

Gone Too Soon, but You're Not Forgotten: The Guide for Families Searching for Help to Confront a Loved One's Death Behind Prison Walls

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Contents

- (1) Forward
 - (2) Introduction
 - (3) About the author
 - (4) Chapter One: Historical events of prisoners dying inside prisons in the United States
 - (5) Chapter Two: Encouraging prisoners' families not to accept what they say to you was the cause of death
 - (6) Chapter Three: Educating prisoners' families how to build support to expose the death of a loved one
 - (7) Chapter Four: time to seek legal counsel to file civil lawsuits against prison officials
 - (8) Chapter Five: contacts to reach out for help to expose your family's struggle
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About the author

My name is Leonard McQuay, also known as Bro. Khalfani Malik Khaldun. I have been incarcerated since 1987. I am 51 years old now, and having been engaged in prison activism for many years now, my work on this guide is personal because in my 34 years many prisoners have died all around me.

The politics of this prison system is real, and without the support of family and friends, many prisoners who may die before leaving prison cases can fall through the cracks. There is an extremely important need for us to encourage prisoners' families on how to fight for their loved ones that may have died in these prisons. We do want the truth out as to how and why it happened. We will not allow the prisoncrats to give us false information as to the manner of death of our loved ones or comrades may have died in prison.

Not knowing the right questions to ask, the right people to call, or the contacts to seek help from can be very intimidating and overwhelmingly discouraging.

While being housed in solitary confinement for 20 years in the Indiana Department of Correction many prisoners lost their lives around me in one manner or another. Suicide as a means of escaping the deplorable conditions were common. Others, compelled by beatings or excessive force by prisoncrats abusing their authority.

As a political prisoner, I have had to stand up and tell the story that other prisoners didn't get their chance to expose. We have an obligation to let their voices be heard, so we free their spirits from the confinement of these walls. Because if these walls could talk, these plantations would explode. These prisoncrats would be removed from their positions, and these plantations would shut down.

For all of our comrades we have lost behind these walls may they rest in paradise.

Forward

Amerikan prisons continue to be permeated by and a hotbed for violence. They will result in the death of prisoners. Some of these cases have and will be at the hands of prisoner on prisoner attacks. Other cases will result at the hands of prison officials, or medical personnel due to medical neglect, or a total disregard for human life.

The world has changed due to the Coronavirus-19. Prisoners are now dying inside the prison plantation due to the virus, adding to the already high death count. They have used COVID-19 to cover-up the real cause of how some prisoners have died. A terrible culture exists in the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility. Professionalism goes out of the window, when it comes to these people's jobs being on the line. Prisoners are being killed by others on behalf of staff. It's our duty to not be silent. To be a voice for those whose voices have been silenced. We have to ensure that these racist inhumane people know that prisoner lives matter. They should be made to know that we will not go away quietly.

This guide is needed for a whole lot of reasons - primarily to be used as a tool to expose prison injustice. Families of the incarcerated could easily be discouraged not to pursue a second opinion as to how a loved one dies in prison. Having an instructional guide can be very motivational.

Hopefully, everyone will enjoy this guide. Embrace and share what you learn from it. Power to the families of those men and women inside the plantations.

The Indiana voice of the voiceless
Uhuru-SaSa!

Chapter One: Historical events of prisoners dying or purposefully being killed by prison officials in the U.S. prisons

The history of the United States can't be reviewed, or researched thoroughly without a careful look at slavery in America, how many people died resisting it, and how it has transformed from the slave plantation, chattel slavery, to prison plantations of modern day slavery.

Being separated from the outside world, and being held in closet-like cells that are equipped with a light, sink, and toilet, and a bed or beds brings along with this reality a number of mental and physical health conditions that only get worse as time goes by.

When prison officials get away with the murder of a prisoner, each time and after that it becomes easier to do. The murder doesn't always have to be by the hands of prison staff member. In most cases, it could be due to medical neglect. Denial of mental health medications. It could be forced isolation into solitary confinement. The actions and disregard of medical and prison staff have resulted in the deaths of countless prisoners all over the world, but primarily right here in the U.S.

For the past 34 years of my incarceration, I have read many news publications that have exposed the countless deaths of men and women in U.S. prisons. I realize that we are all going to die one day. This is an undeniable fact. But when a judge or jury didn't sentence us to death in

prison, unless its natural causes, or an unforeseen terminal illness, we should not be dying inside these modern day plantations. Prison Legal News is one such publication that has historically revealed how prisoners are dying. Seems like nobody on the outside is paying attention.

Prisoners are being dehumanized on a large scale that cannot be ignored any longer. Here, inside the Indiana Department of Correction, especially at the Wabash Valley CF Secure Housing Unit, the years of 2003-2012. There were prisoners killing prisoners, prisoners committing suicide, and officers using excessive force resulting in the death of prisoners.

When prison counselors and internal affairs are aware that a prisoner with a child sex crime or one involving the death of a child can be targeted by being housed in a specific cell or housing unit, they approve it, and someone dies as a result. That blood is on their individual hands. This occurred here at the Wabash Valley Corr. Facility 4 times between 2005-2010 in the general population. When these types of things happen, it's hard not to conclude that it could have been arranged to happen that way.

In 2003, the Indiana Department of Corrections transferred me to Wabash Valley Correctional facility. Having the label on my back as the prisoner charged with killing a staff member, I was placed in solitary confinement. This unit smelled like a human zoo. The conditions of the oppression was driving prisoners crazy, creating a lot of dysfunctionism in an already tense and chaotic environment. Many prisoners met with terrible fates while housed inside the SHU, now called the SCU, only to cite a few:

- + Between 2003-2012, 1 prisoner was killed during a cell extraction being beaten by the goon squad. To silence his screams, they stuffed a wash rag in his mouth. He swallowed some of the rag dying.
- + Between 2003-2009, 2 prisoners committed suicide. One who lived next door to me needed his mental health meds, was denied by them officers. He said he was gonna kill himself. They ignored him, he then set himself on fire and died in his cell.
- + Between 2003-2009, the second guy was having a mental health breakdown. He was screaming and kicking his door. Officers got mad at the noises, and refused to notify mental health. In his attempts to escape what he felt was his hell on earth he took his own life hanging himself.
- + In the beginning of 2007, 11 of 23 suicides occurred inside segregation units. Thus, nearly one half of the suicides were committed by 22 percent of the total IDOC prisoner population.

The purpose for this guide is to clearly help the families not to settle for the lies meant to discourage them from investigating these deaths. There is a prisoner death pandemic occurring all across the country. Florida, Alabama, and California among others all seem to stand out the most.

- + On January 22, 2017, a 36-year old California prisoner with a documented history of schizophrenia died in a jail less than an hour after being released from a restraint chair

Bro. Khalfani Malik Khaldun

Chapter Two: Encouraging Prisoners' Families not to just accept what the DOC say caused the death of their loved one

Prison administration officials for years have engaged in suppressing what happens inside these walls. If the facts of an incident will result in a lot of staff being fired if it reaches the public, this information will never get outside these fascist prison walls. So, it is extremely crucial for our outside families and friends to always seek a second medical opinion. There are a host of activist organizations who will help get the truth to you.

Just for an example, you can reach out to: U.S. Department of Justice: Civil Rights Section, Special Litigation, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20531.

You should contact also: Kenneth J Folk, Indiana Civil Liberties Union, 1031 East Washington St, Indianapolis, IN 46202-3652.

Every state has chapters of the American Civil Liberties Union and they have always helped families in matters such as these. When a mother or father gets a call that a child overdosed, committed suicide, got killed, etc., we have to know that is a devastating time for them. As a long time prison activist, I have an obligation to be of service to the families affected.

A lot of prisoners died during the last year due to COVID-19 and drug overdoses. You will never know the truth or the actual number count. But we should not allow IDOC or the DOC to tell us anything. In order to suppress the actual count that died from COVID-19, they have misled society by saying that COVID-19 victims actually died from Roid-induced paper. That it wasn't COVID-19.

The spirits of our loved ones who have died in prison are depending on us to uncover the truth. Please don't just let the prison tell you anything. Investigate and seek another opinion before you give up on it.

Chapter Three: Educating prisoners' families about how to build support to confront and expose the death of their loved one

As a political prisoner and a prison activist, I have an obligation to help families of prisoners build a support group to help them fight back. The prison environment will always be a dangerous place where unfortunately some men and women are going to lose their lives behind prison walls.

A support group can consist of 3-5 friends or family members of the person who died or was killed in prison. A support group can be helpful in galvanizing local or national support from groups who fight on behalf of prisoners. There are a lot of families looking for help on

where he had been for two days. His family settled a wrongful death civil suit for five million.

- + In 2014, Florida had 346 prisoner deaths on their watch. In June of 2014, Steven Michael Zerbe, 37, who was legally deaf and blind was killed on their watch.
- + On March 6, 2014, prisoner Mark Akens at Pendleton Correctional Facility fell from the top bed injuring his ribs, stomach, and midsection. Seen by nursing staff, and only given a cursory examination, he was told to return to his cell. Later that night, around 4:00 AM he complained of severe rib and abdominal pain. He was given tylenol and sent back to his cell. The nurse was summoned again at 6:00 AM after Michael Akens lost consciousness. This nurse balked at helping this prisoner until a guard declared he wasn't breathing. CPR was initiated, but it was too late. Michael Akens, 51, was declared dead at 7:02 AM.
- + In 2017-2018 a friend/comrade named Willie Henley, who I grew up with in these prisons, had severe/chronic constipation. Seen by Wabash Valley nurses and not taken seriously for seven days, he died in his cell when his appendix burst.
- + Just last year, while held in solitary confinement in a unit called CCU here at Wabash Valley while fighting for his life, Phillip Littler died of throat cancer. Phillip Littler had a long history of resisting being dehumanized by Wabash Valley Prisonrats. Filing lawsuits helped him get his story on record. He won several, resulting in thousands of dollars being paid to him by the state.
- + In 1985, Lincoln "Lokmar" Love was beaten at the "Reformatory" now known as Pendleton Corr. Facility by prison guards severely, sparking a riot that gained the local and national spotlight. Recently, Lokmar, who had been held at the Wabash Valley in the SHU solitary confinement died due to exposure to the coronavirus. This was a great man who cared about everybody affected by prison repression.
- + In December 2020 a comrade named Big 2 was released from solitary confinement to G-leftwing. He was then moved by counselors to the right side of the unit. About two months later, he had a heart attack in his cell. It is said he was smoking and went into cardiac arrest. He was overweight and diabetic. We believe they let Big 2 die due to medical incompetence.
- + In 2020, an old-timer named Dirtball was found dead in his cell at Wabash Valley in F-unit. News accounts claimed that he had committed suicide. That was a lie. His hands were tied behind his back. He was allowed to be killed. May have been sanctioned.

There are so many others that should be shared, but the research is not available at the time of this compilation. We can't forget the lives taken or lost in these plantations disguised as Amerikan prisons. This is why it is important to work and join the movement to abolish prisons.

All power to the people who don't fear freedom.

which direction to go in to get the word out. There are many activist groups who are willing to aid and assist prisoners' families. For us here in the state of Indiana, we have:

IDOC-Watch
P.O. Box 11095
Indianapolis, IN 46201
Idocwatch.org

In every state there are prisoner support organizations solely existing to help us challenge human and civil rights violations occurring inside these prisons. I am going to be the voice of those prisoners who fall prey to death in prison. I will not let their lives be in vain, because if it were me who died in prison for whatever reason, I would want someone not to let my work and contributions be in vain.

Due to my activism for the past 26 years, many prisoners have changed their lives and the lives of countless others. Change comes to us all in spirals. Seeing my brother have a heart attack because he was smoking (K2 Spice) sprayed on paper caused me to renew my commitment to being of service to the oppressed masses.

The struggle continues on all fronts, so let us stay vigilant in our work to expose the wrongs issued against us and our comrades. We are our own liberators until all of us are free, none of us are perfect. But, we need to expose these abuses and wrongful deaths!

Chapter Four: Time to seek legal counsel to file a civil lawsuit against prison officials

When our loved one dies or gets killed inside these prison plantations, we have to always be prepared legally to pursue redress in federal court.

If the prisoncrats are responsible for the death of a prisoner due to neglect or malfeasance, we often encourage families to pursue hiring good civil rights lawyers. There are lawyers who are open to taking on a case pro bono if they can see that the case has good merit to it.

When it can be clearly determined that prison officials were responsible for your loved one's death, you will most likely be offered a deal or settlement offer in an attempt to silence your fight. The initial offer will be a low ball number to see if you are thirsty. The attorney will encourage you to pass it up, for a greater offer. We have to never relent when it is time to hold them to account for their actions. We have to overcome any fears that emerge when thoughts of them retaliating against us enter our thoughts. The solidarity we have with activist groups around the country should make you confident that we can defeat these prisoncrats.

Families who don't have a family attorney should research locally based attorneys and read up on their backgrounds before they are given any money. There are a bunch of good civil lawyers here in the United States. Please search their profiles and review the success rates they

or their firms have enjoyed in the past ten years. Hopefully you will get a lawyer or a civil firm to represent you.

Securing a legitimate legal argument in matters such as these can mean a win or a loss. I am devoted to getting justice for anyone who has lost a loved one. May none of our loved ones' deaths be in vain! Fight the good fight.

Chapter Five: Contacts to reach out to for help to expose your family's struggle

Prison activist resource center is a national prisoner resource directory that was created to provide organizational help and support to prisoners and their families.

These various contacts are in this directory to provide multiple services and to advocate for us outside of these walls. I will list for you a few contacts that will help you to expose any injustices you have endured or have experienced. See below:

- 1) All of us or none, 4400 Market Street, Oakland, CA 94608
- 2) Amnesty International, 5 Penn. Plaza, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10001
- 3) Center for Constitutional Rights, (CUT OFF) Broadway, New York, NY 10012
- 4) Solitary Watch, P.O. Box 11374, Washington, DC 20008
- 5) Abolitionist Law Center, P.O. Box 1654, Pittsburgh, PA (CUT OFF)
- 6) Family Law Project, University of Wisconsin Law School, 975 Bascom Mall, Madison, WI 53706
- 7) NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 40 Rector Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10006
- 8) National Lawyer Guild: Prison Law Project, 132 Nassau St., Room 922, New York, NY, 10038

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions about what you have read. Stay safe. Power to the people (all of us or none of us)

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