



OFFICE OF DARRELL BENNETT

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January 26, 2021 – Four years ago, I sat in an American federal prison with 3.3 million other Americans, and I watched in disbelief as a man who had demonized Muslims, Hispanics, “the blacks,” the LGBTQ community, immigrants, women, and pretty much anyone who did not look like him, became President of the United States. I watched from the inside, as federal prosecutors, *at the direction of his Justice Department*, pushed for harsher sentences, particularly for individuals who were poor, black, or Hispanic. I watched many people denied when petitioning the court for leniency — some who had already served decade-long sentences for low-level drug offenses — as the new administration touted “law and order.”

Then, I watched, when the tables were turned, that same “Law and Order” President spring his own friends free from the same prisons I had been confined in *along with millions of other people who are still there today*. I watched the same federal judges, who made their careers and reputations by thundering down lengthy sentences from the bench, while pontificating on Puritanical values, suddenly lose their voice *and memory* when the cause of justice meant speaking up against the wealthy and powerful. I watched a man with a proven history of egregious sexual predatory behavior appointed to the highest court in the land when literally hundreds of thousands of people, again mainly poor, black and Hispanic, *and increasingly young individuals*, are being convicted and labeled as “sexual offenders” for activity that occurred on a social media account.

I watched the children of immigrants put in cages while the children of the wealthy were buying their way into the Ivy League. I watched black men shot down like dogs in the street while white men with clubs and bats paraded through the Capitol.

Then, I thought about my own role in all this. If I stay silent, now, with so much at stake, what does that say about me? I remembered Mordecai’s words and considered that maybe, just maybe, I was born for such a time as this. Therefore, in the coming weeks, my office will be announcing a series of bold actions we are taking, along with our partner organizations, to help America to live up to its promise and to call on the US government to end its *unlawful and unethical war of force against black and brown people*.

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