

THE SOURCES OF STRESS

WHERE TO BEGIN? I SUPPOSE I DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THE PRE-TRIAL PERIOD... THAT IN ITSELF IS MORE STRESS THAN ONE CAN IMAGINE. THEN ADD TO THAT THE ADJUSTMENT TO LIVING IN TIGHT QUARTERS WITH RANDOM PEOPLE, FOOD THAT IS MOSTLY UNRECOGNIZABLE AS SUCH AND FOR THOSE OF US WHO LIKE THE OUTDOORS - NO FRESH AIR.

GETTING PAST THE DETENTION CENTER IN MIAMI AND BEING TRANSPORTED TO FEDERAL PRISON... FCI-TALLAHASSEE, WHICH TOOK APPROXIMATELY 12 HOURS. THE BUS WAS FREEZING COLD, EVERYONE WAS SHACKLED, HANDCUFFED AND CHAINED THE ENTIRE TIME.

I HAVE TO SAY THAT FCI-TALLAHASSEE WAS PRETTY GOOD, AS FAR AS PRISON GOES. IT WAS OPEN DORM HOUSING (NO ROOMS, JUST HORSE STALL SIZED CUBES), EVERYTHING RAN SMOOTH AND ONE KNEW WHAT TO EXPECT.

THE BIGGEST STRESS FACTOR WAS NOT BEING ABLE TO SIT IN A QUIET PLACE WITH JUST A BOOK (ESPECIALLY A BIBLE). I'VE HAD OFFICERS WALK PAST COUPLES ON TOP OF EACH OTHER (WHICH IS HIGHLY ILLEGAL) TO GET TO ME... SITTING ALONE OUTSIDE, AWAY FROM ACTIVITIES I DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN.

ASIDE FROM BEING TOLD THAT PUBLIC BIBLE READING IS NOT ALLOWED, THE ONLY OTHER STRESS FACTORS WERE THE PESTS. ROACHES AND TINY MICE WERE ALL OVER THE KITCHEN (THE CAFETERIA). CRAWLING ON OUR TRAYS, TABLES, WALLS, ON THE FOOD, EVEN THE CEILINGS.

THE LAST OF THE STRESS FACTORS I'D LIKE TO MENTION WAS MY

CASE MANAGER, Ms. H. THE PEOPLE WHO WENT IN TO SEE HER EITHER CAME OUT CRYING OR TREMBLING. YES, IT WAS REALLY THAT BAD.

YOU WALK IN AND ALL YOU SEE IS AN L-SHAPED DESK, TWO COMPUTER SCREENS (BLOCKING THE VIEW TO THE PERSON ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK) AND SO MUCH PAPERWORK, BOOKS, TRINKETS AND WHO KNOWS WHAT ELSE SPREAD ACROSS AND STACKED HIGH MAKING THE DESK SURFACE NOT VISIBLE AT ALL.

COMPLETE SILENCE FILLED THE OFFICE, FOR 15-20 MIN. THEN A HAND STRETCHED OVER ONE OF THE SCREENS PASSING A STACK OF PAPERS. I RECEIVED THE PAPERS CONFUSED, SO I BEGAN TO READ AND WAS IMMEDIATELY SCOLDED FOR DOING SO.

THE PAPERS CONTAINED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SHE DID NOT ASK, SO WHEN I BROUGHT THIS TO HER ATTENTION SHE GOT VERY ANGRY WITH ME. ALL I WANTED WAS FOR HER, OR SOMEONE, TO EXPLAIN THIS PRISON THING TO ME.

THANKFULLY I HAD A DECENT COUNSELOR MR. P. HE HELPED ME TRANSFER WHEN THE BOP WAS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP ACTIVATE FCI ALICEVILLE IN ALABAMA. I DON'T GET VISITS, SO I FIGURED WHY NOT, SINCE I WAS BEING ACCUSED OF NOT MAKING AMENDS FOR MY CRIME - BY Ms. H. OF COURSE.

FCI - ALICEVILLE HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF STRESS FOR ME FOR ALMOST 7 YRS NOW.

IT BEGAN WHEN WE ARRIVED... 36 OF US CAME FROM TALLAHASSEE. NO OTHER INMATES WERE HERE, WHICH HAD

IT'S PERKS. EXCEPT WE COULDN'T GET DEODORANT MUCH LESS SHOWER SHOES, BECAUSE STAFF SAID THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW WE WERE COMING!

WE THEN REQUESTED OUR PROPERTY OR MAYBE OPEN THE LITTLE COMMISSARY SO WE CAN BUY SOME. NEITHER OPTION SOUNDED GOOD TO STAFF UNTIL WE POINTED OUT THAT WE HAD NOBODY TO BORROW FROM. WE THEN QUICKLY RECEIVED OUR PROPERTY.

EVERY PRISON HAS A HANDBOOK THAT EXPLAINS THE RULES OF THE PRISON, WE RECEIVED A NEW-REVISED-ONE EVERY OTHER DAY FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS. THAT PART REALLY HAS NOT CHANGED AT ALL. RULES CHANGE DEPENDING ON THE OFFICER, WHAT MOOD HE/SHE IS IN AND WHETHER THEY LIKE YOU. BOTH OF THE WARDENS HAVE TRIED, BUT THESE OFFICERS JUST DO WHAT THEY WANT.

IT IS EXPECTED OF US TO KNOW EACH OFFICER AND WHAT HE OR SHE EXPECTS.

SOMETIMES RULES CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE AND WE GET SCOLDED FOR NOT KNOWING MUCH LESS OBEYING THEM. THEN ONCE IN A BLUE MOON THERE IS A FIGHT, WHILE PEOPLE (INMATES) ARE WALKING ON THE COMPOUND. SOME GUARDS YELL FOR US TO GET DOWN ON THE GROUND, AT THE SAME TIME ANOTHER YELLS FOR US TO GO BACK TO OUR UNITS AND YET ANOTHER YELLS FOR US TO JUST GO INSIDE ANYWHERE.

SO THEN WE HAVE THESE RANDOM FIRE DRILLS, WHERE THE ENTIRE BUILDING (APPROX. 480 WOMEN) IS MADE TO EVACUATE AND WALK TO THE CENTER OF THE COMPOUND. WE STAND AND WAIT THERE UNTIL ALL OF THE SEIZURE PATIENTS HAVE BEEN PICKED UP OFF

THE SIDEWALK AND/OR GRASS AREA - WHEREVER THEY
FELL OUT AT.

WE'VE SINCE LOST OUR MICROWAVES, BECAUSE THEY WERE
THE MAIN CAUSE OF THESE ALARMS.

MONTHS AGO WE WERE TOLD THAT DUE TO THE PRISON RAPE
ELIMINATION ACT WE NOW HAVE TO KEEP OUR ROOM DOORS
OPEN FROM 6 AM (YES, WE'RE TO WAKE UP, OPEN THE DOOR
AND GO BACK TO BED!) UNTIL 10 PM, WITH EXCEPTIONS OF
RESTROOM AND/OR DRESSING. BUT DON'T LET IT TAKE TOO
LONG BECAUSE THE OFFICERS WILL BANG ON THE DOOR,
OR JUST OPEN IT - IF THE OFFICER IS A WOMAN. THE FIRST
DAY OF OPEN DOORS A GIRL GOT BRUTALLY ATTACKED BY
TWO PEOPLE WITH IRONS! BECAUSE DOORS ARE OPEN,
ONE CANNOT TELL IF SOMEONE ENTERS THE ROOM.

WHAT'S IRONIC IS THIS P.R.E.A. IS DESIGNED TO STOP
FIGHTS, DRUGS AND SEX. YET IT WAS THE FIRST THING THAT
HAPPENED!

PICTURE 130 WOMEN TALKING, LAUGHING, YELLING IN A
PLACE WITH AN ECHO LIKE THE SWISS ALPS, ALL DAY
LONG AND ALSO AT NIGHT. PEACE IS A THING OF THE PAST.
MORALE IS SO FAR DOWN IT'S CRAZY.

SO I'VE HAD THE PLEASURE OF LIVING IN THE HONOR DORM
SINCE JUNE OF 2018 AND HAD MY OWN ROOM... UNTIL
MARCH 27, 2020. I CAME IN FROM WORK ONE DAY AND
WAS TOLD TO FIND A CELLMATE AND IF I DID NOT, THEN ONE
WOULD BE FOUND FOR ME... THAT DAY!

I MOVED IN WITH MY SCRABBLE PARTNER, THEY LOCKED
US IN AS IS THE CUSTOM FOR COUNT, WHEN OUR DEAR

COUNSELOR CAME AND YELLED THAT THIS WAS IT! WE'RE TO BE LOCKED IN FOR 23 HRS A DAY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. DUE TO COVID 19. NO NOTICE! NO SHOWERS! NO WATER/ICE!

PHONE CALLS WERE MADE FREE ON APRIL 9TH AND 200 EXTRA MINUTES WERE ADDED - WHICH IS AWESOME.

LATER VIDEO VISITS WERE ALSO FREE, EXCEPT ONE HAS TO SCHEDULE THOSE AT LEAST 4 DAYS IN ADVANCE.

THE LATEST SOURCE OF STRESS HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE THE TIMES DURING WHICH WE COME OUT OF THE ROOMS KEEP CHANGING. WHEN THEY DO WE'RE PROHIBITED FROM DOING THE VISIT - THAT WAS SCHEDULED PRIOR TO THIS TIME CHANGE.

I'VE NOT PHYSICALLY SEEN MY CHILDREN, GRANDSON AND HUSBAND IN YEARS. EIGHT AND A HALF FOR MY CHILDREN AND GRANDSON AND LITTLE OVER 7 YRS FOR MY HUSBAND. MY HUSBAND WAS RELEASED UNDER THE CARES ACT JUST OVER A MONTH AGO. HE WAS VERY ILL AND NEAR DEATH. HE HAS SET UP EMAIL AND SKYPE WITH MY YOUNGER DAUGHTER WHO WILL SOON BE 15 YRS OLD.

HOW DOES ONE REBUILD A RELATIONSHIP WHEN ONE DOES NOT DO WHAT ONE SAYS? I SCHEDULE VISITS ONLY FOR TIMES I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO HAVE THEM AND THEN SOMETHING HAPPENS AND THE ROTATION CHANGES. ALL THEY TELL US IS THE VISITS ARE FREE. I GET THAT, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE MY FAMILY LESS IMPORTANT.

JUST TODAY WE WENT FROM HAVING 2 HRS OF FREETIME IN THE MORNING + 1 HR AT NIGHT TO ONLY ONE HOUR A DAY, BECAUSE WE "GET TO" GO OUTSIDE TO THE REC YARD FOR

ONE HOUR A WEEK! THEY LITERALLY TOOK 13 HOURS OF BEING ABLE TO WALK, SHOWER, SEND EMAILS, MAKE CALLS, DO VISITS, ETC AWAY FROM US AND REPLACES THEM WITH 1 HOUR OUTSIDE!

WE'RE TOLD THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SPIKE OF COVID19 CASES IN ALABAMA, WHICH DOESN'T SURPRISE ME AT ALL. MANY OFFICERS STILL ARE NOT WEARING MASKS! IT'S ALL THE ONES WHO THINK THEY LOOK GOOD.

IF COVID19 BREAKS OUT IN HERE I'LL HAVE A LONG LIST OF NAMES OF THE OFFICERS WHO WOULD BE TO BLAME. IT WOULDN'T COME FROM US - THE INMATES - BECAUSE WE DON'T GO ANYWHERE... JUST SAYIN'...