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A-5-231

Commutation Season

It is 2018 and almost Christmas in the California State Prison-Los Angeles County. The prisoners are all excitedly calling it "Commutation Season." Approximately 22 months ago a man named Scott Budnick came into the building I live in to see some of the inmates. He wanted to show Rapper/Movie star "Common" the men of A-Facility, also known as the PPF (Progressive Programing Facility) and the Paws for Life (PFL) dog program. While most of the men were talking to "Common", a few of us were off to the side with the dogs assigned to us when Scott came over. I didn't know Scott at the time but I had seen first-hand all the work he had been doing with A.R.C. (Anti Recidivism Coalition) in changing laws for juveniles and others. I thanked him for all of his hard work and he asked me if any of those changing laws affected me. I told him no; I have LWOP (Life Without the Possibility of Parole). None of it would help me, but I knew he had been working on other bills that would help the guys with LWOP. He gave me a hug, like Scott always does and then told us, "all of you that have LWOP need to submit a request for "Commutation" to the Governor. He said that, "Governor Brown is going to be doing big things before he leaves office."

I have to admit, I didn't really believe his words, but I "wanted" to believe, so I promised to do just that. I was like a man hanging over a cliff who is willing to grab a small patch of grass just to keep from falling; knowing that it won't hold me, but I do it anyway, hoping for the best.

I was locked up, incarcerated at the age of 19. That was in 1983. I am now 54 years old. Like so many other men around me, I have lived most of my life knowing that I am going to die in prison. When California gives you a LWOP sentence you are sentenced to die a very long and slow death in prison. There is a good reason why it is called "The Other Death Penalty." I had accepted my life as it is. I had to, if I didn't I would have lost mind a long time ago. Of course I always hoped, you have to keep hoping, but you have to move on with your life. Like most men and women with LWOP I choose to try and live the best life that I can, doing what I feel was right. Like joining the Paws For Life Program. I didn't do it because I had to or because I would be recognized. I did it because it felt right in my heart, I was helping save animals and I was giving back to the community that I had hurt. I was making a difference and learning about myself just like all the other men who have LWOP. These men, along with PFL, continue to go to school and take self-help classes. It isn't because we have to but because it feels right. Then something unbelievable happens.

At first it was just a few men, they were being called to the Program Office and told that they were being interviewed for possible commutation by the Governor. Nobody was sure what to think about this. It was something new, something unheard of. All the sudden there was a little tiny pin-prick of light down that long dark tunnel of LWOP. But, once again I have to admit, I still didn't believe it. For decades I had watched men with LWOP slowly die, and the reality was simple, the facts were clear, if you were sentenced to "Life Without the Possibility of Parole" you were never getting out. If you had life with the possibility of parole, and were lucky enough to go to the Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) and they granted parole; for decades, the Governors at the time would just take away the parole for one reason or another. So, no, I still didn't believe it could be possible. Then someone I actually knew personally was called to the Program Office and handed a phone; it was the Governor's office informing them that Governor Jerry Brown had commuted his LWOP sentence to 25 years to life! He would be going home someday. Our world had changed, everything changed that day.

Commutation Season had started. Our hearts had these new, wonderful, and scary feelings for the very first time. More commutation interviews started to happen and rumors ran rampant, mostly about Governor Jerry Brown doing a whole lot of commutations before leaving office in two years. On August 7, 2017 I was interviewed for a possible commutation. It was without a doubt one of the hardest things I have ever done. My interviewer was a true professional, a parole agent III. That meant that he had been doing work for the California Department of Corrections (CDCR) for many years. He knew what he was about and understood the gravity of what he was assigned to do. This interviewer never once looked at his file while talking to me, but he knew absolutely everything about my case, and my prison record. When I would tell him that I wasn't sure about a date or the exact words of a transcript he would quote them to me, without even looking at his folder! We discussed my crime, my childhood, my time in prison, to the self-help courses that I had taken. It went on and on for three hours. I knew that this was it, this was going to be the only chance that I would ever have, so I let all my emotions, all of the truths, and everything that I was, out on the table that day.

I had lived in prison my whole life. In prison you admit to nothing and that is how I had always lived, but I stopped caring about prison etiquette and it's stupid politics years ago. During the interview I never once considered lying. When we discussed infractions in prison I made it clear that even the infraction that I had been found not guilty of, If I had really done them, then I told him the truth, "Yes, I beat the write-up but I did it." I discussed my childhood with him, about how I grew up, and I told him things that I had never told anyone before. I grew up with the belief that if it happened at home, it stayed there. That day I could feel how important that day was so I let it all out and held nothing back. When the interview was over and I walked out of the room, I felt lighter than I have ever felt in my life. I understood why all those questions had to be asked. They needed to understand how I became a person who committed murder, what happened to me in my past, that led me to murder another man; take away his life, take him

from his family, friends, and his community? What happened to me so that I could do something so horrific? You see, if nothing happened to me and I committed my crime “just because” then I would be a sociopath and shouldn’t ever be let out. I am not a sociopath, so I told them the truth. I not only told the truth, but I showed him that “I” understood what had happened to me: that I could “connect all of the dots” that led me to my crime. A few weeks later, lightning struck again and two men right here in my building, in the PFL program had their terms of LWOP commuted to life with!

Looking back now, I understand this is when “Commutation Season” really started. We had all wanted to believe, but we had spent our lives not just believing that we would die in prison, but knowing and living as if we would die in prison. I have spent months and months trying to find the words to this phenomenon hitting us all so hard. How can I explain what it is to feel and live with a sentence of “Life Without the Possibility of Parole”? Only the person with that sentence or their family members can understand it. Now all of a sudden everything had been turned upside down. The men and women with no hope now had some hope. It was good, it was scary, it was awesome, it was terrifying and wonderful all at the same time. The rumors were the hardest; nobody knew for sure what was going on, only Governor Brown knows what he is going to do and when, and he isn’t sharing any details! For me, after being interviewed it just got harder. For the first time ever I am trying to look at things like letters of support, people who would be willing to write things on my behalf, and go on the record by sending those letters to the Governor.

The constant thoughts of “what if?”. The interviews for commutation picked up. Now everyone is wondering, will they be called for an interview. You can’t get a commutation without being interviewed. The stress levels continue to rise. Everyone is silently praying and begging to the unknown for their chance to be interviewed, and as the numbers rise so does the stress. I continue to try and find the right words to describe this miracle that appears to be happening. Then a friend, Duncan Martinez, shared his thoughts; he tells me he has the perfect analogy, “we are all people in the ocean, no land in sight, we are waiting to drown, we know it is going to happen. We can tread water for days, months, and even years but we know, it is going to happen. We are going to die, we will sink. We watch those around us sink.” I have added a few of my thoughts to this because this works for me. I can see this all in my head. We watch some prisoners lose their minds and drift off into madness and then we just wait for our turn. Then a row-boat comes by and says hey, I will try to come back with a bigger boat and help you, but it is a long way to shore so I may not make it. Then the rescuer takes one guy with him. A few months later he comes back and this boat is a little bigger but only big enough for a few more. He leaves again after taking a few more people saying, “I’ll try to come back for more, we’ll see.”

For me, what is hard is two of the guys that have received their commutations live close by and continue to tell me, don’t worry, you’re next; saying, “This Christmas brother, it will

happen.” So, I wait for the next boat. The stress level is now getting higher and higher. For decades now I have stopped believing in the rumors of “this law will change things”, and that “the law will let us go home,” because those rumors never come true. Hope is dangerous; hope can drive you crazy, hope can kill. But now, I listen to those rumors, I break my own self-imposed rules, I start to believe them when they say that my turn is coming. Christmas comes and the “rescuer in his boat” saves a few more, but not me, I am left adrift. I feel dead inside, I feel pain like I have never felt before. The depression crashes over me and threatens to drown me in a sea of despair. I hear other names being called out, but my name is not one of them. I walk out of my cell in a daze. I get my dog and I do everything that I possibly can to keep the tears from pouring down my face. I just need to get away from everyone. So many people looking at me, sadness in their eyes, my PFL brothers want me to go home, they have all told me that I deserve it. But I have no words for them, I can’t find my voice for fear of breaking down. I just want out of the building with my dog at my side.

Just inside the building’s door I run into my friend and teammate in PFL. My PFL brother Tobias Tubbs is just staring at me crying, in a stage of disbelief and wonder, tears of happiness are streaming down his face. My composure crumbles and I lose it, the dam breaks within me. I start crying with him, for him, he has been rescued and now he gets to live! Tears of joy mingled with tears of sadness for myself. We barely talk, just hugging while people clap for him and we cry again anew. I let go of him to make way for others to share in his elation. It is unlike anything I have ever experienced in prison. The elation is incredible but deep inside of me, I am losing it, I am so happy for my brother Tobias. I love him like the brother he is to me, just as I know he loves me, still the wave of depression is screaming and wanting to envelope me. People are trying to talk to me and I am smiling, but I just want to get away and walk with my dog. Of course, my dog can feel how messed up I truly am. She is so incredibly special and amazing. As we walk she keeps touching my hand with her nose. I start to get annoyed, it’s a wet nose after all; but I just sit at a table on the yard, luckily there is no yard right now so it is just us. She rest her head on my knee, sighing and I can feel the tears pouring down my face. I can’t decide if they are for Tobias or for myself. She jumps up a little, putting her paws on my lap and starts to lick my face. I realize right then that it is okay. I just need to back up and not give up. I am sad, but I sit and think of two more of my PFL brothers and friends that will now be getting out. I smile and hug this incredible dog. I get up and walk it off. The boat has returned and picked up a few more, the rumors say he’ll be back, just keep treading water, and try not to sink.

The days come and go and I try not to think about the future, but it’s hard. I watch all the men on the yard hoping and praying for an interview; and those that get an interview begin to have an entirely new way of stressing. The only consistent rumor is that during Christmas something big would happen. Then on August 17, 2018, rumors are running through the building, and on the yard; men are being called to the program office, the Governor is commuting more people! I listen to the names of some of the people called and I know a few of

them. I am doing much better this time because I have surrendered myself to fate. I have done all that I can, I have held nothing back and I did my best. I will get on a boat or I will drown, but if I do drown I will grow old and die knowing that I did everything I could to be a good person and help others. I am sitting with my friend and a different dog that has been assigned to me, just inches from where I had been sitting when Scott came in and told a few of us to submit our commutation request. Then, over the loud speaker I hear “Jack McFadden, report to the program office!”

My heart stops and then explodes in my chest, beating so fast that I could feel it pumping. I could feel the adrenalin start coursing through my body. My friend Thaisan is looking at me in wonder as men in PFL start clapping and yelling. Thaisan is smiling at me and I have an outer body experience. I can see myself getting up with a smile on my face, I can see that I am trying to stay calm. Inside I want to believe that this is happening, but I am so afraid that it is something else. I am worried that when I get to the program office that they will just hand me some PFL inventory paperwork for my PFL job or paper work for the building. I can hear myself telling the people in my building that we will see what is going on over there. I am walking in a daze to the program office. When I arrive there is an Correctional officer that I have never seen before; the yard is closed and she is looking right at me. I tell her that someone called for me and she tells me that there are a lot of different things going on at the moment. As she checks where I am supposed to be going, my heart beats faster and faster. I am trying to hold the hurricane force of emotions rampaging through my body. I am so scared that it is just something mundane, like more paper work or more PFL stuff. Then the correctional officer looks at me and tells me that I am here to see the warden. My heart soars and I know that the Captain in the boat has chosen me to rescue; I am no longer drowning, I am no longer in a sea of hopelessness and decay.

It is impossible to describe those moments to anyone who hasn't been through it. I sat out in front of the program office for about 15 minutes, crying one minute, and smiling the next; then just sitting there unable to think, I was in shock. A officer calls my name and escorts me to the captain's office where the warden is there waiting for me. Warden Asuncion looks up at me and smiles as she recognizes me from the PFL program; her smile breaks through my shock and I start crying. I was overwhelmed with so many emotions, elation, hope, happiness, giddiness, and joy. The boat was truly here and I have been rescued. I won the lottery that day and I won my life that day. A new chapter was opening up for me, it is a new beginning, a rebirth into the world that I have been kept away from for a very long time. I was not the only one, eight men had their terms commuted that day, another man from PFL, another brother and friend joined the list of LWOP survivors. I say survivors because the overwhelming guilt hit me a few days later when I calmed down. It was so unexpected and so overwhelming that I had to go to my cell, turn off the lights, in order to calm down. It truly felt like I was abandoning people that I had known and loved for years to drown while I had been rescued.

I was standing in the dayroom when I looked up and saw my friend and PFL brother, Allen Burnett come out of his cell. It hit me that he had been one of the first group of LWOPs to be interviewed. He is married to an amazing and kind woman who is fighting for his release. His daughter is incredible and loves him dearly. He has done so many things to help others and himself. He started many self-help programs, is in the PFL program, college educated, and is in the Bachelor degree program at CAL State Los Angeles. It was his hard work, and love that convinced his daughter to go to college. She is now at Cal State Los Angeles as well. He has been waiting all this time, hoping that he would get the call, hoping to be rescued. So I freaked out when I saw him. I had seen him the other day when I had received my commutation and he was smiling for me and offered his congratulations. That night I had laid on my bunk and thought about what he must be going through. I felt so guilty to be chosen when he has done so much more than I had done. I wondered why I had been chosen? Why was I so lucky? Why had I been blessed and not him? I couldn't find the answers anywhere. I was rescued while so many others have been left to drown. I equated what I was feeling to survivors guilt. I had been saved from death while others have not. It was just so hard to process it all. The conflicting emotions were messing me up inside.

Then it hit me, my PFL brother and good friend Marcus McJimpson had not been called either. I flash back to the day that I was commuted and it is a moment that I will remember for the rest of my life. After receiving my commutation I am walking back into the building when I look up and see my new family standing there waiting on me. Every Paws For Life brother, 40 plus guys were there for me waiting for me to return. I lift my arms up in happiness and every single one of them started shouting in happiness for me. Marcus was one of the first to come hug me and cry with me, my brother and such an unlikely best friend. A kind and loving African American man who had also been locked up for what felt like forever; a man who also lived through the madness and racism of prison for decades.

But here in this building, on this yard, as leaders in the PFL program, we had become friends and true brothers, as we dedicated our lives to this program. At times working 10 to 14 hour days, seven days a week and loving every second of it. We never dreamed that we would have a chance to go home and do it as well. We are a part of the program because we believe in Paws For Life and the beautiful dogs that we care for and train. Marcus had never held back his love and happiness for me that commutation day, the same for my PFL brothers. They were all praying for me and hoping that I have been rescued. Of course, having my sentence commuted was the best, but at that moment, that feeling of love and happiness is something that I have never seen or felt before.

Later on that night I laid on my bunk crying and feeling so guilty, I wondered about the future. I wondered if the Governor truly understood just how he was impacting the men and women within CDCR, and all of their families. I thought about Kristina Lindquist, the person in charge of doing so much to help save us. I wondered if she really understood how amazing she

and everyone working with her really is; how absolutely life-changing it is for us. When I called a lady who has been a mother to me and explained how I was feeling, she laughed and said, "Jack, you have a conscience, of course you feel guilty. You love those men as your own family and you have to figure out how to deal with it. They still love you and they are happy for you. They just have to keep hoping and praying." I understood what she was trying to tell me, but it did not make anything easier!

The days go by swiftly now and I have learned how to live with my happiness and guilt. It is always there and I am conflicted every so often. There are times when I do not think that it is real. I have my commutation papers in a large zip lock bag, inside a large plastic tub in order to make sure that nothing happens to them! As I tell people, this is my receipt! They cannot take it back now! I will get the paper out every so often, just to read it and smile; yes even to cry at odd times of the day or night just to remind myself that no, this isn't a dream. That is a worry at times, 35 years in prison and I fantasized about stuff like this and I know that it would NEVER come true; truly believing the society that I had hurt so badly had forgotten me and left me to die. I am not being melodramatic, just realistic. But I was wrong, I hadn't been forgotten, there are people who care, who love and believe in second chances. I wonder constantly if Governor Brown understands just how happy he has made us, how much joy he has brought to me and my family. I really hope he does know.

It is different for me now as the days go by. I can see and feel the stress in the air. I finally sit down and talk to Marcus and tell him how guilty I have felt for getting a commutation and not him. He smiles and tells me that I am stupid! I can see in his eyes and his face that he appreciates me talking to him. I talk to Allen and tell him the same, he is so kind and even tries to make me feel better. He begins to open up about how hard it has been for him but he came to the realization that when it is his time it will be the right time, saying, "It is in the hands of God now." Allen felt that he has done as much as he could and now it was just time to wait.

Thanksgiving comes and two more PFL brothers have their terms commuted. The boat has returned and rescued two more PFL brothers from death, but it is a small boat this time and only eight people have been commuted. The Captain of the boat says he may be back at Christmas, hold on, don't give up. It is another joyous and happy time and all of us are so happy for the men who get a commutation. I try to explain to Chris and Thomas how to deal with all of these new conflicting emotions saying, "Just enjoy yourself and don't try to do anything important for a while! Be ready for the guilt when it comes and don't let it overwhelm you." They look at me like I am crazy, but they agree that it could happen. Of course, it does, I smile when they come to me, Thomas, his eyes wide and he tells me how guilty he is feeling. We talk some more when Chris goes through the same thing.

As Christmas approaches the tension and the stress rise in a way that is astounding. I have felt tension that has led to a riot on prison yards, but this is like nothing I have ever

witnessed in my life. I don't think that there has ever been anything that can compare to this. At last count there were around 40-50 men on the PPF yard that have been interviewed, more than half of those guys in this building alone, most of them in the PFL program. For those of us who have had our terms commuted, we smile to ourselves but we don't flaunt it or push it at people. We don't hide it because our brothers are happy for us but it is hard for them as well. The rumors going around the yard are actually funny sometimes. They range from no one else will receive a commutation to thousands will receive one. Some are even saying that the Governor will grant a commutation to everyone with LWOP. We write those off for what they are, nonsense! Scott Budnick returns and speaks to some of us. I am happy that I have the chance to tell him personally and in front of others, how he has changed my life the day he told me to submit my papers to the Governor. I know myself, I know that if I heard it from anyone on the yard that I may not have done it. I know that he understood how grateful and thankful I am. Then he tells us that there are more commutations coming, just hold on. Everyone smiles and nods their heads, but they are stressed out! Commutation season is upon us. Will it be another small boat or a big one this time? Nobody knows. The stress continues and I feel guilty in a different way because I am amused at the way men are dealing with the stress.

Christmas weekend has arrived. Nobody is sure when it will happen but it is accepted that something WILL happen soon. It is Friday morning and it feels like everyone is holding their breath. I smile when the loud speaker comes to life and the officer begins to read off names, but at the end of the list he tells them to report to A/B Medical. It is another false alarm. I think of the week before when Marcus, Jensen and I were sitting and talking to Alex Tonner, the executive Director of Paws For Life. The officer started speaking on the loud speaker, "The following people report to the program office in blues (clothes)." Marcus is holding his breath, I can see how he is feeling and I remember that same feeling, that hope, and then we realize that the names being called do not fit the commutation profile. Some of the men that are being called have not even submitted for a commutation. I smile when Alex looks at me with a questioning look on her face. I explain it is "Commutation season." She smiles, she knows that already! Yes we actually know everyone in the building who was interviewed for a commutation or has submitted an application for commutation. And so those names being called that day turned out to be for a census! I can only imagine what the people in other buildings were thinking! In our building we made sure the guys going there knew what it was for so they didn't get disappointed when they found out later!

12/23/18. We are taking our dogs out for walks and bathroom breaks and just enjoying the nice morning. Everyone is wondering, "is this the day?" but nobody is sure. Most of us have decided that it will be on Christmas Eve day, which is tomorrow. I am sitting with my dog, Buttercup, playing and goofing off, when Chris, who just had his sentence commuted, tells me, "I just saw the Captain come in and he is wearing his Class A uniform." Which he usually only wears for special occasions. Chris and I look at each other and smile, it is a Sunday; there is no

reason for the Captain to be here in his dress uniform unless something was going to happen! Word spreads like wildfire and everyone is either walking around with smiles or nervous, strained looks on their faces. It is easy to tell who has not been interviewed, who has been interviewed and is waiting, and who has received a commutation. We are the ones that are hoping and praying that our PFL brothers and friends will be called. All of the sudden the officers rush us through our breakfast. We all go eat and I smile as all the men walk by the program office on their way to the dining hall. Everyone is looking for someone to tell them what is happening, or what is going on. No answers are found, whatever is going on will have to stay a secret for now.

We get back from breakfast and get our dogs out. Once again I am sitting with Buttercup and watching people. I find myself in a good frame of mind, I have my commutation and I am hoping and praying for my brothers and friends to be rescued from drowning. I am hoping for a BIG boat this time around. Then it happens, the speaker comes on and says, "The following people report to the program office." The names start and there is no doubt this time what it is for. One name, then two, four then five, eight, nine, and ten! Just for this building FIVE more PFL brothers have been called. I am so happy to hear Thaisan's name. I am close to his door. It is closed and he is staring at the door. He is in shock!, that much is clear. He really did not believe he would get rescued. I look upstairs next door to my cell where I heard my neighbor's name being called; he hadn't heard his name being called and he did not understand what was going on. He has a confused look on his face. The whole building is yelling and screaming with happiness.

I can see men hugging each other and crying tears of joy and happiness. Thaisan's door opens and I am standing right there and give him a big hug and the tears start to flow. He's crying, I'm crying, and everyone is crying. Two doors down from us, David's door opens up and he is asking if they called him, and we shout YES! He is still in shock and goes to the tower officer, "did you call me?" She smiles and says YES! He looks over at me and gives me this great hug and he too begins to cry. I see my friend and brother Marcus, trying to smile and offer his congratulations as he tries to make it back to his cell, he has not been called. He steps into his cell and closes the door. I feel my heart break, but then my ex-cellmate, Si Nguyen, my very good friend and PFL brother who has been locked up since he was a child, has been called as well! He had years to go before his parole board hearing but Governor Brown changed that. He will now be going to the parole board in 2019, he will be going home to his wife and family! He is crying and smiling and I know I have to put aside my sadness for those who did not get one. Commutation Season is not over! I smile, hug him and once again start crying! This crying stuff is starting to become a habit! I actually smile and think about that while hugging my brother and friend. I have a flashback to when I was little and my stepmother would tease me and beat me for crying. She would say that crying was for little girls. By the time I was ten years old it took a lot to make me cry, by the time I came to prison I would never think of crying. In my warped

mindset I thought that crying was for the weak. That all changed many years later. Since joining the PFL program I found out that crying doesn't make me any less of a man or person. It just means that I "FEEL" and that is a truly wonderful thing.

I stepped back from everyone then, just watching the dayroom, looking at all the men standing around in shock, with happiness and joy etched upon their faces. Men who I had worked with and laughed with, and yes, even cried with. More PFL brothers would be going home. I admit, I was happy for everyone, but I am biased, my PFL brothers are special. Other groups on the yard meet once, maybe twice a week; but us, we meet, work, play, and laugh together every day. Each man in the program puts in at least three hours a day with their dog and more time cleaning and doing courses for the PFL program or just helping other PFL brothers out. They spend their free time with any visitors or donors that come in to see how the program is running. These visitors and donors are the reason this program exists, without their dedication and love, this program would not be possible. We do this because of our love of the program, seven days a week, 365 days a year, without getting paid for it! Just about each and every man in the program, has a full time job, most are enrolled in college courses, working with Professor Bidhan C. Roy from Cal State Los Angeles, corresponding with college students, and for some, preparing for a Parole board Hearing. So yeah, I am a little biased when it comes to my PFL brothers.

Some will wonder and ask, "How come the Paws For Life Dog program is so special? Why are they getting so much love from the Governor?" It is because of our love and dedication to the program. It is because we made the positive choices to do better and help others; we did so not with the hopes of getting a parole or a commutation. We did it in order to help others and become better men. We never had any hopes of the Captain in the boat coming to rescue us. We always believed that we would be left behind, to grow old and die alone, drowning in a dark sea of time. What is different about us is that we made the positive choices in how we would live out the rest of our prison lives. Now we have been recognized for those efforts by Wardens, the Governor's office, and even the Governor himself.

That last commutation day was such a joyous day and yet, a sad day as well. Marcus and Allen have not been called. I know nothing about what led them to be in prison. I don't ask questions like that, it is none of my business. All I know is the men in front of me, my PFL brothers, whom I love so much. Who they were is no more, instead they have grown into kind, loving and caring men. Now they will have to go through the whole commutation process again. We have all heard of a new rumor from the Warden saying, "That the commutations are not over with, there will be more." From what staff has heard, quite a few more. Hope is still alive. The boat has come back again, much bigger this time. The captain of the boat saying, "Be patient, I will try to come back again. Keep treading water, don't give up."

****NOTE:** I have ended this on December 25, 2018 because I want the reader to look and see what happened before and after Christmas. According to the news, **HUNDREDS** of men and women were commutated, but leaves thousands more. I want to get people involved in true prison and sentencing reform. The fight is not over. Governor Jerry Brown and everyone in his office has worked day and night trying to rescue as many people as possible from drowning in the ocean of LWOP. But, there are so many more prisoners that need help. Our next Governor has said that he will continue the fight against LWOP, let's make sure that he knows that he has the public's support. There are a lot of men and women treading water, don't leave them to drown.

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