

Live from Skid Row: A Harrowing Account and Plea for Assistance From an Impoverished Ohio Old-Law Prisoner

By Jason Goudlock

As an 18-year-old in 1993, I was arrested, a first-time offender convicted of aggravated robbery and felonious assault. I never imagined I would still be imprisoned 20 years later. Convicted under Ohio's old-law indefinite set of sentencing guidelines—six to 25 years, plus nine mandatory years for gun-specification sentencing enhancements—I thought surely the Ohio Parole Board would have released me by now. But I have served more time than some prisoners convicted of murder. Now, having concluded the Ohio Parole Board conducts parole hearings so unjust George W. Bush would disapprove, I remain locked inside a prison cell.

At the beginning of my incarceration I had very few people to turn to for moral or financial support. After the deaths of my grandparents and my mother, all of whom passed away within the first five years of my imprisonment, I was left with none.

As my time in prison passed with nothing to hope for but parole, I tried to find strength without any moral support. But the reality of being an indigent prisoner with a monthly salary that ranged from \$3 to \$16 was powerfully challenging. There is a cost-of-living in prison, and it greatly exceeded my earned income.

Having received a 24-month continuance at my most recent hearing in December of 2012—a hearing that was a sham¹--in a financial sense I am in the worst shape of my life. My prison salary has been withheld for the past six months because I was housed in a "Special Management Housing Unit," a form of isolation. I was placed there after an incident in which a squad of correction officers, unprovoked, physically assaulted me.² As a result, I don't have any hygiene items except for a couple of miniature bars of prison-made soap along with a few miniature tubes of toothpaste. The soap severely dries out my skin, and to relieve the skin irritation, I'm forced to rub pore-clogging butter into it, which causes me to break out in hives.

Not only do I lack hygiene items, I have little else. No personal clothing. No food other than what is served by the prison. No radio. No television. (One of my supporters has agreed to purchase a "mini-tablet," which might someday soon allow me to communicate with people via email, as well as listen to music!) After serving more than 20 consecutive years in prison as a result of my first conviction, I live in a demoralizing state of squalor. My physical condition intensifies the psychological pain I have experienced, much of it in isolation, which psychologists consider a form of torture. In 1842 Charles Dickens, having visited Philadelphia's Easter State Penitentiary called the psychological pain "worse than any torture of the body."

I'm currently exploring the logistics of conducting an online fundraiser to help me get on my feet and liberate myself and hundreds of Ohio old-law prisoners from the unjust Ohio Parole Board. In the meantime, I ask anyone concerned with helping those in need to consider making a small donation and/or a donation of embossed stamped envelopes (a limit of three per letter) on my behalf. Your support would be greatly appreciated

If you want to make a monetary donation to Jason Goudlock, please go here: <http://www.youcaring.com/freejasongoudlock>.

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.

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- 1 See "Unveiling the Shadowy Past of Ohio Board Member Marc Houk: A Story of Injustice" at <http://freejasongoudlock.org/unveiling-the-shadowy-past-of-ohio-parole-board-member-marc-houk-a-story-of-injustice/>
 - 2 See "Ohio Old-Law Prisoner Files \$250,000 Federal Lawsuit Against Prison Warden and Officer for Alleged Brutality and Cover-up" at <http://freejasongoudlock.org/ohio-old-law-prisoner-files-250000-federal-lawsuit-against-prison-warden-and-officer-for-alleged-brutality-and-cover-up/>