

October 2014 Post-Ohio Parole Board Hearing Update

Jason Goudlock

On October 15, 2014, my fifth Parole Board hearing concluded with the six-member Parole Board hearing panel voting to continue my incarceration. This was a result, I was told, of an unacceptable accumulation of disciplinary Conduct Reports. The actual amount of time of my continuance has not been decided because the hearing panel disagreed on the amount of time I should be given. They said their decision would be mailed to me in approximately two months or less. Since the decision has yet to be finalized, I'm asking all supporters to please send an e-mail to the Ohio Parole Board requesting that they grant me a parole. You can use this link to contact the Ohio Parole Board: www.drc.ohio.gov/PBEmail/Default.aspx.

In spite of my awareness of the Ohio Parole Board's long history of rendering unjust sentence continuances, I thought they might finally be ready to allow me to get on with my life after having served nearly 21 years, as a first-time offender, for aggravated robbery and felonious assault. The Parole Board, however, opted to use my accumulation of minor Conduct Reports as their reason to continue my excessive incarceration.

What they refused to take into consideration is the fact that my Conduct Reports all stem from a single incident that occurred April 12, 2013, at the Mansfield Correctional Institution, in which I was physically assaulted by a squad of rogue correction officers, who subsequently, filed false Incident and Use of Force reports against me, alleging that I "kicked my cell door open, and then charged towards an officer." The Parole Board could have easily reviewed the vindicating audio recording of the May 2013, Mansfield Rules Infraction Board hearing (Case No. ManCI-13-00237), in which the Chair of the Rules Infraction Board makes the exonerating statement that I "did not kick my cell door open."¹ The Parole Board, however, ignored the audio evidence that reveals I was physically assaulted and set-up. They chose, instead, to focus all their attention on the minor Conduct Reports I accumulated after the April 12, 2014, incident.

During my hearing, I tried to explain to the Parole Board that, after having been assaulted and set-up, my state-of-mind was reduced to a depressed state of emptiness and hopelessness. The Parole Board, however, took my explanations to be excuses. "It's everyone's fault but yours, Mr. Goudlock," they repeatedly said to me. In the minds of the members of the Parole Board, I guess I'm not allowed to show any human emotion at all. I should just endure another decade of having my life stolen from me.

In addition to the Parole Board's failure to take into consideration the audio evidence favorable to me, once again the Parole Board failed to afford me a fair and meaningful hearing. This most recent hearing included one of the same Parole Board members who participated in my previous unfair and non-meaningful December 2012 hearing with proven-to-be-corrupt Parole Board member Marc Houk. Given the fact that Ohio Assistant State Public Defender Kenneth R. Spiert and I appealed the unfairness of the December 2012 hearing², you would think the Parole Board would have barred anyone who participated in the 2012 hearing, from participating in my most recent hearing. The Parole Board, however, permitted the festering injustice to continue, which has resulted in my being denied, once again, my constitutional right to a fair and meaningful hearing.

Shortly before attending my recent Parole Board hearing, I mailed an in-depth letter to the Parole Board, in which I stated several reasons why I deserve to be paroled. I posted the letter³ on FreeJasonGoudlock.org and mailed it to the media and various people of importance. At the conclusion of the letter, I wrote: "On the lighter side, I would truly like to witness in person LeBron James' pursuit of an NBA championship for my beloved hometown." The mainstream media and a host of sports and news websites keyed in on my LeBron comment, which resulted in the comment being spun into a widely reported story.⁴

Most of the responses to the LeBron comment have been positive. Sports analyst Jim Rome made a satirical mockery of my comment⁵, but, hey, that's just Jim Rome being Jim Rome. WNBA superstar Brittney Griner's response⁶ to my comment, though--that the Parole Board should just keep me in prison, and give me a TV to watch LeBron play--is a little unsettling to me.

1 Defendants in the civil case GOUDLOCK v. BLANKENSHIP, et al. (Case No 1:13cv1215), were ordered October 3, 2014, to turn over the audio recording of the Mansfield Rules Infraction Board hearing to Plaintiff Jason Goudlock, who is in the process of having the audio recording copied and transcribed. Soon, the world will get a glimpse at the corruption that exists in America's prisons.

2 Kenneth R. Spiert Letter to Parole Board (<http://freejasongoudlock.org/commentary-on-assistant-state-public-defenders-letter-to-parole-board/>)

3 Jason Goudlock Letter to Parole Board (<http://freejasongoudlock.org/old-law-inmate-jason-goudlock-letter-to-the-ohio-parole-board/>)

4 Media Coverage of LeBron James Comment (<http://freejasongoudlock.org/media-coverage-from-lebron-james-post/>)

5 Jim Rome Comment (<http://jimrome.com/2014/10/10/lots-of-luck-goudluck/>)

It suggests the WNBA superstar didn't read my letter to the Parole Board because it seems nearly impossible that anyone other than the Ohio Parole Board would deem it acceptable for *anyone* to serve decades for a crime others serve, on average, three to 10 years. And that is the injustice made possible by the different treatment of “old-law” and “new-law” prisoners in Ohio.

Surely, if the WNBA superstar read my letter to the Parole Board, she would be aware that I have been, and continue to be, subjected to a cruel and arbitrary injustice, which contradicts every ideal the United States professes to stand for. Brittany Griner is entitled to her opinion of my LeBron James comment. But I would like for her to be fully knowledgeable of all of the reasons I outlined in my letter, for why I deserve to be paroled before she offered her opinion that I should be kept in prison and given a TV to watch LeBron. (Even though I'm not a big TV person, I wouldn't mind if someone, as Brittney Griner suggested, donated one to me. On that point she's right: I don't have one.). With more knowledge perhaps Griner will someday use her voice as other sports icons Muhammed Ali, Billie Jean King, and Jim Brown have--to speak out against the kind of injustice I'm being forced to experience or, better yet, to speak out against the much larger national injustice of mass incarceration, which Professor Michelle Alexander has written about in her justly acclaimed book *The New Jim Crow*⁷. Maybe that would help me move a step closer towards attaining my freedom so I can share my cautionary story with at-risk youth, hoping to steer them away from the hellish experience of incarceration.

In closing, I encourage others to remind Brittney Griner that many people who have been incarcerated have, against all odds, emerged from their imprisonment to become success stories: professional boxing legend Bernard Hopkins; professional boxer Ramone Austin (a former cellmate of mine who fought for the Heavyweight Championship of the World in 2007); R&B singer Lyfe Jennings; actors Charles S. Dutton and Danny Trejo; human rights advocate Malcolm X; basketball player Lee Benson; and many others. These individuals would have never become the success stories they became if they hadn't been afforded a second chance. After serving nearly 21 years, all I want is the second chance I deserve. Hopefully, my time will soon come. Thanks to all the supporters of FreeJasonGoudlock.org for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Jason Goudlock

P.S. Although the Parole Board has stated they intend to issue me a sentence continuation, their decision has yet to be finalized. With this in mind, I ask all supporters of FreeJasonGoudlock.org, to please send an e-mail to the Ohio Parole Board requesting that they grant me a parole. Their contact information is as follows: www.drc.ohio.gov/PBEmail/Default.aspx.

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.

6 Britney Griner Comment (<http://www.t TMZ.com/2014/10/11/britney-griner-jailbird-superfan-deserves-to-see-lebron-from-jail/>)

7 The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander (<http://newjimcrow.com>)