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# FREE THE PENDLETON 2!



# TOO BLACK ON THE CASE OF THE PENDLETON 2

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**TFSR:** *Thank you much!*

**TB:** No problem.

**TOO BLACK:** Yeah, my name is Too Black. I'm an artist, poet, writer organizer, and for the importance of this conversation, the comms representative for the Defense Committee to Free the Pendleton 2. That's that's pretty much it.

Oh! I always forget certain things. I host the Black Myths Podcast. It's a show where we take myths of a socio-political nature and Black culture and history and debunk them, essentially. Anything that is a lie, or just false, or misunderstood, we will take that myth and we will spend an episode or two debunking and also just clarifying the truth and trying to investigate what was behind them. So that's pretty much who I am.

**TFSR:** *Cool, that's awesome. I'll happily throw in some links to your RSS feed and social media presence after this. If you have any extras, please toss them my way.*

*Also putting a pin in a thought, because the focuses of the conversation have multiple names, there is State names, there's other names that they get referred to. I've seen, for instance, Mr. Trotter referred to less consistently as Naeem. I'll probably use their State names just at the beginning, but since you've been covering this for a while and on our on their defense committee, is it better to just go with Balagoon, Naeem & Lokmar or is it okay to intersperse them? Or how should I approach it?*

**TB:** It's best to start with their State names. At least that's how I always do it. Then after that, I'll use the shorthand: Naeem, Balagoon. It's also okay to State openly that that's how we'll be referring to them throughout the remaining of the conversation, for the most part.

**TFSR:** *Cool. Okay, awesome. Well, since we're gonna be speaking about the Pendleton 2, I was hoping that you could please tell the listeners a little bit about Christopher Trotter, aka Naeem, and John Cole, aka Balagoon, some biographical information just to give an introduction, such as why they went to prison, where they came up, a bit about their personalities, if you're if you've been working on the support committee, I'm sure you've gotten to have a lot of interactions with them.*

**TB:** Yeah, they both are from Indiana, the Indianapolis area. They're both older gentlemen at this point in time, because of the sins that

they received. But they're both really caring individuals. I appreciate this question, because sometimes I think, myself, particularly it's failed to highlight just who they are. Because sometimes it's easy to get caught up on the case itself.

But when you talk to either one of them, whether it's Naeem or Balagoon. I was just writing Naeem the other day. They're always interested in how you are doing, despite as we'll get to what happened to them. Naeem is trying to organize a way to to expose the medical neglect that occurs inside prison, not not to him, but to other prisoners. This is someone who's been in prison for 40 years, somebody who spent 20 plus years in solitary confinement. When Balagoon had a medical issue, just over the summer, we didn't even know if he was going to make it initially. Thankfully, he did. And when he got out, he was still in the infirmary, he was trying to organize to bring attention to the other prisoners who weren't getting the proper care they needed.

So these are both men who have maintained a sense of justice and, a sense of dedication to the people despite the things that have been done to them. There's not any overwhelming bitterness that disallows them from connecting themselves with other people around them. They're always trying to educate. They've engaged in hunger strikes. Of course, nobody's perfect, but they're not beat down in the way that the State wants to beat down people like that, they're not dispassionate and completely empty. That's often the point of these kinds of cases is when you punish a political prisoner, you want to make an example out of them to the public, but you also want to demoralize them as individuals, so they no longer fight. Despite what's been done to them, they still find that energy to organize while they're in prison like they were doing prior to the incident that that has kept them in prison.

**TFSR:** *This is kind of off the cuff. But I think it's worth noting, and I think listeners of the show are aware if they are listening already, but the reason frequently that people become politicized prisoners or political prisoners on the inside... The method that the State appears to want people, if they're going to survive their incarceration, is to keep their head down, to participate according to the very strict rules that are put before them, or basically to submit all the time. And to erase their social aspect, to erase the fact that they have interactions, that they have affinities that they have maybe disagreements, they have relationships with other*

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of calls sent to the prison or sent to the governor that can make them look even worse. So this is also a form of protection.

Because the more signatures we have, the more people that that can not only just write the governor or the prosecutor but that can even call into the prison, that can write Naeem and Balagoon, the more connection they have with the outside world, the less likely they are to be brutalized because there will be consequences just simply off of the fact that this will get out, it's not something that can be done under cover. So, I encourage people that if you don't do anything else, to please sign those letters at the very least. And if you'd like to do more, you know, get in contact with me particularly if you're in the state of Indiana. We're always trying to bring in more people to the committee and try to expand because we need bodies, especially if we want to engage in more direct action, we're going to need as many people involved as possible. It doesn't really matter what your background is or who you are. If you care about the case, if you care about justice we can struggle through many of the things we disagree on but ultimately the point is to get them free. To free them all, free all political prisoners.

**TFSR:** *And you can find this on the Linktr.ee, but there is a fundraiser that Focus Initiative has going on for legal support. And I'm glad that you mentioned writing to Chris & Balagoon.*

*Thank you again so much for having this conversation, I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to listeners. Besides your show, Black Myths, any other links you want to mention?*

**TB:** Not currently, I would just stay on the case itself. Again, watch the documentary. On my podcast, the Black Myths podcast, we did interview both Naeem and Balagoon directly. It would be under the episode "The Myth That Violence Is Never The Answer", it's also on the Linktr.ee. If you go listen to those, you can hear those gentlemen as well as Shaka Shakur who used to be held in Indiana, but sent out to Virginia. He's a political prisoner, as well. And you can listen to them explain this much better than I ever could, because they were there. And they also just have insights into other worldly matters that I think people should listen to. I would just say check out that episode.

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been educating themselves and had been educating each other and they knew what they were up against. So, as Jock says, “they stood up.”

**TFSR:** *It's notable that in the charges... the group that they were participating in, the Black Dragons, that was the name of the group, right?*

**TB:** Mmmhmm.

**TFSR:** *It sounds like it was being framed that way in the court and media, as a gang of something like that. But the fact that people have to band together to create educational organizations, advocacy groups, or even defense organizations within these structures to protect themselves from the “authorities” that are supposed to keep the rule of law intact inside these spaces is fucking ridiculous. To bring it up to today, we're seeing continued strikes in Alabama due to not dissimilar circumstances as you've seen for decades and decades inside the US prison systems. The struggle continues.*

*Too Black, you mentioned that you're doing educational work, you've mentioned that you've done some interviews on this subject, we've talked about the documentary. Can you point people to any websites or any social media accounts where they're doing a lot of coverage of this where they can follow up and join on?*

**TB:** Yeah, if you're on Twitter, [search] @FreeThePendleton2. There's a Linktr.ee that will link you to the documentary, to various interviews. But most importantly for people listening, like I said there is a legal route that we're trying. There is a letter that will get sent to the governor who can pardon both of them at any time, if he pleases. And it gets sent to the prosecutor that's over their cases in Madison County, Indiana. We have both of those letters that we send to the offices to pressure them. This is important not just for the sake of pressuring, but also it shows that they have support on the outside, that people care about them. So, when guards might hear about an interview like this or hear about us raising awareness, it helps push back against any type of retaliation. Because they know that if they do that there could be a flood of letters sent to the prison or a flood

*people that are in a similar situation to them, not only do people get put into solitary, people get punished, oftentimes when they're doing these pro social things. A part of prison is to break down the strength of communities into these broken individuals if possible. No disrespect to folks that do keep their head down. I've never been incarcerated, but talking to folks that have been in, or currently inside, it seems really hard to get by. But I have so much more respect for folks when they continue despite being punished explicitly for their participation in defending other people, or standing up for prisoners as a class, medical rights, being a jailhouse lawyer or whatever. I have a lot of respect for that activity.*

**TB:** Yeah, definitely. That's part of what inspires me, honestly. We have a documentary that Jock, one of our committee members made, called *They Stood Up*. That's not just a title, they actually stood up against white supremacist violence in prison, which is one of the most violent places anybody can be. In the documentary, Jock, who directed it, does a great job of talking about how when George Floyd was murdered by the pig up in Minnesota, there was a bunch of people filming it but nobody did anything to stop that from happening. It's not to create some kind of individualistic criticism of any of those people, but it's more so just think about how we've been conditioned to not even respond to when a human life is being brutalized, particularly by the State, right? They were trying differently. They had already been organizing prior to that event.

So, when Lincoln “Lockmar” Love was, was being beat down and was more than likely going to be killed, they actually said, “No, we're not going to stand for that. We're not going to watch that happen, we're going to step in.” Doing that provides a certain inspiration to people who might be a little bit more tepid, who do have their heads down, who don't want to throw the brick at the cop, so to speak, who don't want to put their lives at risk or anything of that nature. It's also important to note that Naeem only had three months left on his sentence when he engaged in this activity. Balagoon, I believe, had three and a half years left.

Both of them could have, just to your point, kept their head down and been home. A lot of us do that. We keep our heads down, we know that something's fucked up, we either feel like we're powerless, or we just don't want to mess up whatever we have going. Again, this is not an individual criticism. This is just again, how we're conditioned. So we don't do anything. But when people see the situation

differently, when they understand that human life is so valuable that whatever they have one line does not stand above the significance of someone's life like that, is an inspiration. That could recondition people to take a different approach.

That's why you have to punish people like that, because they violate an unspoken code, right? You don't stand in in that way. Particularly in a violent way or in a self defense way, you're just not supposed to do that. You're supposed to play by the rules that the State sets for you even though those rules are inherently always gonna work to their benefit.

**TFSR:** *Yeah, for full transparency, I was just re-watching the documentary right before we got on to the phone. I really hope that folks in the listening audience end up checking out The Pendleton 2: They Stood Up. It's quite a good documentary with some amazing firsthand accounts, including talking to Balagoon and Naeem about their experiences.*

*So I'm wondering if you could set the stage. What were the conditions in the Indiana State Reformatory, which is now known as Pendleton Correctional Facility? What kind of organizing were prisoners involved in? And who were some of the folks? We've named a couple already.*

**TB:** Yeah, as you said, at the time it was Indiana Reformatory and on February 1, 1995, well prior to that date, there's a few things that need clarified. So there had already been an uprising at Michigan City Prison in 1982. There was a class action lawsuit, there was actually multiple lawsuits. There's a class action lawsuit against the conditions in Pendleton, and there was a lawsuit that the guards themselves had against Pendleton, (Indiana Reformatory at the time), because some of them didn't even feel safe. They thought the conditions were so bad that it was prompting violence from the prisoners. There was regularly medical neglect and the neglect of food. Horrible conditions, unsanitary conditions. There was also just outright violence and torture that went on in Pendleton or Indiana Reformatory at the time.

Naeem talks about how he had somebody (this is prior to the rebellion), a guard came in and choked him out and called him nigger and said he'll kill him. But this wasn't an anomaly. This happened all the time. So prisoners were regularly on guard even more than you would expect people to be on guard in prison, which requires you to

be released. Because they're also just older gentleman. So even if you think that they deserve this time, which I don't and I think that's clear. They've served more than enough time for the crimes that people claim they committed, there's no reason for them to still be locked up at this point. Even if you're one of those reformist that believe in the whole system as it is. It doesn't make sense. Indiana actually has the most long sentence convictions in the country from what I understand. People serve in 30-40 years as more than anyone. So trying different avenues. We're doing local organizing to try to bring more bodies in and bring more awareness in the state of Indiana and throughout and build chapters from there. Also, do more things like this, get more immediate media attention.

I think, as devastating as the case is, it's also important to understand how the prison industrial complex operates in general and understand how this relates to that but not to reduce it just to this case. But to understand that these conditions are produced by the State itself and the criminalization of Black people, of poor people, and putting them in these positions. Or, like you said earlier, even building these prisons in these rural towns and taking advantage of white folks that have been de-industrialized and then bringing them into these prison systems. None of this would be possible if it wasn't for the overall capitalist state, capitalist system that has to criminalize people to maintain order and to maintain the possession of capital. So, we need also to understand that it's not just this case itself, as devastating again as it is, but that these conditions are a part of a larger, colonial process that requires subjugation of people, that requires criminalization of people in certain forms so capital can continue to be accumulated. Prisons are a necessary part of that counterinsurgency: you don't have jobs for people, you don't have really anything to do with these people so you have to build prisons to get them out of the way so you can continue to loot and plunder the planet. You've gotta have somewhere to house them. It's natural that you're going to criminalize folks, it's natural people are going to turn to so-called crime to try to take care of themselves. And there's families that are going to be destabilized.

Naeem had an abusive father, this the type of stuff that people have to deal with that puts them in these positions almost as if a lot of folks never even have a chance. This is going to happen, you're going to have people eventually who just aren't going to stand for this anymore. And these particular gentlemen were politicized, they had

*murder from occurring and got sent down the river, as it were, afterwards, with decades and decades of sentencing and decades in solitary confinement, which is just an unimaginable. I know it's a real thing that happens in the United States, but the fact that that happens to people is just so disgusting.*

*So I'll just jump forward. Lokmar died 35 years after the incident that we were talking about right here and I don't know what his initial sentencing was for but after so long... I don't have words for it.*

*What are advocates like you who are doing support work for the Pendleton 2 hoping to gain by talking about the case right now by releasing things like that documentary? Amnesty or you mentioned that there was a retake of the trial in 2018. What are the next steps?*

**TB:** I mean, there's multiple avenues. We still try to work the legal side as much as we can. But it's tough. Because honestly, without any outside pressure, they're going to do what they want. That's just unfortunately what it is. But you still do what you can on the legal side, just to show that you went through as many of the processes as you can. Naeem filed for clemency, clemency was denied. Balagoon does have some stuff coming up to hopefully get a sentence modification. They're both also great legal minds. Sometimes I would say even more than most lawyers, so they know the law to a T. They've tried different loopholes, and tried to point out the ways that laws have changed since the time of the rebellion to today. They weren't even, particularly Balagoon wasn't even charged properly for what they say he did. So there's a legal strategy.

By starting a committee, we understand the legal strategy is important, but it's also just doing what we're doing now, raising awareness about the case itself, because a lot of people just don't know what happened at all. Especially here in Indiana. I know I didn't know about it. I would say I was ashamed. Because I like to consider myself somebody who knows about political prisoners. So, to be in the State of Indiana and not know, I was honestly ashamed. Not in a sense of pride, but just like, "this is a situation that deserves attention."

I think this will require ultimately more direct action, we will require pressuring and shaming, and consciousness raising about the case, and shaming of the State itself about what they've done. So we have demands, obviously freeing them in general, whether that be with compassionate release, there's many different ways they can

be on guard anyway, right? Like they were more on guard. The most important point I think to note is that, as we find out later, this was not known at the time explicitly even though the actions were clear, that the guards inside the Indiana Reformatory/Pendleton belonged to a KKK splinter group called the Sons of Light. So you had literal KKK-minded guards running the prison. This was exposed by one of the guards who worked there. So that was all occurring at the time, prior to any kind of rebellion or anything of that nature. Those are the conditions that laid the way.

Then on the prisoner side, despite all these horrible conditions, there was the Black Dragons which Naeem and Balagoon were leaders of and a part of. What they were attempted to do, they had been mis-classified as a gang, but what they were attempting to do was bring prisoners together and organize against those conditions, organize against the violence that they experienced in prison. For the sake obviously, of improving their situation and working against what the guards are doing to them, their goal was to get the prisoners themselves to stop fighting amongst each other, and deal with the real enemy or the real immediate enemy in this case, which was the white supremacist guards.

Black Dragons had been organizing for years prior to this incident. So by the time the incident occurs, which starts in the maximum restraint unit, they're going around flipping cells, and they kept coming back to Lincoln Love's cell. Just to give you a little bit of background on on him, Lincoln Love was also someone who was part of the agitation against the white supremacist guards. He was he was also a lay advocate, or a jailhouse lawyer, I should say. So, he was somebody who was well respected amongst the prison population. But he also had gotten into it with some guards prior because they would mess with him.

So this time, as some have said, Big R said this, who was across the way at this time. Big R was another prisoner there. Some kind of retaliation, because at the time the prisoners were banging the cells asking for cleaning supplies. They weren't getting cleaning supplies. So the guards ran up in Lincoln Love's cell and handcuffed him. They had illegal billy clubs, tear gas, and they started beating the shit out of him. They not only beat him in his cell, but then they dragged him out of his cell bleeding and they yelled it to the other prisoners, "this is this is what's gonna happen to you." So from there, the other prisoners in the maximum restraint unit started yelling to

get Balagoon and because Balagoon was lay advocate. So for people who don't know, lay advocates often can serve as mentors to other prisoners, and can even help them get on parole and get out of prison, as well as give legal advice and such.

Balagoon was up there doing that, he was doing his lay advocacy. So he hears this, he hears people clamoring asking for his help. And then he learns, at the time he thought Lincoln Love was at the Captain's Office, he couldn't get in. So he went back to population and got Naeem and several other prisoners and they went back to the Captain's Office to try to see. They wanted to see Lincoln Love because the understanding was that they thought he was going to die. That was their understanding. They had every reason to believe that based on those conditions, and based on what happened to him.

So, they tried to force their way into the Captain's Office. Initially, they tried so peacefully, then they were met with resistance, so they had to fight back. The guards in that area called for reinforcements, (I'm shortening some of this story). Then Balagoon and Naeem as well as the rest of the group, they found out that Lincoln love wasn't actually in this location to have the run to another location and the infirmary. They had to be careful why they were running because the guards were actually trying to shoot them from up high as they ran through the yard. They make it to the infirmary but they can't get in fully. (If people want to hear them tell it straight up on my podcast actually, Balagoon and Naeem explained this pretty well). They can't get in. Initially, they fight their way in and then the guards tried to trap them within the infirmary. They have to fight their way out.

From there they get attacked. They made their own shanks, they had to fight back. Balagoon talks about how he was about to get caught up and Naeem grabs one of the guards and puts a knife to his neck. So Balagoon could slip into the cell house, Cell House J there at the time. They occupied the cell house for about 15 hours, 15 or 16 hours. They called the media, they listed a series of demands, basically trying to address the things I already talked about, the violence in the prison, lack of any Black guards at all, the food, unsanitary conditions, etc.

Like Naeem talks about, they protected the guards and the hostages that they had, they did not hurt... or I won't say they didn't hurt, but no one died in this situation. Despite the fact that Naeem was charged with attempted murder, If the goal was to murder

Michael Richardson was actually one of the guards involved in the rebellion. Initially, when they went to the captain's office, Michael Richardson was one of the ones there that tried to stop them. So it's not without guilt here, but you still have to appreciate the fact that he exposed this because no one else was able to, to our knowledge. But he talks about how the kids of the guards used to play with the Klan robes of the guards, and how they had their own initiating process and recruiting process.

When you listen to Naeem or Balagoon, or if we talk about Meeka, or some of the other ones involved. For them, it was really confirmation that something was going on, because that's how the prison was ran. Like Balagoon said, "going there was like being sent down to the Mississippi." For people who don't know that reference, that's during slavery in the United States. All plantations sucked but it really got bad if you were gonna get sent down the Mississippi River, deeper south, like that was understood as an even worse situation than if you were in like Maryland or something. So it was understood that this is a rough place, right?

So the Sons of Light, they even passed around literature as well. That's another thing Michael Richardson talks about. So they were deeply infiltrated into the prison. We're really asking for more, we want to know more about this. It's good to know it existed. But we don't have enough facts, as far as like how deeply it ran. As my comrades on the committee always point out, a lot of these people who worked in these prisons and DOC and such, they just continue to move on to other prisons, some move up the ladder. So this is 1985. And these are jobs people keep forever. So it's all within the network. So more than likely, I don't even think more likely, it does, but we we want to have more information. It runs deep throughout the State prison system. This mentality and just this way of doing things, even if it may be organized under a different splinter group or a fascist group here or a Nazi group here. There may be distinctions in that way, but at the end of the day that has been tolerated for a long time.

**TFSR:** *Yeah, for real. I wonder about the legacy, what existing groups there are are still that are operating.*

*So as you broke down earlier, Naeem and Balagoon both helped to save Lokmar's life and brought about this huge disruption, we know with other prisoners, but brought about this disruption that stopped his*

stereotype. But for them to have any real pull, it always goes up the chain. It's never just a random person if it has any pull.

Now, if it's just a group that's just doing something on their own, maybe. But if they're affecting any real pain, I should say, or if they're able to oppress anyone that always goes up the chain. Even if we're not directly dealing with the Klan, but we just go back to any of the lynchings, regardless of who was behind the lynchings historically, you'll always find that there was a business owner involved, that there was someone who ran the city who had connections. It was rare that it was just the white farmers that were doing this. And if they were they were usually emboldened by the establishment.

I say that to say when we come back to the Sons of Light and the Indiana Department of Correction, whether they... We can't prove at this point directly that it went all the way up to the top of the Indiana Department of Correction, but for it to be this thoroughly infiltrated within Pendleton, it's hard to believe that IDOC would know nothing of it. Or to believe that they knew nothing of it, or if they did know anything that clearly they didn't do anything to stop it. It clearly it was clearly condoned, and maybe even sanctioned, but at the very least it was condoned, and it was tolerated. So, I just want to point that out.

I think often when people think of white supremacists, I think it's a really unfortunate myth, I may even do a show on this one day, when people think it's just the white guys with missing teeth or something. When you think of it that way, it becomes cartoonish. It doesn't quite feel like a threat as opposed to when you think of this as an organized force that is very in line with the history of the United States and how it was formed, right?

So, the Sons of Light themselves, that we know of, as you said, was a splinter group. So they weren't directly affiliated with the Klan in a sense that they were tied to all the Klan chapters, usually a splinter group is people who will take the ideology of a group, might even start their own, but are not under the kind of centralized leadership of the group. Also a quick side note, there's also other notes of white supremacist groups within guard organizations throughout the State of Indiana, even to this day. But this particular one, Sons of Light, Michael Richardson, and we have a deposition that was taken around the time. Michael Richardson talks about how they tried to recruit him.

somebody, they had ample opportunity to do so. But they've actually protected them even from some of the prisoners, because they said, "we didn't want to be like them, we wanted to actually value humanity."

After all of this occurs, eventually as those 15 hours or over, then to kind of speed up the story. Balagoon and Naeem get the hardest charges because they were the leaders. They go to court. The court denies them any real trial, honestly. The judge openly fraternized with the jury as did the prosecutor. Anytime they tried to bring up the conditions of the prison to try to explain the State of mind that they had, and why they felt that they needed to do what they needed to do, it always was ruled, it was always objected against and the judge always granted that objection.

They weren't allowed to talk about any lawsuits. They weren't allowed to talk about any of the conditions in the prison at all. Anything that they tried to implement into the conversation was wiped out so they didn't receive a fair trial and then, ultimately, to close this law long answer up, Naeem received 142 years in prison for this and Balagoon received 84 years in prison for this. Balagoon primarily for criminal confinement (kidnapping), and then Naeem for criminal confinement as well as the attempted murder charge and a few other charges. That's why he has a longer charge.

As I said earlier, they also had to spend 20 years for Naeem in solitary confinement, and 32 years and five months, so virtually 33 years, for Balagoon in solitary confinement. And all of this was to save the life of Lincoln Love. If they had not intervened, Lincoln Love probably dies. And not only Lincoln Love, a few other people probably either die or get brutally beat down because it just reached a boiling point.

This wasn't a planned rebellion. Sometimes people like to say this was retaliation. But when you talk to them, that wasn't the nature of it. I'm sure they were tired of being treated this way. But it wasn't like, "oh, today we're going to do this." They jumped in because they wanted to save a human life and they were able to do that.

**TFSR:** *It sounded from, I think what Big R and a few other of the people that were in the documentary had said who were there, it seemed like with the parading of Lokmar bleeding out from his head and a pool of blood and being told, "you are next, we're going to do this to you..." How could they assume that anything was going to happen but that*

*possibility unless they took direct action right at that moment other than to interpose themselves, to interrupt the circumstances, and to bring in the outside, bring in the media, bring out other institutions that might be able to step in and stop what looked like was about to be a massacre?*

**TB:** Yeah. Yeah. I think that's a great point, like, and that's why, coming back to the trial, it was clear that that line of thinking that you just laid out, what the judge and the prosecutor did everything they could to keep that line of thinking from even being entered into the conversation of the trial. The jury couldn't even take that into consideration. They had to think of them just as these monsters who hurt guards, right? And this is also perpetuating the fact that even after, like way after... In 2018 when Naeem's sentence was actually vacated, and then they removed the judge who vacated him and put another judge on who said he basically had to look out for, he had to have his brother's back (referring to the guards themselves) and ressentencing another 22 years, right.

The State doesn't want to take any culpability for what happened at best you will hear that it was okay to go down and check on Lincoln Love but it wasn't okay to defend themselves, as if somehow those things are separate, right? Like it's not on the same continuum. As if they were supposed to just submit to whatever was going to happen to them. Like you said, you saw a man whose head is bleeding, and your people are telling you, "that they're about to do this to all of us." Again, this day is not an anomaly, this stuff is already happening, this stuff has happened prior. So what are you supposed to think? It was just a logical thing to do, honestly. It wasn't just trying to be heroes or valiant or anything, this is a logical thing to do.

**TFSR:** *And it seems like there's a lot of specifics to this being in Indiana, but parts of this remind me distinctively of conversations that I've had with survivors of the Lucasville uprising in southern Ohio. Well, I don't know the makeup of... we haven't talked about the racial demographic of who were the prisoners in the prison, but you mentioned that there were no Black guards...*

**TB:** The guards primarily targeted Black inmates and the white inmates that they targeted usually were inmates who didn't go along with the brutalization of Black folks. The so called 'nigger lovers,'

essentially. That's that's how it operated. So yeah, it was a primarily Black inmates who were targeted and there were no Black guards, not that that would have made a difference at this point. But there weren't any Black guards.

**TFSR:** *Sure. Yeah. Oftentimes prisons are put into rural communities with large surrounding white conservative populations. The guards are often drawn from these populations. Obviously, if you've got the group like the Sons of Light, which I do want to talk about in a minute, or what we know of them. I guess I'll just ask that question.*

*So, the second Klu Klux Klan in the United States, the second iteration or generation of it rose out in the 1920s in Indiana. You've mentioned that there's documentation... In general there's a lot of overlaps between government officials, law enforcement and guards with organizations like the KKK who are there to actively reimpose or continue the imposition of white supremacy quite actively in the day to day manner. In this instance, as I understand according to the affidavit of a former guard, Michael Richardson, (who was a white dude) who didn't want to participate in it, he said that among the groups that he was contacted by were white supremacist formations that operated among the guards, there was the Sons of Light, which was made up of captains and lieutenants and all these other officers. So it wasn't even just the "white working class" or whatever. It wasn't just the ignorant bottom of the barrel folks, this was the people that were in charge, and the people that were in charge of the people that were in charge.*

*Can you talk a little bit about what you have been able to uncover in these interviews and in your research about that organization, or organizations like that, and the ability of that information to get into things like the re-sentencing in 2018, or the initial conviction?*

**TB:** Yeah. I think a point you made within how you were laying it out, I think I want to touch on that first. Then I can get directly to the question. It was good to say like, "these are captains, these are lieutenants, it wasn't just the most lowly worker in the prison." Honestly, even tying this back to the Klan, or any other white supremacist group, the mythology surrounding this often is that white supremacist are just dirty rednecks, or whatever. That's really never been true. Anytime that there's an organized force... that may be part of it, that