

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF TIME

My name is Eric. I was born and raised in St. Louis, but for the past 34 years I have been in prison in Missouri. I have been in the South East Correctional Center at Charleston, Missouri for seven years now. When I was 21, I was sentenced to 50 years without the possibility of parole for killing a young man who was trying to rob my younger brother. I did not have a prior record.

Very few people have any idea what it is like to be incarcerated for decades. Here is what doing time is like over the course of a day. Doing time is not easy. One would imagine that as the years go by it would get easier. It is really the opposite. With time and preparation comes maturity. With the maturity of finding yourself and understanding some of your purpose of being on Earth the opportunities to fulfill this purpose can not be realized here. My daily life is spent in perpetual constraint. I have been in a maximum security setting this entire time. After 33 years I am being treated the same as a freshly sentenced 19 year old that has no respect for self, others or the rules of society. No matter the strides I have made in making changes inside myself I am still vilified, antagonized and sensory deprived daily, all under the pretense of safety and security of the institution. The Government actually pay the state to keep us in a maximum security setting no matter our age or time served.

I do not desire to make this piece a negative, whinning set of thoughts that leave you happy knowing that some of the worse of Missouri's criminals are being sufficiently made aware of where we are daily. The truth of the matter is this system is doomed for failure at the cost of many lives and hundreds of millions of your tax dollars. Let's look at the results of this.

I am 55 years of age. I've successfully completed all the restorative justice classes, educational courses, and vocational training the DOC offers. I've utilized family funding to take and earn my paralegal certificate from Blackstone Career Institute. Funds may soon be available from my family for me to take a advanced course. I maintain daily contact with family and friends. This is what gives me strength to persevere. I have very innovative ways in which I can run and operate a business from here in which I could care for myself and love ones, as well as save tax payer money by providing my own room and board. While my doing this only need approval, Missouri would rather keep me desolate and stigmatized as a tumor on the body of the State instead of promoting me as a shinning example of rehabilitation. The truth about the justice system in Missouri may shock you. Under the watchful eyes of Warden Ian Wallace, his leadership have turned this place into a powder keg of anger, instability, inconstancy and confusion. Because of this I have no daily routine. There is a daily Standard Operational Procedure that suppose to be followed and it looks good on paper. Nothing is ran efficiently or purpose. They slow the meals down to a crawl so that the programs and recreation (which only starts after) never run timely and the volunteers in corrections (VIC's) that come in are purposely delayed, prohibited admittance and inconvenienced to the point where they just stop coming. It is the same for me in trying to maintain a daily routine. Time delegated for one activity is cancelled, delayed or cut into so often a routine is not established and purposely done to keep us imbalanced. Even the correctional officers that volunteer are told to not become passionate about furthering the rehabilitation of the Offenders.

I am a member of the NAACP here. The Warden has successfully shut us down. He reassigned our VIC, who was a correctional officer because he pushed too hard in our behalf for the basics, assigned another who was then delegated job responsibilities during the days our meetings were held. When he quit out of frustration, the Warden took that meeting period since we had no VIC. We are being set up for failure, deemed monsters, are stigmatized

and then you are told they need more money to deal with us. All the organizations are allowed two yearly fund raiser and one ongoing fund raiser. We all can individually retain \$5,000 dollars in our organizational accounts. Our by-laws tell us to donate a certain percentage of funds to non-for-profit organizations in the community. The warden see these funds as his own. He has the president and treasurer of each group sign off on \$1,000 checks and he distributes them to causes he supports, like his brother's church and other self-interested causes he is affiliated with. This nepotism would not be a issue with us, only, the greed of the warden caused him to post rules which do not allow us to fund events within the prison which educates and ultimately generates new members. Further, our requests to donate to causes from the neighborhoods our crimes were committed in are outright denied. Organizations like Women's Voices Lifted for Social Justice, The Resurrection Temple, Missouri CHRE and The Youth Enlighten Program (YEP) never receives anything from us at this Branch NAACP because the Warden will not approve it. He will not approve basic supplies for us to make contributions to the prison community. Since we can't have our interests funded, we refused to sign his thousand dollar requests, even after he threatened to take our meeting and shut us down. The warden has, under the pretense of an bogus investion, locked down (in the hole) our last three Presidents, then had them transferred. This has extended over a six year period. So, we don't function. Our efforts are spent steadily trying to get pass the red tape. His last tactic was to lock down the president six months ago and try to install his own choice as the new president. This has caused the NAACP branch here to not function. The Warden refused to allow us to reorder the frozen veggies we use as our ongoing fund raiser. If we not going to delegate our funds to his whim there wont be any funds generated and our dietary needs met.

Absolute power breeds absolute corruption. There can be no justice if every law and its procedures are absolute. The public is not aware of the many forms of corruption taking place with their hard earned taxes. On the one hand these prisons were built to bring much needed finances to poor rural communities. On the other hand, nepotism concerning the contracts, over inflated invoices for substandard goods and services is the norm. Tracing just who get the lion share of these monies will reveal a clique of a few who have created an exact science and long term goal of converting your tax dollar to privatized funds. The best way to do this is by creating chaos amongst the prisoners. By creating an atmosphere of violence and hostility it will serve their purpose and justify their actions. Crime pays, keeps their jobs secure and lay the foundation for their children and their offspring. An investigation into these practices should promote much needed prison reform. This can not be done by the Missouri Attorney General's Office because they are the Department of Correction's personal Attorney. This corruption is done with the AG's protection and watchful eye.

The psychological effects of standard operational procedure has long had a trend of instilling what the public would perceive as an criminal mind set of the prisoners. However, it is basic human behavior. Practices of true education in the public school system and in prison would stop crime & recidivism, but this would eventually shut prisons down as there would not be a need to incarcerate so many for so long. Those who make criminal justice a family business go out of their way to insure that this does not happen at the expense of your taxes and my life. Minor infractions are inflated into seemingly terrible atrocities. We are being poked, prodded and provoked into physical altercations and psychological despair. In the free world the Willie Lynch syndrome is the norm, is glorified with the end result being addiction, prison or death. Here and there, we are being assaulted and then charged with assault. One of the guys here jokingly said, "Man, they beat my Ass, then gave me five years and said I made them do it." Here, hope is merely a joke to make you think something is going to happen. Guards are being trained to be utterly disrespectful, unknowly being used as pawns to further the cause of those sucking millions of your tax dollars out of the Department's budget. Despite little or no major acts of

violence occurring, those in control justify their purpose by creating chaos. The effects of this on us that have to live here until freed or is slated to die here makes us wonder. How can we have respect for those who do not respect us? Do we have a right to fight an abusive foster-parent who is killing us? The daily routine of making it through a day is so full of abuses of authority it rises to a level of physical abuse because it is battering our senses.

Why should we continue to live under these circumstances when the end result is death anyway? There are many forms of abuse taking place here. The most subtle that have the biggest effects is the daily running of the prison which does not allow you to maintain a set positive routine. Delays and cancellations are the norm. It affects our mental and physical health. The mattresses are merely mats and fatally flawed in their design. Given to us because it makes their job easier to search, they are causing physical injuries to our necks, hips, shoulders and arms. Compressed discs, stress fractures and aches and pains that turn into arthritis plague our bodies with constant pain being the results from merely attempting to sleep. Complaints of the long term effects are ignored. The monthly committees with officials are merely a farce that accomplishes little or nothing. Speak your mind on the truth and you'll be punished and transferred.

You would expect to be able to be left alone after serving 30 odd years with no major altercations. You would expect to be in a lessor secure environment and have hope of working to a goal of freedom, or for many, to die at peace. This isn't the case. Being a ole' head in the joint use to garner respect. Now we are culled out and targeted as trouble makers because we understand the results of being micromanged for the purpose of keeping us unorganized, uneducated and imbalanced physically and mentally. The DOC is trying to create a volatile environment in order to justify our continued incarceration and their existence in serving the purpose of keeping us away from society. There have been fifteen cases of prostate cancer diagnosed over the past three years here. My prostate is also at risk of cancer. I am scheduled for a 2nd biopsy in a few months. While our deaths are termed natural causes, there is nothing natural about it. There is something in the food served or purchased causing this. We are being killed in here by many subtle means and you are paying the medical costs for it. Inferior quality of the food and daily super high doses of stress, pain and anxiety is deliberate indifference of physical injury that is resulting in wrongful death.

Just as pitbulls are trained to kill, the DOC's policies have purposely attributed to the mind state of those released. A day in the life and time of my life is very stressful and very unfulfilling. The most minimal accomplishments are hard fought for and seldom achieved if going thru the powers that be have anything to do with it. I have to be consciously aware at all times. When you let it be known through your actions that you know your place and is not looking for trouble but they want to demean you further, history shows that this will eventually cause a riot. They will tell you, "I told you so, these ~~are~~ monsters need to be kept locked up". I'm telling you now, do not let them get away with continuing to instill the negative behavior traits of those being released, and killing those of us which are stuck in here. They are spending hundreds of millions of your tax dollars for their own gain, not fulfilling the purpose of bettering the conditions of mankind. They are creating the chaos and violence and then is popping their collars in the public's eyes asking for more funds and justifying why they suppressing our life's fires. Fire them and set up a system that is not as corrupt as this one. It is all on the Director of the DOC, George Lombardi. He has squirreled away millions of your tax money to sustain his desires. Make him resign and be wary to insure that the Governor's next choice be a person that is progressively favorable toward true rehabilitation. I may not live to see it, but hopefully someone will look at this and look into the madness of a day in the life and time of Eric. What's happening need to stop.