

# FREE TO BE

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HOTLINE'S ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

THIS IS A SPECIAL EDITION OF  
"FREE TO BE"

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1977 • **FREE**

## Cruel (And Usual) Punishment

# "Free Ray Fulgham Now!"

This special edition of FREE TO BE deals with the struggle of one individual against the system - Ray Charles Fulgham.

On Thanksgiving Day, 1971, Ray was walking down the street near his home in Flint's inner city. A white man drove up beside him and asked him where he could find a black prostitute.

After a brief conversation Ray was offended by this man's attitude toward young black women and the presumption that Ray was a pimp.

Ray pulled out a toy BB pistol and told the man that, as an act of political defiance, he was going to take his wallet.

Ray was later caught and convicted. Although this was his first criminal offense, 17 year old Ray Fulgham was sentenced by Judge Donald Freeman to 12-15 years in prison - a sentence far more severe than any first offender receives.

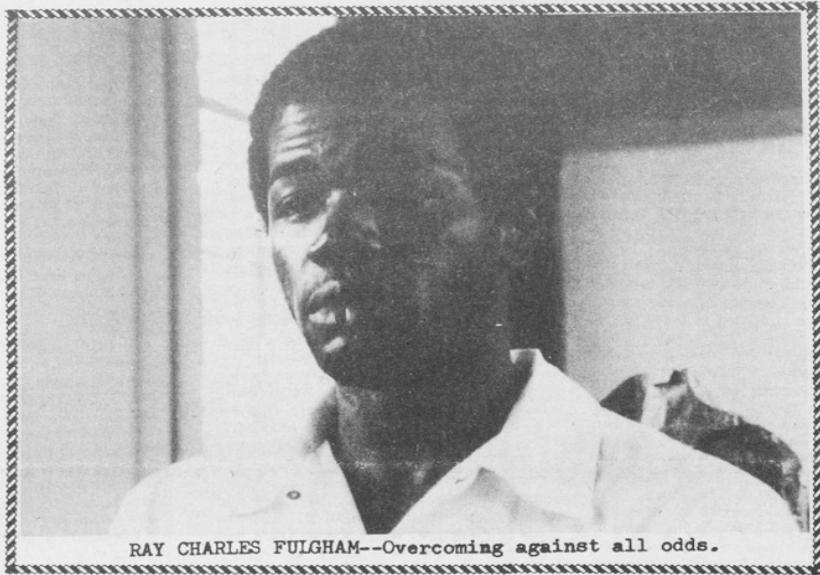
Upon entering prison, Ray was declared "culturally retarded...94 IQ...functional illiterate...equivalent of a sixth grade education...has delusions of grandeur (he spoke of obtaining his PhD someday)."

Ray overcame those labels and all other attempts to break his will and spirit. While in prison he has graduated from high school, graduated on the Dean's list from Montcalm Community College, has read over 1,000 books, is writing his own book, has written columns for the State News, the Hill Top News, has been the subject of a half-hour documentary, and has been contacted by CBS's "60 Minutes". Delusions of grandeur.

Over the past year prison officials have twice recommended to Judge Freeman that he grant Ray a special parole. Twice Judge Freeman has refused.

Ray Charles Fulgham throughout the past six years has rehabilitated himself and no longer belongs in prison.

We at the Hotline Center are extremely concerned about his



RAY CHARLES FULGHAM--Overcoming against all odds.

plight. We feel that Ray exemplifies the failure of our criminal justice system and, in his words, "proves that the theory of 'rehabilitation' is a fraud and a cheap joke."

Please read carefully what Ray and his supporters have to

say on the following pages, especially the column by Alan McLeese on page two.

If you, too, feel some compassion and concern for the life of one individual, then contact the Hotline and together we can help Ray obtain his freedom.

## Hotline, NAACP, ACLU Support Ray

A coalition of Flint area groups and individuals has been formed to fight for the release of Ray Charles Fulgham.

Coordinated by the Hotline Center, the coalition includes the Flint branches of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Flint U of M Black Student Union, the Burton Progressive Democratic Club, George Moss, education editor of the Flint Spokesman, Flint activist Sam Riddle, the Fulgham family and many other individuals.

Harold Ford, chairperson of the Flint ACLU, states that Ray's sentence "is excessive and cruel and is in no way similar to the sentences handed down to other juvenile first offenders. This discriminatory action to deny Ray his freedom is a concern for

all civil libertarians."

Edgar Holt, longtime organizer with the Flint NAACP, notes that "Ray's situation is not an exaggerated case but rather systematic of a pattern that needs to be changed."

"A new crisis is developing with our prisons being full of people who have no business being there."

Michael Moore, director of the Hotline Center, says that "Ray is an intelligent, dynamic, compassionate individual who has the ability to organize people into action."

"This is both his strength and his downfall - for those in authority recognize that ability and will do everything in their power to silence it."

The coalition is planning a community-wide drive to educate people about the case of Ray Fulgham and encourage others to take action toward his release.

"Free To Be" is a Hotline, Inc. publication. We invite readers' comments, criticisms and support. Our address is 5005 Lapeer Rd., Burton, Michigan 48509.

Call us at 742-1230 if you wish to receive the paper, free of charge, or for information about advertising.

Circulation this issue: 10,000.