

# Do Black Lives Matter to Ohio's Parole Board

Jason Goudlock

I have been in prison since 1994. That year, shortly before I turned 19, I was convicted of armed robbery and felonious assault. At my third parole hearing seventeen years later, the Ohio Parole Board recommended my release, but the Board's oversight committee (the Central Office Board Review – COBR) overruled the release recommendation and issued a continuance of 15 months.

Since then, I have called attention to an Ohio State Highway Patrol investigation that shows I was falsely accused by former Ohio State Penitentiary Warden Marc Houk of damaging a prison elevator that held his motorcycle. I pointed out that Houk served on a Parole Board that misrepresented the time I had served when they issued another continuance of my sentence. In addition, I began a lawsuit against several correction officers who physically assaulted me on April 12, 2013 and subsequently fabricated a series of false incident and conduct reports to cover up their illegal behavior. I made an audio recording showing officers lied under oath available to the public on my website ([FreeJasonGoudlock.org](http://FreeJasonGoudlock.org)).

As a direct result of my efforts to call attention to these injustices, the Ohio Parole Board in October 2014 issued a five-year continuance of my sentence.

I suggest one answer to the question I ask in my title can be determined by comparing the Ohio Parole Board's handling of my situation with that of Roger Snodgrass, a white man. Then a member of the Aryan Brotherhood, Snodgrass was serving time for a 1987 aggravated robbery conviction and a 1994 involuntary manslaughter conviction for stabbing a man to death during the 1993 prison uprising at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility. He provided testimony against five prisoners who were convicted of deadly participation in the eleven-day disturbance, and he was paroled in September 2006.

According to the September 4, 2006 Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Ohio Parole Board justified Snodgrass's release by saying he had “served more than the minimum for killing inmate Earl Elder,” who suffered 163 stab wounds from a homemade ice pick, adding that Snodgrass had “compiled a good work history in prison.”

If I had been sentenced under the guidelines that went into effect July 1, 1996, I would already have served nearly three years over the maximum amount of time for my crimes. Instead, the Board has decided I must serve almost 26 years for robbery and felonious assault before they will even consider whether I can be released while they judged Snodgrass to be rehabilitated 13 years after killing a man. Is this equal justice under the law?

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*Jason Goudlock is a progressive writer embedded in the struggle against the repressive United States prison industrial complex. If you would like to offer him support on his quest to attain justice for Ohio old-law prisoners, you can contact him at the following:*

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**Learn more about Jason Goudlock and his struggle for freedom at [freejasongoudlock.org](http://freejasongoudlock.org).**