

Hello my name is Dion Evans. I celebrate 18 months free on February 20, 2026, after being one of the 18,000 or so inmates released from prison each year after doing 18 years for two burglaries of unoccupied structures in Circleville, Ohio.

I was a 25 year old child in adult clothes, who had just come home 13 months prior in 2005 after doing 2 years for one burglary of an unoccupied structure in Franklin County. Over 20 years of my adult life was spent behind bars and I remember Judge Johnson asking me before he sentenced me, What happened? I didn't understand why then, had an honor grad from Heritage Christian Academy in 1999 with no juvenile record, and was given a scholarship to college while I was still in the 8th grade. A mother and father in my life even though they were not together, but they were there. Signed up for Bible College in Texas and signed up for the Marines on the buddy system.

Today at age 44 yrs old, I would say that what happened, I was assaulted the day before I was to leave to go take the Azvac test and would have been sent right off to Paris Island to boot camp. I hit my head on a table and was put in a two coma, because I experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury. My recruiter told my mother that I would have to wait a year to go to the Marines because of the head injury. During that year life changed, I changed and I could not explain it. Now after years of studying the brain and myself. I understand that I changed internally and went backwards for some years, but in 2006 I was rescued the day that I was arrested.

I was given a 30 year sentence, with 20 years 2 months behind bars and 10 years of a license suspension once I was released from prison. While in prison I began to find myself, I didn't agree with the sentence, so the first job that I got in prison was in the Law Library at Lucasville Correctional Institution. I began to challenge my sentences and myself.

I went to 10 different prisons seeking programming and education as my security changed and opportunities opened up to be a part of different classes. I became one of the most accomplished inmates in the State Of Ohio with almost 250 Certificates, 6 Certifications, and 4 License. Which included a H/VAC Apprenticeship, 16 hours away from my Associates Degree in Business and my ParaLegal License from BlackStone, and I won my own appeal after being denied 9 times. I got out two years early because of God and hard work. I read over 2000 non-fiction books, was in 10 plays, 3 documentaries, 8 choirs in which one of those choirs we did sign language as Christian music played through the speakers. I wrote a speech that was published in the YellowSprings newspaper in February of 2020, and I had written a small paragraph that Senator Rod Portman read at his fundraiser for the Second Chance Act in 2023, that was submitted while I was in the Prison Fellowship program at Grafton Correctional Inst.

I was released in February of 2024 to the Alvis house on Alum Creek. Dr to finish out the last six months of my sentence and instead of running to apply for jobs. I believed that building a foundation to stand upon since I didn't have work history to speak about. I wanted to give companies a reason to give me a chance. I began to go to every organization that was coming into the prisons and saying that they would help us once we got out to reaccumulate back into society.

I set a goal years ago to become one of the most accomplished ex-inmates or restored citizens in Ohio. Within three weeks of being in the halfway house, I had obtained my OSHA 30, Forklift license, ServSafe and Flagggers Certifications. I opened up a Motivational Speaker Company, and had already spoken at the State House 61 days after I had gotten out of prison

while still in the halfway house. Had spoken in Finley, Ohio at a Ridge Project fundraiser while I was still in the halfway house. I networked and created many contacts while I was in the halfway house to get me ready for once I was home.

I was released on August 18, 2024 and on August 19, I was at an interview at Illuminate USA, because my uncle Danny Crease who owns Executive Styling in Whitehall. I started at this job after having a great interview in which I let them know that I had felonies at \$26.00 dollars an hour. I worked there for three months and they let me leave for two months to go get my CDL's because I had applied for a grant through Ohio Means Jobs months before I got the job. Once I was done with that, I was let come back to my job at Illuminate USA and start back right where I was at.

Since then I have gotten promoted to the maintenance department making \$33.50 an hour, and opened up a Corporation called The PathMakers Company, Inc. Still building my LLC called Motivators In Action, LLC, I wrote a book called The GreenPrint-From Confinement to Refinement. Spoken in multiple places across Ohio, invested in stock, bitcoin, opened a life insurance policy and a business insurance policy. I invested 10 percent into my 401 (k) and was able to move into my first house with my name on the lease. I have been a teacher at my church Life Vineyard, helping to facilitate a class that I took twice in prison. I've been put in 4 different newsletters as Ohio's Success story in some of those organizations that I went to for help.

In conclusion, I have many more things that I could speak upon, but I just wanted to tell you all about a man that found rehabilitation in prison, because of education and I am applying that knowledge out here, but collateral sanctions have affected me but I choose not to accept any excuses. Senate Bill 143, takes excuses away from felons and gives us an opportunity to be judged on our merit or skills, rather than on our last past bad decision. I always say that when a person commits a crime and goes to jail, they lose their freedom, not their education! Many people in prison will come home one day, and if they become my neighbor in Reynoldsburg, then I hope that they have a job, instead of a collateral sanction to try to excuse bad behavior.