

" I'm just saying..."

By: Ramiah White Side

The main reason I support efforts like the 11 x 15 Campaign is not so much about me, so much as it is about who comes after me. At least the 11 x 15 Campaign is trying. I wish more people would at least try to do something. Prisons are some seriously messed up places. Some people say, if we can't do the time then we should not do the crime. To them I say this,

what if I was your son or daughter or husband or wife?

I had a life before I came to prison. Things were not perfect, but I have some good memories to go along with all of the not-so-good-ones too.

I went to Rufus King Highschool in Milwaukee. My freshman year was full of all kinds of people and experiences that come or go along with highschool. It was like a crossroads for me. I met people from the Dominican Republic, rich people, other poor people like me and some really, really smart people too. I had some very good teachers who did care. I played sports and all that, even though my mind was preoccupied with surviving after school. I made it to my senior year, but by then I pretty much gave up on myself. I guess when everyone else gives up on you it is only a matter of time before you follow their lead. I hate that I gave up on myself.

After almost twenty years of incarceration I now find myself fighting to keep my head above water. It is like de-ja-vu and I struggle with giving up again. My family struggles out there without me. What kind of Husband or Partner am I? What kind of Father am I? Who am I? Am I just a number? The 11 x 15 Campaign gives me hope that one of these days people will wake up and realize there is a better way than this. Anyone that knows me knows that not a day goes by that I do not suffer because of my past poor choices. I support the 11 x 15 Campaign because it is the only option I have for any kind of REDEMPTION. Being warehoused in some psychological gulag is just torture.

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