



HANDOUT FOUR: **ALL CHILDREN ARE CHILDREN THREAD, INTERVIEW ARCHIVE**

Directions: Underline key phrases and new details as you watch and listen to the interviews.

SIA SANNEH

We have a successful victory at the Supreme Court in 2010 and then a few years later in the Miller versus Alabama case. I think in some offices, the reaction is just celebration and cake, and Bryan's response is yes, celebration, thrilled that we won the case, but the meeting on that day, the same day we win the case is about what we're going to do to make that case a reality for the people we represent. Reminding all of us that we haven't done anything yet. We've just given ourselves a tool. We have an idea that if we use it properly, we can help change the way that people see kids and also help some of our kids leave prison, but that's up to us. We now have a new challenge to take on, and I think that's a very Bryan Stevenson-esque way of thinking about victory and success that is unusual but is really helpful and really important.

After we had the success in the Supreme Court, the question for us was okay, what are we going to do for some of these clients? We spent a lot of time working with kids who had just been sentenced who were quite young, but also in what can we do for people who've been in as young people and have spent decades in prison? That population is so incredible. I mean, I've stood in court and had the privilege of saying to a judge, "These are people who were told they had a hopeless sentence. They were told they would die in prison. They had no hope of ever being in the situation they're in today, which is arguing to a parole board or to a court, that they should be allowed to leave prison, and yet they did tremendous things. They changed their lives. They founded a hospice group at the prison. They counseled each other through addiction. They taught themselves how to read. They saved the lives of correctional officers. They did amazing things for their family outside of prison." There's just nothing that I've seen that is more affirming of how even in the most challenging of situations people can change their lives. It's true change. It's not change because you think it's what you need to do to get a better result.

These guys had no chance, no hope, and yet they miraculously transformed their lives, and they did that, some of them, in prison environments that were violent and horrific and where everything around them told them that their life didn't matter, that they had no value, that they weren't human, and yet they did all of these things. One of the honors of my life has been standing up in court and representing these guys and saying to the courts, to the decision makers, "This is the embodiment of what we were talking about in these cases when we said kids have the capacity for change, for transformation and you cannot write off a child at 14, 15, 16. You don't know who that human being will become." It's remarkable what some of these guys have done with their lives, and what some of them have continued to do, having left prison. It's just, it really - it's incredibly humbling, I think to see that.