

# Eskimo Prison Inmate Appeals for Fairness

Box No. 1000  
Steilacoom, Wash. 98388  
July 13, 1967

Dear Mr. Rock:

I shall certainly be honored if you will give this letter your serious consideration and interpret it as a call for assistance.

First of all, I am writing to you because I have witnessed many problems among our people that you have generously helped solved and secondly, because you are a competent leader and possess a strong and serious concern for those of your people. Thirdly, I am confident that you might find time to organize a group, or a department of some type, to help people to get back on their feet and remain standing proudly and without shame.

Rehabilitation—that word covers a broad meaning and there are many pathways leading to becoming a product of such a word.

I am a convict in the eyes of the law and confined in the penitentiary. I have been convicted in 1966 and remained in custody since June 30, 1965, which gave me much time to think things out. I shall admit that I had not been a model prisoner for the first year but as of now, I have come to accept the things at hand. I have also been in and out of jails for the past ten years, mostly because I had much false pride and lack of confidence in myself and those of my immediate surroundings. Lack of job had a lot to do with my being in jail also, however, I am now aware that character defect had been one of the main contributing factors for being in and out of jails.

As I look back, many times I try and find what went wrong. One thing sticks out that I found was that the first few weeks after release from custody are the most critical points.

If an ex-convict does not find a job in three weeks, chances are that although his intentions were good just prior to his release, his chances of returning to custody become more likely. Why? Because when he could not find work, he loses confidence and feels unwanted.

For people like myself, and no doubt there are many others like me, to have and hold a job must exist. It is important to keep in mind that a person who had been confined in custody must be shown that he is welcome to today's society and that his life is precious too as all other human beings. If a person who, after being released from custody is shown that his life is something of value and given a chance to work, chances are that that person shall never have to go behind bars again.

I also want to point out that when a person is released from custody, his mental stability is near minimum, but if he is shown the right treatment, he shall certainly become more stable as time goes by with the knowledge that persons on the outside do care.

I believe that too many times a person like myself is shown sympathy without doing something that may help him to regain his mental stability and dignity.

Having a job upon release is truly one of the main factors towards one's road to rehabilitation and a happier life. I admit that cooperation and willingness on the person himself has a contributing factor but his willingness, and if he is serious, should be bolstered by showing him that he is a fellow human being and he is welcome to be one of today's society.

I have not had a bright future and I shall be quick to admit that most of it was due to my character defects, but I want to belong and seriously want to live a more pleasant life.

With a job and with people like yourself behind me, I know I can make it and honor your faith in me constantly.

Sincerely,  
Vernon Kugzruk

## Letters to the Editor

*(Editor's Note: When Harold Riach was in Fairbanks visiting Tundra Times and the Alaska 67' his sisters, Jenny and Margaret, took over Harold's newspaper route.)*

Dear Editor:

It was raining when Jenny and I were selling newspapers. We had a lot of fun when we were selling newspapers.

One lady said that she was very proud of Harold, and we are proud of him too. My sister Jenny was knocking at the doors and I would do the talking. We sold all the papers except 5 that we know some tourists will buy tomorrow when the Princess Patricia tour boat comes here.

On 4th of July my sister and little brother were on their trikes that were decorated. I was wearing a Korean dress and my other brother was dressed like a U.S. Army man. He won a prize for dressing so good. We wonder if Harold went to Anchorage on the fourth of July.

Here is the money for the papers. My mom wrote you a check for \$8. Jenny and I like to go to all the people's houses and sell papers and talk to them. It was fun.

Can my brother Harold come home soon?

Sincerely,  
Jenny and Margaret Riach

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