

Copy of My Speech for International False Accusation Day(Read at CA State Capitol, 9-10-24)

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That's Me! ☺

Good morning! My name is Dymitri Harszewski, and when I first heard of this movement to address the plague of false accusation, I was overjoyed. It seemed like a miracle to me that anyone cared enough to confront this issue, though my excitement soon faded as I realized that an event like this only means the problem is worse than I'd ever imagined. A day to recognize the harms of false accusation is something to be regretted, not celebrated, but here

we are and I'm thankful for everyone who turned out. I'm especially grateful to Lara Gualarte, my poetry teacher, who is literally lending her voice to prisoners who are normally silenced by the thick walls and acres of razor wire that separate us from our loved ones, our communities, and from all who've gathered here today at our State Capitol. I hope I can do you all justice.

Because there's so much to say and so little time (Ms. Gualarte split her allotted time between me and one other inmate speechwriter), I'll stick to two key points that often get overlooked. Point #1 is, there's a difference between false accusations and wrongful convictions. False accusation is just one of many factors that can lead to wrongful convictions in general, but it is the number one contributor to wrongful convictions for alleged sexual misconduct in particular. Now, even though this topic is an uncomfortable one for many people, we must face it head-on, because sex-related cases are the area where prosecutors and police have had the most success in their quest to eliminate the traditional evidence rules and other safeguards meant to protect people from being wrongfully convicted. In fact, prosecutors of sex-related charges rarely need more than a single, uncorroborated accusation to win a serious felony conviction... which is an especially useful tool for those prosecutors to pad their résumés with almost comically long sentences that are almost never overturned on appeal. Further, because obtaining convictions in these cases is so incredibly easy — especially if the alleged victim is a minor — the rate of sex-case guilty pleas far exceeds the already unconscionable 93-95% of so-called "negotiated pleas" in most jurisdictions. This makes a diabolical kind of sense when you consider that many people will accept a decades-long sentence when the alternative is a virtually guaranteed jury conviction followed by a centuries-long sentence instead, and that's before even considering the possibility of ugly ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> potentially dangerous publicity. All of this evil and more is the direct result of the evisceration of normal trial processes in these decidedly abnormal cases, effectively shifting the burden of proof from the prosecutor — who normally has to prove the guilt of the accused — to the defendant, who must now somehow prove his innocence in a case with potentially no witnesses, no evidence, and almost certainly no sympathy at all from a jury well-primed to believe that the only way such accusations could ever be made is if they're true. Which brings us to Point #2.

With such juicy rewards for prosecuting such easily won (and socially popular) cases, it should

go without saying that there is also tremendous pressure on police, social workers, and other agents of the victimology industry to produce the necessary statements from alleged victims. It's equally clear that these sorts of high-stakes, high-pressure interrogations will also produce accusations that are sometimes false as well. The sad fact, the unforgivable fact, is that the people who make false allegations are too often just terrified youngsters who are desperately seeking a quick way out of the hot seat. Those false accusers are clearly NOT the villains in these awful stories; rather, they are victims too, victims of the same power structures that originally brought us colonialism, chattel slavery, and the convict lease laws that gave birth to the monster of mass incarceration in the first place. False accusers in many trumped up sexual abuse cases are the collateral damage of those moral panics which fuel our fear-mongering public servants, and it is within this climate of hair-trigger hysteria that we witness not only the tragedy of false accusation, but also the trauma of those who are pressured to make such accusations against their will.

With so much damage being done on all sides, the time has come to soberly acknowledge all the hidden costs of abandoning our historical legal and evidentiary standards in these politically charged cases. We must condemn not only the false accusations, but even more so the exploitation of alleged young victims by prosecutors, police, and other insincere shells of the child abuse industry. You see, beyond the horrendous custody battles in which manipulative ex-partners try to checkmate one another by using their own children as pawns, we should be outraged to learn that kids from 7 to 17 are routinely dragged into the bowels of police stations to be interrogated with techniques that were originally designed to squeeze confessions out of hardened criminals. Our blood should boil whenever cops and prosecutors use vulnerable youths as mere tools to advance their careers. We should be furious — we should be absolutely LIVID — because all of this abuse and more happens every day ... but before we can become angry, we must first become aware of the problem. That, to me, is the true calling of International False Accusation Day.

The scourge of incentivized and engineered false accusation is very real. When the punishment system rewards prosecutors for encouraging false accusations, it victimizes countless innocents. It does violence to the values and meaning of justice. It even insults genuine crime victims. And, through all of this, it forfeits its own legitimacy. It's now time — it's beyond time — that we abandon our squeamish discomfort around this topic and replace it with compassion and a clear-headed concern for truth, because until we open our eyes to the everyday corruption and hidden horrors of a self-serving punishment system, we cannot truly open our hearts to the many victims of that system, including those who are falsely accused AND their all-too-frequently coerced accusers as well.

Thank you for your time.

You can  
write to me!

Dymitri Harszewski  
AC2622 E-Yard  
P.O. Box 409090  
Ione, CA 95640

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Hello!

This probably should've been the first page, "1 of 3", but I'd already copied out that speech with the first part on my custom picture paper (pic of me at age 5 with my sister and cousin). Didn't want that one buried!

So yeah, this is a copy of the speech I wrote for International False Accusation Day, and it was read at our state Capitol building on Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. My poetry teacher read it for me since I obviously couldn't make it there to do my own reading, having been falsely accused myself a few years back.

I hope readers notice that I did not make myself the focus of this speech, nor any other victim of False accusation. Those are the obvious stories of heartbreak and injustice, but I thought it was important to put a spotlight on the equal or in some ways greater tragedy of the victims of police exploitation and manipulation, the coerced innocents who are far too often forced by pigs to make false accusations. Almost no one even knows of their stories, much less tells them.

In my own case, yes, I was falsely accused on a number of counts, but I hold NO animosity or resentment toward those who lied about our friendships. They are as much victims of this sick drama as I and many others put in cages for things that simply never happened. I wish them the best and hope they know I've never blamed them. But there are guilty parties here, and it's long past time that they were called out, condemned, and given an opportunity to make amends for the colossal harms they've inflicted on so many, so unnecessarily.

The next International False Accusation Day is now 11 months away. Find out where the gathering nearest you will occur, and go out to offer your support. Whether you or someone you know has suffered from false accusations (and haven't we ALL to some degree? Who among us can't relate to being unfairly blamed ??), your involvement will help raise awareness of the problem so we can start working in earnest on solutions.

Please share your thoughts!!