

Part I
The U.S. Prison Asylums:
Why Americans Should Be Concerned
by Jack Hays*

In 2013 the Wall Street Journal warned on its front page that the U.S. "Prisons are the New Asylums."¹ There was not much concern expressed by much of anyone else, suprisingly.² Moreover, the U.S. Bureau of Statistics reported that 50% of people in America's Jails and Prisons are Mentally Ill. Still not a peep from the Media. Indeed, here in Iowa where I am a Mentally Ill Prisoner the Iowa Ombudsman reported the same year³ that "certain populations" — namely, the poor,⁴ minorities⁵ and/or "difficult"⁶ — were not going to receive treatment other than jails and prisons." A year later the USA Today lamented the "Mentally Ill Suffer in a Sick System."⁷ The Convention Against Torture, Art. I, defines "torture" as any act which

* I apologize for the handwritten work. The Administration of this prison — all former prison guards — deliberately suppress any use of typewriters and there are no computers.

causes "severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental." I was deliberately tortured and abused as a child. Since adolescence I have been a victim and witnessed the deliberate torture of men and women in various institutions here in the U.S., mainly here in Iowa - "The Heartland." I am the Scion of our "Sick System."

After touring the Iowa State Pen. in Fort Madison, Iowa, reviewing hundreds of pages of evidence and hearing testimony Chief Judge Donald O'Brian, U.S. District Court, admonished, "Iowa should be ashamed..." In his 1997 order which resulted in the "Clinical Care Unit" - a satellite structure of the Iowa State Pen. for the Mentally Ill.⁸ Well... Iowa evidently was not, and is not, "ashamed." Many of the older prison guards simply got hired there at "C.C.U." Many continued their degradation, abuse, neg-

neglect, and torture of the Mentally Ill and Intellectually Disabled. On July 18, 2012, Corporal Kessler (former U.S. Marine) was shown on the Frontpage of the Des Moines Register being **Kicked in the head** by a prison guard at C.C.U. Many Men and Women — like Kessler and myself have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and are **Bipolar**,⁹ as well as substance abuse issues. Kessler — as well as other **Veterans** — serve their country in active combat, proudly and honorably, and come home with invisible wounds. These men and women are then tortured in America's jails and prisons — sometimes they **die**, but like virtually all prisoners,¹⁰ they are released **worse off** than before." In 2011 the U.S. District Court ordered more than 40,000 prisoners released citing **cruel and unusual punishment**¹² — the acting secretary of California testified, "[W]e make people worse..."

A decade after the Clinical/Care Unit in Iowa's State Pen. opened, it

closed. I was there. I filed for a contempt order in the original action — it was denied and no-one cared. Moreover, I was (and am) punished for letters and court documents I submitted.¹³ Indeed, I have spent months and months in solitary confinement, told me I could no longer be the Secretary of the NAACP, taken my typewriter, taken my paperwork, etc. I am lucky to be alive. There are some who work in these hellish places who have saved me also — Barbara Clem, Candace Collins, Mike Eisnicker, Tracy Blanchard, and Craig Campbell — most who cannot embrace the "social role" required quit.¹⁴

After the C.C.U. closed in 2013, I was sent to a new Unit at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center. It was based on a new policy for Mental Health Housing.¹⁵ Neither the "Unit Manager," Scott Eschen, nor his staff — including his wife Kathy — had even read

the policy. They did not appreciate my attempts to get them to follow, or read this policy — which includes the statement that more time "out-of-cell" is best for mental health.¹⁶ When an article I wrote the Iowa City Gazette, as "George Simons" (another PTSD Veteran), was printed, I was transferred to the Anamosa State Pen., Anamosa, Iowa.¹⁷ The article explained that the recent suicide of my friend Alex Mabe was caused by their apathy, incompetence and lack of mental health treatment.

None of the people calling themselves a "psychologist" at Anamosa is licensed — which is illegal.¹⁸ When I complained about the failure to provide treatment by law (Iowa's "Bill of Rights" for the Mentally Ill), the Iowa Administrative Code, and their Policy I was sent to the New Iowa State Pen. — which is supposed to have a new wing for the mentally ill, however, the former prison guards decided they rather deal with older people — and almost killed. I am essentially "white" and I was the Secretary of the NAACP¹⁹ — a racist gang member hit me with a weapon from behind. So I am now back at Anamosa State Pen.

I recently spent 35 days in solitary for reporting the symptoms of my mental illness. I am currently in a cellhouse called "Animal House" with 400 other men in General Population.²⁰ The 24 year-old in cell next to me believes he hears a cricket and randomly screams with glee that only the Mad Know. You do not want us as your neighbors.

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ENDNOTES To Part I

- 1 The Wall Street Journal, Sept. 26, 2013.
- 2 Creating Fear, News, and the Construction of Crisis, David L. Altheide (New York: Aldine de Gruyter 2002) The tactics described in here were not used to inform the public...of a real crisis.
- 3 www.legis.iowa.gov/ombudsman
- 4 See Prison Nation: The Warehousing of America's Poor, ed. by Tara Herivel and Paul Wright
- 5 Chief Justice Mark Cady, Iowa Supreme Court stated Iowa is a "leader in the nation in the statistics showing racial disparities." Des Moines Register 1.15.2015
- 6 Anyone with Mental Illness can be "difficult." See "An Unquiet Mind," by Dr. Kay Jamison (1995) (she is Bipolar)
- 7 USA Today, 6.26.2014, Liz Szabo, page 1B
- 8 July 5, 1997, Goff v. Harper, U.S. District court Southern District of Iowa, See Also Goff v. Harper, 59 F. Supp. 2d 910 (S.D. Iowa 1999)
- 9 Bipolar Disorder is "not an illness that lends itself to easy empathy", Dr. Kay Jamison, supra, pg. 174.
- 10 President Barack Obama, quoting Senator John Cornyn. www.naacp.org/news/entry/remarks-by-the-president-at-the-naacp-annual-convention
- 11 "When They Get Out", The Atlantic, June, 1999
- 12 Brown v. Plata, 313 S.Ct. 1910 (2011)
- 13 Most recently I contacted the Office of Civil Rights about the misuse of Prison Rape Elimination Act funds. With no evidence I was found "guilty" of running a "business" as a jailhouse lawyer. Also see "Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners...", by Mumia Abu-Jamal (2009), pg. 62
- 14 Psychology: Themes and Variations, W. Wieten (8th Ed. 2010), "social roles" can make people "unexpectedly cruel", pgs. 688-693.
- 15 www.state.ia.us, "Public Policy" #10-10-09
- 16 see Policy #10-10-09, "Mental Health Housing"
- 17 John Wayne Gacy was released from here in 1983 and went on his serial killing spree.
- 18 see Code of Iowa, section 154B.4 at www.legis.iowa.gov
- 19 ASP and ISP received threats. They put me in harm's way!
- 20 22.25 hours a day in a 7' x 5' cell. No individual treatment plan — per Iowa Law (225C.28A) & Policy # HSP-701 to 703, just pills and this cell.