

Chronicles of March
(Day Two In The Lion's Den)

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This entry is based on the 40 days I spent in the SHU (Special Housing Unit), falsely accused by a member of the Education Department and a prison officer, to prevent me from expressing my First Amendment rights by using the typewriter to talk about prison issues.

Now, there is much to say on this, but I wanted to share the journal I wrote while in the "hole". I wrote probably over 100 pages while back there, to chronicle what USP Tucson officers do when they retaliate against inmates.

Just a note here, retaliation by prison officers or staff is quite illegal...

So, I'd like to share with you what I was going through, and help you see that sometimes the worst people in prison aren't always the inmates. As I usually do, I will "pause" in between the entry to try to fill in the gaps. Ok, let's begin,

March 5th (Sunday): Not sure the time, let's guess about 9. I sat in here thinking what to do, but this morning I realized that my current cell (206) is right across from 215. I believe we're on "D" range, a section of the SHU. But it's WHO'S in 215 that's interesting. It's Phil!!

Pause: I wrote a bit on the SHU, and what it was about. It's basically a two-man cell (at least here at USP Tucson), with a shower, 2 bunks, a table, sink and toilet. With the right cellie, it's not so bad, but it's the stress of being in there that's tough.

I mentioned "D" range; USP Tucson has 6 different halls for SHU inmates, named A-F. I was on "D" range, or hall. Every 21 days, they forced the inmates to swap cells with the guys across the hall; I mentioned cell 215; I would end up moving there about a week later.

If I sounded excited about "Phil", there's reason. Phil was a really nice old man, white beard and hair, but very intelligent and quiet. Never bothered anyone.

Yet, in December of 2016, he was assaulted by another inmate, who grabbed him by the throat. When Phil told the officers, they took the assaulter... and PHIL, to the SHU. Phil was the VICTIM!

Upset, I wrote an essay about prison abuse, with the attempt of getting Phil out of the SHU. He had no reason to be back there, but often times the prison is too cowardly to address issues, and would rather ship guys to another compound, rather than address the issue. Phil has been back there in the SHU for MONTHS, with no justice. Not fair to him. Anyway, let's continue...)

Phil was assaulted by another inmate in my dorm back in December of 2016. I wrote an essay on prison abuse to help him; the way I see it, we have to be able to help eachother, since we have to live with

one another. SIS (Somewhat intelligent so-and-so) say he's going to be shipped. Why? HE'S the victim!

So, I looked over from my cell window to him, and I didn't notice his face because his mug shot has him with a white beard and moustache. But it's Phil alright. I need to call him, to talk to him. I looked at him in the cell, sitting pitifully on the metal seat, talking to himself.

Good Lord, this prison is killing him, and nobody seems to care.

Even when he went to the SHU, less than 5 people really cared enough to do something; I was the only one to put it to action. I feel so sorry for Phil, and now, months later, here I am, in the SHU, right across from the guy I tried to help.

("Pause: Irony at it's finest here folks. I fought to get Phil OUT the SHU, now here I am, right across the hall from him. Guys, make no mistake, there are some bad people here, but many of these guys just made a mistake in life. I've met some pretty good-hearted guys here, and Phil is one of them. Don't think for a second that every person in prison is some evil monster, they are people too.

Sadly, one of the biggest problems in prison is that most inmates are all mouth, no action. Much of this is because of the very reason I was in the SHU; prisons retaliate against inmates by many ways, from targeted shakedowns of your cell, false allegations that get you thrown in the SHU (like me), or bodily assault, or a transfer to another prison (based on false information, which they tried on me).

I believe with all my heart, that as long as I'm here, I have to do the best I can to help others, while I pray for peace. It makes sense; if the prison is at peace, nobody's getting stabbed or killed. I can do my time MUCH easier if the prison is at peace. But it takes people standing up for what is right. The prison will break rules as long as no one does anything, because many staff members think that they have a God-ordained responsibility to persecute inmates...

Who made them judge?

Anyway, I tried to help Phil, and well, now I'm across from him. Let's continue...)

I wrote to protect inmates from abuse; I wrote to show displeasure for Baker screwing up Black History Month, fighting for our heritage, and I wrote to fight against the clear First Amendment rights Farinsky and Kelly are denying us. Have I lost every fight; if so, then there is no God.

(Pause: Now obviously, I don't believe that, but when you're in the midst of a trial, sometimes you question the fairness of God. Sometimes, life just doesn't seem fair when you're trying to do the right thing. As I mentioned, I wrote an essay on prison abuse to help Phil, that didn't seem to be helping. I wrote on how Ms. Baker, from Education, did absolutely NOTHING to help us celebrate Black History

Month, and she was the Black History Month Committee Advisor... and she's BLACK!! Now, here I am, fighting for inmate's First Amendment rights, with wicked staff members like Ms. Farinsky and SIS Officer Kelly, who simply refuse to give us the rights we have, or acknowledge us as human beings, and I end up in the SHU on false witnesses and lies...

Sometimes... it's not worth doing right... sigh...

But at times like this, we have to trust that God is looking at all this, and is willing to help those who call on Him. Even as an inmate, I have the right to call on God to help me, especially when people act so terribly to people. I did not lose my humanity when I came to USP Tucson, nor did I lose my faith in God; I will NOT let any officer or staff here take that from me. But sometimes, it's very tough... Ok, let's continue...)

But I'd be a greater fool than Kelly if I subscribe to that. There IS a God, and without a Bible, I have to still stand on God's word. I'm going to beat this bogus charge, and return to the compound, so that God gets the glory for delivering those who trust in Him. But to do that, I have to keep my eyes on God, not the circumstances. It starts there, and must continue there.

(Pause: Guys, I've been in many tough situations here in prison, times that test your faith, when you wonder if there is a good God. But many times, I think that we are here to help others see that there IS a good God; yet in order to show that to others, we have to believe in it ourselves. We cannot give up in seemingly hopeless situations. Somebody's faith, or life depends on us getting through these tough times.

There is a phrase I use often, "Sometimes you have to go through a hell...to pull somebody out". Me being in the SHU was not God's plan, but because I WAS there, I was able to pray for guys many other forgot about, like Phil, and later, a guy named Steven.

At the time of this entry, I didn't have a Bible, but I knew God's word. It is critical to know what God says about situations, so that you can have faith in it, even when a Bible isn't available...

Can you believe these people actually THREW AWAY my two Bibles??? Are you kidding me? Did it burn their godless hands?? Ok, my joke, let's finish the entry...)

I'll need to write out scriptures to look at and read, to keep the Word in front of me at all times. I'll need to pray for Phil; I need to pray for my friends; I'm sure they're worried about me...

I need a shave and shower!! Gosh, 2 days without a razor; I'm going nuts! We should get one Monday; I'll feel better then. I'll take a shower when my cellie goes out to rec. Still working on a rhythm, so I'm not in his way. I pray they don't throw away my journals; I need them. Well, not much else to do but sit here and wait; poor Phil, nobody to talk to in his cell...

(Pause: That's the end of the entry, but a couple of notes here; I mentioned writing down scriptures; I cannot tell you how important it is to have God's word to lean on . If you don't know God's word, you cannot

be prepared when times get tough, and you're looking for answers. I wanted to make sure that I would be able to look at and read God's word, even if I didn't have a Bible. God's word is just as good on a piece of paper that you wrote as the Bible, if you don't have one available.

Think about that; can you, right now, quote 10 scriptures? Can you? And while some of you might think, "what's the purpose of that?" My point is that what is in your heart will eventually come out of your mouth. If you're stressed, that's what you'll talk about. If you have faith, that's what will come out in trials.

If you can't quote scriptures in a time of trial, then you may be focusing more on the problem than the solution, which is GOD. In the midst of my situation, I had to believe there was a solution, a GOOD one, but to believe in that, I had to believe in God MORE than the problem.

I also mentioned razors; on certain days, they would pass out hygiene items like soap, toothpaste and razors. For us, it was every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I needed to shave and take care of myself, your morale goes up when you can take care of yourself. It's the old saying, "If you look good, you feel good."

You might ask, why wait to take a shower? In the two-man cell, there is a 3-walled shower in the cell, with a shower curtain. I don't mind so much taking a shower in there, but because of the hot water, it makes the cell very humid, and can be uncomfortable. So, I wait until rec move, because my cellie always goes out, leaving me in the cell by myself.

It is a very valuable hour I get, some "me time". I spend that time using the toilet (how embarrassing) taking a shower, and reading the scriptures I wrote down. I also use that time to pray. By the time my cellie comes back, the cell would have cooled down from the humidity.

I was indeed worried about these officers taking my writings. Many times when they put guys in the SHU, the officers take advantage of their authority and often throw away things that they ought not. A home-made speaker, I can see them throwing it away, but a cap bought from the canteen they are not supposed to throw away. But often times, just to do it, they throw things away. Imagine an officer throwing away your boyfriend's pictures of YOU, simply because they want to. Imagine them throwing away some of the food and snacks they bought from the money YOU sent them, simply because they can get away with it. It's not right, but it's what they do... often.

I was worried about this, because I have 4 years of journals that can easily translate into a few thousands pages of writing. As it turned out, they didn't throw away the journals and essays, but they DID throw away magazines I had... and my TWO BIBLES!!!

I mean, did Lucifer call them and give them orders to trash my Bibles? What kind of idiot of an officer throws away BIBLES? sigh... oh well,

Anyway, that's all for now, MUCH more on this later. Feel free to write to me about any questions you may have. Until next time...