

Dear Amani Sawari,

January 27, 2020

Hello, my name is Christopher Armstrong and I hope that you receive this correspondence in good health and spirits. The reason I am writing you is to inform you of my situation. It's my intention to introduce myself to you so that you can familiarize yourself with me, explain my circumstances, and commend you for your efforts at prison reform. My prerogative is to keep it genuine and state facts to you without my opinion reflecting upon my words. There is already a deep level of admiration and respect I have cultivated for you as an advocate for prison reform and a sister in the struggle for liberation. May the words of my mouth and meditations of my mind be acceptable and have a profound effect on you.

First let me state it is absolute pleasure to make your acquaintance. My name is Christopher Armstrong, I am 26 years old, originally I am from Little Rock, Arkansas. I have been incarcerated in the Missouri Department of Corrections under extenuating circumstances for 24 months. The charges I am incarcerated for are nonviolent offenses; second degree burglary and damage to jail property. Pleading guilty to these charges was the only option I sought to be released from Saline County Jail located in Marshall, Missouri. The circumstances I was under forced me to "cop out" because I had a bond I could not make, abuse from staff, and the conditions of the facility. I violated the probation sentence when I returned to Little Rock, Arkansas by absconding and not reporting for 6 months. On the date of December 22, 2017 I was arrested and extradited to Missouri where I sentenced to prison for violating the probation sentence once! The felonies I am committed to both carry 4 year sentences and concurrent. While I've been incarcerated in the Missouri Department of Corrections has opened my eyes to a diabolical system that is truly set on oppression and not rehabilitation. Unjust and unfair actions have been impended on that have severely punished me, sanctions against me have taken my original parole release which was last year and set it back 18 months. There are bias actions that have been portrayed through the staff and administration without regard for the prisoners it is effecting. This realization made me educate myself more so that the intelligence and mentality I have can become refined so that I do not a statistic of recidivism. Also the



Choice of literature that I read is about Criminal Justice reform.

Let me enlighten you about the atrocities of The Missouri Board of Probation and Parole. The original parole release date I had set for the sentence I am incarcerated for was March 1, 2019. I'm a non-violent offender with no previous record in the state of Missouri but they have me located at a maximum security unit called Southeast Correctional Center where I am surrounded by offenders with life sentences, violent charges, and indiscernible attitudes. The atmosphere I am in is not one that promotes being released from confinement and reentering society because only a fraction of the inmate population is eligible to be released. The Missouri Department of Corrections finds no fault in this even when the statistics are pointing this out and it obviously has an effect on the individual's mentality that is eligible for parole. Institutional parole officers at this facility are able to apprehend your parole release date to their discretion and have imposed this sanction on me for unjustifiable three times. They state it is due to poor institutional adjustment and the decision is not subject to appeal or grievable by policy. The Board of Parole just continually deludes you with the statement "There does not appear to be a reasonable probability at this time that the offender would live and remain at liberty without again violating the law." I can honestly admit there are some rule infractions I have committed but they did not endanger anyone's well-being or health. Understand that the Missouri Board of Probation and Parole will extend offenders to the maximum release date with no second thought or remorse because they view it as a profitable cause. The atmosphere I'm in is not inspirational, motivational, or intellectually adaptive. So how can they judge impartially when they are not putting forth the effort to rehabilitate the prisoner population so that you adjust to reentering real society instead of a institution with psychological locks that tries to seclude you to a box. When you state facts about a system that is insistent in holding you in bondage there is retaliation and consequences for your defiance and I state this is the repression of true expression. My parole release date is August 7, 2020 and it does not make sense why they punish by keeping you longer than necessary in a atmosphere full of violence, homosexuality, malevolence, and ignorance. It is imperative that you and others are aware of The Missouri Board of Probation and Parole actions.



These statements should have a benevolent effect on you because the fact is the reason for me contacting you is that I've read your journalism and seen your activism for prison reform and I'm moved by it tremendously. The most recent article I read by you was about the MUM.I Conference. As an advocate for prison reform you have my undivided attention and upmost respect because not only are you intelligent and a college graduate but you are young and dedicated to the cause. The articles I have read by you are very enlightening while stating the truth about what needs to be done. I'm sure you know that we have no access to computers or the internet so I have not been able to view your social media page. It is imperative I follow you for the movement and be added to your list to receive your Right2Vote newsletter. There are people who are supposed to be listening to you and responding with immediate action for the purpose of gaining attention. Most of individuals my age are not involved in criminal justice reform because they are ignorant of the facts that surround mass incarceration. We have to form a strong alliance so that we progress in the struggle for liberation, if there is no struggle for progress then what are we doing.

Ms. Sawari I can tell you that as a young black man I've made some choices that are good and some that are bad which resulted in the confined state I am in. Being inside this system has forced me to the realization that I am a statistic of mass incarceration. When I came to that point I started reading literature that would educate me such as "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander and other titles by authors like Ta'Neheisi Coates, Tavis Smiley, and Toni Morrison. I've advanced my knowledge, wisdom, and understanding by discovering the power of self and my potential and capabilities. In your MUM.I Conference you stated "As a student, I did not recognize my authority on campus to create movements on behalf of the incarcerated people in my state." I can relate to you on that level in a certain aspect because I did not know what I was capable of organizing. During this time all I put forth an effort to better myself and then I found you which truly inspired me to be a higher me.

As you see I wrote this correspondence to you with the best intentions of informing you who I am, the circumstances surrounding me, and to commend you for your efforts at prison reform and as an advocate for criminal justice. The

position that you're in is vital towards the cause because you are on the outside looking in but you are relentless in the struggle for liberation. I have the deepest level of respect and admiration for you. Gratitude for what you are doing because you deserve recognition. My attitude towards you is pious for indefinable reasons and I have included my Facebook information, email address, and Twitter account. We must connect outside of this bondage. I can truly witness the power of your presence. Thank you for your time and diligence.

A True and Living,  
Eric Hampton

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