

ERIC DORNELL CLEMMONS-BEY #99956  
SOUTH EAST CORRECTIONAL CENTER  
300 E. PEDRO SIMMONS DR.  
CHARLESTON, MO. 63834-1347  
e-mail@clemmonseric@yahoo.com



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At the time my friend and brotha ask me to write something about my experiences I gladly jumped at the chance. After going through my thoughts I began to hesitate. I asked myself had I turned into a bitter old man. I know I sometimes sound this way to myself. At the time of this writing I am 53 years of age, and I have been locked up 33 years this August 16, 2015. My sentence is Capital murder and I received Life with No Parole for 50 Years. I had no prior record.

For the sake of clarity I share the basics of why I am here. In August 1982, my younger brotha was followed home from work the few blocks he was accustomed to walking in Mid-Town St. Louis City. On the block upon which we lived the two men proceeded to rob Stanley. Friends and I were nearby. Stanley yelled for help. We ran to his aid and a fight ensued. Unfortunately, one of the robbers later died from blows sustained during the melee. When I learned of the robber's demise I turned myself in and have been locked up since. You can read up on my cases thru the [kcstar.com/2/28/2000;inmate's](http://kcstar.com/2/28/2000;inmate's) legal fight overturns execution; and also [riverfronttimes.com/12/2013;](http://riverfronttimes.com/12/2013;) enough guilt to go around.

After being sentenced to Life with No Parole for Fifty Years, plus ten, In 1983, I was sent to the maximum security prison called the WALLS in Jefferson City, Missouri. The judicial system was just beginning g the trend of sentencing its State's youth to long prison terms. I was twenty-one years of age and within two years of being at the Walls, I was falsely accused of the stabbing death of an inmate. I went to trial, having professed my innocence. I was found guilty in 1987, and with the State using my convictions for murder and assault of the robbers as aggravating factors, I was sentenced to Death Row. I received a new trial in 1997, having come within six months of execution. In February 2000, I was found not guilty upon retrial.



Being on death row was my saving grace. I was around older individuals who had no time to play games. They were soul searching, trying to understand their purpose on earth, and desiring, for the most part, to make amends for the wrong they had inflicted on their victims, families, and their selves. My own personal quest of soul searching and redemption began then as the "Row" had me in an environment in which I could grow and unfold into a balanced young man.

What motivated me was my desire to live and learn. I found myself actually scared to sleep. I feared I would wake up strapped to the gurney to be murdered. I feared I would sleep my chances away, so I operated on three hours of sleep daily for years.

Because I was young I was allowed to pick the brains of all around me. I learned what motivated and shaped their behavior patterns. I soon learned that most mistakes stemmed from their use of some form of chemical dependency. Through their mistakes they taught me that "Life is A Natural High", when you appreciate it. In looking back now the administrators that ran the prison better appreciated a prisoner's efforts in working toward redemption and self-awareness. Our word was our bond and some of the staff lived by this creed as well. Thirty years later and those that control Missouri Government have found many ways to take hundreds of millions of tax dollars from you and convert them into privatized funds. This means they have created avenues like the prison phones, the canteen and various contracts that once used prisoner labor have now all been rewarded to friends of the State. No telling what type of nepotism and kickbacks are involved. With our medical care being under contract with the goal being to save money and not administer proper health care, prisoners are dying, dropping like flies. The official cause of death is always listed as "Natural Causes", but it is nothing natural about it. We are being murdered subtly, right under our own noses.

In having spent decades imprisoned against my will and knowing that the State intends to allow me to perish here, I contemplate my own fatality. I wonder about the eventuality of it. As I have always believed in the God-given right to protect you and yours no matter who the abuser, I can't help



but wonder what type of statement would I leave behind? This I have given considerable thought. I conclude that I will overcome this nightmare. In this regard I am blessed. The judicial branch of government has converted itself from a fact-finding instrument of justice to a very ultra-conservative process of mockery. Some would suggest that this mockery has always been in place where people of color or minority is concerned. Our individual realities is an attestation to the pain and suffering we endure in our attempt to get along and make due.

I have found myself, my calling if you would. It is to be an entrepreneur. Attempting to get my first patent on file has been a rollercoaster ride. I have been able to learn the law. Get good at it. And through various attorneys I currently have filed a petition for clemency now pending under the Jay Nixon gubernatorial administration for six years. I have a State Habeas Corpus filed here in Mississippi County, and a motion for abandonment filed with the 22nd Judicial Circuit pending. I am hopeful that one of these three filings is the key to free me. I pray thru my works I perform to aid myself and others. I toil in hope of seeing brighter tomorrows.

I find that this system is comparable to an abusive foster-parent. They have us in their charge but we are not properly cared for. We are being killed, mainly subtly, but for those of us not having a outdate, death seems to be our only salvation to look forward to. My stress, depression, and anxiety started in the pit of my stomach in 1982. Over the years it worked its way upward into my chest, into my throat, my face, my eyes, and now it threatens to consume me totally. Doing long periods of times have different very dramatic affects upon the prisoners. Trying to keep a semblance of mental and physical balance going while being denied the basic human necessities is very trying. Not having access to my woman, my family, or being able to make the finance needed to sustain them all goes toward making this life very unbearable. Add to it the endless attempts at demanding that this system correct my unjust sentence makes it all the more painful. Add to this your peers around you who don't know how to help. They avoid and shun thoses who become mentally and physically infirm.

Still, with each day I work to accomplish something. I do what I can to



stay alive. To let it be known that I not only want to live, but deserve to be freed. I've met a lot of kind souls and good brothers along the way. We have tried to be there for the other when at all possible. It is my dream to be freed and establish my business. To sustain my children thru the purchase of homes and what other means of succorment that may be needed. I want to swim daily in my own pool and see what I can do to put a referendum on the ballot to allow a parole hearing for anyone with a sentence of twenty years or more. I'd like to develop a dvd educational series thru my non-profit, Youth Enlightenment Program, in order to help at-risk and proven risk youth of this country.

I want to heal. To be able to sit back and contemplate my frame. To be hugged up with my future wife. To be able to live to a ripe old age telling my stories. I'd like to say I defied the odds and overcame great adversities and obstacles in being freed and then went on to be very successful in being able to assist others. I am Eric Dornell Clemmons-Bey.