

## Letter to the Media

My Most Honorable Members Of The Media:

My name is Cedric Dean and I have been in Federal custody since 1995 when I was 22 years old. I am a reformed crack cocaine dealer who is committed to saving the 9 to 15 million at risk youth in America. Seldom do I pause to attract attention to my work and ideas. If I sought to get publicity I would have no time for productive work. But since that I feel that the members of the media are men and women of genuine good will and that your reporting is sincerely set forth, I want to share my mission with you in what I hope will be tolerable and sensible terms.

I think I should indicate why I am in prison. I am the only son of a God-fearing Christian mother who had to raise me all alone. At 13 years old I was baptized into barbarity. I shot someone and robbed drug dealers at a time when I should have been in school or at church. Eventually I ended up going to prison at age 16 for armed robbery, though I only learned how to be more criminal-minded. After my release, in less than 11 months, I was facing Life Without Parole, and that's what I received for being a crack dealer.

In September of 2009 my Life sentence was reduced to 35 years due to my positive adjustment in prison and the changes in the crack cocaine sentencing guidelines. Through a combination of hard work and God's grace I have been able to travel out of the dark and into the light. So I am in prison because of a broken family structure and a lack of focus. I am here because this is where God wanted me to be to show me the Great Light.

But more specifically, I am in prison because this is the land of the lost. Just as Stanley Tookie Williams saved the lives of over 150,000 at-risk youth from San Quentin's death row, so am I compelled to save the misguided from premature death and incarceration. Like Mr. Williams, all of my work is predicated on dissuading children and adults to not follow in my footsteps.

You deplore the violence taking place in America. But your reporting, I am sorry to say, fails to express a resembling concern for a solution to the savagery. I am sure that none of you would want to be satisfied with the adverse kind of reporting that cast a light on problems but does not offer corresponding solutions. It heartbreaking that there is a lack of media concern for a solution, but it is even more heartbreaking that very little is being done to deal with this problem collectively as a country.'

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: gather the facts to determine what needs to be done; mediation; self-cleansing; and immediate action. My book: *How To Save Our Children From Crime, Drugs and Violence* outlines these steps in detail. There can be no circumnavigating the fact that crime, drugs and violence engulfs this nation. Chicago is probably the most violent city in America for children. Its tragic record of murder is known nationwide. Children have experienced horrific deaths. There have been more school kids killed in Chicago than any other city in America. These are the harrowing, harsh facts of the problem. On the basis of this reality, I wrote *How To Stop Your Children From Going To Prison*. But the media has consistently refused to respond to my offer to help solve this difficult dilemma.

With Twitter and Facebook came the opportunity for me to communicate directly to the parents and children that I am trying to reach. The support on those social networking sites have been overwhelming. When I was suddenly catapulted into the role of an activist a few years ago, I felt I would be supported by the mainstream media. I felt that the black media would be among my strongest supporters. Instead, the media as a whole has been outright disappointing, refusing to embrace my desire to make a difference in a world-gone-wild; the disregard has been discouraging.

In spite of my fractured ambitions, I am writing you with the hope that you all will see the righteousness of my mission and, with compassionate hearts, will serve as the mainstream through which my message of peace and love can reach the masses. I pray that each of you will understand.'

I have had many sleepless nights thinking about the politics that goes into what is reported and what is not. Again and again I have found myself wondering: "What kind of human being would refuse to return the call of a prisoner seeking to join the fight against crime, drugs and violence? Who is behind the words? Where are their hearts when 32 children are killed daily from gun violence? Why wouldn't they want to report about the hundreds of men that have changed their lives after attending my Leaders Breed Leaders seminars? Where is the media support when I am trying to stop over 200, 000 youth from entering the Criminal Justice System yearly."

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep dissatisfaction I have cried over the dis passion of the media. But rest assured that my weeping has been weeping of concern. There can be no deep dissatisfaction where there is no deep concern. Without a doubt, I am deeply concerned about the future of American children. I could think no other way. I am in a somewhat peculiar position of being an author, teacher, speaker and prisoner. However, I have no less love for at-risk children than the countless men and women worldwide that work to save them unconditionally.

There are times when the media is very compassionate - in cases of child molestation. In those cases the media has not merely been a whistler blower but it has also been a willing worker against child maltreatment. From the Amber Alerts to the Breaking News Reports, the media has been on the front lines against child abuse. Unfortunately things are different when it comes to juvenile crime and violence where the children are the abusers. But this does not help fix the problem - it only stalls the solutions.

I hope this letter finds you in good spirit. I also hope that you will accept my invitation to help you save America's children, not as reporters but as righteous people.

Yours for the cause of Love and Peace,

Cedric Dean

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