

FREED BUT NEVER FREE

After spending the past 16 years boxed in and buried alive in the pits of solitary confinement, I was finally freed. I entered "Hells Fire" at the age of 22, and I emerged from the ashes at 38. Thankfully due to my will power and resilience, I have emerged stronger and wiser than ever, but unfortunately the harsh conditions that I was subjected to over the years, has left me with countless invisible internal scars.

I have spent many years isolated alone, with minimal human contact, and now in a setting where there is large crowds of people, and a abundance of movement. There was nothing of significance put into place to help me prepare and adjust, and now that im out of solitary confinement, I can clearly see how damaged I really am. I feel like a fish out of water, unable to breathe, and seeking to return to the calm of the deep blue sea.

My captors are not elated about my release. Freeing me from isolation was not done out of kindness and compassion, it was the implementation of new laws that pulled me out of "Hells Fire", I was freed from one hell, and sent to another. Attica's history speaks for itself. It is an oppressive place, filled with the toxic fumes of hatred and despair. Not an ideal place to begin my transition, yet I was placed here anyway, because it was intended for me to feel anxious, oppressed, off balance, and overwhelmed.

I know that as long as I can find my footing, I will be able to find my way, but at the moment I cannot even find my balance. I am layered with 16 years worth of sadness, pain, suffering, and distress. Pieces of my soul, spirit, and mind will forever remain in solitary confinement, so even though I was freed, I will never be **FREE**.