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First Rights
Word Count 1,390

~~EXHIBIT 1-3~~

EXHIBIT 1-3
6 pages

IF you are
unable to return
this, simply pass it on
to someone who may enjoy
it, (or else it will be misplaced!)
Cat
Covelli

REALITY RULES

R. F. Covelli

~~Sorry,~~
~~They (personnel)~~
~~cannot do anything to~~
~~help you.~~
~~It seems that to~~
~~fight against the needs~~
~~of the prisoners is~~
~~able with concepts~~
~~of it CAN be utilized~~
~~now and they grow~~
~~can be taken with our terms,~~
~~but you, etc., can explain~~
~~it.~~

It is difficult trying to explain the reality of prison life to most people. Many seem to grasp our words intellectually but emotional substance is rarely conveyed, and so our words fade and vanish — vanish even out of the minds of those who actively want to see prison "reform" a reality, (i.e. all non-violent offenders released now)

Those who do understand in a way that combines both an intellectual and emotional awareness seem to retain and recall the things they hear about prison life longer, with an understanding deep enough to motivate them into positive action. Who can say what a simple phone call or letter to a local congressperson could actually do? It is far better to try than to let anyone take our silence as a form of consent.

Those who forget, after reading a book about prison or on the way home after visiting someone in prison, forget

because the words we used to explain were chosen so poorly by us that only a superficial hold could take root and be retained, and so any possible seeds of change we attempted to gently share simply blew away and died.

It is our earnest hope that one or both of the following examples of incarcerated life may be useful to anyone who desires to help open eyes and hearts and minds to an ugliness we all so often find it easier to misremember.

I

Officers open windows and/or turn on air blowers to pull air inside your cell. It becomes so cold "the animals keep quiet" and the "winers stop complaining." So you lay in bed almost from 3 P.M. to 8 A.M. fully clothed, under whatever blanket or sheets you've been able to find, and either think bad-angry-things or "day" dream.

You use your breath to slowly increase the temperature where you have curled up your body. It is so cold that when you are forced out of bed to empty your kidneys in the middle of the night, inside a cell without working lights, you are forced to slowly empty your kidneys into your newly cleaned sink because you know (from past experience) that you will not be able to go if you sit down on that ice cold metal toilet seat. You will sit there shivering until your butt goes numb, but the cold will clamp you up no matter how hard you try — no matter how much you hurt.

All grievances to get the windows closed and the blowers turned off are regularly "misplaced", along with letters, request slips and pleas. It is understandable. If we were freezing men most of each day, depending upon who was in charge of the cell house, and inadvertently causing older prisoners and mentally ill patient/prisoners to freeze five to seven days a week — and thereby forcing them to slowly grow ill or worse, well, if we could do such a thoughtless and hurtful thing so easily, then misplacing or destroying U.S. Mail, grievances, etc., with mention of such misconduct, would not find itself into any official record. Would it?

II

You find yourself feeling sorry for a highly disliked prison staff member, because his working in such a prison/custodial setting for so long has slowly — unknowingly — changed him from a professional correctional officer (C/O.) and into an abusive guard. As an officer (C/O) he was meant to have a positive effect on those incarcerated that would translate into a positive and increased public safety change upon the prisoners release. However, unknown to him, his callous behavior can only have a negative effect on all the prisoners he comes in contact with which, in turn, will have a negative effect on public safety in the future. He may guarantee the job security of those like him, and

insure more and more security staff are hired year after year, but it will be at the cost of public safety, security and tens of millions of dollars - tax dollars - to hire additional staff and find excuses to build additional prisons.

You are a bit shocked at the idea that what the abusive C/O does with such negative behavior can have such far reaching effects. You muse over the idea of negative actions, no matter how well covered up, generating negative ripples that will cause pain and grief to so many others even after he departs from this world. If your reasoning is sound, what, might the negative ripples you caused so many years ago have done or still be doing?

You are not fully certain why you feel such sorrow and helplessness for a man you have seen taunt and hurt so many others - due to his anger, confusion and/or frustration. You are also aware no one can be helped or rehabilitated, in any meaningful way, unless they wish to take an active part in such help.

You have not been able to assist many of your fellow prisoners in any lasting or abiding way that you can recognize, so how or why would you even consider trying to help one of the most abusive guards in this maximum security area? You have to be as dumb as a box of rocks for even thinking such a thing!

While vaguely watching the C/O taunting a man locked in his cell, in the hope of provoking threats out of him to justify spraying him with pepper spray, you recall a Stanford University experiment^{*1} you read about. It proved how prison/custodial work can adversely effect an employee, and another study that had to be shut down early because of how fast custodial violence erupted.^{*2}

If the poor man knew, even now, about either study he could use it as a legal foundation and prove his abusing people is a job related hazard he was never warned about. A hazard to his psychological health, the health of those under his watch, as well as the health and safety of numerous communities. He could easily obtain an early medical retirement, with the additional benefits needed for corrective therapy, and probably the funds needed to help retrain him for a different kind of employment — employment that would not cause him to do unintentional hurt to everyone.

You break the unofficial "us vs. THEM" prison reality rules, and explain both the studies and work related hazards to him. He listens to you, carefully, as you give him examples of other C/O's, rather than accidentally shaming him with any of the abuse or hurt he caused. You honestly and earnestly do your best to communicate a simple truth that will benefit everyone concerned — and you fail.

Yes! He might have received the help he needs, but the stigma attached to any mentally hurt person — no matter the trauma or strain or dismaying cause of the mental hurt — forces him to claim the studies "are wrong" or "lies made up by liberal lunatics" and "conservative quacks", and even less logical defensive denials and maddening rationalizations.

Now the offended guard will torment that foolish, stupid prisoner who tried to be a "know-it-all" piece of dirt. He will make sure his cell is searched 3 times in less than a month, instead of 4 or 5 times a year. He will tell other prisoners he is a rapist, and ~~cause~~^{force} him to obtain proof it is misinformation (proof he'll have to carry on his person almost constantly, in case he is cornered by those looking to hate someone — other than themselves.) The guard, and a few of his misguided friends, will attempt to set him up or make him appear guilty for things he could have not done, or spread hurtful rumors concerning things that make no sense.

Late at night, with his face pressed into a pillow so no one will hear him sobbing, he attempts to convince himself nothing will ever change. Yet, in his bruised heart he knows that if nothing ever changes it will only be because not enough people tried.

He weeps and as he weeps he feels a deep ugly shame. Not for breaking prison reality rules, nor for the tears that continue to pour out of him — but because he honestly does not know if he is crying for the angry, terrified prison guard or for his fearful self.

* (1) Access Philip G. Zimbardo "on the ethics of intervention in Human Psychology Research: With Special Reference to Stanford Prison Experiment," Cognition 2, No. 2 (1973) 243-44. (2) the recent study (Blain or Blake), according to anonymous staff member, had to be shut down early due to custodial violence.