

## ANYTHING GOES HERE

USP LEAVENWORTH is all a world of its own, the administration down onto the lower staff do what they want here. Since the beginning of Ramadan (March 24th) we have been on lockdown - those first three weeks consisted of showers every three days for 10 minutes only, no phone, no emails, bags for breakfast and dinner (fortunately they have been serving one hot meal a day), but for the prison population like me who don't eat meat, we are fed a steady diet of peanut butter and jelly and beans and rice or soy. The bags in the morning consist of a piece of fruit (most of the time rotten), some kind of cereal varying from corn flakes to Golden Grams to (whatever else) they put in the bag. And the dinner bags are even worse: some kind of meat or pb&j, some chips, a piece of fruit (most of the time rotten), some kind of cookies, etc., every prisoner across the nation knows these bags - hates these bags but has no choice but to consume them (especially) if you don't have family looking out for you.

Since the full realization of COVID-19 this prison administration here has been getting away with everything short of murder. In 2019 USP Leavenworth went through a change in wardens and the warden now in charge of running the prison here at USP Leavenworth is what we prisoners call a "lockdown" warden. From the very first day of this warden's arrival he has been stripping the prison population of our privileges at a clipping pace, one of his first tasks was the painting over all of the prisoner friendly jobs (UPS, Dell, Home Depot, etc.) that were painted in bold face around the kitchen, the removing of certain commissary items followed shortly after.

All prisons across the nation went on lockdown about the same time, USP Leavenworth has been on lockdown since about March 24, 2020. The Warden claims there are no cases here, but I personally have not been tested for COVID-19. I

am housed in the biggest unit (B-Upper) at USP Leavenworth which consists of three floors that stretch over a hundred yards (easy) from the front door to the back of the unit. This unit is split into two sections, the first half being a program unit (Life Connections Programs/LCP), and the second half the honor dorm. The honor dorm consisted of single man cells, as of last month (June 2020) the Warden made every<sup>Person</sup> in the honor dorm take cellies, he made everyone in the LCP take cellies all for the sole purpose of turning the top floor (in the same unit) into quarantine floor! Not only has the Warden forced prisoners to live in rooms that are made for a single body, he has completely ignored the CDC guidelines by putting a quarantine in the same unit that houses general population prisoners.

Ragmasks are the coverings that we have to "protect" us from contracting COVID-19. And the poor circulation of air, where many parts of the buildings here do not have vents and or filters to clean air (I have first hand knowledge of this because I use to work for the CMS HVAC l crew for nearly two years and have practically been all over this prison), have mold in the showers and ice machines and in the cells, around the toilets and walls and vents (the ones they do have), pose a high risk for one to contract COVID-19. On top of it all is the continuous locking down of the prison population to "minimize" the spread of COVID-19 is nothing short of cruel and unusual punishment for a number of reasons:

1. Being lockdown for times exceeding 24 hours before being allowed out for only (90) minutes a day, wherefore a prisoner has to either exercise then shower, sacrificing phone and email and or making something to eat or visa versa, because there isn't enough time. We are only allowed outside rec once a month (if that),

2. Uncontrollable weight gain due to lack of blood flow and proper exercise (which I have gained at least 10 to 12 lbs since the warden enacted the institutional lockdown) despite the fact that I exercise because,

3. We are being fed a steady diet of nonnutritional meals that are carb and sugar heavy, and most of the fruit is not fresh. The (no meat eaters) are fed a steady diet of pb&j and rice and beans and or soy, which is high in sodium and,

4. Not being able to gain employment (as a means to support one's self) because the institution is locked down and majority of the prisoners have been laid off...

(this is an excerpt of a compassionate release/reduction in sentence affidavit I put together.)

The Warden of USP Leavenworth and his administration have been since the world wide locking down of all prisons, have been using the Pandemic as a means of punishment against the population here. They terminate phone calls on a whim when one is on the phone, they terminate rec time on a whim, the Warden has his mailroom staff rejecting prison friendly magazine, picture, catalogs, etc. companies because he doesn't want that "trash" in his prison, which is a complete violation of the BOP's rules. (See Program Statement 5266.11, 540.71 procedures.) Majority of the staff are overly disrespectful and enjoy the fact we are on lockdown. The Education Dept just put out a memo that which ever unit has outside rec (which I have explained we get once a month, if that) the first 16 people may enter the law library and the rest must continue on out to the rec yard. But this<sup>is</sup> clearly a violation of CDC guidelines of social distancing, not to mention

being denied access to the courts. There are only five typewriters in the law library and many prisoners who are fighting cases have deadlines to meet and failure to meet these deadlines will surely collapse their fights for freedom. I have emailed one of the Assistant Warden's about this and I am waiting on a response. The medical dept (once you make it past sick call) fairly tries to help the prisoners. The laundry dept has failed (since) the lockdown (actually since I arrived here back in 2018) to pass out hygiene kits to the general population. All I can think about are those prisoners are aren't as fortunate as others who have outside support, and since we are unable to work, how are prisoners supposed to properly keep up with their hygiene?

We are constantly being denied by the Warden and his administration Compassionate Release applications, the majority of the prisoners here at USP Leavenworth have not been tested for COVID-19. Despite the fact the BOP has made all phone calls across the nation free for prisoners, none of the prisoners here have been able to visit with their families because this prison hasn't been set up with the video visit monitor system, although according to the CLR released a few months back (and I may be off a bit) said the Government is spending close to one million a month on free phone calls and close to \$75,000 a month on video visits.

If anyone here has died from COVID-19 we (the prison population) haven't heard about it. I did hear about a CO who works in commissary being in the hospital, don't know if it's COVID related but the Warden quarantined the prison workers who work commissary for a number of days before allowing them to return to work. True enough the prison population here at USP Leavenworth may not be suffering

as bad as I have read and or heard about other prisons across the nation, but we too, are being carried by the Warden and his administration however they see fit. Every day the Warden finds something else to take away from the prison population and his behavior is no better than a tyrants. At least one person in my unit has found the courage to file a complaint against him through the BP-8 process, but for the most part, prisoners are afraid to utilize the BP-8 process for fear of retaliation by the COs here at USP Leavenworth. I may even be targeted for writing this and sending it out for publication, but I am tired of standing by and watching prisoners be mistreated for the simple fact that we are prisoners. True, my past is not perfect, but I am a human being and I deserve to be treated like one. Just the another night a CO stopped by my cell because he thought that I had called him to my cell, and when I told him that it wasn't me who had called him, he pointed his index finger at me and told me that he was going "F me up" before walking away from my cell. And this had come from a CO who is a regular in the program/honor unit. I think people fail to realize that not everyone who is in prison is a criminal. A lot of us come from good backgrounds and are educated but just so happened to have made some bad choices. With that being said, all people in prison are looked at and treated as if we are the scum of the earth. (Not all prison personnel treat prisoners this way.) For the most part, most prisoners are just trying to do their time and return to their families. (I happen to be one of these prisoners.)

The living conditions here at USP Leavenworth falls one hundred percent short of OSHA regulations, but for some reason OSHA has not shut this place down. There are rats or mice everywhere throughout the prison, black mold everywhere, visible and purposely painted over, there is even a unit that is completely condemned. The Warden has removed all of the big fans that were in the common areas of all

of the housing units. And even though the commissary sells personal fans, it is extremely hot (especially) on the uppermost top tier in the housing unit I am housed in. A personal fan isn't enough to combat that kind of heat. When I was working for HVAC here at USP Leavenworth my crew helped install a new AC unit, the prison barely seems to use it. Almost every night I have to strip down to my boxers (and no cover) just to cool down enough to be able to sleep. And all the while no one is being tested. No one (but a few) are allowed to work, and if anyone was to ever catch COVID-19 there is no telling how equipped this prison is to handle such a thing.

It may not sound as bad as it does as other prisons across the nation, I just thought to be a voice from here at this location.

written July 28, 2020

in the yr. of COVID-19

By TTB E1