Concentration Camp

by

Danny Cherry

I imagined the inhumanity that Anne Frank witnessed and endured, as we Chronic Care prisoners were being herded through Pendleton's Cafeteria to receive Flu shots. Indescribable fear paralyzed me; medical staff threw used syringes onto tables where we would be eating later; I had HIV, my blood alone was a deadly weapon. Rapid thoughts raced in my mind, as I pondered what infectious diseases flowed through the veins of the remaining multitude. I requested and signed a medical refusal, Then got out of there quicker than a runaway slave on the underground railway.

Although Sergeant Graham and Officer Franklin had been indicted for crimes against Pendleton's Offenders, I still lived in constant fear of them; The merciless beating that they had given me was seared in my mind; The cords of memory could not forget it, neither that which ensued as a result thereof. My decision to report their barbaric assault on me had proven itself to be a grave mistake. Dr. Scott Levin,

Pendleton's psychiatrist, concluded that I was "delusional," and had to be administered forced injections of anti-psychotics. I went from speaking English, Mandarin, and twenty dialects of Spanish, to speaking gibberish and having violent tremors; I was miserable; A semi-vegetable. My condition became so bad that Pendleton's Dr. Stephanie Drescher, Head of Mental Health, sent me to New Castle Prison's psychiatric unit. As luck would have it, however, I met the honorable Dr. Berdine; She took me off the forced injections at once; That great, noble woman saved my life.

H-Cellhouse's case worker, Mr. Brooks, refused to help me in anyway. I knew, from experience, that he was a closeted homosexual; Case worker Brooks made Beyonce look like John Wayne. While I tolerated his envy, and that of all the drolling autotrophs working for the Indiana Department of Correction, I drew the line at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital; Those innocent babies did not have anything to do with peoples' hatred for me because of my

damning convictions, or academic accomplishments thereafter. The vast majority of Pendleton's staff had illusions of superiority over the facility's prisoners. It was quite obvious, to even the most ignorant mind, that they were disillusioned when the Chairman and Faculty of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Indiana University both contacted, and sent me textbooks and a lexicon; I was writing and reading Chinese Characters like fish breathed in water. Case Worker Brooks arrived to bring me legal correspondence, while I sat practicing calligraphy.

"Name and DOC?"

"249323; Danny Cherry."

I signed for my mail then began to inquire.

"Can I save innocent children? Am I not allowed to help to defeat childhood cancer?"

"That's not my job!"

"This letter here from executive regional director Michael Osburn says that it is."

Case Worker Brooks rolled his eyes, and left; He was pitiful.

Although I knew that there was absolutely no way in hell that Pendleton's education site manager was going to allow me to receive textbooks from National Taiwan University or The University of Hong Kong, I still wrote to Director Wei-Hong Kao in Taipei and Chairman Haihua Pan in Shatin; I wrote professor Song Jiang at the University of Hawaii too. I was well aware of the body IDOC's objective — keeping its beds full — and was resolute that I would not yield to the doctrine of recidivism being imposed on Indiana's prisoners. my struggle left me lonesome as I tried to build my temple of peace. Everyday I reminded myself that I was somebody; That I was significant; That I mattered. As I sat watching my favorite movie, In The Heat of The Night, that epic scene arrived between Chief Gilespie, Detective Virgil Tibbs and Mrs. Colbert.

"My God! What kind of place is this! What kind of people are you!"

my thoughts exactly.