

Numbness is all I desire. Is that too much for a man to ask? To be comfortably numb just like the Pink Floyd song says. One would think that after seven years, almost eight, I would have reached an emotional plateau that provides some semblance of sequestration from the insatiable madness of my environs. Regardless of the amount of prayer and other efforts, such a reprieve never arrives. Maybe my parents and teachers did a better job of indoctrinating me than family, ex-family and others (including myself) realized. Otherwise this cloistered world where everyone's sentences begin with first person pronouns and end with the same vulgar, incongruent simile and metaphor would seem more palatable.

Nothing is shocking any longer. Not even a man flopping like a seal on the bathroom floor so high on synthetic pot he thinks he is drowning in the puddles of filthy water gathered atop the fungus-covered tiles. Neither am I shocked to see a Mexican flying over a cubicle wall chasing a cell phone he is trying to conceal from a correctional officer (CO) who laments discovering such a device because of the paperwork it then requires. These are the same cell phones brought in by prison employees and used by former drug dealers from New Orleans, Memphis and St. Louis to Skype, talk, and text their homeboys back home who carrying on their lucrative drug enterprises. While they surf the Internet on these devices men wishing to use a outdated off-line data processing machines to do legal work, write manuscripts and to other work are now told they no longer can do so because these devices are a "security risk." Before, those caught with cells were charged with another crime and their phones sent to Quantico to discover who was contacted and by whom. Now with these devices everywhere, they rarely even warrant an incident report or time in the SHU.

Likewise, CO's pretended to look the other way as men hustle contraband of all sorts in and out of the housing units. To do otherwise would be in the words of a black prison employee, "a betrayal of my race." One wonders how taxpayers would feel knowing their hard-earned dollars are going to protect a racial culture and not meet the mission of this agency that constitutionally required to serve all segments equally. Employees deem their positions as catalysts for retribution against others who are believed to descend from ancestors who treated their forefathers less than fair. Christian services attended primarily by white men are cancelled at the drop of the hat by black chaplains who never submit the black faux Muslims to similar discretionary schedule changes. The reason? The fear of reprisals among this particular prison gang who never attended worship services anywhere but grandmother's Baptist church before coming to prison. These inmates, unlike their Caucasian counterparts, have perfected the art of screaming "Racism!" and know doing so begets immediate action.

Every new warden and captain imposes their own stamps on this facility where after seven years, a total of 28 different privileges and services have been rescinded with nothing new granted. Each eliminated in the name of exacting conformance from the same segment of prison population whose DNA fails to contain even a trace of desire to obey or reform. Meanwhile everyone else is punished through this "blanket discipline" that never seems to generate even a tweak in the behavior of the guilty.

While everyone and everything deteriorates, becomes less valuable to society than the day before, this system of "selective punishment" continues. Those who lament their crimes and wish to improve themselves are prohibited from doing so because of lack of programs and effort on the part of prison staff. And the ones who don't? They just pick up the phone, break rules, and show no respect for their fellow man while treating each day as just another day in a life.