing culture?

It's becoming noticeable how we gravitate toward one another and we are very meticulous about which older "cats" we associate with. We have zero tolerance for old convict

mentalities and misuse of antiquated knowledge generally used to manipulate and navigate through traditional destructive dark values. This is prison, we get it, enough already!

To a greater degree, we are multicultural. It remains a difficult task to complete this topic without offending ideologies, subcultures and values, but as you can tell by my writing, "our" generation here on Death Row are readily intelligent, articulate, and driven with creativity.

The Papyrus Collective sprang from the mind of one of Death Row's wise youngstaz who networked with an older man of another race, and they both chose and reached to consolidate resources, leading by example with qualified minds to provide this very forum of expression from the inside-out. This brand new era- led by the youth and endorsed by the worthy.

We reject the negative portrayals of youth in the eyes of the media around the nation- The Youth of Death Row unite across this nation put the world on notice, provide a concise representation that today's youth are indeed tomorrow's elders and that "without the seed, there can be no crop, no crop, no food, no food, and we all starve."

All but three of the youth on Death Row that I know of, have children living in society with you and over half of the 720+/- men condemned to death here, came while still under the age of 33. How old or young are you? Who's next?



Request Denied By The DRI Project

We are fated to spend our days in an earthly purgatory, exiled from society by our own actions in many cases. It can be fairly said that the population behind the myriad walls and fences of the nation's correctional facilities represents a significant destructive force, that through our deeds, lives have been destroyed and property lost.

At the same time in the greater world, there is an existential crisis for more than a hundred thousand Americans. They cling to life and hope in the face of unspeakable pain and horror, waiting for the gift of a life-saving organ transplant.

The government has an absolute duty to protect its citizenry. That is the rationale for the imprisonment of so many; that, and the concept of repayment of societal debt, rehabilitation, restitution, punishment for transgression, etc. The word penitentiary says it all -- a place to learn penitence.

Why is it then, if the government protects its citizenry, and the objective of imprisonment is to shape positive outcomes in the prisoner, that with a population exceeding two million incarcerated, that those in the "free world" awaiting organ donors and tissue transplants, are deprived of willing donors?

That's right. There is for whatever reason -- be it apathy or oversight, or the outright and backward thinking of the eugenic bigot... a complete lack of any program or protocol for the willing incarcerated to donate living vital organs and tissues to those under sentence of death without them. In rare cases it may be possible to do this for a family member, but the bureaucratic impediments are so substantial that people literally die while awaiting the results of the request for the necessary approval.

It is ironic that an entire segment of the population of the country is excluded from the rolls of the willing. The government protecting our society?

Why is it that the state can take life, labor, income and time from the imprisoned, ask of us to "rehabilitate" ourselves, yet deny us the chance to make the ultimate restitution -- literally the gift of life, the only act that can transcend all others? Meanwhile, the sick languish in such numbers that demand far outstrips supply for match-worthy donors and the benevolent state in its infinite wisdom allows this to go unchecked.

What one could rationalize as ignorance or unintentional indifference soon becomes much murkier.

On San Quentin's Death Row, they will move hell and earth to keep alive the sick, elderly, and terminal cases so that they will face an executioner. They will literally stave off death by heart attack or diabetes over the "Do Not Resuscitate" instruction of an inmate, in the name of "justice."

However, when it comes to heroic measures on behalf of its "law abiding" citizenry, there is no such action to keep them alive. Ask yourself, "What is asked with that set of priorities?"

If you believe that I overstate the case, ask yourself this: Why is it that anyone who gets their driver's license, is asked if they wish to donate their organs in the event of death; yet once one leaves the "free world," nowhere in any file or on any form are you able to do this? You may have been an organ donor when you were free, but as soon as you pass into purgatory, your identification is taken and you are issued a prison number with no such provision. How many organs are wasted every year? The numbers are truly astounding.

It is shameful and sick that such an oversight had to come to light in such a place as hopeless as death row before anyone was moved to do anything about it. For all of the "evil" that

continued on 26

Amazon.com Prime

A Portion Of Thyself: Essential Reflections From Death Row by Michael Flinner (Paperback - January 30, 2010) \$17.99

Michael Flinner's comments on the process of writing this book:

"I've found that writing allowed for the confrontation of my rehabilitation and grief head-on."

This insightful compellation of thoughts relate to self worth and various other topics. They stem from self destructive behaviors and imperfect memories.

"I hope you'll pick up a copy and support our continued efforts at abolishing capital punishment." (Michael Flinner)

Visit: deathrowmate.org

The Sacred Eye of the Falcons: Lessons in Life from Death Row

Price: \$16.26

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Request Denied

from page 13

exists behind prison walls, a greater evil would be letting a single individual perish when there are untold riches in the form of the willing masses who have a number beyond their name. Allow those who wish for the opportunity to make a difference, to better the world, to better the life of someone in need, and to better themselves. To make restitution by giving life. What is justice if it isn't the act of making some good come of something bad? The same logic is true of the opposite, too. To create something bad from good intentions would be an injustice.

It is an issue that doesn't know bipartisanship. Death is the great bipartisan. Get involved. Ask your representatives why a single person would be denied the opportunity to live if there is a chance to save them while more than ample resources exist -- living and deceased.

Certain of these efforts are blossoming online at www.deathrowmate.org. I hope that you'll become a member in favor of this long overdue agenda.

visit: www.deathrowmate.org

email: thedriproject@gmail.com

THE NINTH GROUND

by
Adisa, Ajani, and Ajamu Kamara

"Put them on dying ground and they will live." -Sun Tzu,
The Art of War

The Ninth Ground, a term derived from the ancient military text The Art of War, refers to the last of the nine grounds—the dying ground.

If someone were trying to kill you, would you use every means at your disposal to defend yourself? And if someone took everything you owned, would you start the process of rebuilding? Well, your response to being sentenced to a long prison term, life, or even death should be the same as your response to defending yourself from attack or great loss: you should fight.

We view the prison environment as dying ground and "fighting" as a metaphor for self-determination. One of the biggest mistakes many people make when coming to prison is that they don't initially comprehend the extremity of their circumstances. Instead, they jump into the flow of the environment, and thus fail to productively utilize those first crucial three to five years in prison for acquiring knowledge and building the necessary foundation that will sustain them for years to come. Self-determination should never be relegated to "just getting by."

Self-determination should always be a priority, and anything less should be unacceptable.

"Plan for difficulty when it is still easy, do the great when it is still small." -Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

From the moment we step into the prison system we need to begin a program that organizes our energy toward productive goals. We have to kick-start the growth process. In prison your back is even more up against the wall than ever, so it is imperative to immediately see the place for what it is—dying ground. Since prison culture is a gross extension of the street culture most prisoners come from, there is a tendency to merge with it even though the pitfalls are obvious. You must begin to think strategically, as if you are always on the battlefield. When you take this approach to your situation, you will not squander time but rather move with profound sense of mission.

"If they are to die there, what can they not achieve?" -Sun Tzu, The Art of War

your mind is not focused then your energy will be drained, and your response to your situation will be ineffective. Don't invest time or energy into people who are unreliable. The revolutionary George Jackson once commented, "When someone does not judiciously [and effectively] execute my affairs then I have every right to remove my bosom interest from their hands." In other words, you should not simply rely on the good intentions and benevolence of others. You should always be working toward self-efficiency. The facts we need to come to terms with when we come to prison include these: people change, people face hardships, and people die. Assessing your own abilities and strengthening them through education and discipline brings you closer to self-reliance. Action produces change, creates results, and eliminates obstacles. Inaction produces passivity, escapism, and excuses. Once you take the position that your life is being threatened, you psychologically prepare yourself to do battle. You get rid of your baggage. You become focused, and you strive without compromise to accomplish your objectives.

"One who fears tomorrow has already died today." -Ajani Kamara

Prison is not the beginning of the end, but it can be the end of the mentality that got you there. You can build a viable step-by-step plan for success. How you play the endgame is up to you, but the moment you forget or ignore that you are on dying ground, you have already lost. Take your stand now, right where you are, and don't let anything hold you back. Here are five changes you should make that will strengthen your character and resolve:

- 1) Take initiative. Learn to depend on your own ability and intelligence.
- 2) Take responsibility for yourself. Become self-reliant.
- 3) Quit making excuses.
- 4) Don't assume people owe you something.
- 5) Stop holding onto the past.

Adaptation and change are inevitable and necessary. In prison we can waste away in the cycle of conflict, boredom, and reminiscing, or we can choose to fight and build.

"We're going to have to fight to win. The logic of procrastination has been destroyed." -George Jackson, Blood In My Eye



THROUGH YOUR EYES

by
Bandit

I want to thank you for all you've done for me, through your eyes.

I now can clearly see...

You've shown me love that can never be measured, and this short time we've shared I've treasured...

Your Grandparents sent from the heavens above, who have taught me the authentic definition of love...

And although I may not have been raised by you, it's purely a joy to be loved by you...

So as I start this journey anew from the start, you given me strength and a brand new heart... Because through your eyes I can now clearly see, there's still worth and goodness inside of me...

Thank you both!

Through My eyes



Love. Lies

By D.H.
2011



The title of the design, *Awake and Rise Up* is from a passage in ancient Egyptian text "The book of coming forth by day" called "The Awakening" in it, it describes the deads conscious departure from this life to the afterlife.

The idea of this design is that, for many of us, death is a state of mind as well. A condition - miseducation, self destructive ignorance and behaviour and hopelessness. The setting is the prison system and environment (CDC- California department of corrections) in a country that leads the world in its prison population, with disproportionate number of young black men locked down (1 in 9 between the ages of 20-34). It represents the mental awakening and liberation achieved through true knowledge of self, history and reality, breaking the chains of our conditioning, and giving us the potential and power to transcend into a state of consciousness - "Life"

Kemetink