

Dustin Higgs

I want you to remember January 15, 2021. Please remember me, too, because I will be the last man killed by President Trump, just 5 days before he leaves the White House - I am the unlucky number 13 on his "kill" list. In 2020, for the first time in America's history, the federal government did more executions than by all the States combined. Imagine that - a real killing spree - all lawfully done. But I'm just another black dude who'll die - no big deal.

But if I have to die, I want somebody to hear a little bit about me. My story is not much different from most of the guys in prison, but it is my own sad and sorry life, holding a whole bunch of pain. My Dad was a pretty mean guy, a drug dealer, too, who beat me regularly, just like he did my poor mom who tried to take care of all us kids. He was in prison, too. When I was 8, she got cancer and died when I was 10. That's when the hole in my heart got really big, and I got messed up bad. I struggled in school, was depressed a lot, but couldn't seem to accept any help from others.

When I was older, I hung with the wrong crowd. I did a whole lot of bad stuff. Then, one night in 1996, me and Willis Haynes and Victor Gloria picked up some women and spent the night partying. We drank, smoked pot, danced to the music. Then there was an argument and all the women left the apartment in a huff. But, we picked them up. They were laughing and happy, glad we were driving them home, not knowing what was coming. The thing is, I drove the van to a Federal Wildlife Refuge and stopped on the side of the road. The women didn't have a clue - maybe because we were all still a little drunk - so they got out when Haynes told them to - and bang...bang... bang, he shot them dead... with my gun. So, I'm not saying I'm innocent - no way, 'cause I was there, it was my gun - but still, where's the justice? Haynes gets life and I get death.

Still, if you knew my whole story - the drugs, the guns, the other arrests and shootings, you'd probably agree I deserve to die. I don't blame you. I've used the system to save myself, but it didn't work. All I can say is that I've tried to be a parent to my son. I've

been called a “model prisoner,” and a whole bunch of Maryland legislators - 38 delegates and nine state senators wrote a letter to Governor Larry Hogan to ask Trump to stop the execution. So, maybe there’s still a spark of good in me. I’m not all bad.

There’s another reason to remember January 15 - because it’s Martin Luther King Day. I don’t know much, but I do know he was a brave and good black man. When someone asked him how he felt about the death penalty, he said “I do not think God approves the death penalty for any crime - rape and murder included. God’s concern is to improve individuals and bring them to the point of conversion.” I know I’m not there yet, but maybe if I had more time, I could become a better man. I promise you I’d try.

One final thing, could you pray for me - and my kid?