

ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION: IS IT TORTURE???

I have been in segregation since April 29, 2016, at this time I have been in my dismal crypt for 6 months. I am just beginning an INDEFINITE term. My earliest possible release is September 9, 2017, which'll be 17 months before I even qualify for release into a 'transitional housing unit'. I could be in the hole nearing 2 years or an INDETERMINATE term if the Deputy Director of Missouri's prison system grants me the 'privilege'.

I am going to give you some pros / cons on surviving long-term administrative segregation under apartheid USA prison rule.

Administrative segregation exacts its toll even on prisoners who start off healthy. Individuals with more stable personalities and stronger cognitive functioning will still experience some degree of stupor, difficulties with thinking and concentration, obsessional thinking, agitation, irritability and difficulty tolerating external stimuli. Some prisoners report a moment of terrifying clarity: the sudden realization that they are losing their minds and slipping into psychosis. Because we don't get the stimulus and contact that we need, we go into self-speak, that inner voice, and we enter a period of regression. At times we can feel it coming on, and I think; "I gotta tighten my grip or I'm gonna drown?".

Almost every prisoner that I've spoken to in the last 10 years has coped with the growing insanity in the only way available to them. What saves our lives in administrative

segregation is a routine that is conducive and productive. To approximate the vitalizing effect of the outside world. Prisoners in administrative segregation must devise a regiment of continuous rigorous activity, utilizing the inner-creativity. The old saying goes: Out of suffering has emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared by scars."

Brothers and Sisters, from the moment that I awake until I am forced to repose, I strive for purposeful attention. A passive mind - a day-dreaming mind is a self-harming mind. If I (we) stay in that "cell within my (our) mind", and I come to the conclusion I cannot go anywhere, I'll lose it. I'll become a victim of my own environment. I am not going to do that. I refuse to fail myself. I cannot say that for those who are spaced out on psychotropic medication, spaced out, with blank stares who cannot even convey this message. I tell those that still possess sanity to remember: Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardship and decide not to surrender, that is strength.

I feel that the remedy should be to find an alternative measure to long-term single-cell confinement, and follow the 'Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners' that the UN has laid out. Below I will list a few that Missouri doesn't follow:

United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Geneva 1955, approved 1957. Revised and reapproved on May 22, 2015 as

"It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones"

- Nelson Mandela

122 individual rules, now known as the "Mandela Rules." (Full set of Mandela Rules is 36 pages, available for download at: www.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/MANDELA-RULES.pdf)

DISCIPLINE and PUNISHMENT

- Cruel, inhuman, and/or degrading punishments, including corporal punishment and restriction to a dark cell, shall be prohibited

INSTRUMENTS of RESTRAINT

- Handcuffs, straightjackets, and other instruments of restraint are never to be applied as a punishment, and irons and chains are not to be used as means of restraint

TREATMENT

- Treatment of prisoners under sentence shall be directed to achieve the capacity for law-abiding and self-supporting lives, utilizing services whenever possible

GUZDZUG PRINCIPLES

- The prison system must not aggravate unnecessarily the suffering inherent in a prisoner's loss of self-determination and liberty

Etc.

They shall cease warehousing of human beings!

People in society must be made aware that they are sending us back into society, soon, and this doesn't aid in our transition. This practice must stop, and we get rehabilitated not tortured.

- Tracy Greer