

Messages from the Mound



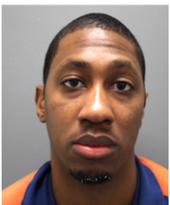
In 2007, I began my prison ministry where I facilitated my Relationship First Aid spiritual based personal development classes at Mound Correctional Facility in Detroit. After Mound closed in 2012, I continued to communicate with the inmates through newsletters, birthday cards and attending/speaking at events at various facilities. It is suspected that the facility got its name because of the many ancient mounds that were found all over Detroit, and I believe the most concentrated and/largest ones

were along what is now known as Mound Rd.

"Messages from the Mound" is named after the newsletters that I send out to the inmates since that is where we all initially met. Because the classes that I was teaching them focused on spiritual elevation allowing the negativity within them to die, thus ultimately elevating their consciousness, I thought it an appropriate name because a "mound" is defined as: an "elevation" formed of earth overlying ruins, a grave etc., a heap or raised mass. The following articles are from men that are currently incarcerated or released and this serves as an opportunity for the voiceless to have a voice. If you have a loved one that is currently incarcerated and would like for me to send them newsletters, please forward their contact information with a MDOC number to: Relationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com or contact me at: Relationship First Aid, Attn: Ma'at Seba, 15224 W. 7 Mile Rd., Detroit, MI. 48235.

Just cuz' I

By Demetrius Buckley
SPECIAL TO THE SUN



Black but ain't innocent, some weld up tear duct
a two family flat,
fatherless sidetalk but attempted to knock on our front
door -- Hip Hop is made.
Lonely window, one curtain called bed sheet,
counting men, thread hollow floorboards
that blacken our bottom feet.
Syrup sandwich swings in the hand of:
you can be anything in this world.

The world is a grown woman forcing me
between her legs -- I'm supposed to like it.
I tell the boys how I've traveled her.
I am innocently fornicating or struggling not to.

Family the archetype of a dead skin. Shit flaky.
Shit too close a copious rumor. All hale Julius
Cesar, bloodline Caligula -- let's be murdered by our congressman.

Just because my momma ain't ugly, projects keen to gardens,
famous negros like Sojourner Truth complexes housing
where all the baby mommas reside --
make dem' babies who fathers we take them babies --
looking into Cutlasses sitting high.

Cellblock stepdaddy, how they give old white men prison names.
We think they're counties.
We think abolition is real recognising reality: tell me your story.
Redlining struck a lung, factory overseer.
Come smoke with me. Picasso's paints dark colors
taking the subway -- in neighborhoods
they hang clothes out to dry,
looking over a yard unfamiliar, at children
squeezing laughter into their empty bellies.

What American dream added welfare and Wic stubs?
They stare. A pant for after joy.
And Just because you're little doesn't mean they won't kill you.
Or something like that or something like
dark colors being shown in light makes others violent.
That ain't you baby.

Chitlin Circuit submerges in the media,
bird feeder beak needler, lip shots a duck face, peckerwood Coon niggah
Just Cuz' I say it doesn't mean disorder.
Neighborhood a theme park. Days it can be fun but
scary when the ride starts.

When does the process begin?

By Glenn Johnson
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

When a person has been duly convicted of a crime and committed to the custody of the Michigan Department of Corrections to serve out his sentence when does the process of rehabilitation begin? Should it not be from the very moment that a person enters quarantine, is classified and their institutional needs identified?

Unfortunately this is not the case in Michigan. Pursuant to departmental policy prisoners are barred from participating in G.E.D. classes or any CORE programming until they are within three years of their Earliest Release Date. This means that if a person is sentenced to serve a 20 year sentence they must serve 17 years before the MDOC decides to begin the rehabilitation process.

Is this not the most absurd thing ever?! Consider this, if a high school dropout who suffers from drug addiction commits a violent offense and is sentenced to serve 20 years within the MDOC he will have to suffer through 17 more years of addiction, not addressing his anger issues and not being educated before the MDOC decides to get involved.

It's amazing that an addict has easier access to the myriad of psychotropic drugs readily available through psych services than he does to a drug treatment program. It is easier for a prisoner to get on a recreation call out to play basketball and lift weights than it is to get enrolled in a G.E.D. class. For the first few years of a prisoner's sentence he will be left to his own devices then in the last 3 years there is suddenly a flurry of activity where he will be expected to complete all of the programming required in order to be considered for a parole. This is part of the reason why prisoners in Michigan serve more than 100% of their sentences. Paroles are denied stating that a prisoner has not completed required programming when in reality he was unfairly denied

participation in said programming for the greater part of his sentence.

If a person is placed in your custody and you are allotted funds for the purpose of rehabilitating this person, you are failing in your duty if this person is left to his own devices for 17 years before you begin the process of rehabilitation. By the time a person has 3 years left on his sentence he will have spent 17 years around criminals picking up their negative behaviors instead of being taught how to deal with his addiction, new coping skills, a trade and a general education. It is an indictment in your system and proof that the system is a monumental failure when you can have a normal person, of average intelligence in your custody for 20+ years and still state that this person is not yet ready to be reintegrated into society, or this person returns to society in a worse state than he was in when he first entered the system.

Prisoners should be required to partake in all available programming the moment he enters the system. This way after completion he can spend the remainder of his time practicing what he has learned thereby becoming a better person. If a person obtains a G.E.D., learns a trade and how to deal with his substance abuse and anger issues then his chances of success upon release improve exponentially.

It is my humble opinion that this denial of education and programming is intentional. If you return a person to society who has not been properly transformed or rehabilitated then there is a higher chance that he will re-offend and return to prison thereby ensuring job security. Prison administrators fail the prisoner, society and in their duties when they don't do the job that tax-payers are paying them to perform. For all tax-paying citizens I implore you to get involved and hold prison administrators responsible. Make them do what you are paying them to do, rehabilitate prisoners the moment they enter the system, not years down the road.

Reparations is ours and we want it now!

By Sean Daniels

According to the Random House Webster's College Dictionary, Reparations is defined as; 1) The making of amends for wrong or injury done. 2) Compensation payable by a defeated nation to the victor for damages or loss suffered during war. 3) Restoration to good condition.

I read about it in books and news articles, I listen to it on radio stations, and watch it on my television, and even indulge in some open discussions with peers about what reparations means. Who is actually qualified to speak on the behalf of an entire nation of people, for what they feel they may deserve as an individual for the tortments of generations of slavery, rape, theft and dehumanization? These discussions are sensitive topics for me and can be difficult for me to have, especially with someone who is grateful for their captives giving them nothing at all. Somehow, I always find myself caught up in a dispute fighting for the freedom of someone who doesn't even want it. Due to what I feel I may deserve as an individual in this long-lost conquered nation, I often find myself standing alone.

I believe the reparations for the people of the long-lost conquered Nation of Africa here in Amerikkka is something that belongs solely to the African people. There is nothing that anyone can give to Africa that will restore her wealth. Only the unification of all of her children all around the globe coming together in one love, one culture, one drumbeat, one vibration, with one thought; "I am courageously in love with who I am."

This is war!!!! What do you actually expect from your enemy? Do you expect for them to give you enough for you to rise and seek revenge against their victory, and lead a revolution into the overthrowing of their system? You can't possibly be thinking that! Do you understand that the more you continue to beg your enemy for your freedom the longer he will have it? Reparations is our responsibility as a nation! It is our responsibility to do for self or suffer the consequences. Look at the wardrobe of everybody that you see screaming; "Reparations! Reparations! Reparations! Reparations! Reparations! Reparations! What percentage of their closet consist of clothing designed and manufactured at an African owned (Black owned) company? Where do most of us purchase our food products? What type of music do we listen to? What languages are we the most eager to teach ourselves? Look at our food diets, Listen to our conversations, look at the bro-

ken homes of our tribe here in AmeriKKKa and ask yourself; "is this really a money problem?"

If Reparations means, the restoration to a good condition, and this is what we are seeking, It would be impossible for the African people captured here in Amerikkka to be properly restored into good conditions if we continue to choose to be held captive by the paradigm of this society. We must return to sender everything they gave us. Give them back their culture! Give them back their music? Give them back their language! Give them back the way they treat their woman! Give them back their money! Give them back their greed! Their hate! their sexual practices! Give them back the way they raise their children! Give them back their diseases! None of this is yours, How would you look going into a court room screaming Reparations wearing a Dashiki over a \$5,000 Gucci suit? You don't think they see this! When they get a peak of that Gucci tag hanging out the collar of your Dashiki, that validates their power and it shows them that they still have their hold on you. When you come in wearing their identity, they only see a slave that's freezing cold outside willing to trade more of themselves for nothing (monetary value). Did you hear what I just said!? I SAID, "GIVE THEM BACK THEIR MONEY!!"

Open your eyes to who you are and receive your reparations. Stand courageously in your freedom. Unite with your community, open their eyes to who you are and they will see themselves. We don't want their land, because if you give us what is theirs, it could never be ours. Just as their way of thinking, their land will only destroy us. My dear brothers and sisters, be cautious of what you ask for, beware of what you trust. Reparations isn't something someone can give you, because it's already yours. Stop taking the money you labor and struggle for and rushing to spend it supporting the brands that doesn't support you. Tell the stories of your ancestors fight for freedom! Tell the stories no one likes to talk about, the ones of Queen Nanny and her brother Cujoe. This is Reparations! Support black businesses. This is Reparations! Produce your own foods. This is Reparations! Protect your children. Wives love your husbands, and husbands honor your wives. This is Reparations! Forgive yourself for all the years you've submitted to the fear of being yourself, buried in the identity of someone else. This is Reparations!

**EVERYONE
HAS A PLACE,
A VOICE,
AND SOMETHING
TO CONTRIBUTE.**