

Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty

On Wings of Hope

Project Hope



Volume 26 Issue 3

July - Sept 2022

Execute
Justice
Not
People

"The Only True Wisdom Is In Knowing You Know Nothing."

A quote from the Greek philosopher Socrates who died 399 B.C. which is still as relevant today as it was then. Much has been written about this quote and although I doubt that I can add any new insights I felt compelled to explore its relevance to the criminal justice system.

To begin with anyone who truly internalizes the above is no longer free to believe in simplistic judgements of guilt or innocence, let alone in sentences of life or death. Why you ask? Well because one realizes that things are never that simple and that there is always the question behind the question.

You may wonder whether that kind of insight would not lead to complete lawlessness as we actually are already seeing in the country. Would it not make the legal system even more complicated than it already is?

I don't think so but rather it might bring about some humility among some of the Justices sitting on the U.S. Supreme Court. They might question their denials of appeals which override lower courts and might experience some self doubt, an emotion with which they are not familiar. It could be the beginning of true wisdom and the end of harsh sentences, the end of the death penalty.

So why hasn't this happened, you ask, after all these women and men have gone to university and law school and will along the way have heard the above quote? I don't have the answer to that except to say that man/woman does not appear to do well with absolute power. Yes, I know there is that other quote: "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" but in closing let me just say that I am very comfortable knowing that I know nothing! So perhaps I am wise after all and if nothing else this maxim certainly helps us not to take ourselves too seriously as most of us tend to do!

Esther

JOE NATHAN JAMES JR.

**PROJECT HOPE TO ABOLISH
THE DEATH PENALTY (phadp)**
501 (C) (3) non- profit.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Working together with
friends, supporters and
other advocates to educate
the public and bring about
the abolition of Capital
Punishment in Alabama.

NATIONAL OFFICE:

P.O. Box 1362, Lanett, AL 36863
Email: beesther@earthlink.net
Web: www.phadp.org.
Email group: brandon@phadp.org
also on Face Book:
Project Hope to Abolish the Death
Penalty in Alabama

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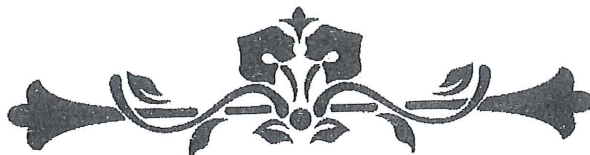
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**THIS NEWSLETTER WAS WRITTEN,
TYPED AND FORMATTED ON DEATH
ROW AT HOLMAN PRISON**

Imperfect people, in charge of an
imperfect system trying to carry out the
ultimate punishment. What could go wrong?
In the "good state" of Alabama, absolutely
nothing! In the land of Dixie flags and
monuments erected to preserve the very
best of its racial heritage, the powers
that be have it all figured out. Their
justice system is flawless. Their prison
system is not overcrowded, nor is it
riddled with violence. The Department of
Justice is just picking on them. Their
execution protocol works perfectly.
Especially since no one knows what it is,
and they get to make it up as they go along.
Capital punishment is a deterrent. Wrong!
Capital punishment is justice for the family,
that will also bring them closure. Wrong!
When the family stands against such
"Supposed" justice in their name's they are
ignored. Capital punishment is nothing
more than a political tool mixed with
revenge... Oops, that just slipped out.
Sound bites, smoke and mirrors, rhetoric...
it's political season. Murder is murder.
All life is sacred. Except when votes are
needed. This state stands with domestic
violence victims...whether they want to or
not, or unless they need the perpetrator
on their payroll.

Imperfect people in charge of an
imperfect system trying to carry out the
most ultimate of punishments. What could
go wrong? On July 28th, 2022 Joe Nathan
James found out exactly what all could go
wrong during the 3 hour torture fest he
suffered through at the hands of incompetent
death team members who proceeded to poke,
prod, slice, and eventually sedate him.
What Joe Nathan James Jr. suffered through
was more than just physical torture.

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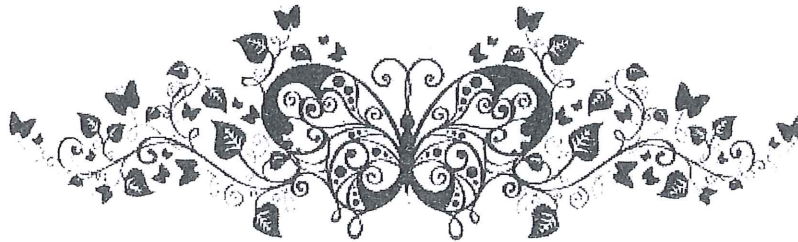


Imagine, he knows this is it, SCOTUS turned down his last appeal at around 5:24 pm and he was lead to the murder chamber for the state of Alabama as "justice." to begin. His mind and strength fortified to help endure his state sanctioned murder. What he was not fortified for was the horrendous 3 hour torturous ordeal he was about to be subjected to. Poked, exploded veins! Prodded, exploded veins! Attempted cut downs, bloody, pain, grimacing, busted skin from straining against straps, and finally sedation. What could possibly go wrong?

What everyone keeps alluding to is that he was back there with no attorney present, but everyone is missing the fact that he was his own representation. Which means, not only did the DOC torture Joe Nathan James Jr. to death, but in doing so they violated his due process rights when they sedated him and he was not allowed to nor able to contact the court to inform them that the execution was being botched horribly. Then there's the question of how or why they couldn't find a vein?! When an execution date is set they take the person to medical to locate the vein they will be using during the execution. In Mr. James' case they last checked for a vein when they took him to medical for a physical on July 26th, 2022, two days prior to his torture. What happened to those veins? What could go wrong?

In Solidarity,

Anthony Boyd
Chairman, PHADP



Time

The time is now to strike while the horrible execution is still fresh on the minds. There will be many questions still waiting to get answered but for the most part we know the truth.

The system is corrupt and they will do everything in their power to keep these things from coming to the light. Let's talk about how you have a man strapped to a table and you are poking holes all in him and the pain is so bad that the restraints was cutting in his skin. Let's talk about why a man is his own lawyer but couldn't use the phone to stop this when everyone that knows him knows he would fight to the end. How about asking why he was put under sedation? To stop him from representing his own self on his own behalf while they subjected his body to human torture. Then the state of Alabama calls this justice in the name of the family - which was asking to spare the life of Joe.

We have to really rethink things and who we are putting in power by our choices in voting. People please wake up before it;s too late.

Darryl Turner

Dear brothers on Alabama's Life Row,

Many times in the course of my work I've been asked why it is that I clearly have a special interest in capital punishment and the lives of those condemned to die. In most cases, I ignore the question. But when one of you reached out to ask me why it is that I prioritize you in the work that I do, I felt inclined to answer.

I haven't written a general explanation of my work on capital punishment thus far because my experience has shown me that there's not really much use in explaining myself to strangers; people aren't inclined to change their minds, and what I do ought to speak for itself, anyhow. Worse, often when I am faced with this particular question it is in fact posed as an underhanded accusation. People will say, for instance, "why are you so obsessed with killers on death row?" to suggest there are better, worthier subjects of concern in the world. Some will then go further, implying that any interest must be a product of feminine delusion, misguided sympathy, stupidity, sentimental obsession, and whatever profanity. To me, the ideas contained in these accusations -- the notion that there are human lives that are worth more than others, and the notion that defending the equal value of life constitutes perversion -- are both clearly evil and obviously false, though corruption can obscure a person's view of the world, as I read Titus: "To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure."

To me, the case for concern about the lives of people on death row is very straightforward. For one thing, you are all -- to a person -- human beings. I think that means something spiritually, cosmically significant. I think that humankind is unique in nature and history, and that human consciousness is a mysterious, sophisticated, perhaps holy thing for which the universe seems especially prepared. In my religious tradition, Catholicism, we explain the uncanny splendor of humankind by looking to the imago dei, the image of God according to which each person is made. That each person bears the image of God also implies that each person belongs to God (the coin face in Matthew 22 bears the image of Caesar, and so it belongs to Caesar, Christ says; but what image is drawn upon the human body, other than that of God?) and has within them an indestructible goodness, and therefore, the capacity for redemption. Every life is precious, and no one is beyond hope.

But while my moral and political beliefs both militate against capital punishment, I don't think anyone need share my moral reasonings to share my political reasoning. In terms of policy, capital punishment is one of the worst we routinely enact. From the backward logic of Baze, where we learn a defendant must provide a superior method for his own execution if he is to successfully challenge his state's, to the rank unfairness of death-qualified juries, which are more likely to accept prosecutors versions of events and to convict in the first place, to the overt reality that one's life often depends on whether one can afford good lawyers at trial -- it seems difficult to me to come up with a legitimate way to describe any aspect of capital punishment as fair or democratic. So much comes down to prosecutorial discretion and capricious plea bargaining, or to whether the defendant is black or the victim was white, or whether the underlying crime happened to take place on one side of a state line or the other. Further, a certain but

continued...



sporadic flow of savegely botched executions has revealed that the death penalty, in America, is really two penalties in one: First, one is convicted to die; second, one is convicted to participate in a lottery of torture before they're granted the privilege.

Some proponents of capital punishment acknowledge all the above complaints but argue that there are potential policy solutions that could affect a fairer and more just death penalty. While I don't dispute that there are elements of the criminal justice system that need reform, neither do I think that efforts to kill our own citizens in a more rational style make much sense as a use of time or money. America has traditionally lagged behind our peer nations in key matters regarding human rights, including the abolition of slavery, and I view our late, dreadful attachment to the death penalty in that same vein, it simply isn't an institution worth saving.

And I believe I owe that instinct to the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. It is easy for people to imagine themselves as the victims of crimes, but hard to imagine themselves as the perpetrators of them, rightly or wrongly accused. I suspect this makes it hard for them to empathize with others in the way the Golden Rule requires a person to. But I am not so certain of myself -- I've fucked things up and changed over time, and also fucked things up and stayed the same over time; I know what I would want in either condition. I know what I would want if I were condemned to die. I would want someone to care about it, and somebody to notice that it was wrong, and to behave as though -- despite all messages to the contrary -- I was still a human being. And you are, and so am I.

Elizabeth Bruenig
Staff writer, The Atlantic

Execute
Justice
not
People



Stuck In Their Ways

Alabama has been known to be a racist state. You would think that this was a thing of the past. Well, I'm here to tell you, "it's not." These people in this state are stuck in their ways. Only now instead of hiding behind the hoods, they hide behind the seal of the state. That's right! Your political figures of this state are the most racist, dangerous individuals I have seen in my 48 years of living. These people create laws that take away your rights. They also kill in the name of their laws. This is exactly the things that they did when the KKK wore the hoods in this state. So I say, "They're stuck in their ways." So we as a people must get back to the basics. We must become more active in our communities, teach the youth about the history of this state. We need activists, a voice, and someone who inspires us to get out and vote the right people in. No more Kay Ivey, No more Steve Marshall, and for those of you reading this article that's stuck in their ways, "No more you!"

Mario Woodward



AMERIKKKA; White Privilege and a Stacked
U.S. Supreme Court

Over 100 years ago the U.S. Supreme Court issued a series of rulings known as the insular cases that still prevent millions of people - overwhelmingly people of color - from accessing certain constitutional rights and protections. These rulings continue to uphold systemic racism today. The Supreme Court's "originalism" is white supremacy! The conservative supermajority has weaponized this harmful judicial philosophy as a way to embrace a racist, patriarchal narrowing of political rights.

Originalist judges express a belief that we should interpret the U.S. Constitution according to the legal opinions of 18th century white men - the same white men who denied the right to vote or own property to anyone but themselves. This type of language is still intended for purposes of the law to discriminate and disenfranchise blacks and poor whites on a "seperate but equal" basis!

This history is rich with racist rhetoric from the Supreme Court about "blacks being a subordinate and inferior class of beings." According to the court, the law is intended to serve the "broad dominant purpose of preserving the purity and integrity of the white race."

Donald Trump's home was raided by the FBI, but Donald Trump is still waving at cameras with no worries, white privilege at its finest.

I know people whose homes were raided by federal agents, but they are never seen again, oh, and they left in handcuffs.

We know Donald Trump has put everyone in place to keep him free from anything illegal he does! The Trump Supreme Court is 6 - 3 in favor of people who look like him and think like him in favor of conservatives/white originalists. Don't think it strange because Clarence Thomas is the puppet master, but he is as white as the sheets the KKK wears at the rallies.

Ignorance is still key to the plan of white originalists, because ain't it sad that the most racist people toward its own kind are black people, prove me wrong! Watch this illusion "They put black people into political office, but tell me one thing, have they accomplished anything for the poor black communities that vote them in? I'll wait.

Part of the white originalist's plan is to trick blacks into believing that this land is moving forward and away from this type of ideology, but they use blacks now to do the lynch work for them - thats 2022 AmeriKKKa! All these conscious minded people out there might not agree with some of what I'm saying, but if we all know this insidiousness is going on, why isn't anything being done to change this narrative!

N.O.



NO JUSTICE

NO PEACE

WITHOUT REFORM!



LOVE - TRUST - RESPECT

IN MEMORY OF 'CHIEF' LEON E. FRAZIER

A Christian Perspective

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To Abolish the Death
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correspondence to: Bart
Johnson, Editor
(Z-778-F-18), Holman 3700,
Atmore, AL 36503

Editorial Staff

Editor
Bart Johnson
Assistant Editor
Randy Lewis
Writers-Contributing
Jeffery Lee

Executive Committee

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Esther Brown
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Spiritual Advisor
Donald Blocker

For more information
about Project Hope to
Abolish the Death Penalty,
write to:
PHADP, P.O. Box 1362
Lanett, AL 36863

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Greetings Friends and Family,

I find myself at a loss for words,
but with a song in my heart. It starts
like this:

Christ is my firm foundation
The rock on which I stand
When everything around me is shaken
I've never been more glad
That I put my faith in Jesus
'Cause He's never let me down
He's faithful through generations
So why would He fail now?
He won't

It's called Firm Foundation, you'll
want to listen to the whole song.

It is often in our darkest times when
we see His light, comfort, and love the
most. When James (4:8) addresses the
sinners, he tells them to cleanse their
hands and purify their hearts, to let
their laughter turn to mourning and
their joy to heaviness, because the
truth is that godly sorrow works
repentance, and it is then that He will
lift you up. He won't fail, we just
wait until we're filthy and weighed
down to turn to Him. He's had it all
figured out, patiently waiting for us.
I hope that brings you as much peace
as it has me.

Yours in Christ,

Bart Johnson
Vice-Chairman, PHADP





We Must Not Forget

That we are created in the image of God, not the other way around, that God is created in our image and likeness.

Yet and still our thoughts, words, deeds, and actions prove that God somehow is created in our image. These thoughts come to my mind after the execution of Joe James.

Here we have the image of God on full display. Where the victim's family spoke through the news media and internet that they didn't want him to die, but for his life to be spared and even asked the powers that be to not kill him.

The powers that be had an opportunity to save face by honoring the victim's family's request by commuting Joe James's death sentence to life without parole.

Normally during the three day vigils here, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Information Director of PHADP have finished explaining the political and legal aspects of the person's situation that's at hand.

All the men attending the vigil are able to share their personal thoughts and views, even something about the individual that's scheduled to be executed. So here is my encounter with Joe James, we lived on the same tier together for about 20 years, he was soft spoken and easy to get along with. He also was one of my workout partners.

I will never forget one of the conversations we had about God. Himself being of the Islamic faith, and myself of the Christian faith. One of his questions directed to me was "How do I know God? and How do I know He is real?"

I mention that without using the measure of faith given us, that it would be impossible for me to please God or know God. And when we cry out to God. We must believe that He is our Creator and we are His creation and that he is a rewarder of those that seek Him. [the reward being that we would experience God's love and realness and presence]

Even until this day I am so thankful to our Creator God, for allowing me the opportunity to share my faith and pray with Joe James. Let us not forget these things about our image:

That the Spirit of God has made us, and the breath of the Almighty gives us life. I also have heard it said like this, there is a spirit in mankind, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

To the families, supporters, and readers of PHADP, thank you for your love, life, support, and prayers to abolish the death penalty; May God's blessing and favor continue to rest, abide, and surround you to do His will!

Earl "Pete" McGahee
Z - 466 / Cell#L24



Alabama News

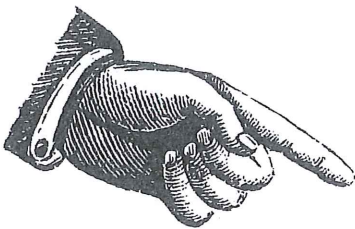
Third Quarter 2022

* On July 28th the state of Alabama killed Joe Nathan James Jr. Joe James was more than his final hours spent tortured by the IV team. He was a 50 year old man with a lifetime of hopes, dreams, and fears; just like you or I. So we mourn our loss, but celebrate the life and legacy he left behind. And we fight to ensure that what he went through was not in vain.

* We are grateful and encouraged by the rejuvenation of J.A.M. throughout the summer. They will be hosting a death penalty workshop on Oct. 15 from 10-1 at Eastlake UMC. Plan to attend and get involved with what J.A.M. is doing.

* I can't believe that I'm still updating you all on Toforest Johnson without being able to tell you that he is a free man. From numerous amicus briefs, to countless news articles, to a giant sign aimed at the World Games in Birmingham stating, "It is not too late to fix this mistake" it is unmistakable that he is an innocent man. Thank you to Radley Balko and to Scott Douglas of Greater Birmingham Ministries for being the latest to shine the light on this man.

* We join so many friends and family of Leon "Chief" Frazier who are remembering his courage, character, and commitment to equal justice in the wake of his death. His support for our cause spans decades. Chief was the first law enforcement officer to sign on to a moratorium on executions, and he did it in style on the steps of the Capitol in Montgomery. His support and friendship did not stop there! We will always be in his debt! Love, Trust, and Respect!



Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty
P.O. Box 1362 Lanett, AL, 36863

beesther@earthlink.net • www.phadp.org

Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty is an interfaith 501 C 3 organization whose mission is to educate and mobilize communities to act to abolish the death penalty in Alabama. PHADP relies on YOU for support. Suggested donations: \$25/individual, \$40/household, and \$100/congregation, or whatever amount is affordable. Checks should be made out to "PHADP" and sent to the above address. Donations may also be made on line by going to our website and clicking on "donate" on the right hand top corner of the front page.



Miscarriage of Justice

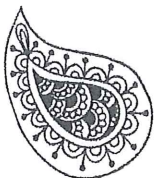
The definition of a miscarriage of justice, according to the Oxford dictionary, is a failure of a court or a judicial system to attain the ends of justice, especially the one that results in the conviction of an innocent person. Due process is a legal requirement that the state must respect all legal rights that is owed to a person it balances the power of the law of the land and protects the individual person. According to the United States Constitution you have a right to legal representation even when that representation is yourself.

The state of Alabama carried out the legal murder of Joe Nathan James Jr. on July 28th, 2022 in an illegal manner. Mr. James himself was his own legal counsel. As he was aware of what the state was doing to him why wasn't he afforded the right to file an injunction to halt his execution after continued failed attempts to establish intravenous lines. As lead counsel for himself it was his right to ask the state to stop this torturous procedure of murdering him. Could he not comprehend what was happening to him. Did he try to stop his execution and was ignored by those trying to kill him. Those questioned haven't been asked and even if they're asked, Alabama feels entitled not to even give an answer except that they followed protocol. OK, Alabama, what is your protocol?

The death penalty process says that it brings justice to the victim's family. Why is it that the Governor if this very state refused to even answer the call of Mrs. Hall's family when they didn't want to see Mr. James executed. Shame on you Alabama for such a blatant miscarriage of justice. This state also wants you to think they have your best interest at heart when it comes to capital punishment, the facts just don't support their truth that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime. Numerous studies by the Death Penalty Information Center show that states without the death penalty have a lower murder rate than states that do.

Now this state wants you to trust them with the protocol details of a new execution protocol. Nitrogen hypoxia, which has never been done before. How is it possible to get something right when what they're doing is morally wrong. It will never be right or humane as long as it is allowed to exist. The change this state needs must start at the top at the capitol and that transformation must take place at the voting booth. Until our vote becomes our voice, our power will continue to abide with those that will abuse it!

Jeffery Lee
Secretary/Treasurer
L - 12





The Guest Of Honor

As Eye walked into the jammed packed party it was people everywhere, both royal and peasants. Everyone was smiling as the band played its classical music. Eye was still grasping the fact how could they have planned so many different parties at once. A guy approached me and said what a fine piece of jewelry you wear sir, pointing at my Ankh medallion that dangled from my neck. You must be the guest of honor he asked. Yes sir Eye am Eye responded, still looking at the crowded place. You had the democratic party, republican party, the tea party, and to my far left was the mob party. Eye was losing count that so many parties were going on at once as Eye came back to focus to ask the man in front of me; What were the people doing down there on the floor? He responded, "They are praying before the swine come in." What about there Eye asked pointing to another group who were also on the floor; "They are praying also before the swine come in because they do not eat pork" he said with a chuckle. He sensed my next question and said, "Those over there are bowing in honor and praise to the Most High. Looking at the man they were bowing to he did not look so high to me as Eye passed them by. Everyone were hunched over, so Eye went and stood off to the far right beside this beautiful woman who sipped red wine and noticed she had tears falling from her eyes. What's wrong Eye asked? "Eye are tired of drinking this blood," she pointed at her glass at the same time. Eww, Eye responded and at the same time my mouth dropped as Eye saw tables being placed on the backs of the praying and bowing people. "This party would be over with Mr. Guest of Honor, if only the people would stand up," the teary eyed woman said! Wow that's deep, this whole time this party is mind manipulation..

(See 1 Samuel 12:12-15)

Jovon Gaston



Given the Proper Care, Potential Blesses So Many

I know this could be in our homes, but I know for sure it is in movie theaters in this world, popcorn starts popping and people are drawn to it, to buy and enjoy it. Just like in here, a football game can be on, not just Alabama either, or a movie can be playing, one popped bag of popcorn changes the atmosphere. This is not a food article, but I want to show you the potential of unpopped popcorn. I found out that inside every kernel of corn is a micro dot of water, and when you heat the popcorn up, the pressure from the heat makes it pop into something different, and even great, yes I love popcorn. People are the same, we can't see their potential inside, until we show them love, wisdom, our experience, and gentleness. Keep this in mind, even though the bag of popcorn has not reached it's full potential, the microwave never rejects it or gets mad when it comes to it for help. Do you want to be a blessing to many? To help others tap into their potential and watch the world change around you.

Jimmy Davis

