

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2010/12/29/scott-sisters-are-freed/>

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by [James Ridgeway](#) | December 29, 2010

The following announcement was issued today by Haley Barbour, Governor of Mississippi, regarding Jamie and Gladys Scott. We were among the first non-local media sources to write about the Scott sisters case, back in March. The full story of their arrest and incarceration, and Jamie Scott's struggle to stay alive in prison, can be found [here](#) and [here](#), while a report on the movement to free the sisters can be found [here](#).

Dec. 29, 2010

GOV. BARBOURS STATEMENT REGARDING RELEASE OF SCOTT SISTERS

Today, I have issued two orders indefinitely suspending the sentences of Jamie and Gladys Scott. In 1994, a Scott County jury convicted the sisters of armed robbery and imposed two life sentences for the crime. Their convictions and their sentences were affirmed by the Mississippi Court of Appeals in 1996.

To date, the sisters have served 16 years of their sentences and are eligible for parole in 2014. Jamie Scott requires regular dialysis, and her sister has offered to donate one of her kidneys to her. The Mississippi Department of Corrections believes the sisters no longer pose a threat to society. Their incarceration is no longer necessary for public safety or rehabilitation, and Jamie Scott's medical condition creates a substantial cost to the State of Mississippi.

The Mississippi Parole Board reviewed the sisters' request for a pardon and recommended that I neither pardon them, nor commute their sentence. At my request, the Parole Board subsequently reviewed whether the sisters should be granted an indefinite suspension of sentence, which is tantamount to parole, and have concurred with my decision to suspend their sentences indefinitely.

Gladys Scott's release is conditioned on her donating one of her kidneys to her sister, a procedure which should be scheduled with urgency. The release date for Jamie and Gladys Scott is a matter for the Department of Corrections.

I would like to thank Representative George Flaggs, Senator John Horne, Senator Willie Simmons, and Representative Credell Calhoun for their leadership on this issue. These legislators, along with former Mayor Charles Evers, have been in regular contact with me and my staff while the sisters' petition has been under review.



James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, Blood in the Face.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

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What I can't understand is why does the Gov. think he can order the sister to donate, or else go back to prison. Am I reading this right?

Here's the thing, the sister is willing to donate, and it is much better to have a living donor. They both need to get on schedule with a specialist. Jamie needs to be on a renal diet, & her sister needs to lose weight too, it adds to the complications with the weight, both will need special counseling that will help them prepare for what is ahead. Jamie should be receiving disability and Medicare. They should be directed by counselors who will help them get the ball rolling.

I agree Alan, credit should be given where it is due. Happy New Years to Jamie & Gladys.

Well done to them two about time this was done good for that governor well done grateful are those who are lucky and skilled or loved enough to break free from the vast plane of justice well done may she live long and well she is very lucky to have done all this and to have those who care stand up those are the heroes of this nation to her and many more who welcome this great news glad to hear

This excerpt was taken from this post:

Their incarceration is no longer necessary for public safety or rehabilitation, and Jamie Scott's medical condition creates a substantial cost to the State of Mississippi.

It reveals that money may have tipped the scales of justice in the sister's favor.

Is the state that requires the one sister to donate a kidney to the other as a condition of their parole also going to do the right thing and pay for it? They obviously cannot come up with the money themselves.

And will other equally meritorious cases be decided in the favor of inmates that do not have such costly medical conditions? I think we all know the answer to that one.

And it is notable that only the politicians were recognized and not the organizations such as Solitary Watch that motivated them all to take action. Without such activism and the public support that they encouraged the politicians would never have taken action.

I salute SW and all the other groups for all their hard work in getting this story out there.

Keep up your hard work!

God Bless Mississippi, the Scott sisters and Haley Barbour. Thank the Good Lord compassion and common sense still is alive.

Hoorah, Hoorah! Best decision this man has ever made.

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Solitary Watch News