

## **Bio for Johnny Perez**



Johnny Perez is a non-attorney mental health advocate for the Urban Justice Center's Mental Health Project, a law firm providing pro-bono legal representation to underserved populations affected by social justice issues.

When he is not advocating on behalf of New York's most vulnerable populations, Mr. Perez works to change the status quo of unjust policies and practices as a member of pro-social groups including the Jails Action Coalition, the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC), and the New York Reentry Education Network. Johnny is also a member of the Bar Association's Correction and Reentry Committee.

Drawing on the wisdom of thirteen years of direct involvement with the criminal justice system, Johnny has testified at the NY Advisory Committee to The US Civil Rights Commission about the inhumane treatment of teenagers in solitary confinement in state prisons and city jails. He is a sought after speaker having been invited to speak at Cornell law, Fordham University, Amnesty International, Princeton University, and at the American Justice Summit where he discussed the cycle of incarceration with Nightline News anchor Ju Ju Chang.

In addition to recently becoming a 2015 Opportunity Agenda Fellow. Johnny will be speaking at the upcoming Amnesty International conference in Boston November 7<sup>th</sup>. Johnny expects to complete his Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice at St. Francis

College while also completing his first nonfiction book: Prison: *The Upside Down Kingdom* (working title). Connect with him via <http://mrjohnnyperez.weebly.com>

You can also connect with him on LinkedIn or Facebook:

<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/johnny-perez/95/503/202/>

<http://facebook.com/mrjohnnyperez>

### Television Appearances

- Featured on Al Jazeera America for his educational journey and the importance of education for formerly incarcerated people reentering society. <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/live-news/2015/7/college-courses-for-inmates-provide-second-chance.html>
- Appeared in *Breaking Down the Box*, a documentary by the New York Religious Campaign Against Torture outlining the collateral consequences of solitary confinement: <https://vimeo.com/129764024>
- Shared experiences and insights for Black males committed to obtaining a college degree. The event was produced by Learning Gateway as part of their Real Men Graduate Initiative, and streamed live. See: <https://youtu.be/6jtxlszLraw>
- Discussed the effects of solitary confinement on mental illness on an International Criminal Justice Panel for the Unitarian Universalist Association held at the United Nations: <http://t.co/PUZC2iBXby>
- Discussed the cycle of incarceration with Nightline co-anchor Ju Ju Chang at the 2014 American Justice Summit held at John Jay School of Criminal Justice. See the interview: <http://youtu.be/5jVLI72JZns>
- Appeared on BK Live discussing the inhumane treatment of solitary confinement: <https://vimeo.com/103173491>
- Talking Transition speech on the importance of higher education's role for the formerly incarcerated, included propositions for New York Mayor-Elect Mr. DeBlasio & his transition team. To see event go to: <http://educatedontincarcerate.splashthat.com/>  
Or fast forward 42:00

- NY1 News feature on the state of solitary confinement on Rikers Island. See the segment here:  
<https://onedrive.live.com/edir?resid=EA99714A3A1924F0!5412&authkey=!ALYTvNgx4qSuJL8&ithint=video%2cmp4>

### **Awards**

- Won the Recognize the Real Award for contributions to the community and furthering the rights of formerly incarcerated people. Go To:  
<http://recognizethereal.info/>
- Recently won the 2014 Victor Hassine Memorial Essay competition for a written essay on the transformative power of education. The Competition is held once a year by College Initiative, a community based organization that aids formerly incarcerated persons complete their education. Go to:  
[http://www.collegeinitiative.org/ci2/services/victor\\_hassine\\_essay\\_prize\\_1/](http://www.collegeinitiative.org/ci2/services/victor_hassine_essay_prize_1/)

### **Featured Articles**

- Highlighted in a recent article by solitary watch. Go to:  
<http://solitarywatch.com/2014/07/14/teens-isolation-state-advisory-committee-u-s-human-rights-commission-holds-briefing-juvenile-solitary-confinement-new-york/#more-13137>
- Educated the public on human violations on Rikers Island in the following article:  
[Abuses at Rikers Island: Officials and Advocates Call for End to Solitary Confinement and Officer Violence](#)
- Highlighted in an article about teenage confinement at Rikers:  
<http://www.wagingnonviolence.org/feature/beyond-reports-formerly-incarcerated-people-speak-rikers/>

### **Internet Specific**

- Discussed problems with Urban Policing at St. Francis College, and presented possible solutions. Go to: <http://www.crimcast.tv/crimcast/2015/10/7/in-my-neighborhood-first-hand-stories-of-police-interactions>
- Featured on the Office of the Appellate Defender (OAD) website. A law firm specializing in criminal appeals. I was highlighted as a success story for their Social Work Program. Go to:  
[http://www.appellatedefender.org/SocialWork\\_Success.html](http://www.appellatedefender.org/SocialWork_Success.html)

- Appeared on the popular online news outlet the Gothamist highlighting the injustice surrounding Bradley Ballard's homicide on Rikers Island. Go to: [http://www.gothamist.com/2014/06/27/bronx\\_protesters\\_demand\\_justice\\_for.php](http://www.gothamist.com/2014/06/27/bronx_protesters_demand_justice_for.php)
- Featured in a photo project raising awareness about Mass Incarceration for the CUNY School of Journalism. The photos were posted on the popular social media site Instagram. See them here: <http://instagram.com/everydayincarceration>

### **Association/Membership**

- New York City Bar Association: Corrections and Reentry Committee  
Voluntary association of attorneys and law students advocating for better prison conditions and for the protection of rights for people in reentry.
- Jails Action Coalition  
A coalition of activists that includes the formerly incarcerated, currently incarcerated, family members and other community members working to promote human rights, dignity and safety for people in New York City jails.
- Campaign Against Long-Term Isolated Confinement  
CAIC brings together advocates, formerly incarcerated persons, family members of currently incarcerated people, concerned community members, lawyers, and individuals in the human rights, health, and faith communities throughout New York State. We invite individuals and organizations to join the campaign's ongoing efforts.

### **Consulting**

- Consulted on a public service announcement for Human Pictures highlighting the many challenges former prisoners go through upon reentering society.  
<https://vimeo.com/121718382>