

...Rusted bars here and rusted bars there;everywhere you look,it's rusty everywhere...Leak's here,leak's there;it's leaky everywhere. ...Roaches here..roaches there;roaches everywhere.

I've woken up to this scenery for 22-years and nothing has changed since.The sad part is;that I've been to 5 different prisons in Texas and the scene is the same.You would think I was in a third world country;but no,I was raised here in the Texas Penal System currently known as TDCJ.

Here I find myself doing time-and time doing me.Trying my best to stay alive and in good health.Yeah..it's nasty and dirty but that's been the norm;so we know nothing else.The only clean areas are were the administration people be-or were the auditors walk to inspect.So it's up to use prisoners to keep our own cells clean;the rust and leaks can't be helped,but we manage by covering it up with tape.

As for our health;well,that is only managed by working out and eating enough food.That's why commissary is one of the top five most high-lighted moments in prison.But not everyone is fortunate to have money on their accounts-to purchase items off commissary.We don't get paid for the slavery we do daily-for hours.

Commissary is a must-if your going to stay healthy and work-out. The food they feed us is not sufficient,it's only enough to maintain you for work;if you want to burn extra calories working out or playing basketball then you must purchase those calories in commissary.

Texas is one of the few prisons that work you daily for hours and do not pay you.But this too is the norm-so we know no difference.There is nothing to compare it to,to see a difference.So we keep living....

Life is hard here;but we maintain by hustling,surviving in any way we could think of-or get our hands on.We learn to steal,cheat,scam,con, and deceive anyone that is lame and weak.Prisons that run on free labor and harsh treatment make humans into animals-it becomes a jungle and only the strong and wise live nicely.

TDCJ has so many industries slaving us and making millions off our backs and health.We get nothing!Yeah,they give us a certificate-a piece of paper.And if we don't work,then we get a disciplinary punishment case.So we are forced to work if we wish to stay out of trouble.

TDCJ makes so much money off of us through commissary also.They get kickbacks from the contracts they make with companys;or build their own company,by stealing their ideas and selling us a generic brand.Fixing the prices and not letting any other competition sell us better.

This might be one of the only prisons that have never had a federal audit.No investigations,no auditors;I've been here 22-years. Texas has powerful influential politicians that have become presidents, and many of those politicians get many donators from those that run TDCJ.So everyone is getting greased and rich.Why we sit here workin free, paying big dollars for a couple of items off comissary.

So that's why the Texas Penal System has been off the radar,and has gotten away with so many scandalous revenue.We have over 100 prisons in Texas,each no bigger then 3000 prisoners.Yet,each prison has 3 wardens 2-majors,8-captains,12-lieutenants,and a bunch of sergeants;plus all the guards and personnel.And that not including the big-wigs that run the industries and administration.TDCJ is a goverment agency that just keeps growing in power and size.It's holds itself to it's own standarrds and as long as it provides the revenue to keep funding it's pockets thru- legit scams and free labor;then all is well,and all are happy-except us!

We prisoners are what make this place run smoothly, we are the oil that fuel this machine called TDCJ. We don't rise off the floor because the Texas boot is firmly holding us down. Not letting us know better. We pray and pray for change but none come; our voices ain't being heard, or they are ignored.

Our familys voting for smooth talking politician who promise justice-reform but sell out the first day in office. His pockets get fatter and he gets to buy stocks into companys that deal with TDCJ. Like they say- follow the money! Follow the money and you find the faces; many of those faces are famous politicians who make the law in Texas.

Not enough money for paint, building material, medical, food, ect. So here I still sit on this rusty bunk trying to keep the battle won with the roaches-who try to steal a bite of my food. Looking out rusted bars seeing the janitor trying to clean up with the water-down chemicals he is given. All the free labor; yet, this place is falling apart. Tomorrow... another day will go by; work free, and hope someone in our family sends us money. If not-then we must steal, cheat, scam, con, and deceive anyone that is lame and weak.

In the end; it all comes back to commissary. We strive for more food to eat. Commisarry... is the only thing we look forward to; besides, visits and parole. That's how sad it is here-but we are forced to be content. This system is too big to fight; it will crush you, just like it's crushed those that tried.

There is no unity amongst us, no matter how tough we think we are. We feel the same pain-but fear the crush. So we just keep floating through this madness.

Although, we ain't alone in this struggle. The guards feel our pain because they get treated no better; though, they get to go home. They too have to work in this nasty dirty place for little pay, risking their lives

and putting up with their supervisors treating them like prisoners. Most of the guards got a good heart and only come to do their job. But there is not enough training-psychologically-to cope with all this madness. Mostly every decision in TDCJ is rushed on thought and how much it will cost. I've been here 22-years and have only seen it get worst. This place only makes us more animalish. When you treat a person like an animal; well, he will be what you create.

Like the other day; I found myself eating with all my co-workers the left over food with our fingers. We worked that day overtime and since we were working, we missed chow, so they brought us cold left overs. But we were thankful that we atleast got to eat-that's how they condition us mentally. It's normal treatment, so we don't make a fuse about it. Complaining will only bring their wrath.

So we keep living-hoping for a letter from a love one, a visit, or a phone call; counting the days till our next commissary day. Some form of happiness to get us through the day.

Since most of us are from disfunctional families, all the above doesn't happen, so we lose ourselves in drugs and hustling; trying to live and eat just like the rest that have families that care. We are not bad- we are just trying to eat, and survive in this dark world.

And those that can't hustle-or buy drugs, find comfort on medication pharmaceutical drugs. And the system gives them out like candy. So many prisoners have gotten lost mentally from taking them meds. They take them as a generic high but end up hooked and soon lost mentally.

I too got lost in meds when I first got here as a form of depression but ended up taking different kinds for a generic high; till one day, I got to crazy and big, and that's when I got a good beating-by my own friends. Pharmaceutical drugs make you agitated or turn you to a zombie.

I was a pill-head for years before my beating. But I am thankful for that beating, because many don't come back from them meds. All my money was going into buying other prisoners meds. Yes, We sell them!

The beating opened my eye's; if my friends beat me that bad, then how bad will my enemies beat me, if I get out of line! The pills were a form of way to escape this place-mentally! To cope with these conditions and treatments; plus, the lack of love. It's hard to survive in this place without love or help. Like I said, we become animalish!

I fight my animal instincts every day. I now read, play chess, workout, and stay busy mentally and physically trying to survive daily. Keeping the mind idle only causes trouble. With all the negativeness in here how do they expect us to come out positive. This place only makes us worser. We come out with this mind set and struggle to cope out there in the free-world.

My story(adventure)sucks compared to others but that's only cause I don't brag; nor, do I harm people. I live and let live as long as they respect me. There is people here who get raped by prisoners and guards. There's prisoners here who get in gangs and end up dead or hurt. And then, there are those like me; chilling and doing time with respect. Some fools pay protection, others find lovers, or join gangs-but they all end up in a web. Every prisoner has a story and a part to play.

I've been blessed to survive this long with my sanity and health. I've been beaten down once by my own friends-but that was an awakening! I've had a few fights and won-by luck! I've sold drugs and did drugs-plenty of times! I've had cellphones and relationships with female-guards but like I said I don't brag, it's just part of being locked up for life. But even all this fun and money gets boring. So I'm chilling now, trying to be a good little boy. Learning and studying and keeping the mind busy.

My mother and father are alive; but have yet to help me or see me. I

am like many here who grew up in the ghetto. Love is sparse, but I keep strong by the love I got for the Lord. My faith in God has helped me through out this whole time. My heart has always been good no matter what bad I've done.

Writing is my only way to express myself and let my voice be heard. Hoping that my voice could help make a small contribution in some sort of change in the way we live.

TDCJ is a machine that's powerful and has crushed everyone that's tried to change it. Not even the federal government has fought it. Courts have made them change our treatment-but then, it only makes up another rule that crushes us.

This system has been operating for many many years and doesn't plan to change any time soon. So one just has to make the best of the struggle.

Well...I have to get back to reality and get some rest for work tomorrow..can't be late, cause they will give me a refusing to work disciplinary case. The slavery system never sleeps in TDCJ....