

Since the inauguration of President Trump, the Federal Bureau of Prisons has taken a hard-line approach to solitary confinement, perhaps motivated by Trump's hard-line rhetoric about criminals in the U.S.. Instead of building on President Obama's unprecedented ban on subjecting juveniles to solitary confinement in federal facilities, the Bureau of Prisons, decided to instead appoint a new Complex Warden named J.E. Krueger to USP (United States Penitentiary) Terre Haute, and actually make solitary confinement more difficult for prisoners.

Prior to this Warden's arrival, prisoners had access to purchase commissary food weekly, however meager, prisoners will readily confess it was better than nothing. The accessible food included - one Hershey candy bar, one pack of salted almonds, two packs of peanut butter crackers, one granola bar, and one box of lemon iced tea packs. In February the new Warden decided to be hard-nosed, and without explanation, removed all food items from the commissary list of S.H.U. (Special Housing Unit) prisoners. This applied to both the medium-security F.C.I. (Federal Correctional Institution) Terre Haute and U.S.P. Terre Haute.

If the Federal Bureau of Prisons, USP Terre Haute, felt that they adequately fed their prisoners daily, they would not allow prisoners in general population to buy \$85 of food weekly. Yet they do. Dinner is served at U.S.P. Terre Haute at approximately 4:30 p.m. in the S.H.U. where solitary confinement prisoners are kept. Breakfast is served at approximately 6:30 a.m. This means that U.S.P. Terre Haute subjects its solitary confinement prisoners to something abhorly

different from the general population prisoners—a 14 hour intermittent fast, daily. Whether this practice is a violation of the 8th Amendment on cruel and unusual punishment, is a question for the Courts. But what is clear, is that this newfound policy of restricting solitary confinement prisoners from purchasing commissary food, as a form of discipline, must end. The Bureau of Prisons is knowingly subjecting its prisoners to chronic hunger. The Trump administration needs to know that as the "greatest" democratic country in the world, all eyes are on us. A hard-line approach to unimprisoned criminals is to be expected, even applauded. However, our government's humanity is judged based upon how well it treats its prisoners.

In March, this Complex Warden J.E. Krueger also found it necessary to remove all personal hand-held radios (that prisoners also buy from commissary) from the S.H.U. This time though, we were given an "explanation", which was that the Warden was tired of smelling smoke (presumably from drugs) when he comes to the S.H.U. He assumed that prisoners were using the batteries from their radios to light these drugs. So instead of focusing on the issue of how drugs illegally entered his facility and where the drugs he smelled through smoke was, his backwards solution was to take the batteries and radios from the prisoners. Question - Does law-enforcement "crack-down" on illegal firearms by taking the legal ammunition used to fire them? If a police Chief were to suggest a strategy akin to this, he would be promptly fired. It is completely unprecedented throughout the B.O.P's prisons to deny solitary confinement

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prisoners access to their personal radios. In fact, the B.O.P.'s national policy -(541.31, Special Housing Units)- allows for it. What makes his order even more outrageous and baffling is the fact that when staff conducted a mass "shakedown" or (search) of prisoners cells, to confiscate the radios, no narcotics were found.

Furthermore, this is the first time in the history of U.S.P Terre Haute where a Warden issued an order for the removal of radios and batteries. Is anyone really ready to believe that past Wardens also smelled smoke and failed to link it to batteries? Or did prisoners just start smoking, for the first time in U.S.P Terre Haute's history, upon the new Warden's arrival? This also opens up a new line of questioning - Why weren't the correctional officers and other institutional staff who work daily in the Special Housing Unit, reporting or complaining about smelling smoke? For the Warden to make such an outlandish assertion for his justification of taking the prisoners' radios, is an insult to his own staff, by indirectly stating that they are incompetently doing their correctional duties.

A radio is a saving-grace to prisoners in solitary confinement, and it should not be viewed as a privilege or a "luxury". In fact, it should be a mandatory tool, given to all solitary confinement prisoners, for its effective assistance in counteracting the side-effects of solitary confinement. It's noteworthy that the B.O.P.'s only super-max prison - ADX Florence, requires its prisoners who are also held in solitary 23 hours a day, to have TV's inside

of their cells. The mental toll of solitary confinement is the same everywhere, in all prisons. One should not have to be housed in a solitary confinement Facility for the Bureau of Prisons to realize this.

Before Complex Warden J.E. Krueger decided to take prisoners radios, convicts had access to a welcoming distraction in a world full of madness. It saved them from the antics of the mentally disturbed, the rare, but maddening silence, and foolish, disadvantageous discussions on the tier. Since S.H.U prisoners are not allowed access to television, hand-held radios were our last audible link to civility. Uninstitutionalized humans. The world we were once apart of, and ache to return to. The music had the power to give us hope and put us in an upbeat mood, relieving us of the side-effects of solitary confinement - depression, stress, tension, anxiety, anger. Feelings we know that are self-destructive, and makes us vulnerable to actions that we may later regret. Sport games, morning talk shows, and political talk shows left us with something to look forward to. Counteracting the more severe side-effects of solitary, such as feelings of hopelessness and suicidal thoughts. The news kept us informed of the important issues facing our fellow mankind in the real world, a reprieve from the trivial nonsense that is considered "news" in this world.

We simply must have this vital tool returned to us. Unless of course, the Bureau of Prisons - U.S.P Terre Haute wants to be held directly responsible for unnecessarily causing

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more of its prisoners to become mentally-ill.

On behalf of the prisoners in solitary confinement, within U.S.P. Terre Haute (including myself), this missive is a concerted effort to obtain help, and to raise awareness to our plight.

- J. Terrell Mebane

J. Terrell Mebane

Reg. 53519-007

USP Terre Haute

P.O. Box 33

Terre Haute, IN 47808