

## Preface To A Suicide Letter To The Michigan Parole Board

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When I shared with a friend that I was writing a preface to a suicide letter to the parole board he had many questions. First, "what is a preface?" A preface is a preliminary statement, usually in a book, by the author or editor setting forth the book's purpose. Or in this case, the purpose of my suicide letter. Then, he asked over and over again despite the fact that I answered him every time, "are you really going to commit suicide?" No, I am not going to take my life, the courts and Michigan parole board already have.

I shared with him that suicide is not just the taking of one's life but, the destruction of one's own interests or prospects. What makes my letter to the parole board a "suicide letter" is there is an unwritten, but very well known Michigan parole board policy, that if a prisoner does not admit to the crime she or he has been convicted of, the parole board will not grant release. It does not matter if a prisoner has been in prison for decades or has an exemplary prison record. This is also in spite of the fact that there is increasing public recognition that the U.S. criminal justice system often convicts the wrong people. I will never take responsibility for a crime I am 100 percent factually innocent of, which "kills" my prospects of a favorable parole decision.

If a person admits to the crime they have been convicted of or not a parole hearing last no longer than five to ten minutes. It is no stretch of the imagination to assume that prior to the hearing the parole board has already made a decision to continue or end a sentence. Still, giving the parole board the benefit of the doubt (something it does not give) that a hearing is actually an opportunity to persuade them to grant release, is five minutes enough time to explain the horror story I have lived since July 8, 1994?

Is it enough time to explain that there was no probable cause or exigent circumstances which justified my arrest; or that after arrest detectives never asked me one question? A practice so unusual, it is fair to say that it never happens. Is it enough time to explain that the entire case hinged on the testimony of a professional jailhouse informant? Not only did the informant allege that I confessed to him while being detained at the precinct, but the professional witness appeared in court case after court alleging that others confessed to him as well. Usually the sole evidence offered by the state.

Is it enough time to explain that he testified that I confessed to him 3 or 4 days after arrest, even though precinct record show he was with detectives just 17 hours after my arrest preparing to be a witness against me? Is it enough time to explain that three new witnesses have come forward: one who says they know who the real perpetrator is; another who says he was present when detectives gave the professional jailhouse witness a script of exactly what to say

and attribute it to me; and another who is willing to testify that detectives tried to pressure him to fabricate I confessed to him also? Is it enough time to show the parole board secret memorandums that have surfaced where the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office admits that the professional witness who alleged I confessed to him was part of a small cadre of professional witnesses who fabricated testimony in dozens of cases in exchange for police favors and time knocked off of their sentences?

Is it enough time to explain to the parole board that according to research from the Northwestern Law School's Center on Wrongful Convictions, 45.9 percent of documented wrongful convictions have been traced to false informant testimony. Making jailhouse informants one of the leading causes of wrongful convictions? Of course five minutes is not enough time to explain one, let alone all of these factors which I believe substantiates my innocence.

I have been in prison twenty (20) years, which is not good enough for the Michigan parole board whom wants me to hear me say "uncle." Admit to a crime that has not been solved because the real perpetrator is yet to be caught. And if I don't, the hearing will not even last five minutes. Therefore, I was hoping that by sending a preface letter to the Michigan parole board it would give me an opportunity to explain why the parole board should correct what the courts got wrong. Thus, providing with an opportunity to have a meaningful parole hearing.

I am writing this letter even though several prison copounselors have acknowledged that despite their assurance that I pose no threat to society, failure to take responsibility for the crime will result in automatic denial of parole. And since I will not take responsibility for something I not only am innocent of, but have no knowledge of, any letter I write to the Michigan parole board, is, in effect, a suicide letter.

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