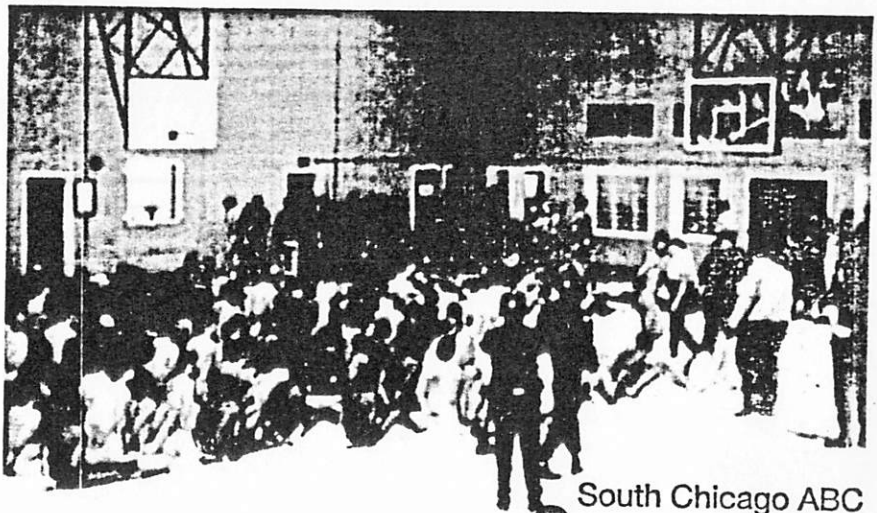
VOICES OF THE LUCASVILLE UPRISING VOLUME 4



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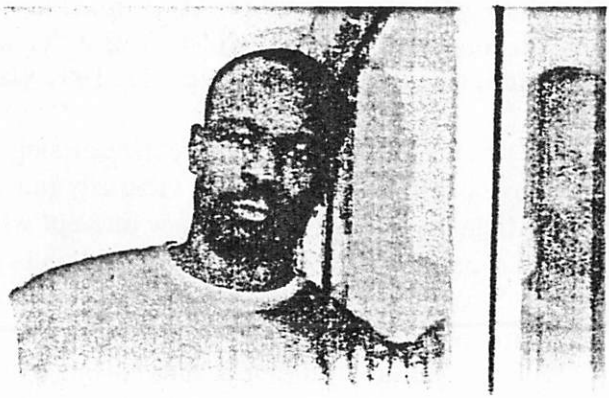
LUCASVILLE: A BRIEF HISTORY



This is an excerpt from Bomani's book, *Condemned*. Go to Keithlamar.org for info on how to order the book.

Based on the official account, the uprising was the result of a discrepancy between the warden and Muslim inmates who refused to submit to mandatory tuberculosis testing. Apparently the serum being used to determine whether or not inmates were infected contained an alcoholic substance called phenol which, due to Islamic doctrines, Muslims were prohibited from ingesting.

In an effort to resolve this dilemma, several Muslims met with the warden to suggest alternative ways in which the tests could be given. However, for reasons I will explain later, the warden refused to listen to their suggestions and gave them an ultimatum demanding complete compliance or automatic lockdown and forced inoculation.

Faced with something of an impasse, the Muslims decided to stage what was supposed to have been a peaceful demonstration to protest against what they perceived as unfair treatment. Since it was known that alternatives (chest x-rays, urinalysis, sputum samples, etc.) were being offered to Muslims at other institutions, the Muslims at SOCF felt that protesting would force the

administration to yield in their behalf. However, after physical force was used to strip guards of their keys and weapons to release prisoners from their cells, the protest quickly erupted into what is now known as the longest prison riot in history. But that's only part of the story. In truth, what happened on April 11, 1993 was a long time coming.

In the fall of 1990, three years before the uprising, a school teacher by the name of Beverly Taylor was viciously murdered by a black inmate. Allegedly, after a botched rape attempt which turned into a hostage situation, the inmate panicked and cut Beverly Taylor's throat. This caused a tremendous uproar in the surrounding community and led to calls for the inmate to be put to death. The inmate was put on trial, but because of his diminished mental capacity was barred from receiving the death penalty. This reignited the anger in the community, who then began calling for the complete lock-down of the institution. Ultimately, a new warden was appointed.

The new warden's name was Arthur Tate, who was supposedly chosen as someone who could restore order. However, since it was against the law to permanently lock the penitentiary down, Warden Tate immediately came under fire and had to wrestle against the accusation that we were being coddled and catered to, which was a perception that Warden Tate despised and sought to dispel by severely limiting programs and out-of-cell time. But he could only do so much. In a very real sense, his hands were tied and the best he could do was to start enforcing a strict dress code, which basically meant we had to keep our shirts tucked in at all times. He also had yellow "caution" lines painted on each side of the hallway floors, apparently to create the illusion of physical and psychological distance between inmates and corrections officers.

Finally, as a last resort, Warden Tate sought permission from Eric Dahlberg, South regional director, to build a high security (i.e. super max) unit inside the prison. He was convinced that this was the one and only way to address the potential threat that certain individuals posed. But since SOCF was already equipped with a high security unit consisting of twenty (20) cells

which were very seldom, if ever, completely full. Warden Tate's request was denied. In addition to that, Mr. Dahberg's office lacked the finances necessary to fund the building of an additional unit and, therefore, would have to convince the state legislature to provide it. They needed a riot.

In order to prove that SOCF was unable to contain the potential violence that Warden Tate predicted, they needed a disturbance that exceeded their ability to control. Thus began what became known as "operation shakedown." Warden Tate gave his c/o's the green light to do whatever they wanted to do, and this unleashed years of pent up rage, stemming from Beverly Taylor's death, which expressed itself in the worst possible way.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, SOCF was known as a place where inmates were routinely beaten and killed. And when Warden Tate instituted operation shakedown, it became evident that old trends would be resumed with renewed vigor. All of a sudden, minor transgressions were met with extreme hostility, e.g. if you were caught crossing the yellow "caution" lines it could result in you being slammed head-first into the wall and then rushed to the hole to face disciplinary action. And this was only the beginning.

In prison, most of the day-to-day operations are run by the prisoners themselves. Prisoners determine where you work, where you cell and how much access you have to certain areas of the penitentiary; c/o's are there mainly to prevent anyone from escaping. When operation shakedown began, the whole complexion of the penitentiary changed. Now the only way that you could work where you wanted and cell where you wanted, you had to be in cahoots with the administration and there was no such thing as middle-of-the-road; you either worked with the administration or you were subject to the insanity that ensued.

Known racists were being forced to cell with black militants. Homosexuals were placed in cells with individuals who were known to be homophobic. Rules were changed on an almost daily basis, leaving us in constant confusion. And just when you thought things couldn't get any worse, Mansfield Correctional Institution, a northern Ohio penitentiary, sent 200 to 300 of its

most unruly inmates to SOCF. In the midst of all this volatility, the Administration started showing ultra-violent prison movies depicting inmates stabbing, raping and killing each other.

As April approached, you could sense that it was only a matter of time before something serious was going to happen. Tension between prisoners and c/o's began to rise as the c/o's became more and more violent. In hindsight, it's hard to say what the Muslims expected when they took the keys and weapons, but when all the cells were opened, years of repressed animosity burst forward in a torrent of unbridled aggression. Warden Tate had finally gotten his riot.

CONFERENCE STATEMENT



Jason recorded this statement for the Re-Examining Lucasville Conference. The audio can be found at http://www.lucasvilleamnesty.org/2013/05/jason-robb-conference-statement.html

Hello everybody, my name is Jason Robb and I appreciate y'all being here today and I ask that you keep an open mind throughout this weekend. Don't draw any conclusions until you sit down and analyze it for yourself. I'd like to add that a lot of people have not heard a lot of the facts of this case, only what the courts allowed us to put on as evidence. A lot of things were denied to be put on as evidence by the judges who refused to allow us to show that some of the state's witnesses who testified to the truth of their statements failed a lie detector test about those statements. That was never brought out in the courtroom. The judges made sure they censored us and our attorneys about the lie detector tests.

Further, there's the credibility of witnesses when we attacked their mental health issues. Numerous witnesses in these cases had serious mental health [issues] case loads. One man, a key to the prosecution of myself and George Skates, had got off death row from Arizona for murder committed in Arizona, based on the fact that he was mentally incompetent and delusional. That was kept from the jury's attention as well.

Also, there are other instances of things being withheld, such as the so-called vote tape that they used against us in our trials. This same vote tape was challenged by defense attorneys with the request for expert witnesses who would testify that the tapes were tampered with and/or altered by the state. This request was denied by the judges, so we could not challenge these for being fabricated even though there were preliminary reports by specialists who said the tapes were suspicious and needed to be further analyzed.

These are just small instances of things, throughout our trial, that have not come to the public's eyes. Our hands were tied at trial and our mouths were duct taped shut by these judges who were handpicked by the state to try these cases. Our attorneys tried to put on expert witnesses to talk about conditions of confinement prior to the disturbance and about a building of tension within the prison system. This was denied by judges, not allowing them to speak on these matters before the juries. So the juries, in a lot of these cases, had been denied a lot of evidence that they should have been able to see to be able to make and formulate a proper decision. The judges did not want the jury to see this evidence. But when the state wanted to put something on as factual evidence, the judges allowed them full reign to just throw anything out there; hearsay, or whatever

So that's one of the main issues in a lot of these cases. There's a lot of things that transpired behind the scenes in the courtroom that the jurors didn't see. You know, when they say these courtrooms are open to public scrutiny--well, there's a lot of back room talk and deals going on behind closed doors and in the judge's chambers between the prosecutor and the defense attorney and the judge that the juries and the people in the courtroom do not

see. We're trying to bring these things out to the public eye. Why are these things hidden behind closed doors? They should be put out there for justice's sake. Further, as we sit here today on these hunger strikes, asking for media interviews when there is media people wishing to speak to us about these conditions and our cases, the Department of Corrections has gone beyond and above to keep us from the Lucasville cases from having access to the media.

So, basically, we still have that tape on our mouth. You would ask yourself why. Why are they so afraid to let us talk? You would think they would want us to talk. Similarily situated prisoners, on death row, are interviewed and allowed to talk about their case, but when it comes to us, it's been total blackout for over 20 years. These things should cause doubt in some people's minds, like, what is going on here. Just the fact that you're sitting here today brings me great hope in that, one day, the truth will come out. Everyone knows that sometimes justice is denied. Sometimes the truth WON'T come out for many, many, many many years. The truth is, I'm not guilty of these crimes and yet I sit here, condemned to death. It is because of political games played within the judicial system in the state of Ohio.

For those people who stand up for us and help us get our word out there, thank you. From the bottom of my heart, I thank all of you. I just ask... follow the evidence. You make your final conclusions. Just follow the evidence. Don't get caught up in the mumbo-jumbo spin tactics that the state uses to tell their side of the story. Because they're the only ones who've been around to tell their side. We have not. Now, slowly but surely, we're doing that. It's a long struggle. I just hope that it's told before they murder me, if it comes to that. Even after, if it comes to that, if the state murders me, I hope the truth still comes out. Then, have them answer for that.

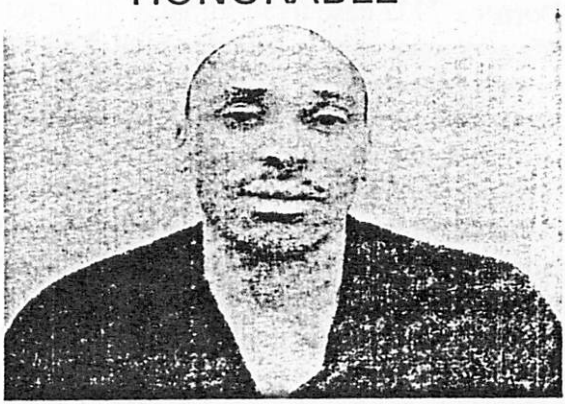
Thank you again to everyone there today. I know there are some people there that ask why we should believe anything these people say. To that, all I can say is: DON'T. Don't believe us. Dig for yourself. You make that decision. Don't let us put that in you. You make that decision for yourself. Find the facts. We need to put them out there. We need to get the stuff we can get and put it out

there for you to see.

Everything seems to be done behind closed doors. Just like right after the riot, when inmates sued the state for damages for the property and the family members, and all that, the state went out of their way to deny courtroom access to the media. They closed the courtrooms to the media. A public event where the public is allowed in the courtroom. They didn't want them [the media] to hear the testimony. When the people threatened to sue; only then did the state, all of a sudden, come to the table and settle out of court for four million dollars. Now that should tell you something.

Thank you everybody. I ask that everyone send out their prayers and best wishes to the people in Boston for the latest tragedy that just occurred [the marathon bombing]. Thank you so much for being here today. Bless you all.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE HONORABLE



Written by Greg Curry, while Christopher Dorner was on the run.

As of this writing, Mr. Christopher Dorner, 33, a former Marine and Los Angeles police officer, is a week into what has been termed a "killing spree." There is a massive regional manhunt in southern California--jointly by police, FBI agents, and transportation administration officials--to capture or kill this ex-cop, who has extensive police and military training, before he fatally strikes again.

This former serviceman turned cop, under orders from the government or state to kill, would be considered a hero and possibly awarded the highest honors by his superiors if his prey were not his former colleagues and their families. And we, citizens of this great country, would be obliged to remove our hats as a sign of respect in his presence. However, such decorated honor is not forthcoming, for Mr. Dorner has decided, with prior calculation and design, to "clear his name" by waging a deadly war against the Establishment he previously swore allegiance to. The popular opinion is, Mr. Dorner would die in a hail of bullets rather than surrender and not have his name cleared.

In his chilling and profanity pinned manifesto, Mr. Dorner said he will "stop the killing when the LAPD publicly proclaims

his innocence and restores his reputation." As a result, Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck just announced today (Sunday) that he will reopen Dorner's 2007 case that prompted his firing on January 2, 2009. Beck's announcement is disingenuous. It's simply a ploy to lure Dorner into peacefully surrendering. If Beck and others had been truly interested in discovering the truth--a white policewoman abusing and using excessive force on a person of color--they had six years to uncover the truth. Instead, concealing the truth and continuing their routine business--abusing, torturing, and murdering people of color without any serious repercussions-- was the deliberate path they chose. So, come what may!

While the mainstream media has glossed over exactly what the merits of Dorner's grievance is about, cops are rounding up so-called "look alike" blacks and shooting people of color driving around in a "look alike" truck. In addition, they are ransacking his mom's home while simultaneously promoting his ex-girlfriend's fear. Many of us have, too often, seen or been a victim of such tactics on some level of our life. Indeed, most of our revolutionary brothas and sistas, victimized by COINTELPRO, have been buried alive or dead by this "blue wall of silence" and abusive dictates of this system.

Thus, I can certainly understand those who want to cheer for Mr. Dorner to knock off a few more cops. I caution that sentiment lest we not forget that Mr. Dorner did honorably offer to give up another cop that was violating another person's rights. However, he once swore to defend the nation-state of capitalism as a member of the armed and police forces. It wasn't until this unjust system surprised him with being the snake it has always been that he became so enraged that he wrote an 11-page manifesto, addressed online to America, not about the daily injustices and exploitations in poor communities-- from banks to think tanks, from economic deprivation and exploitation that leads to crime and the prison pipeline. No, this is totally a reaction by Mr. Dorner to his personal awakening to that which he swore allegiance to. And thus I can say: THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE HONORABLE.

RE-EXAMINING LUCASVILLE CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Greg recorded this statement for the Re-Examining Lucasville Conference. The audio can be found at http://www.lucasvilleamnesty.org/2013/05/greg-curry-conference-statement.html

Hello everyone. I'd like to take this opportunity to send warm greetings to all of you there. I truly recognize that any number of more pressing issues require your attention, yet you made a choice to attend this important conference. Whether you're a skeptic or already convinced that injustice exists, those of us seeking your help and support hope that we provide more than an emotional plea for you to operate with, for if emotion alone would bring justice, every crying eye would be justly rewarded. Isn't that right?

All our documents are official, from the state, and in some cases, our issue is that the courts know the exculpatory documents will bring into question the riot convictions and the deals given to the inmate conspirators that are commonly called snitches for the state. Those of us convicted consistently have asked that if the system require our life including how our absence from our parents, children, wives and births and deaths have affected their lives, whether life is by a state-scheduled death or death as it comes to an isolated substandard existence, all available evidence should be examined. I hope you agree.

Curious to me is why is it those of us convicted are more confident in the totality of the evidence than is the judicial system with far more money, power, and other resources. Without being too technical, I'd like to refer everyone to a case, *Beckett v Haviland*, sixth circuit, ruled on in 2003. This case law rules, and is a continuation of court rulings back to the 1970s. Briefly the case said, when the state's star witness is given a deal to testify, and that deal isn't disclosed, the only remedy is a new trial.

Compare that case law to my trial transcript, paying close attention to the state star witness Lou Jones' testimony and how members of my jury were concerned about deals possibly being given out as incentive to lie. Think all of you hearing my voice will share that same concern. Let me be really clear. The state swore during my trial to the judge and jury no deals were given to anyone. Some of these prisoners were accused and some admit involvement in the riot related crimes and none of them was charged. And the prosecutors, knowing the no-deals testimony was false, allowed it to be heard, even swearing themselves that no deals was made. So that the coveted conviction was attained. The official record shows the same two prosecutors on direct appeal admitting yes, they had given deals and you can check all the listed websites on literature being passed around at the conference [http://www.lucasvilleamnesty.org/2012/05/greg-currys-trial-transcripts.html].

Some skeptics have said to me, well, you have caught other cases since the riot. I've been on supermax status since the riot and faced with relentless oppression and retaliation at the hand of some aggressive prison guards and leaderless administrative supervision all while being held against my will. It's amazing to me I've not killed someone for my freedom or for my just due. Let me point to the fact that before 1993 inside the prison, I had not been charged with any violent behavior. Since 1993, I've been charged with plenty. What changed? What draws such a response from a peaceful person, I ask all of you.

For those of you who believe in our cause and us, like my dear brah Kunta Kenyatta, I say keep the faith. Keep sharing out info with people and taking advantage of current technologies such as Ben and Annabelle are doing. To the activist community in general, you must know it's always darkest before there is light. Continue to seek the light and justice. At the very least, comrades, our efforts should make it harder for unjust systems to reuse these tactics on anyone else ever again—on *anyone* else *ever* again.

Thank you. Freedom first. Greg Curry from OSP.

LETTER TO THE NORTH AMERICAN ABC CONFERENCE

Greetings from behind enemy lines. I hope, as all of you attend this year's conference, you will meet like-minded comrades that will help to strengthen your resolve for true justice.

Invariably, the question of how to best serve those of us trapped behind prison walls turns to prisoner input, from my personal experience and in my humble opinion, developing a personal rapport with us in order to help you feel our pulse is the way to proceed.

How many of you know that one of the prisoners you've rallied on behalf of has lost a parent or some other loved one this year, or has a teenage child rebelling at home? Would you invite that teen to do something constructive in your realm of influence? Also, how many of you know how close to starvation the prison system keeps the occupants under its jurisdiction and control?

Sure, you're told our birthdays just like American doctors are told our symptoms as they go about their clinically detached analysis-- that is, nothing personal to it while they're off to their next patient. As we all know, American health care is nothing to brag or get excited about. (smile) Thus, any detached method of activism would seem counterproductive to a sustained effort at freeing all political prisoners.

I'd like for the various organizations represented today to be sure that they're getting the most out of their resources. For example, pooling their printing and postage resources whenever possible.

And to the question of what direction I'd like to see you moving in, perhaps it's time to reconnect with law students, radicalizing and urging them to file lawsuits over every legitimate prison issue, e.g. the Draconian treatment of SHU prisoners in California, false detentions, eligible prisoners being randomly denied paroles, religious discrimination, etc.

Until we touch base again, for the prisoners it's...
Freedom first, Greg Curry.

MEDIA ACCESS HUNGER STRIKE



This speech, announcing the media access hunger strike, was recorded at the Toledoans for Prison Awareness Conference on April 11th, 2013.

This is Imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan calling from Ohio State Penitentiary. As of today, April 11th, 2013 myself and three other prisoners who were convicted as a result of the disturbance are starting a hunger strike. The purpose of this hunger strike is the fact that the prison authorities, all the way up to Central Office have been denying us access to the media and this has been going on for twenty years.

Initially, what the prison officials were telling those who sent in requests to meet with us, was that they could not meet with us because it would pose a threat to the security of the institution.

This consisted of people from the *New York Times*, *48 Hours*, *Vibe* magazine and several others. After that, when we went to trial and were erroneously convicted, the prison director, the chief, Reginald Wilkerson stated to a reporter from the *Columbus Dispatch* that anyone was was convicted as a result of the Lucasville disturbance would not be allowed to meet with the media. Other prisoners on death row and other prisoners confined here at Ohio State Penitentiary have been allowed to have access to meet with the media. We've been denied just because the state doesn't want us to talk about our criminal case. We feel that that's unjust. We have a constitutional violation here. We're being denied equal protection up under the law.

Basically, this has happened because the court allows the prison authorities to have a broad range of discretion with regards to security issues. The institutions around the state have taken advantage of this to not grant us access to meet with the media.

The reason the state has been successful is because the media itself have not been vigorously challenging this. Not only just the media but human rights organizations have not been vigorously challenging this. We're asking that the media, as well as leading human rights groups, take a firm stance with us and try and push the issue to be allowed to meet with us.

One of the things the prison officials have also said is they don't want us speaking about overcrowding or our long term confinement in supermax prison, because we've been confined since the disturbance in 1993. But, we would like to speak with the media in particular with regard to our cases.

So again, our simple request at this point is for the media and leading human rights groups to push this issue and get out to the public. The more people who make requests to speak to us, on camera, we think we'll have a better chance of succeeding in what we are trying to accomplish, and that is getting the truth out about what happened during the Lucasville disturbance. It's obvious that the prison officials do not want it to be known to the public what happened. So we're calling on the public to get involved, to make requests to meet with us, and push the issue and, God willing, we will be allowed to meet with the media. I can assure you what we

have to say will be very interesting to the media.

We missed two meals already. About 6:15 they came through with chow (breakfast) and at about 11:00 this morning they served lunch. We'll be on hunger strike for a while unless they meet with us and resolve our issues because we only have one request, and that is, that we be granted the same opportunity that you grant other prisoners on death row, and prisoners in general to meet with the media. All right; peace out. This is Imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan from Ohio State Penitentiary.

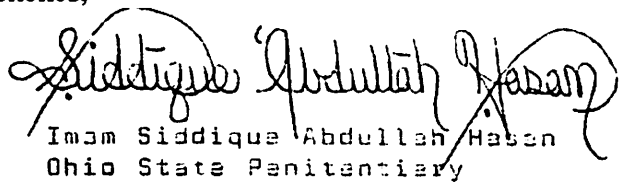
Hasan also wrote this press release on May 6th, after the conclusion of the hunger strike.

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO-- Today, at 3:15 p.m., Greg Curry and I, Siddique Abdullah Hasan, decided to end our almost month-long hunger strike. The strike commenced on April 11, the 20th anniversary of the Lucasville prison uprising. The sole purpose of our strike was to vigorously challenge the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) continuously denying us to have direct access to the media that is, on-camera interviews with the media. While both death-row and non-death row prisoners in Ohio are granted on-camera access to the media, those who have been railroaded and convicted of crimes stemming from the Lucasville Uprising have continuously been denied equal protection under the law. And though ODRC policy permits its prisoners to meet with the media to discuss their criminal cases, this policy has not been applicable to those of us convicted of riot-related offenses. In fact, in 2003, the then-prison chief, Reginald Wilkerson, made it perfectly clear to Kevin Mayhood a staff reporter at the *Columbus Dispatch* that "no inmates convicted of riot crimes will be permitted to speak with [them]." This blanket and collective denial is contrary to ODRC's own statewide Media Policy, which Mr. Wilkerson's successors have been unconstitutionally enforcing his vindictive directive.

We want to thank all our supporters, as well as some reporters in the media, who have been aggressively assisting us in

challenging this unconstitutional media blockade. We also want to thank the various organizations who have expressed interest in this matter--that is, the flagrant violation of our first amendment guarantees which protect freedom of speech and redress from government excesses. Finally we want to thank Warden David Bobby for negotiating with us in good faith and for being the liaison between us and his hard-line superiors at Central Office. Because of these factors, we decided to end our hunger strike and allow this crucial matter to be litigated through the court. God willing, we will be granted a resounding legal victory against the prisoncrats who wish to silence us in a deliberate ongoing attempt to prevent us from revealing the truth about our criminal convictions, convictions which are a serious affront and travesty of justice. Until then, I remain...,

In the trenches,



Imam Siddique Abdullah Hasan
Ohio State Penitentiary

As of this writing, the ACLU has filed their lawsuit and the matter is in litigation.

WRITE TO THE PRISONERS:
Greg Curry, 213-159
Siddique Abdullah Hasan, R150-559
Bomani Shakur, 317-117 (LaMar)
Jason Robb, 308-919

Ohio State Penitentiary
878 Coitsville-Hubbard Rd
Youngstown, OH 44505

The Lucasville Uprising was a rebellion against oppressive and racist policies at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF) in Lucasville, OH. Nine inmates and one guard died during the uprising in April of 1993. Today, many people are serving time or condemned to death by the state of Ohio in relation to the uprising. We demand amnesty for all of these prisoners. The conditions at SOCF were (and still are) intolerable and unconscionable.

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The distributors of this zine do not support the various alleged affiliations of the prisoner contributors, but strongly support their stand against government oppression, and will do what we can to amplify their voices. As shown by prisoner resistance nationally, there is a need for us to look past individual beliefs and alleged affiliations, to stand together. Unity takes away the power of their captors to play puppet masters and places power back to those enlightened prisoners who choose not to be puppets. These prisoners' united stand across challenging divisions and under the most trying of circumstances should be an example and inspiration to us all.

FREE ALL PRISONERS!

