

Out of Sight; Out of Mind

By Linda Kennedy

Homemade waffles with blackberries from the garden. Taking a drive to visit a friend. Going to the grocery store. Evening walks with the dog. Most of us are able to take these little things for granted. In fact, we make hundreds of decisions everyday without giving them much thought. Now imagine not being allowed to make even these small choices. Imagine what you eat, whom you see, what you wear, and every movement of your existence monitored by armed guards. Such is life at the Nebraska State Penitentiary; and such is life for Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa.

The two were convicted in the suitcase bombing murder of Omaha Police Department Officer Larry Minard, and sentenced to life in prison in 1971. Both maintain they are innocent of the crime. They believe they were framed for the murder because of their political activism and community organizing. The two were former Black Panther Party members and part of the National Committee to Combat Fascism.

It was 44 years ago this week that Mondo surrendered to police. That was the beginning of the end of choice. No finishing Creighton University, no getting that first job after graduation, no deciding on a future. Instead, creating a future within a tiny box, making it as big as possible.

There are many people working to free Mondo and Ed and yet, it is easy for most to forget about the small choices the two of them cannot make. There are no homemade waffles or fried chicken dinners with friends, no Labor Day barbecues. In fact, since we rarely hear about them and never see them, it may be easy to forget Mondo and Ed altogether.

Blame the media-driven world, which shifts importance from crisis to crisis never lingering, and always forgetting the current catastrophe when the next one comes along. For example: What's happening in Katrina-ravaged New Orleans? Have you heard anything about the earthquake victims in Haiti lately? What about the Malaysian plane that fell from the sky and disappeared? How about those kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls? Any word on the Korean ferry disaster? As Mondo quips, "If news breaks, why don't they fix it?"

Major media do not do a good job with follow-up. Broadcast media especially move from headline to headline. So if we aren't seeing it on television everyday, it's easy to forget: Out of sight, out of mind. Media often encourage us to live our lives looking through the lens of that staccato world, bouncing from thing to thing without pause or reflection.

Follow up. Don't take for granted the choices you can make. Please take time to remember.

Mondo's Attorney, Timothy L. Ashford, filed an appeal on his behalf with the Nebraska Supreme Court citing ineffective assistance of counsel at the trial. In 2009, Ed Poindexter's attorney, Robert Bartle, filed an appeal, which was not granted. The Attorney General has until September 8th to respond to this latest appeal.

Write to Mondo and Ed:

W. M. E. we Langa
27768
Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68542-2500

Ed Poindexter
27767
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68542-2500