

Beginning of a Change...

"In the beginning of a change, the Patriot is a brave and scarce man, hated and scorned. When the cause succeeds, however, the timid join him... for then it costs nothing to be a Patriot."

That is a quote I often think of by Mark Twain when doing my life sentence and actually trying to enforce my Constitutional rights and promote change here. People don't like change and it can be a difficult and dangerous thing to do at a prison, especially alone as I am.

I have been labeled many things by the prison correctional officers and inmates when I try to exercise my legal rights or try to promote a positive change in how this prison is run.

I am currently trying to enforce a no retaliation clause of a legal agreement with the South Dakota State Penitentiary in which they agreed I would not be retaliated against. However, what they say and what they actually do can be very different, especially when there is no oversight from outside this prison.

I have had numerous prison employees, from various ranks from floor officers on up, repeatedly call me names such as "lawyer rat", "rat", "cry-baby", "Buddha Rat" etc. openly to each other as well as inmates to harass and retaliate against me

for exercising my Constitutional/Civil rights.

There is currently an on-going campaign by prison employees to have me removed from my cell on B-floor and placed in the SHU (Segregated Housing Unit) to punish and retaliate against me.

On almost a nightly basis over ~~the~~ a period of months there has been numerous discussions on ~~the~~ B-floor to have me moved for made up reasons such as "IP." IP stands for Investigative Purposes and can be used for any reason prison employees make up. They like to talk over the prison radios, which are recorded.

I have brought these issues up to Unit Staff who are supposed to take care of these things but nothing has been done. As one staff member told me "You are going to lose!" whenever I bring up ~~any~~ any retaliation. The prison really has not enforced the no retaliation agreement ~~and~~ and the no harassment policy in the inmate living guide is just some words on a piece of paper, like Ethics Policy.

I feel alot like "a brave and scarce man, hated and scorned" for I am the only prisoner to stand up for what I believe in. I am the only person here willing to put my life on the line to exercise my rights as well as others. No matter what the future holds for me, no matter what draconian effects may be inflicted on ~~me~~ me, I am proud to have at least tried to bring to light changes that need to be made to the South Dakota State Penitentiary.

by Share Bell