I’m sending this via mail in hops you will respond to this other student’s questions. It was my fault they weren’t included in the first group. See you Thursday.

Thanks.

Question 1) Is there anything you would’ve done differently a second time around, such as actions leading up to the event or having acted differently which could have prevented you from the initial occurrence? If so Why? Why Not?

Question 2) If you weren’t incarcerated at the moment what would you being doing in terms of work?

1. What was it that motivated you to do whatever it was that landed you on death row?

2. If given the choice of life in prison with no possibility of parole or death, which would you choose?

1. With the project that they are working on, would they say it is something they would recommend to someone in a similar situation?
2. Has the project helped get them through tough times?
3.

Q1) Do they feel that their artwork helps them cope with the situation that they are in.

Q2) Do they try to express their emotions through their works of art?

Akil Jahi

Answers to the students questions.

Question 1) Yes! I would have done many things differently a second time around, such as listening to my love ones advice about the bad influences, surrounding my life at the time.

Question 2) If I weren't incarcerated at the moment I would be working in a restaurant. I love cooking for other's.

1. A drug situation gone bad.
2. I would choose life for sure.

1. Yes! I would recommend it, to someone in a similar situation inside or outside.

2. I've found art to be very therapeutic, especially doing tough times.

Derrick—

I asked my students to write questions they had for you. They are somewhat familiar with some of the things we've worked on together and have had the opportunity to see the website. Three out of four students asked questions. Here they are.

I hope you will have time to answer them by tomorrow night. I can then pick them up when I come in and get them back by Friday.

Thanks.

Question 1) Is there anything you would've done differently a second time around, such as actions leading up to the event or having acted differently which could have prevented you from the initial occurrence? If so Why? Why Not?

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2. Has the project helped get them through tough times?

Q1: Yes? It would have taught me different types, like are around me now. They could have taught me how to make better decisions than I did before, such as escaping multiple times. Escaping has placed me around people who resolve situations with violence instead of stealth.

Q2: I would probably be in the heating + Air conditioning business or a paralegal or French pastry chef, because I enjoy sculpting, and the arts (leather crafts) has been of interest for years.

1. I escaped from a MAX. Security prison in Ky. Other people do things that I get blamed for. I'm here because my beliefs and world views do not allow me to participate in a corrupt judicial process.
2. I would never choose either. An "LWOP" is more cruel than the death penalty though, because it means

the immorality that the current process that imprisonment is goes on with one's eternity. For this reason, I don't understand why juries don't hand out life sentences rather than death sentences.

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1. I believe collaborative art/writing projects are the best projects we can do to convey our collective humanity. It shows that while we make mistakes we have the ability and the desire to change and make something positive in our passing. This is what reciprocal education is about: community building through participatory joint efforts.

2. It is not the projects, so much, that has helped get me through some rough times. It is the people I've met and worked with that has reaffirmed my sense of humanity. These people are what social practice is all about. The projects we have done have never been done from any death row. So many people had to be on the same page at the same time to start a choir program here and then maintain them, even when our sister Matranch got run out. It is because the "volunteers" she recruited have defended their programs — touting the benefits as actualized and possible to those new "security first" administrators. Did I hear you say: "Reciprocal Education in Action!" Go change something and change you?

Gary Cone 96618
2B208

(1) In 1980, I was less than a month from starting Law School at the University of Arkansas. It was hot so I wanted to go back to Amsterdam for a week or two and was bored. Boredom is a condition I have problems with. It leads to bad decisions as I had been robbing drugstores for the past year and had a strong addictive behavior pattern. It was hard to concentrate and I went shopping at a jewelry store. Took a tray of engagement rings & half a dozen Rolex watches which I later found was illegal. (a joke) anyway cops starting chasing me around Memphis & I ~~[illegible]~~ wound up shooting a motorcycle cop & a citizen trying to make an arrest. Neither died but now lots of cops were on the hunt and after a day without my drugs, left in the car as I bailed out, ~~[illegible]~~ cold turkey advances eventually caught up and I killed two old people. I was 31 and finished even though I escaped to Key West before being caught after a drugstore robbery in Fort Lauderdale Beach Florida. Now I have multiple life sentences in Florida and Duval in

14 Current project with APEX – memorials sound good to me. Several guys are not going to do one because they think of it as an obit on their death. My project will be my dictionary of ~25 plus years (American Heritage - New College Edition 1981). Got the idea from a novel (The Winter Vault by anne michaels) I used to look up words from books and put the initials of the book by the word. I am going to memorialize the books the words came from. That is my initial thought anyway. Reading is my number one enjoyment. Doing art for Barbara & the Watkins art place is secondary to that. You can learn from almost any book and spend time riding down the road with the author. If you were in prison that would be very comforting to know.

15 I didn't do any art before starting this program. Now I draw awkward paintings, write on photos by good instructors and do projects at various places. Currently we are committed to the apex memorial project, a spoken piece at Carnegie-Mellon University with an instructor who used to teach in our program,

a cartoon project from an L.A. guy & his wife that will travel the world on the death peralty, and a near future showing at a local university. Wow, I think I need a vacation. Thanks to Barbara we can show our art on-line and let other people see that even if we suck (okay just me) that attempting counts too.

Hope you folks do some stuff Barbara can show us. Don't come to prison. It is boring. Hey, isn't that where my sad tale began?

- Tennessee. Looking back at 66 it is hard to recognize the person I was. Even I would not want to meet that guy on a dark street.

I've used drugs my entire adult life beginning in Viet Nam, through college and prison. It is not something you voluntarily stop or at least not for me. You think you have control or can resume control at a future date but addictions are not predictable. I'd say don't do drugs but that is a facile statement. They beckon to me and I came. Kind of a Dylan's Tom Thumb's Blues. From the vantage point of today I see ways that things could have been so much different but destiny is not a series of do-overs.

(2) I was going to go to law school. I wanted to use my degree (Banking & Finance) to become a corporate lawyer. Wouldn't be doing any of that now but I could see doing a storefront literacy job. I think I'd be a good teacher as I am curious if not all that cautious.

[1] Motivation - I did not see armed robbery as a ~~bad~~ career interval. I wasn't hurting anyone physically until 1980 and thought of it as a between career move.

[2] NO to LWOP. I'd really rather be dead. Lots of people here say that but grab the offer if it is made. I was offered at trial death by electrocution. The judge said he could see why I turned the offer down.

Q] Is there anything you woud've done differently a second time around, such as actions leading up to the event o having acted differently which could have prevented you from the initial occurrence? If so why? Why not?

A] In our Philosophy class, someone raised the question: "If you could have a conversation with anyone, living or dead, real or mythical, who would that someone be?" My answer was: "A much younger me?" So yes, there are things which I would change if I could live my life over.
Why would I change things? Because there are a lot of things that occurred in my young life that had an adverse effect on who I would become but a lot of these things I had chosen to forget as a way of self preservation. What changes could I have made? My first option would be to change my childhood and prevent the early incidents from ever taking place. Short of that, I would talk to my family more, not let relationships get strained or distant. If I had done this I believe that I would have had answers to a lot of why's and why not's in my own life and I could have sought solutions instead of letting anger and hate build in my life to the point that it would consume who I wanted to be.

Q] If you weren't incarcerated at the moment what would you be doing in terms of work?

A] It is really difficult to say for sure what I would be doing. I have never had a problem finding a job. If I worked at one place and got tired of it, I would just find another job. If I wanted more money, I would find another job and work two, so it is difficult to say exactly what I would be doing. I have been working since I was twelve and have had various jobs since then. The first "real" job which did'nt violate any child labor laws was right out of high school in . I was not even looking or a regular job, I was sitting at home watching T.V. when the doorbell rang and a man was standing there and asked for me by name and he said he was the foreman at the local mill and he had heard of me from people in the neighborhood who worked for him and he wanted me to come to work for him at the mill so the following Monday I started working at the local hosiery mill. I even quit that job once but they came and asked me to come back to work for them. After that I have worked construction doing plumbing and electrical work, as a motel desk clerk, a truck driver. The longest I ever stayed at an one job was when I served in the Army for 4 years as a demolition specialist with the Combat Engineers. When I was arrested I was managing a restaurant. So, there is no telling what I would have been doing.

Q] What was it that motivated you to do whatever it was that landed you on death row?

A] As I mentioned in the earlier question, there was a lot of things in my life that had a adverse effect on who I was. These

unresolved issues and emotions led to a lot of anger and hate in my life but I did not lash out at the ones who caused the problems in the family instead I harbored this anger and resentment until it fueled a rage that cause me to lash out at others. So the short answer would be unresolved issues controlled my actions and landed me on death row.

Q] If given the choice of life i prison with no possibility of parole or death, which would you choose?

A] Death, without question. Don't get me wrong, I am not tired of living but this is not living. Understand that the State has already taken my "life". I have been locked up over 26 years and at this point I am merely exixting. Why would I choose to exist without hope of freedom or having any kind of a real life again? Why would I choose to go on existing merely waiting for death? If my sentence was converted to life with parole, there would be no guarantees that I would ever get out again, I may very well spend the rest of my life behind bars. What then is the difference? One word - HOPE. Take away my hope for a better tomorrow, you take away my dreams, passions, and desires and reduce my "life" to just a series of "todays". Yesterday being the same as today and all there is to look forward to tomorrow is just another today? What then would I have to live for? Life without parole is just a prolonged death. Just kill me and be done with it.

Q]. With the project that they are working on, would they say it is something they would recommend to someone in a similar situation?

A] I would absolutely recommend it. Often people in prison feel forgotten, as if separate from society. Society often thinks about prisons and prisoners as being separate from society. We're not separate. We are still a part of society and until society realizes this the revolving door of prison will never close. As it stands now society shuts a prisoner away to be punished and when that individual is release on parole back into society, society does not know how to handle that individual. Society, will shun that person, although they have served their time. Society, will protest an ex-convict living or working in their neighborhood. The will refuse the ex-con a place in "their" society. But when this happens what has the ex-con got left. How is he/she supposed to make a living? There only recourse is homelessness, or working in a job where their supervisor takes advantage of them for having been in prison and makes life rough for them requiring them to work longer hours with very little pay. The only way the individual can survive is by turning to crime. People needs to see prisons as a part of their society and work toward solutions which would help the individual coming out of prison to become a viable part of the community and not become a burden. What does this have to do with me working on this project? Simply this, it gives me a voice I would have not otherwise had to show society

that people in prison are still people and that there is good even here. Yes, we have made mistakes, and that is why we are here, but does that mean that we should be written off completely? No. I just want society as a whole to recognize that there is still good in people if you just care to look.

Q] Has the project helped get them through tough times?

A] Absolutely, without my art to while away the hours I would be climbing the walls by now, so yes the projects I have worked on have helped me through tough times.