

A Minimum of Dignity (& Dangers of Covid and Smoke)

I believe, to grant a minimum of human dignity, all incarcerated individuals must be housed in a single cell.

The Covid Crisis has highlighted such a need. Almost all Regular Population at my current prison are housed in double cells. Total square footage per cell - here at Tabor City, N.C. - is about 65, including the space occupied by the bunks, desk, lockers and sink/toilet. In November of 2020, my block had to endure an about three-week quarantine. Misery and degradation city. And they were even "quarantining" Covid-positive people in double cells - so they could "share variants," I suppose....

They had to house almost 40 Covid-negative people, on mats on the floor, in the gymnasium.

Their horrible headaches - those of prison staff - would have been exponentially eased if only we'd been housed, humanely, in single cells. (Or demi-humanely, at any rate.)

Smokable tobacco was, in theory, "banned" from N.C. prisons in 2009. It is still, however, rampant.

At Lenoir, in 2018, I even observed an inmate walking

up to talk to a lieutenant, no less, cigarette in hand, as though he was doing "nothing wrong...."

Cops smuggle it in; inmates smuggle it in; it is even tossed over fences onto rec-yards. The State itself gives tobacco away, at Native American religious services. At least 80%, if not 90%, is promptly smuggled back into the buildings to be consumed and/or sold. (And it's amazing how all races have suddenly become "Indians.")

The CDC informs that there is no known "safe" level of exposure to ETS. (Environmental - or "secondhand" - Tobacco Smoke.) Exposure can be really deadly, to a far greater degree than the average person begins to realize.)

This Covid crisis has highlighted, even more, the grave danger constant exposure to ETS places us in. If said exposure compromises our respiratory systems in advance, such as a case of bronchitis, and then we contract Covid we could, you know, like die, man....

Nicotine (an insecticide) is even more addictive than heroin. Rest assured, the nicotine-junkies will find a way to get their "fixes."

The only way to ever adequately protect us, especially now, in the Age of Covid, would be by having genuine

nonsmokers at separate prisons.

Please, someone, insist on such. (And it wouldn't hurt to test urine for tobacco — instead of, uselessly, for other drugs, which actually have a far lower chance of harming "innocent bystanders.")

If not, it's nothing less than a statistical certainty that some of ^{us} will be handed extra-judicial death sentences due to ETS and/or Covid-exposure.

The general "hell-factor," of our lives/existences, would be ~~be~~ lessened if all prisoners were granted the privacy/safety of a cell, no matter how small, that would represent a "place they could call their own."

— Anonymous N.C.
Prisoner