

Letter from Jail

Dave Valler

1968

I've been in jail for so long now that I've lost count of the days, But such is the fate of the man who doesn't have the money for bail (\$10,000 or \$1,000 for a bondsman).

I've found that there's two types of justice in our illustrious nation: one for the rich, and one for the poor.

But if life in a "democracy" hands you a lemon, you don't bitch. You find that there's only steel bars to listen to you. So you do what any man who wants to make the world a better place to live would do. You squeeze the lemon and start a lemonade stand.

You read book after book, write, discuss, think, plan, cultivate patience and listen for the guard to tell you it's your turn to return to the outside world once more.

In these long days of slamming steel doors and artificial lighting I found something I had searched for outside relentlessly. I found freedom, that elusive commodity every man lives and sometimes even dies for.

Freedom isn't a material thing. I'm as free in this sophisticated torture chamber of the 20th century as I would be outside.

Not that I've become a masochist and grown attached to Wayne County Jail—I haven't. I want out. I want my liberty back.

Freedom is a state of awareness. A desire to be free and living your life towards that end is the essence of freedom. As long as a man wished freedom for himself and all others of society, being careful not to do injustice to others, freedom will exist. Whether it be behind bars, or walking around in the outside world, as in a true democracy.

As Thoreau asked his jailer, I ask many of you outside, "why are you on that side of the bars? You should be on this sides," if not in person, at least in spirit. For that spirit is the spirit that laid the foundation of our nation, and it's the spirit that will finally design it into something beautiful,

Peace,

David

P.S. If you have any old newspapers, the other prisoners and I could dig reading them. Wayne County Jail, Ward 411, David Valler, Detroit.

fifth Estate

Dave Valler
Letter from Jail
1968

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/67-november-28-december-11-1968/letter-from-jail>
Fifth Estate #67, November 28-December 11, 1968

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net