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African Americans and the African world.

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Ghosts of Iraq Sentencing Statement By David Swanson BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator

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Prepared for this coming Monday in Washington, D.C.:

Your Honor, my name is Eve Tetaz. I am 77 years old, and have spent several decades teaching in inner city secondary schools in Washington, DC. Since my retirement, I have been involved with Life Pathways, a non-profit organization that I founded over 15 years ago. We help low income single parents acquire basic life skills necessary for obtaining and maintaining employment.

Your Honor, I do not question the process by which a jury of my peers has found me guilty of unlawful conduct. I do wish, however, to talk about the personal costs of doing justice which I am willing to assume. I remember discussing Henry Thoreau's essay on 'Civil Disobedience' with my 11th grade class during the Viet Nam War. Thoreau believed that when our leaders cease to reflect the core principles upon which our nation was founded we, the people, have the right and the obligation to voice our opposition and demand that our leaders admit their failures and advocate for policies that truly reflect democratic principles. He concluded that when the government acts unjustly, the only proper place for the just person was jail.

On March 12, 2008 during a debate on the 2009 budget, I was part of a group of ten citizens who called upon a Senate Committee to address our concerns over the continued funding of the Iraq war. Prior to the March 12th action, I had expressed my

opposition to the war and other unjust policies sanctioned by our Government, by writing letters, sending e-mails, visiting Congressional offices, vigiling, and participating in protests which, on two occasions, led to my incarceration, but I was never granted the opportunity to make my grievances known to those responsible for these policies.

I belong to a faith community that is committed to the peaceful, non-violent opposition to all forms of injustice. This translates into the belief that I must share in the cost of doing justice by accepting the responsibility of making sure that my elected leaders who speak in my name, do not misrepresent me by supporting policies that violate moral law which takes precedent over laws made by governments. Since 2005, I have been arrested, held overnight for arraignment, convicted and incarcerated for advocating the end of torture and the closing down of Guantanamo and other secret prisons, the restoration of habeas corpus to Guantanamo detainees, the repeal of the Military Commissions Act, and the cutting off of funding for the illegal occupation of Iraq and the war in Afghanistan. I have been arrested in front of the White House, the Supreme Court, the Rayburn Building, and the Hart Building, and on the grounds of the Capitol. We were also arrested in Congresswoman Pelosi and Senator McCain's office, respectively, and I was arrested while attempting to deliver a letter to Senator Clinton. Some of us have been arrested for praying outside of the 'free speech' zone of the Pentagon.

In every instance, we were peaceful, non violent, and respectful. We were demonstrating our grief and horror over the illegal and immoral actions of a government that lied repeatedly under the pretext of protecting us against terrorism. As a morally responsible individual, I believe that I must be held accountable for crimes committed by our leaders who, having been democratically elected , act in my name. When my country engages in a preemptive illegal, and immoral war – a war that has been condemned by the international law and the highest religious authorities, I must say NO, NOT IN MY NAME. When, it sets up a detention facility in Guantanamo, I am obliged to say NO, NOT IN MY NAME. When it kidnaps people off the streets in countries around the world, and transports them to torture facilities in secret locations, I am compelled to say NO, NOT IN MY NAME.

I will continue to maintain my right to speak out against these crimes against justice regardless of the cost. It is my hope that you and all those present will join me in praying for the day when nations will turn their swords into plowshares, and study war no more.

Thank you.

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
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BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator, David Swanson, is co-founder of the [AfterDowningStreet.org](#) coalition and a board member of [Progressive Democrats of America](#). His website is [www.davidswanson.org](#). Click [here](#) to contact Mr. Swanson.

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