

February 6, 2010

Greetings to everyone,

34 years. It doesn't even sound like a real number to me. Not when one really thinks about being in a jail cell for that long. All these years and I swear, I still think sometimes I'll wake up from this nightmare in my own bed, in my own home, with my family in the next room. I would never have imagined such a thing. Surely the only place people are unjustly imprisoned for 34 years is in far away lands, books or fairy tales.

It's been that long since I woke up when I needed to, worked where I wanted to, loved who I was supposed to love, or did what I was compelled to do. It's been that long-long enough to see my children have grandchildren. Long enough to have many of my friends and loved ones die in the course of a normal life, while I was here unable to know them in their final days.

So often in my daily life, the thought creeps in-"I don't deserve this". It lingers like acid in my mouth. But I have to push those types of thoughts away. I made a commitment long ago, many of us did. Some didn't live up to their commitments, and some of us didn't have a choice. Joe Stuntz didn't have a choice. Neither did Buddy Lamont. I never thought my commitment would mean sacrificing like this, but I was willing to do so nonetheless. And really, if necessary, I'd do it all over again, because it was the right thing to do. We didn't go to ceremony and say "I'll fight for the people as long as it doesn't cost too much". We prayed, and we gave. Like I say, some of us didn't have a choice. Our only other option was to run away, and we couldn't even do that. Back then, we had no where left to run to.

I have cried so many tears over these three plus decades. Like the many families directly affected by this whole series of events, my family's tears have not been in short supply. Our tears have joined all the tears from over 500 years of oppression. Together our tears come together and form a giant river of suffering and I hope, cleansing. Injustice is never final, I keep telling myself. I pray this is true for all of

us.

To those who know I am innocent, thank you for your faith. And I hope you continue working for my release. That is, to work towards truth and justice. To those who think me guilty, I ask you to believe in and work for the rule of law. Even the law says I should be free by now, regardless of guilt. What has happened to me isn't justice, it isn't the law, it isn't fair, it isn't right. This has been a long battle in an even longer war. But we have to remain vigilant, as we have a righteous cause. After all this time, I can only ask this: Don't give up. Not ever. Stay in this fight with me. Suffer with me. Grieve with me. Endure with me. Believe with me. Outlast with me. And one day, celebrate freedom with me. Hoka hey!

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,

Leonard Peltier