

Members of the Parole Commission,

Before you judge me on my eligibility for parole I'd like to convey my thoughts and emotions to you. Foremost in my mind, today and always, is the heavy burden of remorse I feel for my crime. Because of decisions I made at the age of 21, Kimberly Gardner and Dawn Carroll died. There is nothing I can ever say or do that would justify those decisions. To find the words to express my grief is hard. Very few days go by that I don't experience and feel the remorse of my crime. To ask forgiveness or to say "I'm sorry" seems so insufficient. I'm very conscientious and being responsible for the lives of Kimberly Gardner and Dawn Carroll is a heavy burden to carry. As the Parole Commission you can set me free from prison, yet you, nor anyone else, can set me free of the remorse that I must always live with. I realized this years ago and I just do the best I can to cope with it.

I have now been in prison for over 23 years, over half of my life. In here you have a lot of time to think and early on I made a promise to my family and to myself. I would be a model inmate and strive to prove that I'm capable of reentering society as an asset and not a liability. As you can see from my record I have kept that promise. I have taken advantage of everything the P.O.C. has offered me. The majority of these programs were voluntary. I realized that rehabilitation is something each inmate must take upon himself. You can sit in here and do nothing or you can use your time wisely to better yourself and prepare for the future. I have accomplished a lot because of the determination I have to make something of myself. I realize I must serve the mandatory 25 yrs before I can be paroled. What I'd like to say to you is that in 25 yrs. a man has either rehabilitated himself or else he never will. The man I am today is the very same man I'll be 5 yrs. from now or 10 yrs. from now. I have

accomplished everything I can in prison, though I'm very interested in taking the "Lifer" program at Everglades C.I. to just serve more time isn't going to improve my readiness for parole. What else is left on prison for me to do to prove I'm rehabilitated and ready for parole?

I've put together an excellent parole plan. I wish to parole to Eclectic, Alabama where I'll be surrounded by supportive family and friends. I have several job offers and a very stable residence with my parents until I can afford to get out on my own. I'll have clothing, transportation, and financial assistance upon release. It is more or less a religious community and they have welcomed me there. Also, I would like to try to help some of the young people there by speaking to some youth groups. I think that I have experiences I can use to relate to them. If I could help even one then the effort would be worth while. I want to be an asset to this community just like my parents are.

In closing there are two things I'd like to repeat to you. Firstly, as the Parole Commission you can set me free from prison, but you, nor anyone else, can free me from the burden of remorse I must live with. That burden is mine alone to carry. Secondly, the rehabilitative process is up to each inmate. You have to want it and work for it. In 25 yrs. a man has either rehabilitated himself or else he is never going to change. My record speaks for itself. Thank-you for hearing me and I ask for you to please give serious consideration to my eligibility for parole.

Sincerely,

Mark Wayne Jones
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