

feedback

inside & outside, voices from the jail struggle
Durham, NC ~ june 2016 ~ volume 18

Unprofessional behavior that is unbelievable: a letter

May 21, 2016

To: Chief District Court Judge Marcia Morey

This is the president of the First Five Grieving Committee of the Durham County Jail. We are a grieving committee (of jail inmates) that works hand in hand and outside of the Durham Co. Jail. We also work with families, friends, the media and the health department. We also publish any grievance that is not solved on the internet and with the news media. We are writing you this courtesy letter so you can be aware that we have found so much evidence of unprofessional behavior that is unbelievable.

We feel that some may be indictable and some may not. This is why we need you to look into this and respond back to us. We really need your help. We have evidence that all throughout the jail of magistrates working with corrupt police officers in order to hold minorities against their will. For example: a person gets arrested for one bag of heroin, and the drug enforcement officer calls the magistrate and says to him “another dead man walking.” Then it goes from one bag of heroin to a trafficking charge (5 counts), a thousand feet from a school zone. All these “trump up” charges. When he gets to the magistrate’s office, his bond is 1.5 million dollars. This is sad and this is a crime, and I’m asking you who is the real criminal? This is also against our civil rights. With all due respect, when this comes out, some people are gonna be looking bad and in trouble. I, myself, am looking to start a class-action lawsuit. We are hoping that you will at least listen to us and know that we are serious.

“I think if we could all work together and be on strike by not ordering any snacks or foods from Aramark Food, Inc., or if the Trustee Dorm stops working, things would change more quickly.” — E.L.

Sincerely,

Anonymous inmate

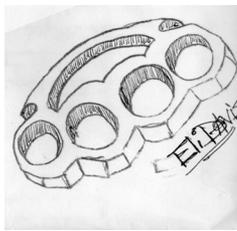
'They treat us like animals and talk to us any type of way'

April 21, 2016 (received May 19)

Dear ---

I'm doing good, keeping my head high. I'm ready to go home, this ain't no place for anybody, they treat us like animals and talk to us any type of way. They crazy how they let that wonderful man (Matthew McCain) die. They don't want to be doing they job.

The commissary be so high and the phone calls, too. I don't get to talk to my people like that, and the things I'm seeing in here: c.o.'s treating certain people different and that's not right, and things i'm going through is been treated wrong--short walks, uncooked food and unhealthy food, bugs be in the drinks, gnats be flying around this jail nasty, and they don't take us to court. They try to punish you for little things and medical charg-



ing you 20 dollars if you go down there. Yes, i would like to help y'all get night walks back and stuff. I'm staying strong, I know God got me and watching my cast. The pod officers don't care about us at all. They say bad things and they try to frighten you and wish bad on you and write you up if they in the wrong. But write me back--thanks for caring. — M.C.

What is Feedback?

Feedback is a publication of Inside-Outside Alliance (IOA), a group of people trying to support the struggles of those inside (or formerly inside) the Durham jail, and their families and friends. We recognize that any of us can be outside one day, inside the next -- the revolving door of incarceration. We also participate in struggles against police harassment and brutality. IOA maintains a website called Amplify Voices Inside (amplifyvoices.com) that publishes the words of Durham jail inmates and former inmates talking about conditions inside and outside and how they see the world.

The name Amplify Voices Inside comes from something a brave and rebellious inmate wrote in the fall of 2012. This publication, Feedback, is a sampling of recent contents of the website. When something amplified is redirected at the source of the sound, the effect is called feedback. That is what this is: the voices that have been amplified to the outside world being re-broadcast inside the walls of the jail. Feedback is also distributed on the outside and sometimes includes 'outside' voices. Unless a person requests use of their real name, then writers' initials have been changed to protect identities and minimize repressive attacks and harassment.

To contribute words or art, write to: IOA, PO Box 1353, Durham, NC 27701.

Or, if you are not in jail and are able to, send an email: insideoutsidealliance@gmail.com

*** Se habla español. ***

Ayúdenos por favor /

Hola _____

¿Qué tal? Mira, el otro día aquí se murió un amigo que se llamaba Mateo. Antes de que le pasara ese caso, él me dijo que se sentía muy mal. Él le dijo pero no le hicieron caso hasta el otro día, ya para que ya estaba muerto. También el otro día estaba un muchacho de Honduras, a él se le torció la boca y él les dijo a los guardias pero no le hicieron caso hasta que ya estaban fastidiado, pero ya le había dado derrame cerebral y le cambiaran para otro bloque que está a lado de nosotros. Esta lo hicieron para que nosotros no nos diéramos cuenta lo que puede pasar a él. Ayúdenos por favor. Y aquí nos cuida un guardia que se llama Gomez, otra mujer hispana y una morena. Ellos cuando le pedimos papel no nos dan. Pero cuando los morenos le piden devolado (devuelto, de volado), le hacen caso a ellos. por favor ayúdenos please. Por favor no mencionen mi nombre. No quiero tener problemas aquí.....

Ok, gracias por ayudarnos, ok ____ que dios los bendiga a todo el grupo que se esfuerzan por ayudarnos.

3D, MT puerta 21

Murió Mateo 3D Puerta #21

Help us please

Hi _____,

What's up? Look, the other day, my friend named Matthew died here. Before this event occurred, he told me that he was really sick. He told them but they did not pay attention to him until the other day, and only because he was already dead. Also, the other day there was this guy from Honduras, a his mouth was twisted and he told the guards but they did not pay attention to him until he had really annoyed them, but he's already had a stroke and they sent him to another pod next to ours. They did this so that we would not realize what can happen to him (or someone?). Help us please. And here a guard named Gomez, another Hispanic woman, and a black woman take care of us. When we ask for toilet paper, they won't give it to us. But when black people ask they give it, they pay attention to them. Help us please! Please do not mention my name. I don't want to have problems here... Ok, thank you for helping us.

Ok ____, may god bless the whole group who is trying to help us.

3D MT Door 21

Matthew Died 3D Door #21

So, which one are you...?

How are you doing out there? I hope yall doing ok and the movement is great, too. I got that mail last week sometime, the feedback I like. Oh, I got them books and that booklet, too, that's talking about the deaths, too, need more booklets like that for everyone to read. I got to say yall doing a great job about putting out there. Us in jail love yall for that, too. I'm doing ok in here, just taking it one day at a time, too...I'm going to say that the jail and court system is fucked up, too...

I'm really ready to put this all behind me and to move on in life, fuck jail and prison, they do you wrong when you in the inside, smh. It's a lot of people who be reading these feedback and like them. I be talking to all my friends in here, and they be thanking me for putting them on to yall and I know there is more...I also got a few d.o. who be reading these and they be loving, too, smh.

Oh, and they still got Boria working here, but got him working in the hole and his ass need to be fired, he still working in 3D every blue moon. I send my love to them families who lost their loved ones in this bullshit ass jail/system. I got a few things to put in the news:

I send my love to everyone in the jail who fighting for their life,

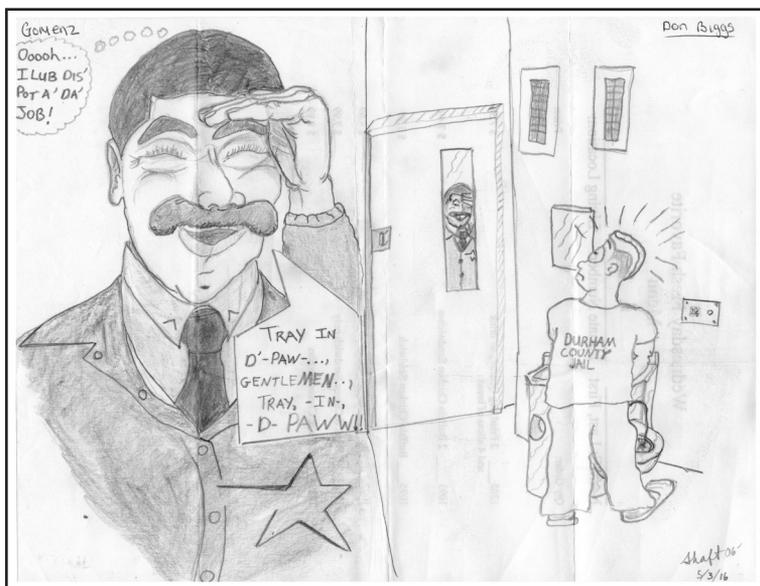
just know God is on your side...
Mr. Biggz "Coward with Power"

Fuck the justice system—they money hungry, if you don't got money you a nobody to them...

- Prisoner = A person locked down beyond his/her will...
- Inmate = House nigga. A person who is ok with his/her surrounding by doing good in the police face to be rewarded, and they be telling...
- Convict = A person who bucks the system and fuck the rules...
- Comrade = a person who stays together, each one teach one and hold each other down and fight to the end and loyal, too...

So which one are you, at the end of the day we got to be together and stand for our rights and fuck the system...I also got to shout out all the good d.o., too, and thank yall for the things yall be doing for us and yall know who yall are, too. Oh, to the bad one, Fuck yall and go to hell. I'm out. The realest : Dexter Poteat, aka Mr. Biggz

"Fuck the Police"



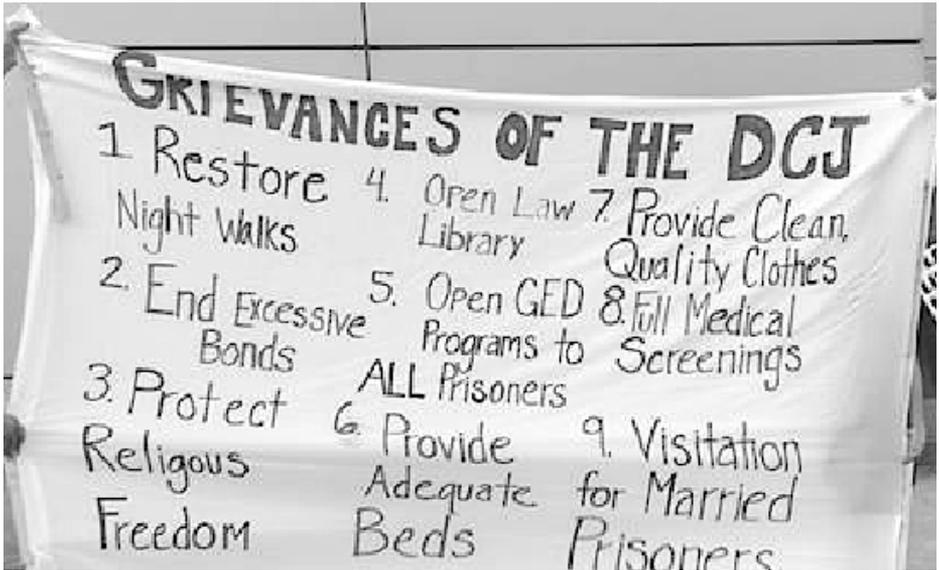
‘I’m tired of these guards thinking they’re better than me..’

Sorry it has taken a while to respond... I've been going through some personal issues lately, but to answer your question about us getting three hot meals instead of sandwiches, I'm honestly kind of glad. I was starting to get fed up with those dry-ass sandwiches every night, but as my fellow inmates said, they don't give us a good enough portion to fill us up...

Nothing has changed in my pod: Same bullshit showers that we've been complaining about now for over a year. Mildew is everywhere and for the sake of God I just can't see how they continue to pass inspection. I don't know, maybe it's because the inspector gives the time and date of when they're coming, so they can hide things and make stuff look good. Then they never allow them to talk to the inmates--it's like we're not even here.

But for the most part, I'm tired of these fucking guards thinking they're better than me because I'm in this fucking orange. I have a couple of them who likes to taunt me in a un-professional way about my mental health problems and background. Just last week on C squad an officer and another one of his co-workers supplied me with an object to harm myself and taunted me to kill myself. This place is nothing but a hell hole and sorry excuse to con and make money off people. To you, IOA, I thank you and others for standing behind us and the rest of the inmates in DCJ who write about the neglect that goes on in here. And to my fellow inmates: keep your head up and stay strong. You may use this in the newsletter. —T.E.

First Five Grieving Committee: “rattling some cages”



This banner was one of several displayed in the April 29th “Smash the Jail” march and rally in support of prisoners and against prisons and jails.

Greetings to all my brothers/sisters supporting us in and out.

I am founder and president of the 1st Five Grieving Committee of the Durham Co. Jail. First, we would like to let you know how much we love you for helping us. There has been a lot of changes here; a lot of small things have improved. We also noticed that there is a lot of street Sheriff Officers coming in to supervise and watch us, as if something big is about to happen, like our inside protest. That means the fliers you are handing out and the things you are doing is working. I feel that those letters I sent you are really “rattling some cages” and shaking up some people.

You should see some of the inspections that’s going on in here. I’m so proud of you guys but we need a lot more help from the outside. I suggest we go on an information campaign, meaning we need to flood the jail with flyers. I also urge you to send hundreds of flyers to all the inmates and to all that writes Feedback on a regular basis. One letter here and there is just not getting it. To pass one letter around to one inmate just don’t make no sense. We know this is hard work, we believe in the end, it will pay off and we love you for doing it.

— Emanuel Lennon

‘Everything associated with this jail is a mind battle’

Hey! What’s going on?

I don’t know if you have paid close attention to my letter I wrote about me being an analyst... I mentioned how the jail staff would meet the demands being made but also cause conflict in the meeting of these demands to continue an uproar in the jail, because its result would boil down to what’s more important. Take a look back at that letter and read it carefully and see that my predictions from the time they started nightly hot trays to now is accurate... Like in my last letter I informed you they serve hot trays but they slack in portions, and how inmates prepare the food.... And lately they have been serving us sandwiches but they try to pull it off with just a small scoop of hot scalloped potatoes so it be considered a hot tray... oh, really!

Now down to the “nitty gritty” about all this money they keep ripping off of us for these overpriced commissary items everyone keeps talking about. Why is a county jail able to charge more for the same items on a state prison facility commissary list? We are only detainees, a good portion of us are still dealing with pending issues and we pay more for food than individuals that’s serving time in prison—like going to prison would be a luxury. They intentionally make the conditions in here terrible...(this is psy-

chology 101)... (Now let’s flip this scenario) As detainees there are a lot of us that expect better, but we are realistic about it, but there are several things that stick out like a thorn in the side... Everything associated with this jail is a mind battle...they try their best to wear you down into a conviction or a plea. From terrible staff, terrible food, terrible lighting in the cells, terrible cells, terrible commissary prices, terrible judicial system, terrible D.A.s, terrible attorneys, terrible professionalism and terrible walks... I’m not just saying this, because I have come up in some of the most terrible conditions... No one can tell me, though I am thankful that God has sustained me through my life, what terrible is or is not... moving forward... from such terrible conditions you begin to have mental, emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical breakdowns. If you are not strong in those areas, or have any support in those areas and the conditions of this jail is an additional factor. It begins to indirectly pressure you in the areas you are weak in to become submissive and jump on the first plea or conviction get just to get out of this jail to feel the sun again, to breathe the air again...Michael Andrews really needs to get it together for us...

Til next time--

Sincerely, Willie Martin

‘It seems like we are making some headway and things are starting to change’

I wish I could have been present for the debate with Michael Page and Major Martin to hear their responses and the appropriate actions they are taking to everyone’s concerns regarding the jail. I will say that after March 15 we have been receiving hot meals for dinner instead of cold bologna sandwiches, which has us all a bit shocked. For the past 5 months it has always been cold sandwiches and, all of a sudden, hot meals. I have no doubt it’s because of inmate petitions, IOA and the volunteers and the protesting in front of the jail. It seems like we are making some headway and things are starting to change.

I had a lengthy conversation with one of the COs this past week. We were discussing the IOA and he told me that the Sheriff is starting to make changes and the food is not the only change to come. Hopefully this is true and we will see here shortly.

...One of my concerns now is with the mail. I have had recent problems with both outgoing and incoming mail. In February I was notified by my family that my mail was opened and taped shut...I started to secure each envelope so that if it was tampered with, it would be noticeable. Again my family notified me that my mail continued to be opened. The jail is only supposed to open outgoing mail if there is a threat to security or order of the jail and have probable cause to do so... Also, I am not being notified that my mail is being searched...

Incoming mail is a similar problem. Recently, I have been receiving scanned and printed copies of a National Geographic magazine. I was notified that magazines are contraband and my mail would be returned. What I am receiving is not a magazine but what is similar to an article printed from the internet. So now my mail is being censored and I am not allowed to receive National Geographic articles. How is this contraband? How can this possibly cause any threat or harm to the jail? The only thing I can do is write a grievance... Lastly, my family has also sent me bookmarks and puzzles in the mail. They specifically mention them in the letters, (but) they are nowhere to be found within my mail. This means that whoever is inspecting mail is taking these items out before giving me my mail. Again, this is an example of them censoring mail. What bothers me is they do so without your knowledge, without notifying you that they removed items. There is no mention as to why it was censored or how it violates policy. ...If the jail censors your mail you should be notified of their actions so you are given the appropriate time to appeal that action....I wouldn’t be surprised if incoming mail is being screened and censored or just blocked from being delivered, especially from IOA. Much of the staff here do not like being within the newsletters or on the website to begin with.

‘Durham utilizes crime, poverty and despair to tear at the infrastructure of America’



Hello,

....I'm trying to work my time away and I am within 24 days of release from this God-forsaken hellhole I have been caged up in for the past 13.5 months! I would like to express my thanks to you and all of the people out there fighting to have voices of men and women trapped here for various insufficient reasons.... there are still hundreds of people here who have been here for longer than I, and will continue to reside here for longer after I am gone! What happened to the right to a “fair and speedy trial?”...I know of an individual in here who is being held on on obscene bond for a crime to which the state has absolutely NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER... WTF? How is this criminal action by the state of North Carolina overlooked and condoned? Hello?? People? Wake the Fxck up!! This criminal action happens all the time! People who are unaware of what their government along with their tax dollars are going towards...Oh yeah, we all want what our government has to offer, free this, free that, affordable bullshit at what price? I will tell you the price, oppressive governing! How long will dumbed-down america continue to allow your local and state and ultimately federal government to completely take over every aspect of our lives?...

Why do we have these problems in our society? Crime is big business! That's why! Durham and every other county utilizes crime, poverty, and despair, to tear at the infrastructure of America! You don't see the wealthy stealing cars, breaking & entering or other petty crime. No, because they are comfortable in their palaces, and heavy bank accounts. No, come here to DCJ and you see the poor, the downtrodden, poverty at its rawest nature. You find homeless people, men and women who will gladly commit a petty crime just to get taken off the streets in winter. You find women who sell their dignity to feed themselves, and/or whatever habit they have developed, to cope with hopelessness. You have a society of “haves” and a lot of “have nots.” When a person is given a “have-not” hand in life, it's amazing what they will do to get by...

I could seriously go on and on, but it's pointless...I am only one voice, one opinion, but it's a biased opinion because I've been on the receiving end of American Justice, and let me tell you, it sucks! But what sucks even more is that for some there is no way out! The government will dog and hound them for the rest of their lives.... Sincerely, Jason Larson

VOICES OUTSIDE

'My life doesn't matter so long as they can get paid off my misery'

By Vincent P.

I was locked up for six months for being \$900 in arrears in child support. The thing was, my kids were living with me. I was supporting them. But the state (or the county) wants their money. How and why am I paying child support for children that are in my house? Who am I paying it to? It's going directly to the state. What does that have to do with my children?

So they left my younger daughters to go with their mother, who was not supposed to have unsupervised visits. My older daughter and son were left to be homeless on the streets while in school while I did my time. Well, I really think the jail term did more harm to my family than good...

When I was in court before getting locked up, a chaplain Holloway from the Durham Rescue Mission came and said I could have a job so I'd be able to make my payments, and the judge told him to move along, that he wasn't supposed to be there. What is that all about?

The judge said, 'How are the kids going to eat?' I tried to explain they had been with me, that they were eating. And he told me, "You're in custody, don't speak." I didn't even have a lawyer on my side...

My 10 year olds have been with me since they were three. But before that they were in foster care while custody was getting worked out. Now, the 10 year olds are separated from their family. Emotionally scarred pretty much. They are in foster care now again because I don't have a place for them to stay, and custody is in question....

Now, I need a job that's not going to land me in prison. This situation is driving me to think about desperate means to support myself and my kids.

I am not a criminal! I am a loving father who needs help. Nothing feels worse than not being able to protect your family. I think that's what the system is designed to do. If you cut the head off of the family you leave the family vulnerable. So the kids don't have a father figure. When a person is in this situation, they fall into places that sell drugs CALLED TRAPS...

What do people do after they get out? What's the cost of 'paying the debt to society?' Is the cost not being able to do things that are self-sustaining? They have money invested in the jail. But what money do they have invested in aftercare for PEOPLE?

You start over. Over and over again. You make no progress. There's a waiting list for services, but shouldn't they start you on that before you get out? So you can have a smooth transition when you get out of jail?

I suffer from depression and anxiety... When I was inside they had these people come around and do a survey. I was telling him about the medicine I am

supposed to get, and that they were trying to give me something for high blood pressure. I don't have high blood pressure, I have anxiety. And this guy who was giving me the survey, because I wanted to do it, he said I shouldn't worry about that, it's 'doctor stuff'. So why are you asking me then? That survey was a joke.

The medical department will give you medication but they won't give you any documentation about side effects. Isn't that illegal? Why keep offering me medication that makes me sick? That's why I wrote what I wrote (previously) about medical stuff. They weren't gonna do me like they did Matthew McCain.

When I was in there, I saw people paraded in front of us with a turtle suit on barefoot and afraid. The suicide suit. I mean, if you're feeling suicidal, how you gonna intimidate people into not feeling suicidal? I don't think there's anything natural about being locked in a room- no other animal on Earth does anything like that to their own kind. They take away your bedding, they put the suicide smock on you. If you refuse to put the suicide smock on you, you are threatened to be tased. I was threatened, so I know . You have to agree to suck it up and be dehumanized otherwise you're gonna sleep on that hard, hard floor and continue to be demeaned and mind you they still have the air pumping and you have no blanket, never mind no dignity. Miss Kelly (mental health counselor) did come and make them give me one and I thank her for that.. It's the most dehumanizing place on the planet, right here in America. I still have nightmares about that place.

I want to tell my whole story before they lock me back up or I decide I can't be a prisoner for the rest of my life. I have minimum mental health help. After that six month sentence and dealing with the system since then I am now convinced my life doesn't matter to them just so long as they can get paid off my misery.

'Nothing has changed in the women's pod'

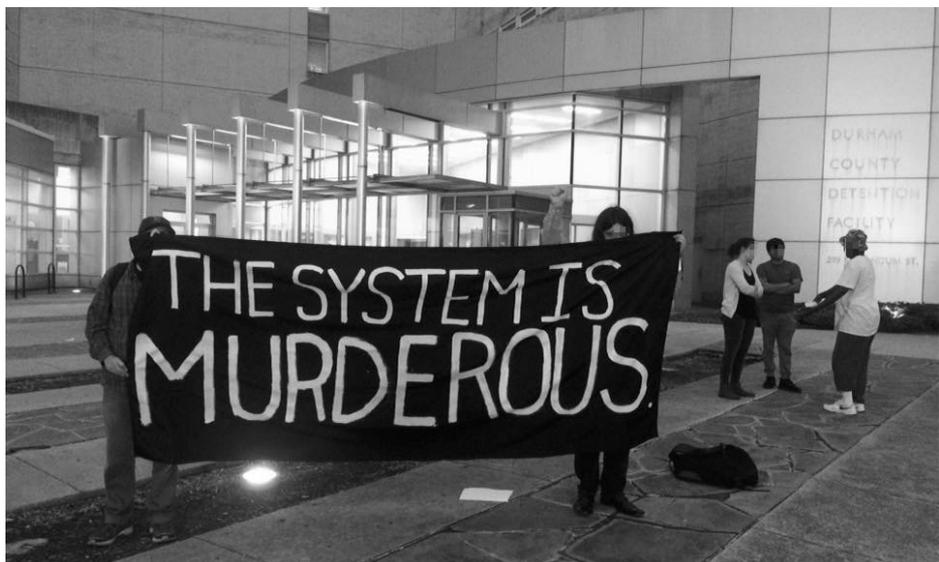
How is it going, World, and my brothers and sisters here in D.C.J.? Me, I'm ok, taking it one day at a time. I've been here 10 months, praying when I go to court I'll be going home. Nothing has changed in the women's pod. There's about 47 of us in here, maybe even more. Well, now we can't watch BET, MTV, VH1, anything like that. They put a block on it. Me, myself I get along with all the c.o.'s that work in the women's pod. I try to keep the peace in the pod. Already don't want to be here and I sure don't belong here. At least we get 3 hot meals now. They could let us have radios, something, anything better than nothing. Yes, it still is cold in here, sometimes it be freezing. One thing I can say is that me and my friends are here for one another. Shout out to Jessica W., Alezai C., Olga L., Ashley G. I mean that's what we got to do is be here for one another and don't bring each other down. I love you all. Keep your head up. This will be over soon. What don't kill us only makes us stronger. —*Melanie B.*

Tired

Tired
We're tired of
Being treated
Like dogs
Tired of
Being fed slops
You wouldn't feed a hog
What makes the government
Better than us
Because we're inmates
God made us
All by hand
Which makes us all
Human beings

At the end of the day
We're tired of
Being the detention officers
Footstools
We're tired of
Being Durham County's inmates
I mean
Durham County's Slaves
Doing story short
We're tired
And as humans
We shouldn't be
Treated this way.

— *Travon E.*



On May 20, two defense attorneys recently made famous by the hugely popular Netflix documentary “Making a Murderer” came to Durham for an event titled “A Conversation on Justice.” With the above banner and a specially made info sheet about the many injustices going on across the street (in the jail and in the courts), IOA delivered a message to the lawyers and audience members.