

E. Morales #186444
OSBORN CI
P.O. Box 100
Somers, CT. 06071

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"Is Prison Reform A Fargone Solution?"

By: Efrain Morales, Jr.

Institutions have been known to run-a-mock when unchecked for too long (the reason for a checks-and-balances in gov.). But what happens when, as a society, we become as complaisant as to ignore corruption merely because, as a society, we've adopted a visceral reaction to felons or certain types of offenders?

The answer is that, as an institution of public safety (Dept. of Corrections/D.O.C), it will concede to status quo and behave accordingly in mostly subtle forms of cruel-and-unusual punishment. This might persist to the point that some D.O.C employees may become calloused toward reforms, because they have operated in such an unchecked fashion for so long - where some Corrections officers and choice inmates stealthily collude to set up, or altogether eliminate certain undesirables by simply pairing that inmate in a cell with one who has little to nothing to lose (disproportionate housing).

For example: Around 2002 in one of Cheshire Correctional's Protective Custody Units (NB5) - out of all places - a wiry sex offender, that was known for making waves with the administration was tossed into the cell of a three-hundred pound Serial Killer named

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Jason Day. After repeatedly-ignored pleas from the to-be victim and death threats from the to-be victimizer, Miguel Morales' shattered body gets hauled out on a stretcher in a coma.

His family immediately expressed outrage on national TV (chan. 8, ABC News).

Then there are some officers who, through a convoluted rationale, placate conscience by misapplying the D.O.C Mission Statement of "Protect the Public." In this way they'll justify jeopardizing an inmates early parole eligibility - via a Class "A" ticket, and thereby succeed in keeping certain inmates off the streets.

Take, for instance, a shank MYSTERIOUSLY appears among an inmates property during a transfer from, let's say Hartford Correctional Center to Osborn Correctional Institution (vice-versa).

Yes, stuff like this happens. Especially to certain kinds of inmates - like sex offenders, and incarcerated writers.

One is commonly loathed by the general inmate population and society at large (to include an unknown % of Correction's officers). And the others are writers, mostly viewed by D.O.C as disgruntled troublemakers publishing propaganda.

Then, as a result of being framed, an inmate is sent to the hole (Punitive Segregation), where he often pleads guilty because nine out of ten times there's no way for the accused to prove otherwise.

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Far fetched or not?

Not! The writer of this piece was framed with not one but two shanks, and after pleading NOT GUILTY while adamantly requesting State Police and Investigative Reporter intervention the ticket was as MYSTERIOUSLY dropped.

It's noteworthy to mention that cruel-and-un-usual punishments are forms of psychological and emotional torture tactics.

Inmates are sentenced to a term of incarceration, not mistreatment. Mistreatment can in effect create embittered ex-felons that might begin to view the Corrections Department and sometimes even society as the enemy, translating into greater recidivism rates. As the saying goes, "Treat 'em like animals, and they'll behave like animals."

But this would, of course, mean greater job security for the D.O.C - at the expense of tax payers, who haven't pushed the envelope enough for tighter prison reforms.

So I'm released ~~from~~ the hole on the 25th and send to a cell in the block,