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ACLU of Ohio Foundation
Attention: Andrew K. Harvey
4506 Chester Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44103

March 21, 2014

Dear Andrew,

I received your letter, and I'm writing in an attempt to fulfill your request. In addition to the following, I'm enclosing a copy of my recently published book, *Condemned*, which, hopefully, will help you form a more complete picture of me and what I need the public to know about my situation.

Over the years, and somewhat organically, the five of us who were sentenced to death because of our alleged participation in the uprising, have become known as the Lucasville Five; this name (or, rather, the implications of it) has led many to believe that we all have the same cases. This is not true. Being an attorney, you understand that the courts do not recognize groups, but individuals, and deal with them accordingly. Consequently, my case has moved into its most critical stage (while the other cases have been put on hold), and I am right now awaiting a date to be set for oral arguments, which is basically my last hope for relief (notwithstanding the fact that, should I receive an unfavorable ruling, I can appeal to the Supreme Court, who very seldom, if ever, accept cases.). This being the case, I would like the public to know the following:

1. Although the uprising (riot) lasted 11 days, I was not part of any of the groups who allegedly presided over it. Indeed, I came out onto the yard on the very first day, during the first hour and was subsequently rounded up in an early morning sweep on April 12. It was only months later (after I and others participated in various demonstrations against the administration) that I was assigned a role—"death squad leader"—and accused of participating in the deaths of five suspected snitches. I was offered a deal, but refused it on the grounds that I am innocent. During my trial, the State refused to turn over exculpatory evidence, most specifically—and importantly—the statements of the actual perpetrator(s) of the very crimes for which I was charged. If you go to my Web site (www.keithlamar.org), you'll find the statement of an inmate named Aaron Jefferson, who admitted to killing an inmate named Darrell Depina, an inmate for whom I was convicted and sentenced to death. Also, on my Web site, there's a copy of an indictment that was issued to an inmate named Freddie Frakes, who was charged with killing an inmate named William Svette, someone for whom I was later convicted and sentenced to death. For every murder I was charged with, there were multiple conflicting statements that pointed the finger at someone else. But, again, the State withheld this very vital information, depriving me of a fair trial. I need the public to know this.
2. With respect with how I have been affected by the uprising and my incarceration, I want the public to know that I (we) have been tortured by and through over 20 years of solitary confinement, with no substantive due process and no viable remedy to lessen the agony of our ordeal. Being in solitary confinement for these 20-odd years has been terrifying. I live in an environment where suicide is a constant thought, something that hovers forever on the edge of my consciousness. I live in an environment where men lose their grip on reality and forget their own names, where they live, etc. I have seen men smear their own feces all over their own body. Several of my close friends have taken their own lives. As you might imagine,

this is all very traumatizing (to say the least), all the moreso because I should have never been placed in such a dire predicament. I want the public to know that an innocent man is being tortured in their names.

3. I am from Cleveland, Ohio. I have been in prison for 25 years, since 1989. Regretfully, I took another man's life during a shootout, after he and an accomplice attempted to rob me. This was during the height of the crack-cocaine epidemic of the late 1980s. When I came to prison, I was merely 19 years old, lost and confused. But I managed, somehow, to find my way back to myself. I earned my GED and enrolled in the college program, which, due to the repeal of Pell Grants, was suspended before I was able to complete my studies. During my 25 years of incarceration, I have met and was mentored by some very remarkable men and, with the assistance of these individuals, I have been able to reclaim my lost potential. I taught myself how to write, how to meditate, how to stay alive. If given a chance, I can—and will—do something meaningful with my life. I want to use the knowledge of my experience(s) to help educate at-risk youth. In fact, I have started a non-profit program called *Native Sons* (which will launch along with my book) that is designed to provide books to youth who are confined in juvenile facilities. Reading was the key to turning my life around, and I want to provide other wayward individuals with the opportunity to envision a better future for themselves. This is what I want to do with my life. For the past several years, I have been co-teaching a class called the "Prison Experience" at both Youngstown State University and Binghamton University (NY), helping sociology/anthropology students garner an in-depth understanding of what has been termed the "Prison Industrial Complex."
4. The reason why the State doesn't want to grant us access to the media is because they don't want the public to know about this story. What happened to us was (is) a travesty of justice, and keeping us incommunicado is their way of preventing our story from being told to a wider audience. This is the whole purpose behind the hunger strike a year or so ago, after our request for access to the media was initially denied; this is the whole purpose behind my writing of the book, in hopes of sharing my own personal story with the public. I cannot—will not—sit back and let these people kill me for something I did not do. But I (we) need some help. I'm not asking you or the public to take my word for anything. Instead, I invite you to read the book, view the evidence, and decide for yourselves whether or not you think I deserve to live or die. I'm having a book launch on April 13th at CSU, and I would like as many people as possible to know about it. If you can help in any way with this, that would aid in the endeavor to gain support and get our story out to a larger audience. It might happen that our requests through the court will be denied; maybe it won't. In the meantime, we can take advantage of the opportunity to build the necessary momentum to force their hand (one way or the other).

In closing, let me extend my heartfelt thanks to you and your colleagues for following up on this very important matter. Please give Mrs. Levenson my warm regards and best wishes for a successful outcome. Obviously, since this is all designed to help me (us), I would like to assist you in any way I can. Please let me know when you receive the book and if there's anything else you need in the way of content. The book is over 60,000 words (smile). I hope that, along with this, will suffice.

Farewell,

Keith LaMar