Your Name

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Question: What has Robert Lipscomb sentenced to prison for? How did that compare to other people found guilty of the same crime?

Answer: Robert Lipscomb was sentenced to prison for 25 years for possessing and selling 17 fake twenty dollar bills worth $340 that was found at that time. He bought 50 fake bills and only 17 of those were left at the time of his arrest. He was also accused of purchasing automobiles using fake checks and he was also charged with transporting women from Chicago to Cleveland for immoral purposes. Robert writes in his letter to director Bureau of Prisons that he was shocked when he met and read about other counterfeiters who were involved on national and international level. Their punishment ranged from probation to only 10 years. According to Robert, such difference between the punishments of the same crime with less severity is a representation of racial persecution rather than judicial persecution. He was denied of a Parole upon his arrival in leaven worth, but apart from him, all other detainers are now free.

Question: What ideas did Lipscomb harbor?

Answer: Lipscomb was regarded to possess excellent intelligence and writing skills, but he was also regarded as prone to anxiety and depression. He also educated black inmates to act against racial discrimination within the prison system. Even the committee in their impression of him in special progress report believed that this man is one of the finest writer’s in the institution. Using his strong writing and with the help of other inmates, he continued his efforts to obtain funds to use for court and attorney fee. According to the cell house supervisor, Robert was an egotistical individual who fancied himself as a good jail house lawyer. At the time of racial activeness and ethnic equality movements, Robert was a social activist among inmates in order to act against discrimination and prejudice.

Question: Who found those ideas dangerous?

Answer: Mr. D Berman of the subcommittee on constitutional rights had some concern over integration, the idea of which was imitated by Robert Lipscomb. According to him, some southern white Klansman who are considered as white supremacist group had sworn blood oaths to kill him for his civil rights actions (*1961 Lipscomb Letter to Director of Bureau of Prisons*). Robert believed that under normal circumstances, it was not an issue but even some officers were southerners by birth and beliefs. Those guards and inmates had a fair understanding with each other and were dangerous for Robert. Once in a protest against racial discrimination, Robert injured his leg and the same day a white supremacist guard kicked him in his back. Then in his report, he said that Robert fell from the stairs due to his injured leg. He feared that the severity of these cases might increase and get him in trouble.

Question: What does the incarceration tells us about the political nature of the incarceration?

 Answer: Robert Lipscomb incarceration is a reflection of social behavior at that time. Racial discrimination was at its peak and was present in every field and aspect of life, whether it was cinema, sports, justice system or any other professional or institutional matter. The incarceration of Robert Lipscomb tells us about the political racial discrimination that was a common practice at that time. The implications of some laws that were legal in colonial era were still in place until mid-19th century. Black people were subjected to physical assault and lynching practices at that time because they were considered unequal to white people. Black people were considered less of a human being because of their cultural and social backgrounds. Racism was not about just the color of one’s skin, it was about power relation and control over other people.

**Work Cited**

*1961 Lipscomb Letter to Director of Bureau of Prisons.*

*Special Progress Report Alcatraz 1955-62*