

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

Today is my son's 40th birthday, which I didn't think I would be spending it in a visit with him in jail, but I usually try to spend his birthday with him.  
It's November 11th, 2015, J.J.'s mom Maria is driving to see him at Sing Sing.  
We're lucky this year he has a visit today, so I'm on my way to visit him and wish him a happy birthday.  
I just wish it was under different circumstances, but we'll just keep pushing forth.  
It's been one year since J.J. sent me that devastating letter, the one he'd written at four in the morning in despair after finding out a judge had denied his request for a hearing.  
That letter was a turning point for me.  
I knew that something had changed in my relationship with J.J.  
When I read it, I was afraid for him.  
My dateline story about J.J. had already aired, and there wasn't another one planned, but I was more committed than ever to keep going.  
After the judge's denial, J.J.'s lawyers filed an appeal.  
As J.J. waited, time was passing.  
By his 40th birthday, he'd been locked up for nearly 18 years.  
Maria says over time, it's gotten harder to visit him.  
Actually, my visits have gotten less and less.  
I don't like seeing him there.  
He's gotten old, and every time I see him, it hurts.  
When I think about the fact that he's lost all those years, that he's never going to get that back.  
I try not to think about that, but it does come into my mind, especially on his birthday.  
By now, I've known J.J. for 13 years.  
We've grown closer.  
We've both grown older, too.  
I've lost a little hair.  
His goatee has gone a little gray.  
Turning 40 in prison only serves to remind me of how many years I've lost.  
My salvation, my ability to survive this ordeal has basically been based off the fact that I've tucked away a lot of pain and suffering.  
I call it a reservoir of pain, and I try to numb myself to the situation because I know I have no choice but to survive it.  
No matter what it is that comes my way, I have to survive it.  
Turning 40 reminds me that I'm getting older, and I wonder how many years I got left in this world.  
My father died at 49, and I'm still locked up.  
Every year, I say, you're going home, this is your year.  
Every year, I still don't know what I'm going home.  
I'm Dan Sleppian, and this is Letters from Sing Sing.  
From the moment I met JJ all those years ago, one thing was clear to me.  
Not only was he focused on fighting his case, he was determined to make something of his life, and in prison, it's not an easy thing to do.  
You know, prison is designed in a way that individuals are supposed to just waste their

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

time.

It's like every day, come to the yard, lift some weights, run around the yard, walk around the yard, talk about nonsense, so, you know, like, it was monotonous.

And that was JJ's life in the first couple of years after he was locked up.

Then one day, a group of older men approached him in the yard.

They had a proposition, come to the school building.

A lot of these older guys, their whole mentality was, get these guys out of the yard because there's nothing good happening in the yard.

And so it started with, like, a VCR and a TV and a room, and it was like, you guys can watch movies.

The only thing is, if you're going to watch a movie, you have to write about it.

The older guys were proposing movie nights, but with a required writing assignment.

And that changed everything for JJ.

And so I had developed a reputation.

People started to say, listen, that kid right there knows how to write.

JJ says other men in the prison started to notice him.

Some of the younger ones wanted help with their writing, but the more senior guys, the ones who are active in organizations on the inside, asked JJ to come to their meetings.

So JJ got more involved in the prison's programs.

I remember on one of my visits back in 2008, he told me about some of the things he was working on, like starting volunteer programs, organizing fundraisers.

We donated \$1,200 for back to school supplies, where the kids can come up, and they're actually going to be coming up starting this weekend, and they get a book bag with a bunch of supplies in it.

To try to help the families that come up here with their children, this was for the annual toy drive for Christmas.

We buy toys for the children to come up on the visits.

What does it do for you right here?

Well, it gives me the opportunity to help you, you know, to get back.

JJ was even elected by the prison's population to speak for them when issues came up, which meant he began to work closely with the man who runs SingSing.

He was a natural leader, and so he stood out right away.

That's Superintendent Michael Capra.

He's been in charge of SingSing for more than a decade.

He says he immediately noticed something about JJ.

Here's the guy who was, kind of remind you of a CEO right from the beginning, right?

There's a certain error about him, the way he carries himself, the way he speaks.

He's very clear on what he's thinking about, but he's also reads the room very well, understands who he is.

He stepped out as like a young professional who was, you know, an executive in a company.

And that's kind of how JJ began to operate inside the prison.

Responsibility brings a sense of purpose.

Now it's not, I'm just waking up every day in a cage, looking out in the yard, and no, I got to go and see this guy in the yard, so I'm trying to help him.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

But it also was an escape for me.

While I'm focusing on everybody else, I don't have to focus on what I'm going through.

I don't have to deal with the suffering, the trauma of being incarcerated for a crime

I didn't commit.

But JJ was surrounded by men who did commit crimes, and he got to know them.

Many felt remorse for what they'd done.

JJ realized their stories could help people on the outside, so he helped create a group

with 10 of them to talk about the pain they'd caused, the people they'd hurt.

They wanted to redefine what it meant to pay a debt to society.

Doing time in prison is doing nothing to give back to your community.

There is no reparations in that, right?

But doing something for your community.

Using your experience, your lived experience, using your hindsight and sharing your insight

to provide foresight for the future and the safety of our children.

So JJ and the group began to work with Superintendent Capra.

They wanted to make a video to discourage kids from following in their footsteps.

But Sing Sing is a maximum security prison, not a production company.

They needed help.

The superintendent had seen my dateline special on JJ, so he called me.

And I told you, hey listen, I need a consultant.

We talked for a while and you were like, I am in this 1,000%.

I'm doing this.

I'm going to bring a team with me.

And that's what I did.

I loved the sound of the project, but honestly, I had another motive.

I wanted to keep JJ's spirits up while I continued to look into his case.

I enlisted the help of a couple of colleagues, and we all volunteered to make a short video.

We set up a camera in an empty room, and one by one, the incarcerated men went in and started to talk to the lens.

I shot my friend six times because I was angry.

I know how it feels to have destroyed a family.

I know how it feels to have eliminated a name.

You can't make it right.

That video eventually grew into a program inside the prison called Voices From Within.

JJ was the group's leader.

We got to get to the younger guys.

It's about re-establishing a new culture.

Believe it or not, a lot of the culture out there emanated from prison.

Those kids that are out there cutting each other's faces, that started in here.

JJ ran the meetings, and Superintendent Capra helped spread the message of Voices From Within to the rest of the prison's population.

This is what we're doing.

Guys that care, men that want to make a difference, men that don't have a negative agenda, want to give back to their own peer group, you guys.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

The point of it is that everybody can be successful as just being a successful, who we are, doing the right thing, period, and being able to be man enough to step up and say, that is not cool, that ain't right, we're not doing that, we're going to do this.

But to JJ, the accomplishment he was most proud of was getting an education.

Singing has a college program, something not all prisons offer.

It's run by a nonprofit called Hudson Link for Higher Education.

And in 2014, JJ graduated with a bachelor's degree in behavioral science.

The commencement took place in the prison's visiting room.

JJ and 25 other graduates wore caps and gowns over their green prison pants.

His mom, Maria, was there with his younger son, Jacob, and I was there too, with my camera.

There were special guests, like Harry Belafonte and the commencement speaker, who was Whoopi Goldberg.

Unless you know the past, you're doomed to repeat it.

It will happen.

So now here you all are, and you're being encouraged to go out into your communities, but you know what you're walking into, because you have to think back to who you were.

Because who you were when you came here is not who you are when you're leaving.

And that's really the journey.

Then they handed out the diplomas.

I was so proud of JJ that day, I had such respect for what he'd achieved despite everything he'd faced, everything he'd gone through.

If I were in his place, I think I would have lost my mind.

But over the years, I'd seen how strong and resilient JJ was.

We'd become true friends.

That's not something I ever expected to happen, getting this close with someone I'd done a story about.

This was new territory for me.

As a journalist, I needed to be careful.

In my mind, I wasn't advocating for JJ.

I was simply following the facts.

I was advocating for the truth.

JJ knew that.

I said it to him a hundred times.

And while he continued to fight his own case, JJ told me about other men who were convicted of murder, who he believed were innocent.

He introduced me to three of them and encouraged me to look into their cases.

And I did.

I wound up doing date line stories on each of those men.

All of them were ultimately exonerated.

Eric Glyson was one of them.

I was with him the moment he was released.

It's like jumping up out of a coffin and walking.

It's like being read your last rites.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

And all of a sudden, a miracle happens.

For JJ, the guy who led me to Eric and the other men, who helped free them, he remained locked up.

When I visited him at his cell one time, he showed me news clippings that he taped to the wall.

Show me who everybody is.

It's the wall of shame.

That's all the people who had to spend time in prison for crimes they didn't commit.

This is Eric Glyson, wrongfully convicted, 17 years, came out of the Bronx, Richard Rosario, 20 years, wrongfully convicted, also in the Bronx, did a story on him called conviction just like my document.

So I wake up every day and I look at this.

And it's what drives me to keep going.

Because while I may not be able to get my freedom through this process, there have been others that we've been able to help.

And I guess that's a part of my purpose.

How does it feel to look at that wall, knowing that you're still here?

There's no way to deal with this, man.

I mean, it's a very painful experience.

That's where my hope lies.

JJ hoped that he'd soon be free too, that the New York State Supreme Court would finally grant him the hearing that he'd been asking for for years.

In September 2016, two years after JJ's graduation, his lawyers Celia Gordon and Bob Gottlieb got the answer.

Last week, after many months of waiting, we received word that the Appellate Division denied our motion, denied the appeal.

So the news is lousy, to say the least.

Once again, JJ had been denied a hearing.

The decision was unanimous.

The judges didn't buy what the eyewitnesses, Augustus Brown and Philip Jones, had said that they knew JJ was the wrong man.

The court wrote, quote, the alleged recantations by two of the four eyewitnesses were shown to be highly suspect.

The opinion also addressed Mustafa in Seattle, the man I confronted outside his house, the one that two women said had confessed to them.

The court wrote, simply put, there is nothing either trustworthy or reliable about the purported confession attributed to Mustafa, and that it, quote, was refuted by the overwhelming evidence the people unearthed in their reinvestigation of the crime.

I'd also had doubts about Mustafa, but to me, the main issue was, did JJ commit this crime?

Now, unless new evidence surfaced, JJ was at the end of his legal road.

Bob and Celia were devastated.

Knowing that this is the end of the line, legally speaking, it was so hard to read that decision.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

I don't have words.

I don't have words for that.

This is John Aegean's life.

I firmly believe that someday, somehow, when you least expect it, something is going to break.

Someday, justice is going to be done, and I only hope that I'm going to be alive when that day comes.

You have a pre-paid call from John Aegean, an inmate at Sing Sing.

JJ called from Sing Sing after hearing the news.

I'm just coming to terms with realizing the effects of the court decision is having on me.

It's like, you know, they don't want to hear the facts.

They don't even want to take the opportunity to dig deeper into the facts by just simply holding a hearing.

I just don't know how much more of this I can take.

It's been two decades.

I mean, at this point, speaking to my attorneys, they're back with my what's next.

It took me 19 years to get where I'm at today.

What am I supposed to do?

Another 19 years?

To try to figure out where we went wrong, what we haven't uncovered already, how can we uncover something new?

How am I supposed to pull all this off if I'm locked up in a, I live in a cage.

I don't think, you know, I just don't know what's next.

What's next?

Finishing my time?

I've been sentenced to life.

I don't know what's next.

Hey guys, Willie Geist here, reminding you to check out the Sunday Sit Down podcast.

On this week's episode, I get together with Jessica Alba to discuss her amazing transition from star actor to big time founder of the honest company, a great conversation you can find now for free wherever you download your podcasts.

It was a pitch black night in the high desert.

Sheriff Deputy Billy Cox drove over the park and ride in Palmdale, something very wrong around that bright blue Mustang, a woman's left leg and bare foot were hanging out of the door.

L.A. County homicide detective Richard Longshore was sound asleep when he got the call. There are cases that you will take home with you at night and that will last until the end of your life.

I'm Keith Morrison and this is The Girl in the Blue Mustang, a podcast from Dateline.

Listen now for free wherever you get your podcasts or subscribe to Dateline Premium on Apple podcasts to access new episodes one week early.

After JJ's appeal was denied in 2016, I began speaking with him several times a week and rarely did a month go by without a visit.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

We'd have long talks about his case and his work and we talked a lot about his family, how much he missed his boys, how much it hurt to be separated from them.

June 26, 2009, I haven't told anyone this, Dan, but I've been waking up in the middle of the night worried about my son.

Almost a decade earlier, JJ had written me letters about how concerned he was that his son John would get caught up in the system.

I know my son is trouble bound.

He is a good child with a pretty solid foundation of principles and morals, yet he is vulnerable in an environment that makes statistics out of our youth.

In a way, JJ had predicted the future.

I'd spoken with John when he was 16, when he was at a court-ordered facility for kids who got in trouble with the law.

Two years later, John got into more trouble.

He was convicted of attempted robbery and spent two years in prison.

Now John was 23 and on parole.

He'd been working, driving a delivery truck, trying to make ends meet.

Then one day, Maria called to tell me that he had gotten into another situation and was in danger of getting locked up again.

John was hiding out in a motel room, just like his dad had all those years ago.

Maria urged John to get in touch with me, and he did.

He texted me to come over.

So I'm on my way to see John Adrian, Jr. now.

He's had some problems, you know, when he was a kid, when he was little, he used to say how he didn't like to go visit his dad at Sing Sing because he didn't like prisons.

He never wanted to end up in jail.

And as he got older, I think he got sucked into a life that maybe he wouldn't have had his dad been around.

He got in trouble with the law, and he's already been to jail himself.

So I just drove an hour to get here, and I'm going to go talk to him.

I pull up to a rundown motel next to a gas station.

Hello?

Hey, Jay.

Yeah?

What room are you in?

I'm parking right out front, okay?

All right.

Coming open the door.

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

You look so stressed, man.

John is sitting on the edge of the bed.

The room is full of smoke.

An old square TV is flickering in the background, but he isn't watching it.

His head is down.

It just looks lost.

So have you just been doing smoking and sleeping?

Yeah, not really sleeping, just like resting on my body.

This is tricky for me.

I've known John since he was a little kid.

I've watched him grow up.

I care about him, and I want him to be okay.

But as a journalist, I've also been documenting his life for years.

So with John's consent, I record our conversation.

Why don't you start with what happened last week?

It was difficult.

I just came back from a long trip.

I'm just, like, at the house, coming back from this trip.

Somebody called me and was like, one of my friends, I got robbed.

John tells me his story, how one of his friends was robbed, and thought he knew the guy who did it.

So John and a few others went to get the money back.

Except he says it was a setup.

Someone called the police and John was arrested for burglary.

He spent about a week in jail.

So you got out of jail four days ago?

Yes.

Getting arrested was a violation of John's parole.

So now he's facing another state prison sentence.

I mean, I have seven months of parole left, but I just came out of jail on Monday.

Like, I just don't want to go right back right now.

It's too much.

Why are you here in this room?

Just to get away from everything.

I could just do as I please for the moment.

What's your plan?

Not too sure yet.

That's another reason for being here, to make one.

Well, have you thought it through?

Not yet.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

Well, let's do that, okay?  
Let's start doing that together.  
Let's start thinking this through.  
I want you to just feel free to be honest with me, too.  
You know what I mean?  
I might hear the best any judgment at all, no matter what happens.  
The fact that you were arrested last week is a violation of parole.  
Let's just talk about your real options.  
Let's deal with what's a fact.  
The fact is what your parole officer said you need to come in, right?  
So now what are your options?  
Tell them to me.  
Option one.  
What's it called, yeah?  
Okay, option two.  
Let's not go.  
What happens if you go?  
Let's go down that road for a minute.  
I'll just be sitting there rocking and counting jail.  
For how long?  
The worst case scenario?  
I'll just do seven months.  
What's the best possible thing that can happen if you turn yourself in?  
I do four months.  
What was option two?  
You run?  
Yeah.  
Okay, so let's go down that road.  
What happens there?  
You keep moving around, right?  
How is that life?  
Look.  
I don't know.  
I need to be able to get in a good state of mind.  
You can't go right back to jail.  
It's like, this is too much.  
Does it feel good to live like this on the run?  
Hiding?  
Doesn't feel good, but I know I can get some things done.  
Like what?  
I could work.  
Not if there's a warrant out for your arrest.  
You're 23.  
Yeah, as a child, I wanted to, I wanted to be this age.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

I was trying to grow up too fast, and I'm here just like whatever, just a lot going through my mind.

I'm really trying to figure out what I'm going to do, but until I figure that out, I know that I'm just going to stay here.

You know what, you know I talk to your dad, you know that?

And rarely is there a time when I visit him that we talk that he doesn't tell me how much he loves you.

I was with your dad on your birthday, and you know what he said to me?

My son is 23 years old today, I turned 23 in prison.

He doesn't want to see you go down this path, you know what he would say?

He would say, I love him no matter what, and I'm going to be there for him no matter what he does.

He knows there's a future for you, and he also knows that you've been robbed of him.

It makes your burden that much harder, it makes your fight that much harder, right?

I've watched you grow up, and it just must be very, very difficult for you.

So I don't want to pretend that I know what it's like to be you, or that I know what the right decision for you is.

You got to do that for yourself.

I'm sorry, man.

I'm sorry.

I give John a hug.

He's kind of in a daze.

He's hearing me, but I don't know if it's registering, or if I'm even helping.

I'm sorry that you're going through all this, all right?

Yeah.

Tough choices, right?

Yeah.

I head back to my car, and I sit there for a few minutes, letting it all sink in, and my phone rings.

You have a pre-paid call from John Adrian.

Hello?

Hey.

Hey.

He's got off the phone, my mother.

She told me you two were together.

You know, I spoke to him for more than an hour, and I did my best to try to not judge him, and not to give him any advice, but to help him think through all of the options that he has before him, you know, and I told him that you know what your father would say right now, and he said, what?

I said, no matter what you do, he's going to love you.

No matter what you do, he's going to support you, so that's what I said on your behalf to him.

Mom, I thank you so much.

He's going to have to make decisions, right?

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

Yeah.

Definitely.

It's the collateral damage.

Since he was 15, he's been going in and out of situations with the criminal justice system, and it's not working.

Whatever they're doing with him while he's institutionalized, it's not working.

It's obvious that he needs something else.

He needs help, and he's not getting it in here.

It was tough to tell JJ about what was happening with his son, especially because I knew there was nothing he could do about it.

JJ had predicted this.

He told me about the research on children of incarcerated parents.

He knew how they face a host of hardships, a higher risk of financial instability, emotional stress, trauma, sometimes that can lead to making bad decisions.

John didn't turn himself in after I spoke with him in that motel room.

Police caught up with him months later.

He was sent back to prison to serve two and a half more years.

These days, the news never stops.

The morning's headlines change by afternoon, and by the end of the day, it's all totally different.

So, let's get into it.

What's happening right now, what it all means for you for an hour every day.

I get it.

I know that it can be hard to keep up, so let's get started together and go from there.

Hey, I'm Hallie Jackson, and we have a ton going on tonight.

Here's the deal.

Hallie Jackson Now, weekdays at 5PM Eastern on NBC News Now.

MSNBC presents a new Peacock original documentary.

Lowes County was one of the poorest counties in the country.

It was 80% African American, and in 1965, no black people registered to vote.

The story of a brave community.

People were followed.

People could lose their jobs.

That found its voice by voting.

We have to continue to tell the story of how we got to where we are today.

Lowes County and the Road to Black Power, Sunday at 10PM Eastern on MSNBC and streaming now on Peacock.

It had been 15 years since I received that first letter from JJ asking me to look into his case.

And despite all that I'd found since then, he was still in prison.

What made this so hard for me to understand was that, from my read, prosecutors hadn't really been evaluating whether or not JJ was the gunman.

In their court filings, it seemed to me their position was that JJ's trial had been fair, but his constitutional rights had not been violated, that their conviction was a solid one.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

The only chance JJ now had to get a judge to even listen again would be if he found new evidence that hadn't been available at the time of his trial.

And it would have to be a big deal.

There would need to be a reasonable probability that the new evidence would have led to a more favorable verdict for JJ.

After all these years, that was a tall order.

Still, I figured there had to be something new out there.

I simply refused to accept that the law could keep JJ locked up, when to me, there was so much evidence of his innocence.

So I got back to work.

I followed up on random leads I'd never explored, chased down old ones, reviewed notes and court filings.

One day, I even walked the streets of Harlem looking for a guy mentioned by one of the eyewitnesses.

And there was something else I wanted to check.

Before a trial, prosecutors have a legal obligation to turn over any documents to the defense that might be relevant to their case.

But it was up to the DA's office to determine what was relevant.

In JJ's case, his lawyers asked the DA's office for copies of all of the police reports, more than 100 of them.

But prosecutors responded with a letter saying they decided to withhold dozens of those reports. They said that they weren't material to JJ's defense.

But I started to wonder.

But if there was something important in those reports, for months, I worked to get my hands on them.

I can't say how I did it without revealing sources, but one day, I finally got them.

It's March 21st, 2017, 15 years after I started this investigation.

And I get home last night and there's this big yellow envelope in my mailbox.

And inside are all of the police reports from JJ's case.

One of those police reports, number 93, felt like a bombshell.

It was an interview that a detective had done with the father of Derry Daniels, JJ's alleged accomplice, the man with the duct tape.

That interview took place the day before JJ's name first came up in the investigation.

According to police report, 93, Daniel's father said his son, Derry, had come over to his apartment the night before the murder.

Derry had a friend with him, someone he owed money to.

The father told the detective he didn't let that friend in.

And he described the friend as a light-skinned black man with braids, the exact description of the shooter many of the eyewitnesses gave police.

The father even said he could identify that friend.

Think about it.

This is the father of JJ's alleged accomplice, saying his son showed up the night before the murder with a man who matched the original description of the shooter.

And the father tells police he can ID the guy.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

The next day, JJ's photo was picked out by Augustus Brown, the key eyewitness.  
But there's no record of anyone ever going back to speak with Derry Daniels' father.  
Not even to check if JJ was that friend.  
I drove over to Sing Sing to tell JJ what I'd found.  
That's seven building, right?  
To the left?  
Yes.  
The guard leads me to JJ's cell.  
He's sitting on his bed.  
I sit across from him.  
So here I am.  
We're cramped in here.  
Wait.  
You're starting to get a feel for it.  
How does it feel for you to be inside of a cell?  
It's small.  
What am I sitting on your toilet, right?  
I'm sitting on my toilet.  
So my knees are touching the bed.  
We can reach both sides just by standing up and reaching across.  
So your latest appeal was denied.  
Yeah.  
Now, I'm not a lawyer.  
And what I'm going to tell you, I don't want you to talk about it on the phone right now.  
I don't want you to talk to anybody else about it until it plays itself out to see what happens.  
But I've seen some of the police reports that we're missing.  
It turns out that I have now seen an interview with Derry Daniels' father.  
That interview was done on the 29th of January, which was two days after the murder.  
In the narrative of the report, the father said that on Monday night at 5 p.m., which  
was 19 hours before the murder or so, that Derry had come over to his apartment with  
a friend that he owed money to.  
And the father described the friend as a light-skinned black man with braids and said he could  
identify  
him.  
Why am I finding this out 20 years later?  
There's no justice in this justice system.  
It's no justice in this justice system.  
I lost 20 years of my life, man.  
What does it matter?  
I got five years left for the sentence that they gave me.  
I'm so numb at this point that I can do it.  
I spent half of my life in prison because people want to hold back information, because  
people want to continue to perpetuate lies.  
I didn't deserve this.

## [Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship

My children didn't deserve this.  
My mother didn't deserve this.  
These people destroyed my life, destroyed my family, and that's time we can't get back.  
My children, my oldest son, is the age that I was when I came to prison.  
He was three years old when I left him.  
My youngest son doesn't even know what it is to wake up to a father.  
He was a month old.  
These people stole my life from me.  
There's nothing that can be done to make this right, even releasing me tomorrow doesn't make it right.  
It'll never hurt any less.  
Do any of them prosecutors ever think about that when they destroy our lives?  
Somebody had this information.  
Why was it withheld?  
This is not a mistake, Dan.  
They know I'm innocent.  
My heart was breaking for JJ.  
What he said was true.  
There was nothing that could change the fact that he spent nearly 20 years in prison.  
But this police report, report 93, could mean a new chance at getting out.  
When JJ's lawyers saw the report, they were outraged it had been withheld.  
To them, it was clear evidence that JJ's constitutional rights had been violated.  
They immediately filed another motion for a hearing.  
And this time, it was granted.  
JJ would finally be back in court.  
Next time.  
Your Honor, it is not too much to ask how in heaven's name was DD593 not turned over?  
How did the people not turn it over to the defense?  
The system that we're up against is, I don't even know how to explain that, man.  
But it's dark, it's ugly, it's disgusting, but it's powerful.  
When I look at my son and I find him to be so strong, I say to him, how do you do that?  
I couldn't do it.  
In my 40 years of service, this is one of the more exciting times in my whole life.  
Why is it so?  
Because I know he doesn't belong here.  
Letters from Sing Sing was written and produced by Preeti Varathon, Rob Allen, and me.  
Our associate producer is Rachel Yon.  
Our story editor is Jennifer Goren.  
Original score by Christopher Scullion, Robert Reel, and Four Elements Music.  
Sound design by Cedric Wilson.  
Fact-checking by Joseph Frischmuth.  
Bryson Barnes is our technical director.  
Preeti Varathon is our supervising producer.  
Soraya Gage, Reed Cherlin, and Alexa Danner are our executive producers.

## **[Transcript] Letters from Sing Sing / Friendship**

Liz Cole runs NBC News Studios.

Special thanks to Sean Gallagher.

Letters from Sing Sing is an NBC News Studios production.

New episodes run every Monday.

See you then.

Hey everybody, it's Savannah Guthrie.

And I'm Hoda Kopian.

We've got some great news to share.

The Today Show is now available wherever you get your podcasts.

Can you believe that?

Right now you can get your daily dose of news and headlines and the day's top interviews from us right here every single morning.

We have what you need to start your day and it's available every day, wherever you get your podcast.

Don't forget to subscribe and follow today to start listening.