

Dec. 9, 2020

To begin, I came to T.D.C.J in 2008 at the age of 33. I am currently 47. My Charge is Murder I and I took a Plea of 40 years. In my time of incarceration - I have worked several jobs. As an AGG. offender ~ I receive no Good time or Work time Credit. My first Job in the Penitentiary was the Kitchen at the Unit they call Hobby which is Maximum Security. Hobby worked us 10 hour days. Hobby has at least 1500 inmates. Its a rough Unit. I did Six Years at this Unit. While there - I also worked in the field squad. We worked from 7AM - 11AM, Later if we got in trouble at work - we would have to pull grass by hand along the fence. It reminded me of Slave days when you see Pictures or movies of Slaves in the field picking Cotton with a man on a horse over seeing everything. The officer on the horse with a gun is a high rider. They have Coon dogs in kennels close by if anyone trys to run, but Im Sure the high rider has a good shot if someone thinks they can out-run a bullet. All the field bosses ride horses - Depending on how many squads are called out, depends on how many bosses we had on horses. I only seen one individual make a run for it and we were just turning out that morning coming out the main gate ~ We All were walking in our normal formation 'Deuced up', Aggies held over our shoulder. Each Squad had 20-30 inmates. This particular day, we had several squads turned out. This individual came out of the gate and went Left instead of Right.

Our boss charged ~~her~~ w/ the horse but the horse, which are trained to run the inmate down, didn't comply - So a second officer had to tackle the inmate and put cuffs on her. They yelled at us who were outside the gate to 'Get on the fence and on our knees with hands behind our backs'. Once the offender was cuffed and escorted to Command the rest of us were escorted back in and the whole Unit went on lock down that day because of this one individual. That's the only attempted escape I have ever seen.

You have to forgive me ~ In Prison we have female offenders who look 'manish' and we refer to them as 'He' Just as I'm sure in Mens Prisons - Their are Men who look femine and they are referred to as her or she. Everything you do in Prison - Reflects who you are - Even how you wear your hair.

I made the mistake of wearing Stud braids because the style is easy when you work in the field ~ Everyone thought I was Gay ~ Even how you WEAR your clothes in here - SAYS you are a fem or Stud ~ Meaning your trying to be the boy or Girl in a relationship.

Then you have those who are Gay for the stay and have a whole husband and kids at home. On my time I can truly say, Im not Gay and never will be - Different strokes for different folks, Companionship - whatever. People choose to pass their time in different ways. I pass my time reading, MY artwork and a little T.V now and then and work Evenings.

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The Other Jobs people are assigned to - Depending what Unit you reside at. Hobby has Kitchen, Field Squad, Janitorial, Gator Pit, Boiler Room, Laundry, Inside Yard, Trustees, Paint Shop, Property Teachers Aide,

Crain Units ~ There are Seven Satellites There is:
Reception, Riverside, Terrace, Hackberry, Sycamore, Valley Trustee Camp. Jobs are numerous. There is the Dog Program called: Patriot Paws where they train dogs to aid Veterans, we have Garment factory which is located at Hill top and they were a big asset during this Covid Epidemic making masks, hospital gowns for the doctors and nurses, they have contracts with outside business ~ Free labor making money for T.D.C.J. T.D.C.J is Self Sufficient - We make the Uniforms - the appliances we inmates buy off Commissary, We Grow our own vegetables ~ We have our own Chickens and Pigs. Inmates keep T.D.C.J up and running ~ We had a Covid Unit lockdown and the officers had to help Cook, Laundry, Pick up mail - Bring our meals - Take out trash - Bring medications twice a day - Currently we are very short handed - Officers are working mandatory 12hr. days. Under Staffed and Over Worked, these officers are, So I have much respect for what they endure. We are in it together and this Covid has surely effected everyone including the Penitentiary. The Prison gets more money when we are on Covid Lockdown. Prison has little to do with rehabilitation because its a business, a money maker for the State of Texas which has more Prisons than any other State in the U.S. Texas does not like to use their Parole System ~ Majority of us do 85% of your sentence if less than 20 Years.

I'm not even originally from Texas ~ I'm from way up North and things are done so differently in the South. All you can do is do your time and hope after several set-offs and Denials of Parole that eventually - You will be able to rejoin your family and Society.

I'm currently a STAT 3 that's the highest you can go in Custody level when you're a AGG. offender ~ It's considered Trustee Status but because of my Crime and time - I'm not allowed outside the fence unescorted. I've taken 2 Vocationals and did College Prep ~ I've taken Cognitive Skills twice. Any further College I pay for - out of my pocket. With the Covid - No one is allowed from the outside - No Church Groups - No College Teachers ~ It hasn't stopped the Executions on Death row - And that's a whole other topic. But on a final note ~ I feel I have done my time in a productive way ~ I work, I have Construction Fundamental Skills, I'm OSHA 10 Certified, and have learned skills to increase my chances for Employment opportunities.

Incarceration is what you make of it ~ You can take this time bettering yourself and preparing yourself for your Release or you can Bid your time playing Dominos, watching T.V, staying in the mess. It's up to you as an individual if this time benefits you or not.

Furthermore, the Correctional System could use more programs for offenders to teach skills for all the new technology in the world. Some of us have been locked up so long we won't even know how to use a phone, drive a car, go to the grocery store w/ the Self Check out.

I am not computer savvy to begin with and I have never used a I-phone / smart phone / Payed with my phone, SIRUS, Alexa... Whose that? In there we get excited about Irish Spring Soap and Commissary where we can buy a variety of treats, meats and hygiene because T.D.C.T only provides us with two rolls of toilet paper a week, five small 1" x 2" rectangular eye soap bars a week, and female supplies once a month. Thats it - thats all. I know what the website says, but it gives nothing else then what I have told you.

Some people in the world think we shouldn't have T.V. But lets me tell you ~ Have you seen what happens to a day care of five year olds, when you take away their movie 'Elmo?' I have and it is chaos on a whole other level. Thats like telling a prison we are out of coffee ~ Talk about a whole panic induced riot. People will lose their minds. Just like the term 'Institutionalized' A very real thing it takes on a form of P.T.S as well - I hear keys ~ I feel anxious ~ If a door is closed ~ I may knock, but will never attempt to open it. We are not allowed any contact w/ a personal offenders and to do so

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Even a Simple hug Can be misconstrued and you can receive ASEX Case. So after being incarcerated these 13 Years ~ I find I do not like to be touched.

Keeping Someone locked up over 20 Years is Cruelty. Because its hard to be able to re-enter Society and be Successful ~ To much time has lapsed - Family deaths happen and you can not Grieve properly - Your family moves on without you - Kids grow up not knowing you and Women seem to do more time then men. In Texas a man does the Crime - and your Guilty by association destined to do as much or more time then your man.

I see it everyday ~ Cases of women doing time behind their mens actions. Plus Texas does not believe in SELF defense as a defense in a domestic Situation. Women are natural Survivors - we will do what we have to do to feed our families, Provide Shelter, Take the abuse so are Children are safe ~ But the minute you fight back - we are in the wrong.

This is 2020 - soon to be 2021 - This is not the 1930 when women were Only meant to Cook, Clean and Give birth. We as women have had to raise kids all by ourselves and still work and maintain a home. Laws need to Change for the defense of women. Especially those who loose their Children because both Parents are taken to prison - Now you have a Chain Effect - Kids being raised by the Same System that incarcerated their parents ~ What kind of

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Future does this child have being raised in foster care. I know this because I was in foster care ~ Became a ward of the state at 3 days old. Im lucky I was adopted into a family - not a perfect family but a family none the less. I was always clean, fed, and had the basic things I needed ~ So many in prison - when you hear their life story didn't even have that. A perfect world would be no prisons - No need for prisons because people are healthy and financially stable, mental illness is treated ~ People are compassionate - No one is homeless or hungry ~ Children are taught, Teachers are rewarded ~ Our Government is fair, There is no stereo-types, No racial profiling, Power is distributed ~ Not Given to only one individual. Communities help each other. We are all part of a Greater plan and we all have something to contribute, But unless people can identify w/ the struggles of others and recognize others as people who hurt, who suffer, who want nothing more than to have the same Privileges and Rights ~ Then our world will continue on a downward spiral ~ Relying on the Younger Generation to fix things. When the only answer is 'Lock em up' then we will find a weight on our system financially. Everything has a Chain reaction ~ We take up all the natural resources from the earth ~ Where do we get more?

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When there is no Clean water to drink and no glaciers to melt ~ Where does that leave the future Generation? It should be Crime to Kill America's People. But this is being done daily.

The Greed of man is what will be the End of us All. Covid is Just the beginning and eventually something has to give. There's no balance in the world that's why we have the problems we are having. With Covid ~ The free world feels what it's like to be in Prison ~ Stores Sold out on basic essentials like toilet paper, Fines if you are not practicing Social distancing. Stuck in your homes ~ no traveling or Entertainment ~ No work for most ~ Watching everything on a screen ~ Not being able to spend holidays with family ~ Yeah ~ It's been that way for me these past thirteen years. Can't hold your mother - Can't bury your father ~ Never met my nephew whose now ten. Isolated, Being told how to live.

Change needs to come and it needs to start with us. the people - When you see that homeless man - Can you buy him a meal - Give him a extra blanket, Look for one thing a day to help someone in need. Little things like this become a ripple effect and leads to other acts of kindness. Being human is being a humanitarian. Be the Change you want to see.