

REQUEST FOR FREEDOM  
“WHAT DOES HOPE AND REHABILITATION”  
MEAN TO ME

BY.  
HENRY D. WILLIAMS  
CDC#AE7308

THE QUEST FOR FREEDOM

“Hello” my name is Henry Williams. I am a 43-year-old African American male. I was convicted of first-degree murder with a gun enhancement in 2010. I was sentenced to 50-to-life. I arrived here at A Facility PPF yard in 2012. I have been on this yard for approximately six years and this yard has given me hope. From the groups I have participated in, to the college courses I have completed. This yard has reformed my approach to life, and how to deal with complex problems. The PPF has helped me understanding my own behavior. This yard has provided an avenue to challenge my educational potential, to find that highest threshold and

expound on my interests. Since I have been on this yard, I have developed a true love and value for education and the importance of it. In all actuality, if I would have obtained my college degree out in society, I would not be here. I would not have made the choice to sell dope, carry weapons, and commit white collar and crimes. While in society, I got a taste of what a little education can do. I received a certification in computer technology and repair when I was a juvenile. I went to a job fair, submitted a resume and got hired 3 weeks later. My entry-level salary started off at 25k a year with full benefits -- 401k, dental, medical, vision and paid time off. I shouldn't have made the careless decision of relocating back to where I committed the crime. I should have continued to stay with that company that I was previously with for those 3 years.

When I analyzed the word rehabilitation, I focused on "re-hab." It is just that. REHAB. Every prisoner has been using crime as an addictive drug, we have literally been detoxing from this euphoric feeling of what this "crime-drug" does to the criminal mind, and it is a strong addiction to shake. Some relapse in which they reenter their rehab and some realize their "crime-drug" addiction, receive proper treatment, and are able to assist others who are struggling with that addiction. This is something I really want to do. What would I do if my case was over turned and I had an opportunity at a second chance at freedom? I would complete my master's degree at CSULA. Then complete my PhD and pursue teaching. A program on television called, "Underground Scholars," which introduced a young man who was an ex-prisoner who became a professor at UC Berkeley inspired me.

The transformation that I see within myself is empathy. By putting myself in my victim's shoes, I ask myself "How would I feel if that happened to me?" "How would I react?" "What would I do?" "What would I say." Asking these questions humanizes my approach in life and my overall interaction with people. Asking these questions makes me realize the true essence of what the meaning of humanity really is. Thank you..

Sincerely,  
Henry D. Williams