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"Letter from Loretta"

Hello again from the Federal Correctional Institution at Loretta, Pennsylvania.

I've learned over the past months that one's prison sentence is not the totality of his punishment. I took a plea in January 2013 to one count of violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act. In addition to having to spend 30 months in prison, I will have to meet with a probation officer monthly for three years after my release. I also lost my pension after 19 years of proud federal service. My legal bills totalled nearly \$1 million, and I sold most of my personal possessions to pay at least some of that million dollars.

But my punishment didn't end there. Last week my wife received a sharply-worded letter from our insurance company, USAA - the United States Assurance Association. I have had my insurance with USAA - both auto and homeowners - since 1993. They were a terrific provider during that time. The letter we received cut right to the point: USAA doesn't insure felons, and they were canceling our insurance effective immediately. I told my wife not to panic; call them in the morning and put the insurance in her name. She did that, only to be told that USAA doesn't insure "felonious families." Thank goodness she was able to find another, more reputable, company with which to do business.

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When I mentioned this travesty to my friend Dave, about whom I've written, he told me to soon expect the other shoe to drop. When he was arrested - even before he was convicted - his bank, Wells Fargo, closed his accounts and sent him a check along with a letter saying that they do not allow felons to bank with them. He had to find a small local bank that was willing to allow him the luxury of a checking account.

Similarly, immediately after my arrest, both Cardinal Bank and United Bank refused to allow my "John Kiriakou Legal Defense Trust" to open an account. A vice president at United Bank said, "We simply don't want to do business with you."

In addition, I learned recently that I can no longer travel freely to countries like Canada, the UK, and France. These and many other countries share law enforcement databases with the US, and they do not allow felons in their countries without a special visa. So when I want or need to travel abroad in the future, I will have to go to these countries' embassies, file a visa request form, and submit to an interview about my "crime."

I read something recently that had a great impact on me. The Yale Law Review recently sponsored a writing competition related to prison literature and voices from prison. A former inmate, Ernie Drain, was one of the winners. In my five months in prison so far, I have lived every word of what

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he wrote. Here's an excerpt:

"Being incarcerated in prison means tucking your life into your back pocket for a while. It means taking your slumber on a bunk bed for the first time since childhood... It means showing your pride the door as the staff begins to emasculate you. It's the difference between answering to a pejorative or disobeying a direct order. It's being appalled at the number of grown men who enjoy watching Jerry Springer and Maury Povich... It's questioning the morals of inmates who befriend child predators. It means standing in line for the privilege of performing a bowel movement. It's being made to stand in ninety-seven degree weather in order to receive your medication. It means locking everything you own in a small steel box and hoping that no one smashes the lock when you go to dinner.

"... It's listening to the details of another inmate's deteriorating family life when you couldn't care less. It's suddenly realizing that you have a deep affinity for Mark Twain's political commentary, Norman Mailer, and the New Yorker magazine. It's forgetting what real ground beef tastes like... It's coming sixty cents a day and enduring a lecture on work ethic from a twenty-dollar-an-hour CO whose most strenuous task of the day is reheating his coffee. It's watching the CO's own low self-esteem ooze from every demeaning word he speaks to you. It means watching the staff eat food that was meant for inmates while the state deals with

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budgetary problems by shrinking the portion sizes of the food delivered to those inmates...

"... It's thanking God for the small things like seventy-five-degree days, pizza bagels, quiet and mail, hash browns on Sundays, a soft pillow, Dove soap, the few staff members who treat you like a human being, and the ability to write a cohesive sentence... It means constantly reminding yourself that this is not the place to make friends... It means adopting the new first name of "inmate" or "offender." It means hiding your own emotional desperation and only exuding power and confidence... It's the total absence of pure joy. It's having your exuberance replaced by momentary relief from anguish and paranoia... It's mandated nudity before an anonymous person... It's a lesson learned, never to be forgotten."

If you want to read this incredible essay and the other winners, see *The Yale Law Journal*, 122: 2082, 2013.

Update: Many of you have asked for an update on the event that I reported in my first letter. In that letter, I wrote about two Special Investigative Service officers who tried to bait me into taking some sort of action against a Muslim prisoner. After the letter was published, I was assured by both the warden and by a CO lieutenant that an investigation would be conducted. It turned out that the investigation was of me. My email was put on a four-day delay, both incoming

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and outgoing, my incoming and outgoing snail mail was stripped open and read, and none of my witnesses were interviewed. I wasn't surprised by any of this. This is exactly what happens to all whistleblowers.

To learn more about my case, please visit www.defendjohnk.ca

Thanks for reading,

John