

September 30, 2022

Baker County Detention Center
1 Sheriff Office Drive
Macclenny Fl, 32063

“ GOD DID NOT BRING ME THIS FAR TO LEAVE ME NOW. “

To whom this may concern,

My name is Hyacinth Marlene Bailey. I am a mother of five, a grandmother of seven and I am originally from Kingston Jamaica. I am sixty years old. I left Jamaica and moved to the United States in 1986. I moved to the United States for a better life and to get away from the abuse I was facing back in Jamaica. The abuse I went through was both physical and mental abuse. I made a mistake many years ago, which I am still getting punished for.

I was deported back to Jamaica many years ago and was taken away from my children, resulting in me not being able to raise my own children. After losing my first child and having to send for her body to Jamaica made me risk my life to cross the American borders to be with my children because I refuse to suffer the trauma of burying another child. All my children are in the United States, I could have raised them in Jamaica, but as every mother, I wanted the best for my children. I was not going to risk my children's lives and have them grow up in a country I was trying to run away from. I was not going to let my children suffer the abuse I suffered in Jamaica. As mentioned, I have gone through the Immigration System for the same mistake many years ago; however, this time I am fighting with all my might to be with my children and grandchildren again.

I came into Immigration Customs Enforcement custody with a broken back and many more illnesses, such as sickle cell, hypertension, high cholesterol, pre-diabetic, and much more illnesses. I have been detained for approximately six months and all I have experienced was medical negligence, worn used clothing with blood stains, eaten undercooked meals and most importantly suffered disrespect from the staff. For the six months I have been in ICE custody I can count on one hand how many times I ate the food provided for me.


I am a survivor and victim of rape. Although I was raped many times, years ago, I still feel as though it was just yesterday. In May 2022, I became a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) victim from one of the ICE deportations officers while in Baker County Detention Center custody which advertises, “ZERO TOLERANCE for sexual abuse or assault”. I faced retaliation for speaking out and was even called a liar. In September one of the sergeants entered the cell I am assigned to with another detainee without announcing himself and all I saw when I opened my eyes was the sergeant holding a cell phone in his hands taken pictures in a selfie angle. At this point I concluded that maybe the ICE officer felt as though it was okay to watch me use the toilet because we detainees are being watched everyday from staff from the control room anyhow. When these incidents occurred, I started to think about all the rapes I experienced in Jamaica. I really wanted to give up, but I kept praying and kept reciting, “God did not bring me this far to leave me now”.

Being the oldest detainee in the dorm, I am always trying to motivate the younger ladies even though I am breaking down inside myself each day. When I am alone, I cry to myself, and I used to look at my back brace which was taken away from me for no reason and ask God is all this worth it? Am I worth it? Why am I going through all this pain? When will I ever be genuinely happy and be able to be with my family again? I cry to myself because only God knows how much pain in my body I am going through, but my voice is silenced because I know that nobody cares.

For the six months I have been at Baker County Detention Center, I have seen about five detainees get a third chance for new crimes, then I look at long timers seeking a second chance get denied, turned away and most importantly separated from their family, which leaves me hopeless. All I am seeking is mercy and a fair second chance to raise my grandchildren and see my children again. Being sixty years old and having officers who could have been my children or even my grandchildren scream at me and slam a door in my face is mentally killing my already weakened and fragile body.

I am afraid to have this letter read by many people because I know that there will be many worse retaliations such as trying to quickly deport me and treating me worse. However, If I am going to lose my life in this place due to my weak immune system, at least I can try to bring justice for the other detainees. But honestly, I really want the ICE authorities to answer this one question for me. Who run away from good?

Thank you for taking the time to read out my cry for help.

Sincerely, 

Hyacinth Marlene Bailey