

TRULINCS 75913067 - KEITER, JACOB A - Unit: SCH-B-B

FROM: 75913067
TO: Keiter, Julie; Weidman, Drew
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Inmates are renowned for their unpredictable, ruthless, devious, and obvious destructive behavior. So when you have over a hundred inmates contained in a confined single housing unit, how exactly do you disrupt and block this behavior from ever being exposed? Easy. Place them in front of a television.

This is a method not only used by prisons and institutions, but by everyday households as well. How many parents out there have placed a crying, fussy child in front of a television to help alleviate their discomfort? It doesn't make someone a bad parent or caretaker for doing this, because it simply works. I know I personally have spent countless hours in front of a television, resulting in a relatively calm child. Today's generation has made it more of a controversial issue on if they shall allow or limit their children from watching television, or to keep them physically active.

For decades now there has been intense controversy over whether prisons should be equipped with cable television or not. I personally have heard the issue raised only once since my incarceration, but I have read about numerous other attempts to do something about this. The problem doesn't revolve around the negative consequences commonly associated with excessive viewing of television that most parents worry about, but rather over the fact that cable television is considered a luxury that inmates do not deserve if the rest of the general population can not receive.

First and foremost, NOTHING in prison is free. What the inmate population doesn't pay for with monetary value, they pay for with time, blood, sweat, and tears. Once you find yourself in this situation, you quickly come to realize freedom is priceless. The institution is equipped with a commissary market, operated by the Trust Fund department. Every item is marked up in price for the reason being, the extra money is used to purchase inmate luxuries and amenities such as cable, movies, and recreation equipment. This made sense to me after realizing I was being charged .35 cents for a single Ramen Noodle soup.

Some prisons, mostly state, allow an inmate to purchase a personal television for their cell and pay for the cable service out of their own account. These services are too marked up in price. While other institutions, including my own, provide televisions in a common area for all to sit and enjoy. The prison I'm currently housed at has seven televisions spread across the day room per housing unit. Just like everything else in prison, the televisions are segregated by either racial or geographical association.

With multiple televisions blasted at full volume and various other activities conducted by inmates, it has to be awfully loud in here right? Wrong. The prison system found a way to counter this as well as finesse their way into the inmate's account once again. In order to fully enjoy a program, an inmate is required to purchase a radio from the commissary, and tune to the station programmed for that television. This runs the inmate roughly \$50 - \$100.

For some inmates watching television is the entirety of their prison bid. From the moment they roll out of bed, until the final lock-in for the night, you can find certain individuals staring blankly at the television day in and day out. One disturbing thing I've found the television causes is a sort of primitive reaction amongst inmates. Anytime a female in a bikini, or Miley Cyrus is caught twerking on MTV, the majority of inmates completely stop in their tracks and gawk animalistically at the image. Look, I'm a young male with testosterone pumping its course through my body at an all time high, but this action is obnoxious, absurd, and quite frightening. I do not condone this behavior but witness it on a daily basis.

Personally, I limit my television viewing time to a minimum. When given the opportunity I'd much rather spend my day at work, in the library, writing, or exercising. The frequent lockdowns lately prevent me from engaging in these productive activities, and suck my attention into the television instead. There are a few shows I try to catch including Yellowstone, and Impractical Jokers, but I'd rather be making the most of my time here in prison.

Regardless of whether you're an individual who is for or against television, it's safe to say the hypnotic features have had benefits for any and all caretakers alike.