

:Prisoner 103060919, essay #05:

It was a cold and snowy Thanksgiving Day when Captain Thomas decided she had a little business to attend on the West Yards. Scheduled to work Sterling's East Side for the holiday – a post forever vigilant, as are many within the wire – I would think she wasn't in the best of moods. Stuck filling the chair of someone who was home enjoying whatever there was for them to enjoy this season. But, even though the East Yards offer their own day-to-day challenges, it might not of been too demanding of our captain; being minimum security and all. Maybe she missed the different energy of the medium and closed security prisoners on this West Side? This side where there have been numerous staff assaults; some as simple as spitting in their face, others as serious as stabbings, cuttings, hospitalization and surgery.

I first met Captain Thomas on 24 October, 2019, when she responded to a letter I sent administration, three days prior, concerning an add-on submitted to an already existent proposal for normalization. As resident representative of the Prison Writers Support Organization (now a nonprofit charity, taking the title of PWSO Inc) and in the name of this PWSO, I attached this add-on to that proposal back on 09 August, 2019. In this attachment (a proposal of our own) the PWSO asked that C-DOC recognize certain mediums – including but not limited to writing, art, crochet, etc – as actual means of legitimate revenue capable of building future careers, and that the C-DOC aid those of us who are serious to gain success in these. We believe that through the unlimited

resources C-DOC enjoys as a government entity, they could and should help us prisoners achieve a true chance at making it in the real world – something that is possible if C-DOC simply chose to put their resources to use actually helping their fellow human being instead of putting so much effort into prolonged punishment. I needed to know what administration was planning to honor and dismiss, out of said proposal, so that we had such information for our own records at the PWSO – this was what I sought in that letter which brought Captain Thomas into my life. Gathering all she needed from me, I was told that she would investigate the matter and get back to me around 03 November, 2019.

On 26 November, 2019, I figured she had been granted enough time to honor what she told me, so I sent a kite as a friendly reminder. This brings us back to our opening paragraph.

On Thanksgiving Day, 28 November, 2019, Captain Thomas put on her heavy C-DOC jacket, hat and gloves and walked the equivalency of three or four city blocks, across the West Yards, in below freezing temperatures, braving snow-filled wind gusts, after walking an unknown by me distance, in this cold, on the East Side. She did this to meet face-to-face, but what might bring her all that way to see me? I already aired the assumption that she might not have been in the best of moods working on a holiday, so did this have something to do with her actions? In essay #03 I wrote about conditioned choices; conditioned assumptions are part of this psychology. If most my experience is that I only get this much attention, from C-DOC staff, primarily when I'm in trouble,

the primordial part of my brain was obviously warning me what?

But Captain Thomas wasn't here to scold. She came to assure that she wasn't blowing me off. She apologized for circumstances beyond either of our control placing her in position to not be able to further pursue what she said she would do and informed me of plans to pass it on to Major Reyes. Whether or not she felt unfavorable sentiment over working on the holiday or any other present disappointments in her life, to me she was very pleasant and seemed sincere. I assured her that all my interaction with Major Reyes, to that point, had been nice and that I held Major Reyes and all our shared experience in high regard. Major Reyes was commissioned the task of reading my novel, *Lou Cifer*, to find any security concerns, then allowed it to be downloaded onto a flash-drive and mailed out to my new literary agent. She has also done this with *Brain Pulp Remastered*. Things that are now being facilitated through us, the PWSO, and SCF staff working together on my self-rehabilitation, instead of C-DOC staff being at odds with me.

So what's changed so much in the last eight years that C-DOC went from straight up denying me access to sign that publishing contract, back in 2012, no matter how much I applied for administration's written consent, to actually assisting me as much as they seem to be doing today? Have my actions confirmed some sort of positive change in character that they actually now see value in nurturing? Has the actual bureaucracy of C-DOC changed? Is it maybe a little of both? This you now read, unique because it's

the first piece of journalism I've written so full of positivity. As well, it's not just being written for the APWA but is also going to be an article in Reverberations from With(in) Us All, issue #08/Rehabilitation. You'll be able to access this, if you are interested, @ thisiswithin.com/reverberation-issue8. Somehow has the University of Denver – a college of arts, humanities & social sciences – teamed up with the Colorado Department of Corrections to create a hybrid entity called Prison Arts Initiative, which now gives us Colorado prisoners a chance at being heard. When in the Hell did this happen?! When did captains take it upon themselves to brave the elements at their harshest, and walk the distance of six or eight city blocks to treat me as if I'm just as important as any other living and breathing person on the face of this planet? Positive affirmations nurturing the continuation of positive behavior in place of draconian style punishment for wrong choices made; such a big, important step in the right direction of actual rehabilitation in place of simple punishment, which very well should lead to a drop in recidivism. I know that as long as I have the stability of this career as a splatterpunk/horror writer of extreme fiction, paying my way, in the free world, when I get outside that gate once again, I won't come back; which is something I have never before said. The difference for me now?... This time I know I have an actual chance at legitimacy. I've built a certain self-worth through positive accomplishments writing, that takes the place of all the negativity weighing me down for as long as it was – my entire life. The ac-

tions of my captors affirming this positivity, more and more, these days, as they interact with me in a supportive and positive manner, does so much to assure that I will continue to remain on this path and not revert to the one I've been on my whole life. That's what rehabilitation is, right?

So what is it? Do we simply have better individuals gaining positions of power, in the Colorado Department of Corrections, today, than those who ruled it almost a decade ago? For it is actions and results that are so much more truthful than empty words and unfulfilled promises.

In essay #04, I was rightly concerned that I might of been victim to stall-tactics; having suffered the such before, as also having been recorded in earlier essays you may or may not have already read. But, by the end of essay #04, it all worked out and, after six months of uncertainty, I announced that the Lou Cifer thumb-drive finally went to my novice literary agent. Before you start questioning what happened to my friend, Tara, helping me, let's clear that up right now.... With what Larry – the agent, attorney and cofounder of PWSO Inc – has to offer, her and I have agreed it best for him to take over. Tara was then going to establish a Web site to sell images of my art, but that also became too hard for her to do as well. Her heart's in the right place but, I guess not just anyone can jump right on in there and perform those actions to aid me in my pursuits. She's simply going to keep a more active facebook going than the one I've presently got. So, I'm not complaining – after all, she can

only do those things she's capable, but this has been the ongoing problem, I've been having with people in the free world, this whole time... this in addition to what I've been dealing with, in here, for the last eight years. This is the problem we at PWSO Inc believe C-DOC, with all its unlimited resources, can help prisoners within its fences overcome. I'm simply fortunate that Larry showed up when he did and that our ambitions sync up.

He wants to seek a traditional publisher for my novel, Lou Cifer, who will pay an advancement. With me now having a literary representative soliciting my work, I actually have a chance at achieving this type of publication – so I'm going to let him do what he does.

We are still building a case against the "publisher" who embezzled my royalties from Brain Pulp's first marketing venture. Using the self-publishing services of Lulu as he did, this "publisher" was probably pleasantly surprised when my book did so well. Then, when C-DOC, at the time, didn't allow me to have a signed, active contract with him, they granted all the leeway he needed to take advantage. Now days the staff here likes to say that C-DOC does not want liability by being directly involved with us captives in certain situations. One example being the whole situation over emailing Lou Cifer that ended up leading to the flash-drive. And though it did work out real nice, being we can now send things out on flash-drives and all, doesn't C-DOC realize that sometimes a lack of involvement is all it takes for them to be liable? When administration didn't give me that writ-

ten consent, back in 2012, that they really had no other choice but to grant because of the legitimacy of what I was doing, and left me open to becoming victim of a criminal act against my person, they became liable for what happened to me because of their unfair treatment of and disinterest in my self-rehabilitation. But, C-DOC's blameworthiness aside, I'm just glad to think that if and when we file this lawsuit, that "publisher" is going to find himself surprised in a whole new way.... It's got me a little excited actually.

If you've read my other essays, you know that Prison Writers Support Organization Inc is new in my life. Also something positive that Larry's helped me establish; he filed with the Colorado Secretary of State this last December, 2019. From that date we've got 27 months to file our 1023 with the IRS but are now allowed to operate as a nonprofit charity until then and thereafter. When he brought up the idea, it blew me away because it's something I've been wanting to do for years, but I never mentioned it to him - that I know of - up to that point. A sort of synchronicity maybe? Surely awesome - now I can do all those things, for other prisoners, that I've always wanted to do since the first thought I ever had of creating something like this. So, the reality is, instead of wanting, I am now actually working on securing prison based writers' rights and helping to open better supported opportunities for them to succeed in their craft(s). I now do this through working with C-DOC staff and administration as the resident representative for PWSO Inc. Our belief is that although

cognitive thinking is great and it's a wonderful thing prisoners are offered courses to gain the skills to do so, having solid financial footing, once they're on the other side of the gate, is a sound deterrent to stressors that could lead to relapse. This footing frees their minds to better concentrate on those newly learned cognitive skills.

I credit the following accomplishments to PWSO Inc:

We have accomplished opening up a new connection to the outside world, for prison writers and possibly even artists, through the use of C-DOC scanners, PDF files, and flash-drives purchased by the prisoners themselves. Technology fitting better with the modern day world than the technology literally from last century that we were being forced to use before (i.e. paper products). We have enabled an electric typewriter loaner program, too. Though pretty last century in and of itself, it will provide prison writers the opportunity to work on their craft all day – much like I do – and later scan the results into a PDF file. This is a positive accomplishment because, as it now stands, the majority of prisoners only get a couple of hours a week at the programs building to access its computers and monitors; hardly is this enough time to build any kind of successful writing career. Now, we've got to get more typewriters in this program because C-DOC staff have only been able to come up with one. I've spoken with Captain Clare, who is the staff member responsible for allowing any of these loaner programs, and let him know that PWSO Inc is working on securing more stock from Brother typewriter. PWSO Inc

also plans on trying to secure equipment from other manufacturers as well. And the add-on to the August, 2019, proposal for normalization I have been wanting to know administration's conclusion on?... Major Reyes and I had a nice thirty to forty minute meeting that left me more puzzled than before. She was nice, just not very helpful. PWSO Inc's general counsel and free world representative will be contacting administration from our office on the streets to see if we can achieve clarity that way. I look forward to those results and to working further with C-DOC administration and staff to accomplish our goals.

We are making progress though. Brain Pulp Remastered only took half the time of Lou Cifer to go through its processing out of the facility; this being the difference between empty words and actual results because you can now find it @ amazon in both ebook and paperback forms!!! I am so happy to have it back on market and especially glad to be able to inform fans, through an assortment of back pages, about free viewing and download of some of my work @ PrisonsFoundation.org; how they can read and download these essays, for free, to learn about my struggles and triumphs building a writing career while incarcerated; and, I've included a display of the printout, along with ISBN, revealing how much the original release of Brain Pulp is now worth since becoming a collectible. I want my fans to be able to enjoy that free viewing and download of my work, because they are the lifeblood of all that is me. I really want the fans who bought that first release of Brain Pulp to know how much it is worth so that they can make

the choice to keep it as a prized possession, sell it for a big profit or whatever because, as my fans, they deserve such choice.

I'd like to say that none of this would be possible without the positive support of these wonderful professionals working for the C-DOC this whole time. I'd like to say that they've always done all they could to honor their mission statement (which is basically an oath) and aid me in my self-rehabilitation. But I'd be lying if I said any of that. For so long it has been me fighting for this alone and facing all opposition. By myself have I brought about this point where I now stand; I've done this on my own over the course of the last eight years. But things have finally seemed to slightly change, in my favor, as of late, and the C-DOC professionals I've been dealing with, here at SCF, are on the same page as I. I want to congratulate them for this because my success can and will be their victory, too, if they allow it. I am not so self-absorbed as to not see their present support for what it is - I'm just angry that it never came sooner. I like to think that I am a realist and this is as real as I can be about all this. You can see where I'm coming from, can you not?

The reality of my present relief and anger is that I am only now at that point where true success can commence because, even though these good things are happening and fueling my rehabilitation, changing me for the better, I know that I am not yet ready to get out. Even though I have finally got this far, I've got so much further to go. The journey continues into the unknown, but I know what I'd like to see happen before I can say," open the

" gate, I think I'll finally make it this time." Recently I was walking through the programs building looking to speak with Major Reyes, Lieutenant Nygaard or both and found the major in the back of one of the classrooms observing actual Peer One clients here informing prisoners about the Peer One program. That room was packed with people interested in what they had to say. Of course, it wouldn't of been proper to wave the major down, through the window, in an attempt to take her away from her present interest, so I continued on. But there was a spark ignited from looking into that room and realizing what I witnessed - I thought of my own release. Why was I not one of them prisoners, in there, interested in what those clients had to say about a program that could maybe get me to the streets a little sooner? I reminded myself that I'm not ready for the streets yet; that's why I was not in that room. I do not want to try to get out any way possible just to simply get out. I'm not saying that everyone trying to get out is like this, but there are guys who's sole motivation is to get back to the free world and be damned any plans beyond this. Getting out unrehabilitated. They are the ones who get regressed from programs like Peer One, halfway houses, parole and the such. I know who they are, I was once one of them. I never had the plans I now do, I never showed the positive drive I now do. But facts are; at this very moment that gate could open for me and, plans or no plans, it doesn't matter, I am not yet ready. I am only in the planning stages, nothing's yet solid enough. I could be told that this is my one and only chance at an early release

- if I don't take it I will have to sit the next eight to ten years till the parole board, nineteen to twenty before my maximum release date, hoping that something works out before these dates, and I believe I'd still have to decline. I'd have to choose to sit and hope, as sad as that sounds, because my rehabilitation is not complete until everything I've been working so hard to achieve is set in place. Eight years have I been working on this plan for my self-rehabilitation and do not feel to have a true chance, at success, in the free world, until everything is as I need it. This is why so much opposition has truly hurt me and makes me so angry. This is also why my fans, literary agent, attorney and cofounder of PWSO Inc, C-DOC staff who now help and anyone who legitimately aids me in my success holds a special spot in my heart. It is why these supporters are so important to me. It is why true action and results from both, C-DOC and myself, matter so much.

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