

F R E E

Antonio Bascaro

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End LIFE SENTENCES
for Marijuana

Meet the nation's longest serving marijuana prisoner, Antonio Bascaro, who has served over 35 years behind bars for a marijuana conspiracy offense. A former Cuban naval pilot who participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion, Bascaro fled Castro's Cuba shortly thereafter. Now in his 80s, Antonio will be eligible for release in the summer of 2019, but his daughter Aicha, who lost her father to prison when she was 12 years old, fears that may be too late. The octogenarian grandfather is in poor health and suffers from severe back problems, glaucoma, and other ailments. Back surgery left him confined to a wheelchair for a period of time, but with the help of a walker he is slowly starting to get back on his feet.

Antonio's "crime" involved no violence and no drugs aside from marijuana and his part in it was that of a minor player. He had no prior convictions. Everyone involved in his case, including the true kingpin who ran the operation that used Cuban fishing boats to smuggle marijuana, have long been released. The only reason Antonio received such a harsh sentence is that he refused to "cooperate" and testify against others. Antonio Bascaro, who has been a model prisoner, is the only person from this case who remains behind bars.

In one of the most ironic, cruel and downright nonsensical twists of fate ever, the fact that his case is so old and he has been incarcerated for so long disqualifies Antonio Bascaro from any of the sentencing reduction and compassionate release programs recently put into place. Those who wrote the laws failed to take into account the possibility of inmates who have been warehoused away as long as Antonio. So while others might get Compassionate Release or a reduction in sentence, this nonviolent, first time marijuana offender must serve out his entire sentence (which will be over 39 years, if he makes it that long).

Nonetheless, Antonio's family and supporters are lobbying for the President to grant him clemency, so he can spend what little time he has left with his loved ones.