

IT ALL STARTED IN NOVEMBER, 2018, WHILE INCARCERATED AT THE O.B. ELLIS UNIT, AN INSTITUTION OF THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

ONE MORNING I BEGAN TO THINK ABOUT WHY I ENDED UP BACK IN PRISON AFTER JUST SEVEN MONTHS OF FREEDOM, AND THE TERRIBLE COST I PAID AND CONTINUE TO PAY BECAUSE OF MY INCARCERATION. THE REALIZATION THAT I HAD LOST EVERYTHING THIS TIME AROUND.

I HAD LOST FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND COMMUNITY TIES. NEXT CAME THE REALIZATION THAT NOT ONLY WAS I ALONE, BUT WAS DEPENDENT ON THE STATE PRISON SYSTEM TO PROVIDE ME WITH THE BASIC NECESSITIES NEED TO SURVIVE. IT IS REALLY A TERRIBLE FEELING NOT BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR YOURSELF.

THE LAST REALIZATION WAS THE FACT THAT IF I WERE TO DIE IN PRISON, I HAD NOBODY TO PICK UP MY BODY FOR PROPER BURIAL, AND WOULD BE BURIED ON PRISON PROPERTY. THIS THOUGHT ALONE IS QUITE TERRIFYING.

AFTER CONTEMPLATING ON THESE THOUGHTS, I BECAME VERY, VERY DEPRESSED. I HAD NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS TO REACH OUT TOO OR ANYBODY ELSE FOR THAT MATTER. THIS DEPRESSION LASTED FOR OVER A WEEK. I COULD NOT EAT OR SLEEP WELL DURING THIS PERIOD.

AFTER THE EXTENDED PERIOD OF DEPRESSION, I MADE A VERY BAD DECISION AND INTENTIONALLY OVERDOSED ON ANOTHER INMATE'S SEIZURE MEDICATION AFTER ENDING UP IN THE LOCAL HOSPITAL FOR A

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FOUR DAY PERIOD TIME, I WAS RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL AND SENT TO ONE OF THE PSYCHIATRIC UNIT WITHIN THE TEXAS PRISON SYSTEM FOR DIAGNOSES AND EVALUATION

ONCE AT THE PSYCHIATRIC UNIT, I WAS REMOVED OF ALL MY CLOTHING AND PLACED IN AN EMPTY CELL. I HAD TO CURL UP IN A BALL IN ORDER TO STAY WARM AND SLEPT ON THE FLOOR. I WAS ONLY ALLOWED A PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICH, AND A BALONGA SANDWICH EACH MEAL. THIS TREATMENT WENT ON FOR A SEVEN DAY PERIOD OF TIME.

AFTER THE WEEK IN AN EMPTY CELL, I WAS MOVED TO A DIFFERENT CELL AND GIVEN A BLANKET, SHEETS, MATTRESS, BUT WAS NOT ALLOWED SOCKS OR SHOES. READING MATERIAL WAS NEXT TO NON-EXISTENT. WHAT ENDED UP HAPPENING WAS THAT I HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO FOR THE DURATION I WAS AT THE SKYVIEW PSYCHIATRIC UNIT. THE IDLENESS WAS AS MISERABLE AS ANYTHING THAT I HAD EVER DEALT WITH. I HAD BEEN FORCED TO LIVE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS FOR EIGHT WEEKS.

THE CELL I WAS PLACED IN WAS FILTHY, THE CELL SMELLED LIKE A URINAL AND HAD FECES SMEARED ON THE WALLS FROM THE LAST OCCUPANT OF THE CELL. THIS ONLY MADE THINGS WORSE FOR ME. I ENDED UP EVEN MORE DEPRESSED AND STOPPED EATING AND DRINKING FOR 9 DAYS. I HAD LOST OVER 20 POUNDS AND BECAME VERY WEAK AND SICK DURING THIS TIME.

I ENDED UP EATING WITH THE PROMISE FROM

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MENTAL HEALTH STAFF THAT I WOULD GET THE HELP THAT I NEEDED. I NEVER DID RECEIVE THE PROMISED HELP, AND ONLY SAW A PSYCHIATRIST TWICE FOR NO MORE THAN 5 MINUTES EACH VISIT.

I ENDED UP JUST SITTING IN AN EMPTY CELL EVEN MORE DEPRESSED. I HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THIS WAS THE LOWEST POSSIBLE POINT IN MY FIFTY-FOUR YEARS.

AFTER EIGHT LONG WEEKS, I WAS FINALLY RELEASED FROM THE SKYVIEW PSYCHIATRIC UNIT. I WAS TRANSFERRED TO A NEW PRISON UNIT AND PLACED IN THE HIGH SECURITY UNIT DUE TO A DISCIPLINARY INFRACTION FOR TAKING THE OVERDOSE. I WILL REMAIN ON HIGH SECURITY FOR ONE YEAR WITH A CLEAR DISCIPLINARY RECORD DURING THIS TIME.

I STILL SIT IN A CELL TWENTY-THREE HOURS OR MORE EACH DAY DEALING WITH DEPRESSION.

WHAT I CANT UNDERSTAND IS THAT WHEN AN INMATE HAS ANY SORT OF MENTAL BREAKDOWN THE FIRST RESPONSE IS TO REPLACE THE INMATE IN ISOLATION, MUCH OF THE TIME FOR DAYS WITHOUT EVER BEING SEEN BY ANY MENTAL HEALTH STAFF.

IT IS TO MY KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS TYPE OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT ONLY MAGNIFIES THE INMATE'S PSYCHOSIS. WHEN THE INMATE ACTS OUT IN ORDER TO GET HELP, THEY ARE EITHER IGNORED OR SPRAYED WITH PEPPER SPRAY AND LEFT IN A CELL TO BURN. THIS IS NOT A LEGITIMATE FORM OF MENTAL HEALTH

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CARE, BUT COULD RATHER BE LABELED TORTURE OR SIMPLY TERRORISM.

I OFTEN HOPE AND PRAY TO NEVER HAVE TO EXPERIANCE THIS EVER AGAIN. IT TERRIFIES ME TO UNDERGO SERIOUS DEPRESSION OR SOME OTHER PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER AND BECOME PERMANTLY LOST IN THE ABYSS OF PRISON PSYCHIATRIC CARE IN A SYSTEM THAT IS TOTALLY UNCARING, AS SURELY THOUSANDS HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST. IF THIS HAPPENED THERE WOULD BE NO ONE TO HEAR MY PLEAS FOR HELP, AND I WOULD BE AT THE MERCY OF PRISON GUARDS AND MENTAL HEALTH STAFF WHO SIMPLY STOPPED CARING YEARS AND YEARS AGO.

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