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Sent by: JAMAL BIGGS (196368)  
Agency: Michigan Department of Corrections  
Facility/Housing Unit: Muskegon Correctional Facility/UNIT 4261A01  
Date: 10/17/2023 14:59:21

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ARTIST STATEMENT  
Jamal Biggs

"The Demise of Liberty," 2023©, 22 1/4" X 24", Mixed Media: Acrylic on Canvas, Paper, Chip Board, Corrugated Cardboard.

This work is a commentary and critique on the American Justice System. It depicts Lady Justice standing in the foreground with the scales of justice in one hand and a sword in the other. Such an image is often displayed in nearly all of the courthouses in this country. While those images portray the idea of what "justice" should represent, this work portrays what it has become.

Lady Justice is often depicted with a blindfold to symbolize that justice is blind. However, in reality, justice is meted out differently based on race, sex, finances, fame, stature, etc. To reflect this fact, I have her peeking out of the blindfold.

She is often shown standing on a law book, symbolizing that justice is supposed be founded on the law, as well as with her foot standing on the head of a serpent to reflect her subduing evil. However, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and police officers routinely deviate from well established legal precedent for personal, political, and financial reasons. They also make backdoor deals, fabricate evidence, lie under oath, coerce false confessions, and so much more that result in wrongful convictions and lengthy prison sentences. Thus, I've depicted her standing on books entitled, "Machiavellism" and "CAPITALISM." Instead of her subduing the snake underfoot, the snake has overtaken, seduced, and influenced her as it wraps itself around her leg, in between her crouch, around her midsection, around her neck, and hisses in her ear. Her other foot is standing on the decapitated head of the Statue of Liberty which she has slain with her sword, symbolizing all the wrongful, unjust convictions and imprisonment of innocent people.

In her other hand she holds an unequal scale with money weighing on one side and a family (father, mother, and child) weighing on the other. This represents the often true reality that money is valued more than the cost to families under the current system of justice.

The background of this work consists of actual news articles about police misconduct, fabricated evidence and many other abuses within the justice system that resulted in a lot of wrongful convictions and exonerations. Layered over the top of those articles is a transparent image of the U.S. Capital Building, as well as an image of prison cell block. In the lower right corner is photo of me from the newspaper 33+ years ago, at the age of 19, when I was sentenced to die in prison.

*This work will be donated to Ms. Claudia Whitman, a private investigator and advocate of those wrongly convicted, who has personally helped numerous individuals wrongly convicted overturn their convictions and gain freedom. If you look closely, you will notice a news article talking about Claudia and her efforts.*

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