

# QUITE A CONUNDRUM

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There was a recent rodent infestation at the prison. Mice had chewed through the insulation of the freezer and ovens, pooping on the food trays. Needless to say we were not happy and several of us complained. Derek joked "we should be more concerned even the rodents aren't eating the food."

In response the prison closed the yard for a few days spraying pesticides. Once the yard was open we were eager to get out for some sun and fresh air. As a group of us walked to the baseball field, we observed Mike kneeling in front of a mouse gently stroking its fur. It was apparent the mouse was slowly dying from the poison. We had a brief conversation about the rodent problem and the horrid state of the food, without mouse poop.

After a few minuets, Dan stated what I and the others were thinking. "well? Should we kill it and put it out of its misery?" Which I replied "maybe. But who's going to do it?" After a moment of reflection we all turned and silently walked away.

The area of the prison I currently find myself houses several prisoners who spent years on death row, but who's sentences were commuted to life based on a recent Washington State court decision finding the states death penalty law unconstitutional due to racial disparity. The majority of the other prisoners are life without parole, or LWOP, because of the controversial Three Strikes law. I am serving a sentence of 29 years to life and must convince a governor appointed board of people that I am a fit subject for release, otherwise I to will die in prison.

The question I have pondered. Is it more humane to end that mouses life, who there is no doubt would eventually die, or allow him to have those final moments of life, even though those moments are spent suffering? Whichever position we took on the subject. Non of us wanted the final decision on our conscious.