

What to the Political Prisoner is the Fourth of July?

written by Jay Burton
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Jay Burton

[Jay Burton is a political prisoner.](#) At just 16 years old, he was ensnared by the predatory neo-Nazi [Lynwood Vikings](#) deputy gang within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department — a white supremacist gang that federal courts have condemned as engaging in “terrorist-type tactics” and “racially motivated violence” against Black and Latine communities. For 36 years, Burton has been buried alive in California's prison system for a murder he did not commit. This commentary was

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As we commemorate July 4th, a day traditionally associated with freedom and independence, I ask: What does this celebration truly mean for someone like me, Jay Burton, who has been incarcerated for 36 years, since the age of 16?

My case involves the KNOWN Los Angeles Sheriff's GANG, the Lynwood Vikings, and raises questions about what justice and accountability mean today. I am seemingly condemned to a new form of slavery, AmeriKKKa's "New Jim Crow" as Professor Michelle Alexander called it.

As Sister Assata Shakur said: "(Prison in the United States) is a new form of Plantation."

I am living proof of the ills of today's criminal (In)justice system.

Meanwhile, we have (false, manufactured) leaders like President Donald Trump leading the AmeriKKKan Empire! He has been convicted of 34 felony counts yet remains free to actualize his most twisted fantasies! I have remained in chains for over 36 years for a crime I did not commit.

This highlights the complexity of freedom.

Frederick Douglass's powerful question, "What to the slave is the 4th of July?" resonates deeply in this context.

It prompts us to consider the multifaceted nature of freedom, including the mental and psychological barriers that exist in inner-city communities and the ongoing struggles for freedom and justice in various parts of the world, such as Palestine, Sudan, the Congo, and Ukraine.

While stuck in the belly of the beast, the celebration of freedom feels distant — the

only fireworks here are the harsh realities of life, where sharpened metal often pierces the flesh of men in hopes of taking their lives.

Where sometimes relief comes at a terrible cost, and freedom is lost and in some cases given forever.

Behind the wall, business is business; there is no holiday from this violence. ...

For me, freedom is a simple yet profound desire: to be free of these chains and shout #FreeJayBurton with my family and supporters, to show love without the interference of the state, and to enrich the next generation for the struggles to come.

I want #FreeJayBurton to be read as a demand and grassroots call to action so that it becomes a message of hope to The People!

Remember my name!!!

Jay Burton will be Free.

These Bars cannot restrain my Revolutionary Spirit.

Come be part of the solution and reach out to me through social media at: @freedom4jayburton. If you feel called to do so, please donate to my legal fees via Cash App at \$mayag8 or my [gofundme](#). Contact the [Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice](#) for more information and action steps. Be a part of the Revolutionary change we want to see in our communities, where youth won't be degraded and thrown away as urban waste.

#FreeJayBurton

#FreeJayBurton

#FreeJayBurton!!!

