

Michael Torres

## My Narrative

It was ~~2011~~ July 4th, 2011, I was locked up in Modesto, Ca downtown jail or Stanislaus County Jail. I should tell you here that it has since been closed down because the conditions were unlivable. I feel very strongly that ~~they are right~~ whoever shut it down was right. That day it was ~~at~~ 120° ~~no air conditioning~~ in the cell with no air conditioning. ~~The~~ The guards put massive fans ~~down~~ at each end of the hall that blow hot ~~air~~ air around. When talking thru story someone said it was like a hair dryer, and yes that was what it felt like. The cell I was in had bunks for six people, a shower toilet, and two tables. With a pay phone on the wall. When ~~was~~ a new guy showed up every body would wait for the dudes code on his third phone call, because when he dialed that code every body could use it and make a free phone call. Nobody came in that day, and so we one might imagine nobody was trying to move.

I was laying on my bunk hearing the fourth of July parade going by, and realized that this was it. I was looking at 3 three life sentences and I could lay in my misery or change my mind's focus to becoming the best me I could be, no matter where I'm at or what conditions I'm living in. This the day I changed. I have been on this journey ever since. Every day I try to learn one thing or improve one thing, it hasn't been easy, especially the day my mother died, or every birthday I missed of my daughters, every Christmas, first day of school or the day my ~~the~~ youngest daughter started crying on the phone, and because I couldn't go to her father's daughter since. I still sucks

but today is a great day, and ~~even though~~ <sup>those</sup> days I learned and improved, ~~to~~ even if it was just learning how to listen and be patient. My mind has been set to be better ever since that day and I will die trying to be better than yesterday.

It changed my energy, I didn't give up just changed the fight. It was obvious, I would be sitting in the holding tank because we could hear with my paper book in my pocket wanting to be moved one way or the other and every time some one would ask for my paper book, and I would struggle with my black box hand cuffs get it out of my front pocket and over to them, then they would read for some reason their eyes would get big they would struggle with the handcuffs handling my paperwork book and say "you have 3 all day your looking at 3 all day sentences?" I would nod yes, the group would get quiet for a little bit like someone died and they were paying their respect and then people would start talking again.

The Feds picked me up and I didn't get the three all day sentences, my mind set has not changed. I believe I was in Federal Court on December 23, 2011, the court room was packed, I recognized one person, my old boss ~~whom I worked for the Ceres Council as a paper~~ had a paper court with the Ceres Council. He didn't recognize me and ~~stole~~ stole a picture with his Apple tablet. I felt alone but I was determined to change. The judge shook her head when she told the court room how much time each court held, they added up to 150 years, there was gasps of exclamations coming from behind me, that day I learned to embrace change. I met new people and learned how to adapt to new friendships. I also learned that the feds don't like Paul Robeson. The court conditions were a little better than before, and I learned to adapt

to the new environment, Coincidentally I was in the same pod that a professional rapper had been held some years before on bank robbery charges. From there I was moved to Lerdo MAX, conditions improved a little more phone calls were cheaper, and I met new people. Eventually I got my sentence of 15 years and that was the hope

I had been looking for, this time the court room was filled with my loved ones, I wasn't alone, it ~~took me~~ was a hard lesson for me to learn. I am not alone, and I can't lie and say I never forget this lesson, because I sometimes do, but I am not alone. Even though I don't know you, we are in this world together, and even though we live in different environs we still share this air, and even though I have never ~~seen~~ seen you I have thought of you.

Today I'm on my last legs of my sentence, still trying to be better than yesterday, still missing funerals, weddings and birth days, still facing sometimes in humane treatment, ~~but~~ such as no potable water for two weeks, the Covid epidemic, and at one point no toilet paper, I learned that even the small things matter during that last part. I continue to embrace change, it hasn't gone smoothly but I'm still standing, and I hope that one day I will stand free and rising forward ~~and~~ becoming a successful citizen, still being better than the day before. Embracing my day, and if I can live through the hell of the past, my future shall be at the very least livable.