

TORTURE IN UNITED STATES PRISONS

Evidence of Human Rights Violations

2nd Edition

**American Friends Service Committee
Northeast Region
Healing Justice Program**



Edited by:
Bonnie Kerness
Coordinator, Prison Watch

Editorial Assistant:
Beth Breslaw
Intern, Prison Watch

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*Special thanks to King Downing, on whose work
“How You Can Get Involved” (pages 79-82) is based.*

Introduction

When prison doors close behind men and women they become our prisoners. If we are their family and friends, we may visit, write, call, and advocate on their behalf. If they are anonymous, we will likely dismiss them with the thought, “they broke the law—that was their choice—and now they must pay the penalty.” And we proceed about our daily lives without looking over the prison wall.

It is time we did just that; prisons reflect the societies that create them.

International treaties, conventions, and declarations provide basic guidelines for the treatment of prisoners. These guidelines are often ignored by the U.S. criminal justice system. Meanwhile, the United States continues to criticize other countries for violations of prisoners’ human rights.

“Torture in United States Prisons” (Second Edition) provides primary evidence of such human rights violations. Its goal is to cast light on the torture and abuse of prisoners.

For over three decades, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has spoken out on behalf of prisoners. Since 1975 AFSC has operated a Criminal Justice Program in Newark, New Jersey. During that time AFSC has received thousands of calls and letters of testimony of an increasingly disturbing nature from prisoners and their families about conditions in prison. The list of abuses is long and horrifying: use of stun guns and restraint devices, rape, prison chain gangs, inadequate medical care, isolation, “no touch torture” (lights on 24/7, deliberately startling sounds, menacing dogs), use of force, and other egregious violations of international human rights standards, including the Convention Against Torture, ratified by the United States in 1994.

The concepts of human rights law must be upheld by the United States police, court, and prison justice systems. One way to foster this change is for prisoners, their families and loved ones, and prisoner rights

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advocates to weave the language of international standards and treaties into their arguments for humane prison conditions and treatment of prisoners.

To that end, this document presents prisoners' testimonies in five sections—Isolation, Health and Medical Services and Conditions, Use of Force and Devices of Torture, Racism, and Women in Prison—and introduces each section with a relevant international standard as stipulated in international human rights agreements. For example, Article 1 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture prohibits “physical or mental pain and suffering, inflicted to punish, coerce or discriminate for any reason.” Yet practices such as the indefinite use of shackles and other mechanical restraints, the administration of dangerous chemical treatments, and the practice of extended isolation continue in the United States.

The practice of extended isolation in particular is of growing concern to many prison activists, both inside and outside the walls. The reports that come to AFSC about prisoners subjected to devices of torture have largely been from isolation cells—often called management control units or special management units—in which there are few witnesses. Ojore Lutalo is one such prisoner, and you can find his full story in the Appendix. There are thousands of similar stories as well, some of which are included here.

In these pages you will read the words—verbatim—of prisoners whose lives are irrevocably changed by the conditions under which they are held. The details are hard to read; some of the language is crude and the accounts graphic. All are compelling.

Read on. Tell us your story. And, above all, we urge you to use the language of international standards and treaties in your argument for humane prison conditions and treatment of prisoners.

Bonnie Kerness and Beth Breslaw

Acknowledgments

This document would not have been possible without the courage of those people in prison who were determined that their witness and testimonies reach the outside world. In many cases, they were afraid of retaliation, and in many cases they were beyond fear. We especially thank those who wrote on behalf of and about people who could not write on their own.

Very special thanks to Beth Breslaw, an extraordinary intern student from Rutgers University, New Jersey, who drew excerpts from the hundreds of letters, drawings, and photographs we received. She categorized the testimonies to fit logically within the human rights framework. Beth took care to respond to each person who wrote, while struggling with her own emotions as her work progressed.

We want to thank Terry Kaye, who walked into the office one day with her devotion and determination to help. It is with gratitude to Terry that this document flows with wonderful editing. Her guidance, comments, and suggestions throughout the entire process were full of wisdom. Her willingness to put hours of energy into creating a document worthy of accuracy and pride is appreciated by everyone who had the privilege of working with her. Beth, Terry, and I formed a team who worked with consensus and a loving sense of purpose that never wavered.

We want to thank King Downing for his excellent section on practical ways to help, Elizabeth Enloe for her constant support of the work of Prison Watch.

Bonnie Kerness

Isolation

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)

Article 1

... the term “torture” means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 7

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 10

- 1) All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the dignity of the human person.
- 3) The penitentiary system shall comprise treatment of prisoners the essential of which shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation.

Article 16

- 1) Each State Party shall undertake to prevent in any territory under its jurisdiction other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in article 1, when such acts are committed by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. In particular, the obligations contained in articles 10, 11, 12 and 13 shall apply with the substitution for references to torture or references to other forms of

cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

2) The Provisions of this Convention are without prejudice to the provisions of any other international instrument or national law which prohibit cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or which relate to extradition or expulsion

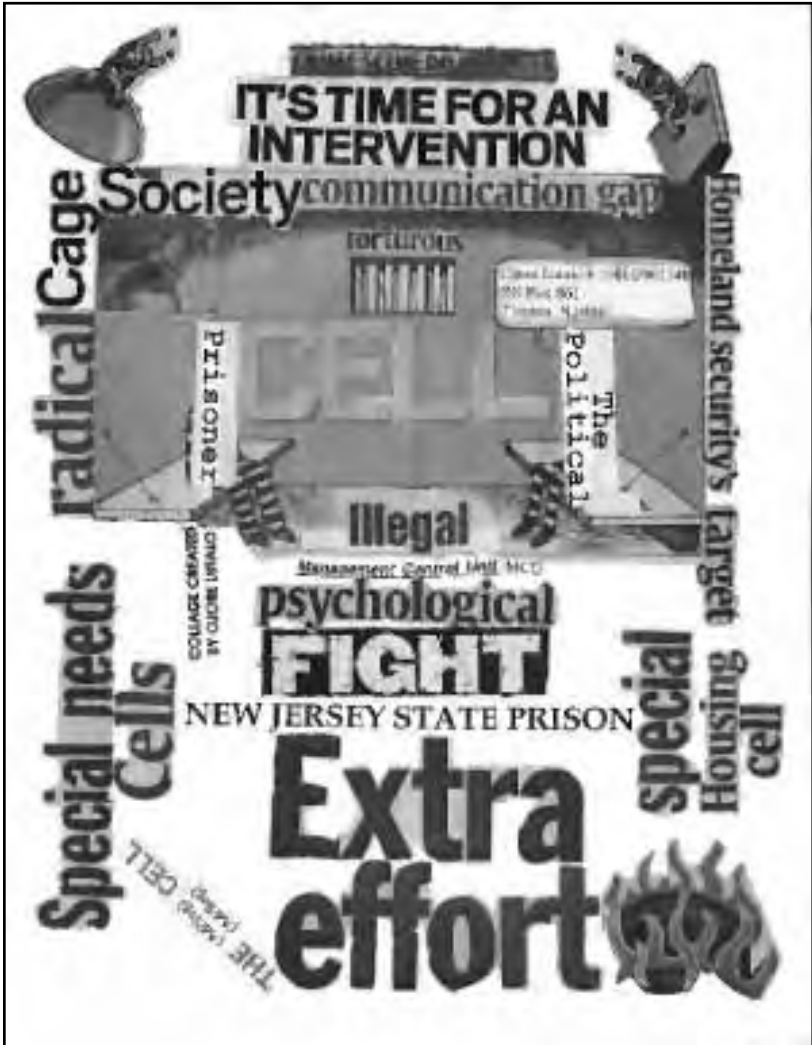
“...at 9:30 am, they gave me back my clothing! The telephone is ringing with calls coming in from other prison security guards wanting to know Lutalo’s status, if I had lost a sense of myself, meaning if Lutalo went crazy. I grow weary of pacing the floor and sitting atop of the sink, so I cover the dirty foam mattress with a paper sheet and lay down fully dressed and doze off. I wake up to the sound of splashing water, to see water leaking from the ceiling and running down the wall and seeping under the mattress. I call the guard who comes to the cage door. I ask if he could move me to another age. Now the water is running underneath the cage door. Two hours later they move me into cage #2 which doesn’t have the 24 hour camera watch. Cage #2 has another dirty foam mattress with two paper sheets atop it and is just as cold as Cage #1. I start pacing to generate some body heat. The stool and the cage shelves were removed, the light switch has a steel plate over it and the wall sockets have steel plates over them. The cage light stays on 24 hours a day. The floor, toilet, and sink are filthy!”

Ojore Lutalo, Trenton State Prison—now New Jersey State Prison (10/14/05)

“My eyes are hurting more from the glare of the 24 hour bright white lights! You call this a democracy? I feel the coldness of the cage assaulting me. I pace, I doze, I cover the dirty mattress foam mattress and lay down. The way I am now being treated is illegal. This cage is condemned. You call this a democracy?!”

Ojore Lutalo, Trenton State Prison—now New Jersey State Prison (10/17/05)

Another progression of control units and the use of isolation are called “security threat group management units” (STGMU). The government defines what a “security threat group” is. According to a national survey by the Department of Justice, the Departments of Corrections of Minnesota and Oregon named all Asians as gangs, to which Minnesota added all Native Americans. New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania include various Islamic groups as gangs.



Collage by Ojore Lutalo

Review of “An Omar Broadway Film,” which documents abuses in the Security Threat Group Management Unit in Northern State Prison, Newark, NJ. The film was released to the public in 2008, and premiered on HBO in July 2010.

“As the prisoners stand motionless next to each other and cover themselves with plastic bags to protect themselves from chemical weapons, the riot squad bursts in, spraying torrents of Mace and freely swinging their batons. The inmates offer no resistance. They later sport black eyes and broken jaws. One disappears for months after being dragged by his shackles down the stairs and across the floor, bleeding and screaming. Disturbingly, these scenes are also often filmed by ‘Internal Affairs’ agents—employees of the prison in charge of procedural enforcement—who can be seen pointing their cameras toward the ceiling as the blows start raining down. The other prisoners who are locked in their cells also choke on the gas; no preparations are made for their safety. When this happens on Thanksgiving, the styrofoam-encased dinners sit undistributed all night in full view of the inmates. They are stacked behind two canisters of Mace.”

Open Salon, “Prison’s Dirty (Open) Secret: An Omar Broadway Film.” July 18, 2010. http://open.salon.com/blog/lawless_lawyer/2010/07/18/prisons_dirty_open_secret_an_omar_broadway_film

“New Jersey Corrections Commissioner Gary Lanigan said the state will close a 240-bed unit at Northern State Prison that houses the state’s high-risk gang members. Lanigan said inmate files will be reviewed to determine where best to transfer them. He doesn’t believe mixing them with other inmates will cause problems.”

*“New Jersey closes high-risk gang unit at Northern State Prison.”
Associated Press. 5/7/10*

http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/05/nj_closes_high-risk_gangunit.html

In 2004, an office secreted a small video camera into the Northern State Prison, New Jersey STGMU unit and gave it to inmate Omar Broadway, who filmed abuse in the prison over four months. That footage resulted in a screening at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. Home Box Office purchased the documentary and showed it multiple times in the summer of 2010. The film features commentary by Bonnie Kerness, Coordinator of Prison Watch, AFSC. AFSC has copies of raw film footage (“Sneak Peak”)—given to them by Omar Broadway’s mother—available

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for viewing. Reports of abuse and use of physical, chemical, and psychological abuse came out of STGMU to Prison Watch during the entire twelve years it remained open. The New Jersey Department of Corrections closed the unit in May 2010.



Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli

“I have not had ANY physical human contact in 2½ years, I’ve not been allowed to wash any of my clothes, clean my cell, clean my shower (I HAVE MY OWN BUILT IN SHOWER), receive a haircut, use the phone, receive visits, my outgoing mail was being opened, refused legal assistance, my meals are being tampered with, they are serving me WITHOUT gloves or hair nets on, sometimes feeding me HOURS AFTER everyone else has been served and this is done by the supervisor They leave my tray in here all night until the next morning when I am served breakfast and this accumulates bugs I am videotaped leaving as well as coming back in my cell at all times and this is done by a FEMALE S.I.D. officer making me bend over and spread myself as well as show my genitals.”

Lester A, East Jersey State Prison Lockbag R, Rahway NJ (11/29/08)

“I’ve been in the (hole) for three years and now so paranoid that I can’t be around people. I can’t even sleep in a cell with someone else even if I knew him all my life. I’ve tried every treatment, medication possible, no help... I am now so paranoid I can’t even be on the yards. I’m so paranoid now for being by myself for three years, I won’t take a cellie, won’t rec with someone else in my rec cage. I don’t even turn backwards when they say

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to come out of the cell that way. Even in a lock cell, a lock shower, a lock rec cage, **I'm still paranoid so how is it going to be on the streets when I am around others?** I've really tried to work on it but nothing at all works even the medications. So all I ask is, is this place really need[ed].”

Jeff H, Federal Correctional Complex, Oakdale SMU, Oakdale LA (3/18/10)

“... Eventually the isolation and cycles of highs and lows simply became my new norm... in 1997 I agreed to double cell with a prisoner, who unbeknownst to me, was already suffering from the adverse psychological effects of sensory deprivation brought on by the extreme isolation designed to break down the mental conditioning of those who are housed in this type of setting... my new cell partner stated many times to myself and openly to our neighbors that he found it hard to breathe... He told me that if he sought psychological help that it would impact him negatively when he went before the Board of Prison Terms during his parole hearings and that the psychs would think he was just faking it to get out of the SHUs anyways. Two months later he violently attacked me in an attempt to strangle me with a short piece of rope. During this struggle for my life he told me that **he would rather die on death row than go crazy in the SHU...** I have seen every level of madness and every level of deteriorating mind in this slow freefall here... My eyesight has deteriorated from never looking past the walls of my cell and my skin has long since passed being pale and turned now to sickly pale from never seeing the sun.”

Bryan E, Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit, Crescent City CA (5/3/10)

“... inmates have the choice of remaining in SHU unit until death, mental illness, or becoming a known informant – who has caused damage to other inmates... [SHU inmates are] subject to (10-20+) years of sensory deprivation via isolation and intentional limitation of normal human contact and social interaction as much as possible... denied adequate medical care (this became more pronounced when... [medical administration began] telling SHU inmates, “if you want better care, get out of SHU – and now SHU inmates are chained down to the floor of the clinic like animals, if they need to see a nurse/doctor) the psychiatric staff are complicit too, claiming there are no mental health issues precluding continued SHU confinement, without any personal interaction with these inmates!”

Anonymous collective, Pelican Bay State Prison SHU, Crescent City CA, sent by Rita G

“It’s hard to explain the multitude of little factors that induce stress, anxiety, frustration, and depression... My best attempt to describe prolonged isolation in a supermax prison is that it’s like Chinese water

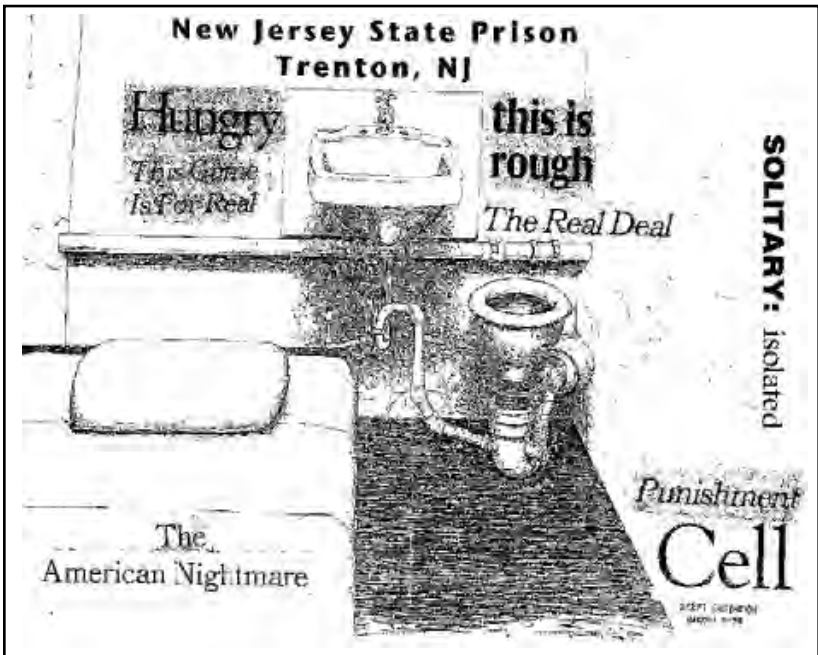
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torture. A single drop may not harm you but the millions of little drops of stress, anxiety, uncertainty, depression, and sorrow build up until **you can begin to feel your mind breaking**. I wish I could explain it better. Maybe then people could understand and wouldn't allow this hell to continue."

Joe D, Tamms Correctional Center, Tamms IL (2009)

The conditions were very inhumane...hot, no working vents at all... stuffy and humid...my first cell bugs were biting me all over my body, when I said something about it they (the medical staff) played like I was crazy then finally after constant complaining they gave me Benadryl then moved me and still didn't clean the cell. They had a light on all day that felt like a rotisserie lamp. It was hard to sleep because of the hot humid cells and constant bugs biting me all day and night...we had no cups to drink the brown colored water that came out of the sinks and toilets. There was constant screaming yelling kicking and banging (with objects on doors to multiply the sound on the doors)."

A.S. A., SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Township PA



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(8/20/09) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter
Institutionalized Cruelty p. 21

“My blood pressure is up and I constantly have headaches. I have bug bites all over my body which I was given Benadryl for and never seen a doctor, then moved from my cell to another cell with the same results. I fear for my life and sanity every day I live. I often think and have suicidal thoughts from the abuse I am suffering from back here...” [follow up letter 10/8/09]

“Suffering under 24 hours a day lights on in the cells, a spit shield fixed on the cell door without violating a spit policy that makes the cell on a 80 degree day feel like 110 in our cells cause there is no ventilation in the cell, the vent doesn’t blow air out or take air in, they refuse to put the fans on the tier, obstruct and tamper with our food, showers and exercise yard, have us housed in close proximity with mental health [patients] who they agitate and have...banging on doors, metal desk, sinks and toilets and screaming all night for days at a time causing sleep deprivation.”

Eric R, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Township PA
(7/16/09) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter
Institutionalized Cruelty p. 22

“The light in cell is blinding. It reminds me of old war torture tactics. It hurts your eyes and gives you migraines. I’ve seen medical for migraines and am due to receive glasses for damage to retina. Only noises we hear are the screams of mental patients of which there are many...The CO’s are liable to do any level of undignifying acts to you at any given time. It’s constant worry and unease. It makes one feel so helpless and vulnerable and you never know what tragedy may affront you today. At first I slept too much, now I rarely sleep. The loud screams and banging and kicking on doors make it difficult. Plus I’m always attentive to CO keys and the possibility that they’re coming for me.”

Lawyer L, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Township PA
(undated) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter
Institutionalized Cruelty p.23

“The noises I hear are constant banging from inmates near and far

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in the RHU. And I'm talking about 24/7. Some inmates bang on tables, bunks, doors, sinks, etc. and it seems like it never ceases. Other than that I hear guards yelling and cursing at people. Often I hear them use racial slurs and other derogatory terms towards inmates. **The COs tell inmates to 'kill themselves'** and sometimes kick doors or clang keys to disturb our sleep. Also, I hear inmates constantly screaming...Thankfully, I've never had an impulse to hurt myself, or at least a serious one I should say. This place definitely makes you think about it though. I feel sorry for weak-minded or mentally unstable inmates, though, because I can see how they would have such impulses. In fact, at least one inmate committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell while I've been in this RHU (the COs harassed him into hanging himself). It was a few weeks ago, I don't recall the date. But the jail swept that incident under the rug and put a new inmate in that cell the very next day...

I have noticed slight visual hallucinations in my peripheral vision and also if I focus on an object for extended time. Now that I think about it, my perception of reality maybe isn't as good as I'd like to think it is. I must admit, my thoughts are often irrational in relation to reality and often violent. Sometimes my perception of time is off. I sometimes get paranoid and think my cellmate is watching me or paying too much attention to my business. We get absolutely zero privacy. I often get paranoid and wonder if he is a homosexual. Sometimes I have urges to hurt him, but I try to control myself. I try to remind myself that it is not his fault we are forced to be in this situation.

The banging noises and screaming voices often seem unbearable as well. Also, I sometimes get very claustrophobic and feel like I am having a panic attack...I think that the whole idea of solitary confinement is insane. We're already in prison. This is just a form of inhumane punishment and torture. I think that most of the COs that work in this RHU in particular are sick individuals that get off on torturing us. The administration is obviously indifferent and could care less about the long term affects that this type of confinement has on us as human beings. Obviously we are not human beings to them, we are merely a number. Most of the inmates in solitary confinement need mental help but are not receiving it."

Anonymous, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Twp PA (undated) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter Institutionalized Cruelty p.25



Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli

DEPRIVATION

“...I was not allowed to communicate with no one outside of this prison and when I try to send my family a letter they would not receive it and when I was put on administrative custody I would ask for a phone call a week when you’re allowed one phone call a week when you’re in AC. When I ask they would deny it talking about I don’t deserve anything because I’m a piece of shit...I hear all type of noises, people crying, people screaming and yelling all day and night. My ability to focus is not the same anymore...

Yes I try to hurt myself because the **officers will always tell me to kill myself**, calling me all type of names and encouraging me to do so because they say the world would be a better place without me and it came to a point where I started believing them. I can’t sleep at night because I’m always thinking that the officers were going to come in my cell and attack me. I’m always having dreams whenever I get a chance to sleep. I’ve dreams about the officers trying to kills me or trying to poison my food. I wake up shaking where I can’t control my nerve. I be halluci-

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nating that everybody that I look at always laugh at me and **I'm always hallucinating that every officers I see is wearing a shirt that said 'kill yourself.'**"

Wally M, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Twp PA (9/17/09) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter Institutionalized Cruelty p.27

"The systematic grind consist of constant illuminate light interrupting your sleep pattern, being denied food trays, showers, exercise yard, and humiliating strip searches whenever you exit your cell or given a urine test. Additionally, the sensory deprivation exacerbates the problems prisoners already have and the most rational individuals find it extremely difficult to accept this abuse and wanton infliction of pain...fabricated misconducts and retaliation by RHU's guards for challenging and being defiant of their abuse of authority often resulting in placement in the Special Management Unit. **This control unit is designed to deprive prisoners and break their spirit and mind...**"

Paul R, State Correctional Institution, Huntingdon PA (4/29/10)

"... these state based CMU units such as being locked up and confined to a windowless 'monkey cage' 22 ½ hours a day, in which there is no human contact with other prisoners, and no environmental stimulation "

K.T.A., Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City CA

"My food trays have been sprayed with mace or cleaning agents, to having human feces and urine put into them by guards who deliver trays to my breakfast, lunch, and dinner... I have witnessed sane men of character become self-mutilators, suffer paranoia, panic attacks, hostile fantasies about revenge. One prisoner would swallow packs of AA batteries, and stick a pencil in his penis. They would cut on themselves to gain contact with staff nurses or just to draw attention to themselves. These men made slinging human feces 'body waste' daily like it was a recognized sport. Some would eat it or rub it all over themselves as if it was body lotion..."

Prisoncrats use a form of restraint, a bed crafted to strap men in four point Velcro straps. Both hands to the wrist and both feet to the ankles and secured. Prisoners have been kept like this for 3-6 hours at a time.

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Most times they would remove all their clothes. The Special Confinement Unit used the [‘water hoses’] on these men also... When prisons become overcrowded, prisoncrats will do forced double bunking. Overcrowding issues presents an assortment of problems many of which results in violence... Prisoncrats will purposely house a ‘sex offender’ in a cell with prisoners with sole intentions of having him beaten up or even killed.”

K.M.K., SHU Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, Carlisle IN (2010)

“In segregation, prisoners were locked in cells 23 hours a day. All the amenities of population life described above were absent. Every single segregation prisoner was subject to solitary confinement. Mentally ill prisoners, some of whom had attempted suicide multiple times, were housed in the segregation unit with the other segregation prisoners. There were prisoners who threw food and feces, who rattled and pounded their doors, who yelled from cell to cell or screamed incoherently at all hours...

In segregation, these lights glow 24 hours a day. This, combined with the standard sleep cycle were techniques specifically used as methods for low intensity and plausibly deniable torture in military manuals I assisted in editing while in the U.S. Army. These torture techniques were employed at ToCI...

In segregation, the trays used for food delivery did not even hold the appropriately sized portions. Segregation food servings were often half the normal size. As a consequence, I lost approximately 30 pounds in 70 days, weight that I gained back after my release to population...

In segregation, it is policy for prisoners to be subject to full visual body-cavity searches and to be handcuffed, shackled, and belly-chained whenever leaving the cell. All movement was under escort. I still have scars on my ankles from being shackled and forced to walk up stairs, through extended hallways, and back down stairs. I had open wounds on my ankles that would not heal for weeks at a time...

When I arrived in segregation... a prisoner named A occupied the cell next to it, sharing the vent... the smell of human feces and filth permeate[d] my cell through the vent. After his transfer, another mentally ill prisoner named O was moved from his cell down the range without explanation into the cell A had vacated. O made several suicide attempts and would stay up for days at a time, ranting on manic tirades, pounding his door, sometimes flooding the range with dirty toilet water that spilled under my cell door and left human waste on the floor... A

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Collage by Ojore Lutalo

prisoner named Friesz attempted suicide. **After being placed in the suicide cell, he climbed onto his sink and dove head-first to the cement floor trying to kill himself yet again.** The conditions in segregation drove people to suicide.”

Sean S, Mansfield Correctional Facility, Mansfield OH (5/17/10)

“... in 1997, I defected from the [validated prison gang] and renounced my gang association and withdrew from all gang activity. Yet here I sit 13 years later, still in segregation, although CDCR knows that I am a drop-out... I have been trying to get out of my validation for many years without success. It’s a slow and frustrating process with twists and turns and roadblocks. I am 52 years old and continue to suffer punitive isolation I was first introduced to at 35 within the walls of California’s SHU units...

Many are the days that we go without a shower or without yard or exercise. 24 hour periods locked in a cell, more often than not for



PAIN

Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli

consecutive days. The administration will use any little excuse they can to keep us locked in our cells. We lose showers, yard and medical on a regular basis. I spent the better part of 2008 and part of 2009 in a cell without any glass in a 2 foot by 4 foot window frame. I had to use the blanket I was issued as a covering. I slept with all my clothes on a bare mattress so I could have two sheets to cover myself with. I also lived with huge cockroaches and

mice and had to secure my food items by hanging them in a t-shirt from the ceiling vent to keep bugs and rodents out. I've had to drink water with toxic levels of arsenic and selenium well above federal standards. If this is not torture, I don't know what is.

I have seen many fall victim to isolation and sensory deprivation of the SHU environment. The indifference is mind-boggling. The prevailing attitude by CO's is that 'we're garbage and so what if you don't get treated humanely, who cares?' I actually heard a guard say, 'we used to be able to beat the crap out of them, but they cried to the courts, so now we get in trouble if we touch them.'"

Joe A, Corcoran State Prison SHU, Corcoran CA (Real Cost of Prisons 5/4/10)

"I have scars on my ankles (as I know everyone here does too) from

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where some officers like to sharpen the shackles to cut into the prisoners (a prisoner does not leave the cell without cuffs and/or shackles). These same types of guards will clamp down on cuffs to cut into the skin. When the inmate protests the guards will sometimes leave them on for hours. That is a favorite punishment of these guards to any prisoner that stands up for his self-worth. Leave them/him in cuffs – let him stew in his own feces and urine for a day... I've seen a man stumble (chain on shackles) and was thrown to the floor and a knee on his neck. He screamed the knee went to his face – breaking his front teeth – meanwhile the other officer is kicking him in his balls – well kneeling his balls while he held the prisoners legs open. The inmate charged with assault, the officer is now a sergeant...

Right now as I write this a man has a broken mind and spirit. He screams 'stop – shut up – shut up – fuck you!' He's not screaming at us. He screams because he's a little psychotic and the guards in the tower will open his door a little crack and then close it. Prison doors don't close like doors at home – they slam shut – BOOM. And they turn on the speaker and tap – tap – tap – for hours. They'll yell into the speaker, saying verbal abuses sometimes, sometimes just yelling."

Kevin O, Ely State Prison, Ely NV (6/1/10)

"I witnessed several incidents of guard on inmate abuse. Once I saw two guards punch an inmate in the face while the inmate was handcuffed and shackled to a bench. I saw inmates slammed face first onto the concrete, often for nothing. These incidents cite only the overt physical abuse. The mental abuse was, in some cases, worse... Even now, six months out of the hole I still remain affected. I withdraw from social interaction/setting. I feel frustrated for no apparent reason. Possibly the most damaging aspect of segregation is the sense of powerlessness. You can yell, scream, report misconduct and abuse to prison officials to no avail."

Brian S, Jefferson City Correctional Center, Jefferson City MO (6/10/10)

"The control tower was manned by one CO. Each shift literally experimented on different ways (methods) to torture me. They'd write notes and call in my responses to the torturer. They were constantly on their phones and walkie talkies communicating about what they were doing... The bottom (lower tower) CO would ring the control tower and

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the control tower CO would start turning knobs on one of the console boards (control and mixing boards) and this would turn up a certain frequency through the sound system. Then they'd blare the sound into the isolation cell so loud it hurt my ears. He'd then add pre recorded sounds of a guillotine hacking off limbs and several other sounds at the same time. They did this for days. They'd play certain recordings over and over again to elicit a response and then take notes... It hurt so bad I begged them to stop. They'd use sign language like putting their hands together in prayer formation and point at the concrete floor to imply I had to pray and beg to them on my hands and knees...

Another example is a term they called 'fired.' They'd use some kind of voltage that made the hairs on my arms stand up. It was a painful, continuous, irritable feeling. When they turned it up that means it was what they called 'hotter' (higher voltage). They also had a term cool off. The cell floor would get cold and the atmosphere would make me shake but I could still feel some voltage... Sometimes they'd have all intercoms playing through the loudspeakers at one time and then they'd add echo or high pitched frequency sounds similar to sounds they use when they check ears at the doctor. Then they'd blare it all into the isolation cell and play it off and on for days... One day they had a high frequency echo so loud in the cell it felt like my ears were going to explode.”

Eric H, El Dorado Correctional Facility, El Dorado KS (1/15/10)

“... offenders are forced to go numerous nights without sleep due to officials invalidated practice of keeping lights on 24 hrs a day on the rare occasion that cell lights are turned off it is only for 45 minutes or so. Offenders are not allowed to cover lights in cells, if an offender does he faces a conduct violation and subsequent denial of his breakfast meal. This not only is physically torturous (whereas prolonged sleep deprivation causes headaches, etc). It is also psychologically torturous (whereas) prolonged sleep deprivation... leading to dementia, paranoia, irritability etc... serves to worsen mental illness. These conditions also inflict chronic insomnia which is defined as sleeplessness lasting for more than a month, or chronic intermittent insomnia in which periods (days or weeks) of insomnia alternate with periods of good rest. Mental health staff tends to throw drugs at the problem. However, although these drugs will treat the symptoms, mental health staff have a more pressing responsibility of addressing the underlying problem – which is

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sleep deprivation caused by constant exposure to bright strobe lighting within cells.”

Antwon W, South Central Correctional Center, Licking MO 65542 (6/7/10)

“Many people may not know what it’s like to be isolated for so long the way we’ve been here, and I would say that it’s like being locked in the trunk of a car with enough weather stripping removed so that you can breathe, and with enough food and water stuffed in every day so that you can physically survive. You’re soon going to realize what it actually means when it’s said that we’re ‘social beings.’ You’re going to crave social interaction and human contact. **Soon you’ll be hollering out the cracks of the trunk to see if anyone is out there, ‘anyone’ who you can at least talk to for even a brief time.**”

Gabe H, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City CA (6/7/10)

“If the sensory deprivation does not subdue a person then they resort to physical attacks with chemical agents over the most trivial merde they can think of. Stripping a man naked and putting him in a cell with NOTHING because he ‘caused a disruption’ by notifying the ‘corrections officers’ of rotten and putrid food being served... Here is a list of things they do to prisoners:..Spray pepper spray/chemical mace into cells just to ‘establish who’s in control’ etc. 20 Hours a day of constant fluorescent lighting. Dog leashes (restraint tether) used on top of handcuffs to leave the cell. Every time. Restraint tethers, shackles, belly chains, handcuffs and black boxes to see our families for 2 hours of no contact visiting. Tormenting our visitors with seeing us in such a state. Chained beyond any real security concerns... They’ve blocked air flow from under the doors with sandbags causing a flux of staph infection along with a variety of other bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Those sandbags are wet and putrid (sometimes I’m not sure if I’m smelling the food trays or the rotting sandbags.)”

Nate R, Jefferson City Correctional Center, Jefferson City, MO (7/1/07)

Tamms Correctional Center

“... current procedures for sending prisoners to the Tamms Correctional Center in Southern Illinois’and keeping them there indefinitely’s



TORMENTED

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in violation of the 14th Amendment to U.S. Constitution, which guarantees due process of law. The judge ordered that significant changes be made at the notorious state supermax... Judge Murphy made clear that his ruling 'is narrowly drawn, extends no further than necessary to correct the violation of the 14th Amendment due process rights of IDOC [Illinois Department of Corrections] inmates placed at Tamms, and is the least intrusive means necessary to correct the violation of the federal rights of such inmates'

Jean Casella and James Ridgeway, "Judge Rules Procedures at Tamms Supermax Violate Constitution" *Solitary Watch*, July 21 2010

"Since I been at Tamms July 8, 1998 to present, I have cut, bite and hung or attempted to hang myself. I been on and off 17 different medications... since I been in prison 1994 to March 2009 when I was force off meds by Dr. K for writing a grievance against her... **I NEED HELP! Someone PLEASE HELP ME!**"

Robert F, Tamms Correctional Facility, Tamms IL (6/8/09)

"... guards found Robert F, 33, dead on June 23 in his cell in the Tamms Special Treatment Unit, or mental ward..."

George Pawlaczyk and Beth Hundsdorfer, *Belleville News-Democrat*, "Trapped in Tamms: In Illinois' only supermax facility, inmates are in cells 23 hours a day."

August 4, 2009

“... Tamms warden YJ told her on the phone that **Foor was not receiving any medications at the time of his death...”**

Dusty Rhodes, “Private Hell: Mentally Ill Tamms inmate dies in solitary confinement.” Illinois Times, 7/2/09. <http://www.illinoistimes.com/Springfield/article-6079-private-hell.html>

In a statement in support of his decision in a due process prisoners’ lawsuit, U.S. District Court Judge G. Patrick Murphy wrote, “Tamms [Supermax] imposes dramatic limitations on human contact, so much so as to inflict lasting psychological damage and emotional harm on inmates confined there for long periods...” Prison officials and inmates who described “crushing monotony” of spending 23 hours per day alone in a cell, devoid of human contact... The judge’s findings concerning psychological harm contradicts prison officials’ numerous claims over the years since the supermax opened in 1998, that long-term solitary confinement does not lead to mental breakdown.

George Pawlaczyk and Beth Hundsforfer, “Isolation at Tamms leads to mental illness, judge rules.” Belleville News-Democrat July 2,5 2010

“Krystal reports that she was physically attacked by other youth nearly every day that she was in the system. Shortly after arriving, Krystal found her shoes in the trash, covered in urine and spit. Frequently, youths attacked Krystal for refusing to perform sex acts. Other queer youth in the facility had similar experiences. ‘We’re all in the same category,’ she says. And there was nowhere to hide. ‘It was basically

Terrorist suspects cannot be sent to life in jail in US, European Court rules

“The court said the sentences would breach the prohibition on inhuman or degrading treatment under Article Three of the European Convention of Human Rights...The judges have also ruled that prolonged detention in solitary confinement in a US ‘supermax’ prison in Florence, Colorado would breach Article Three.”

*Duncan Gardham, Security Correspondent,
www.telegraph.co.uk, July 8, 2010*

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like a big dorm—one big room where everybody sleeps, that’s what’s going on,’ Krystal says. ‘Sometimes you would get sent to lockdown for fighting back, but there’s nothing else you can do.’ Krystal reported the abuse to staff, but ‘they would just wait till things happened. Sometimes the staff would tell the other youth to stop. Sometimes they wouldn’t.’... When Krystal was 13 or 14, the bullying and violence became so bad that staff placed her in protective custody, where she remained for a month....”

*Daniel Redman, “I was scared to sleep: LGBT youth face violence behind bars.”
The Nation. June 21, 2010*

“I am very thankful that there are people like you in the world who care. A friend of mine let me borrow and read your ‘Survivor’s Manual.’ It brought so many memories. Tears fell from my eyes as I thought back to the many years I was forced to spend in solitary confinement in total isolation and the years spent in control units forced to endure unspeakable forms of abuse by both inmates and prison officials. I’ve been beaten and raped more times that I care to remember. Degraded and dehumanized. Passed on from one man to another. From one organization to the next. I’m still treated with the same discrimination and deliberate indifference. I am a transgendered (male to female) inmate currently incarcerated in a control unit within the federal bureau of prisons. I am in my mid-thirties and have been incarcerated for almost 16 years...” *Anonymous*

It has been convincingly documented on numerous occasions that solitary confinement may cause serious psychological and sometimes physiological ill effects. Research suggests that between one third and as many as 90 per cent of prisoners experience adverse symptoms in solitary confinement. A long list of symptoms ranging from insomnia and confusion to hallucinations and psychosis has been documented. Negative health effects can occur after only a few days in solitary confinement, and the health risks rise with each additional day spent in such conditions.

Individuals may react to solitary confinement differently. Still, a significant number of individuals will experience serious health problems regardless of the specific conditions, regardless of time and place, and regardless of pre-existing personal factors. The central harmful feature

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of solitary confinement is that it reduces meaningful social contact to a level of social and psychological stimulus that many will experience as insufficient to sustain health and well being. The use of solitary confinement in remand prisons carries with it another harmful dimension since the detrimental effects will often create a de facto situation of psychological pressure which can influence the pretrial detainees to plead guilty. When the element of psychological pressure is used on purpose as part of isolation regimes such practices become coercive and can amount to torture.”

*International Psychological Trauma Symposium, December 2007.
Kingdom, Application nos. 24027/07, 11949/08 and 36742/08, Council of Europe:
European Court of Human Rights, 6 July 2010,
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c3718882.html>*

Communications Management Units

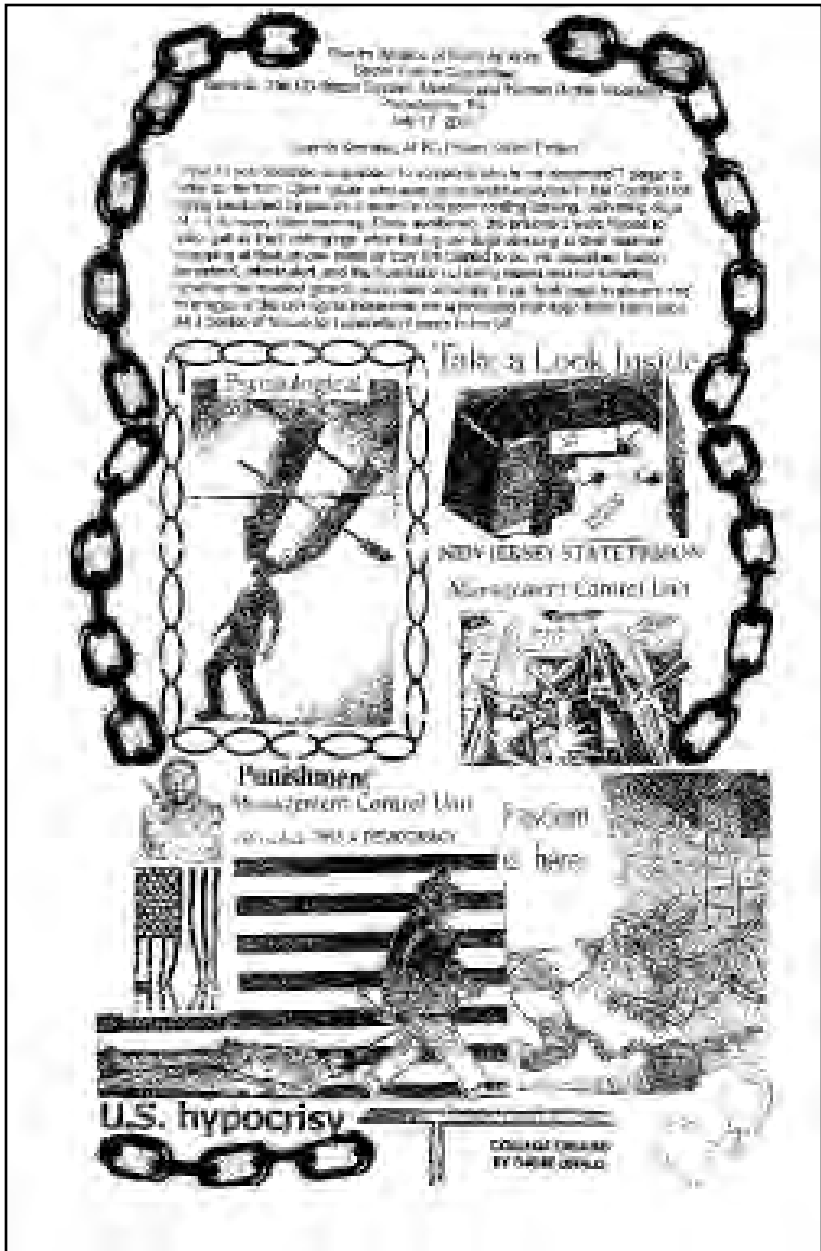
Note: The Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, IN and the United States Penitentiary in Marion, IL currently house the two Communications Management Units in the federal system.

“The latest progression of control units are called ‘security threat group management units.’ This is particularly egregious because it is the government which gets to define what a ‘security threat group’ is. According to a national survey done by the Department of Justice, the Departments of Corrections of Minnesota and Oregon named *all* Asians as gangs, which Minnesota further compounds by adding *all* Native Americans. New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania go on to list various Islamic groups as gangs. Because of my own background, I am very mindful of who is considered a ‘security threat’ to this country and how they are treated. The progression of the use of isolation is most recently known as ‘Communications Management Units’ in federal prisons which are designed to restrict the communication of imprisoned Muslims with their families, the media, and the outside world. This treatment of prisoners is replicated in US secret prisons throughout the world where almost all of those captured are people of color.”

Bonnie Kerness seminar, Muslim Alliance in North America (7/17/10)

“The Bureau established the CMU at FCC Terre Haute, IN, to house inmates who, due to their current offense of conviction, offense conduct, or other verified information, require increased monitoring of communications with persons in the community to ensure the safe, secure and orderly running of Bureau facilities, and to protect the public. The CMU is an open unit that operates separately from the general population of the main institution. With a capacity of housing 90 inmates, the CMU’s operational procedures reduce inmates’ ability to circumvent existing mail and telephone monitoring procedures. Types of inmates who may be housed there include those:

- convicted of, or associated with, international or domestic terrorism;
- convicted of sex offenses who repeatedly attempt to con-



Collage by Ojore Lutalo

tact their victims;

- **who attempt to coordinate illegal activities while incarcerated via approved communication methods;**
- **those who have received extensive disciplinary actions due to their continued misuse/abuse of approved communication methods.”**

*“State of the Bureau 2007: Bureau of Prisons Staff: Everyday Heroes,”
p. 15. U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons.
Harley Lappin, director.*

“At the Marion CMU, 72 percent of the population is Muslim, 1,200 percent higher than the national average of Muslim prisoners in federal prison facilities. The Terre Haute CMU population is approximately two-thirds Muslim, an overrepresentation of 1,000 percent.”

*Center for Constitutional Rights, “Communications Management Units:
The Federal Prison System’s Experiment in Social Isolation.”*

“There is no justice and no rights for someone like me who is a foreigner and Muslim. They sent me to the special unit called “Guantanamo Bay on American Soil” for the following reasons:

To manage our communication (phone, visits, mail) Because we are supposedly terrorists and a danger to the community. Let me explain what the government claims and make it clear for you that it is nonsense, an excuse for the new fascism, the new rule of discrimination.

There are people here who don’t have any contact with the outside. They never write or get mail, they have no phone calls and no visits. This was true when they were in regular units for years but still they were brought here. Which communications are being managed? Many others have a visit only once a year, phone calls once a month, mail once a week. How difficult is that to monitor? While secretly they wiretap millions of people and read billions of pieces of mail and email in this country! But they can’t manage to “follow” one 15 minute phone call per month so they must put the person in this Unit...

...All our visits, even with family, must be through glass. Stopping me from hugging my baby has nothing to do with national security! Again,

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if it's really a security concern let them give us non-contact visits for friends. But family, especially children under 10, have nothing to do with threats. Even if the people here were a danger (which I don't believe, at least in most cases) there are thousands of criminals, even murderers, in medium security prisons like this. But they are all allowed contact visits every day, not 4 hours a month and through the glass. The law should be the same and all should have the same privileges. The only difference is that we are Muslims...

... I was here when an inmate died. I still don't know why but they said it was a heart attack. All we knew was his friend did not see him at breakfast, and after eating went to check on him, he found his body. Even if it was a heart attack, imagine what he must have gone through all alone. Usually in prisons they have an emergency button you can press. Not here. He could have been struggling all night. Maybe if someone had known his life could have been saved. But who cares... like they say, prisoners are just numbers. If one dies, it's one less number.

Another night at about 2:00 am I heard someone banging on the door of his cell and yelling, 'CO! CO!' Other inmates started shouting, 'What's going on?' He yelled back, 'It's not me but my neighbor - he's diabetic and he collapsed... he is crying for help.' We all started shouting for the guards to check on him, and the doctor yelled that they should give him some honey or juice. It still took two hours until the emergency team arrived with a nurse. If his cellmate had not heard him and started shouting he would have died. Why is this a locked down unit but there are no emergency buttons in the cells?"

Yassin A., *Communications Management Unit: Terre Haute, Terre Haute IN*
(10/14/07) <http://www.albanyweblog.com/2007/10-Oct/10-14-07.html>

“Director L specifically redressed a concern that surrounded activities by Muslims prisoners within the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Because certain Muslim prisoners ‘don’t require’ high security, Director L informed Congress that the CMUs were specifically created for ‘these individuals’ instead of placing them in the Supermax ADX. [BOP 2009 Budget Hearing Before Congress]. This request for additional funds was for 9 million dollars after Congress had already given Mr. L 17 million dollars for the Counterterrorist Unit in West Virginia (CTU)...”

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A gentleman by the name of Mr. N, a 71-year-old man serving 120 years, also resides in the CMU. Mr. N does not shower for months on end. Letters written to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are ‘lost’ in the mail. Staff, those specifically running the CMU on-site and administration staff, i.e., Mrs. H, her associate wardens and department staff heads, are all aware of the odor of urine on Mr. N and have made no attempts to have him transferred to an institution where he could be taken better care of.”

Center for Constitutional Rights, “Comments Submitted by Current and Former CMU Prisoners” Royal Gene Domingo Jones, Sr., USP Marion. June 2, 2010

On a tour of Camp 5, a maximum-security camp for detainees the military deems “noncompliant,” the commanding officer rattled off statistics about the building. It was modeled after a prison in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Jeremy W. Peters, “Tour of Guantanamo Offers a Look, but Little Else.” New York Times, August 11, 2010

Those coming out directly to the streets from years in isolation talk about sleeplessness, paranoia, feelings of violence, and an inability to relate to anyone who hasn’t had the experience of prison and isolation. Family and friends report that the loved ones being returned to them after finishing their sentences are not people they know anymore. The people who have endured this describe years of living in an environment so toxic to mental functioning that they are unable to relate to the world as we know it upon release. One man described cutting himself just so he could feel something. I once asked a man why he threw feces on officers, what could possibly compel him to behave like that? He said it was the only power he had left.

Bonnie Kerness, “From Slavery to the Prison System: Human Rights Violations in America.” Monmouth University, February 19, 2009

Health and Medical Services and Conditions

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 6

Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Article 2

1. Each State Party shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction.
2. No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, international political instability or any other public policy emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.
3. An order from a superior officer or a public authority may not be invoked as a justification of torture.

Article 16

4. Each State Party shall undertake to prevent in any territory under its jurisdiction other acts of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in Article 1, when such acts are committed by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

“Please allow me to explain the unhealthy, unsanitary, unsafe and

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nasty cells I've been placed in since I've been here 5/9/08... Sgt. B moved me in a cell building 18D-Lower-11 that had blood on the floor, the walls, the mirror, the toilet, the bed frame and the sink from the guy in the cell before me – hit his head or something and I was forced to clean it up on 4 to 12 shift bare handed with just torn towels that the 4 to 12 officers gave me because Sgt. B wouldn't give me anything to clean the blood up with on his shift (8 to 4) and when I asked him [Sgt. B] for some gloves and cleaning supplies, told me, 'F-no'... I filed a grievance and told, non-grievable...

I've been told by several officers, that's why I eat their spit, their semen and all kinds of stuff, I filed grievances on all of the things they have told me they are doing to my food and I'm told, non-grievable. On 6/27/09, 7/11/09, and 12/22/09 I bit down on metal in my food in which my mouth still hurts and bleeds from when I first bit down on metal in my food on 6/27/09 and all they are trying to do is [CMS medical department] cover up and justify my injuries to my left hand and left foot and cover up and justify why my mouth is bleeding... **I fear for my life, safety, and health by correctional officers** and the department of corrections is continuing to allow the *same exact officers* to continue and continue to assault me, harass me, target me, tamper with my food, steal my legal work, steal my grievances, etc. and I've made the department of corrections know exactly what's going on but nothing is being done about it at all..."

Greg R, SHU James T. Vaughn Correctional Center, Smyrna DE

"I am a lung and bronchial tube cancer patient and it has metastasized substantially... Due to the cancer, radiation, and botched surgery, I am in constant pain. I am on lifetime M.S. Contin [morphine] pain medication which also help tremendously for the multiple spine disease pain... Prison staff deliberately refuse to allow me to go to my pain medication appointments or they deliberately interfere by holding me in my housing for 2 hours which both cause unnecessary pain and narcotics withdrawals that are even worse than the cancer pain..."

Another incident where medical staff deliberately refused to provide my pain medication was during a heat wave of 101-105 degrees. This Texas prison unit with many elderly, and very ill inmates, has no air conditioning... the medical holding cage is not in the medical department



like on almost all other Texas prison units. It is in the main hallway in front of medical... everyone must sit at all times.

During the hottest summer months the cages become so full with staph infection, medication, and treatments that it is shoulder to shoulder sitting... the cages become so hot, the body heat being held in by cinder block walls and bodies shoulder to shoulder that we become soaking wet with perspiration. On one such occasion I became dizzy and nauseous and I went to the medical door and asked to sit inside after

explaining my symptoms. **The guard not only refused but refused to tell the medical staff... sitting in the cage during a heat wave I became dizzy again and felt like I was going to be sick** – nausea and mouth watering. Because the ‘pill window’ was still going with regular meds I knew from experience that it was going to be a long while until they were done [cancer meds are given in the medical department under direct observation] so I went back to my housing to lay in front of my fan. As soon as count cleared I went back to the medical dept., I was gone about 1 hour and as soon as I walked up the R.N., Ms. R, yelled thru the door ‘You are not getting your medication!’... It was a rough, rough night. Cancer pain, narcotic withdrawal, and all the heat stroke symptoms.”

Michael S, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Rosharon TX (5/3/10)

“July 19, 2007 inmate Dale I died from a raging infection caused by fecal matter seeping into his abdomen through a perforated ulcer. The official investigation found that Jail Health Service caregivers overlooked or ignored the evidence that Iszley was in serious medical trouble the day before he died. **Documents show Iszley begged to be sent to a hospital and writhed in pain for nearly two days before he died in the jails infirmary.**”

John S, Seattle WA King County Jail (5/4/10)

“A prisoner by the name of Fred C died this past week, and you should be informed that there is little doubt that his death was caused, at least in part, by his maltreatment at the hands of your B-pod housing staff... Mr. C complained incessantly of experiencing chest pains... b/c of his presumed mental health issues, staff mostly rolled their eyes and ignored Mr. C’s medical complaints... **staff would make fun of Mr. C’s medical complaints...** The smell and filth associated with Mr. C’s dramatically declining health did not move housing staff to seek medical help for him, but instead caused further anger and resentment by staff... [C] was subjected to hazing and harassment by unit officers on a regular basis in connection with his inability or unwillingness to stand to take showers. Instead of attempting to accommodate his needs by providing a chair in the shower, or providing him access to a bathtub in the medical unit, housing staff took it as a challenge to try and force Mr. C to shower. This was attempted on many occasions by locking Mr. C in the shower and

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leaving him in there, laying on the filthy shower floor, for literally hours at a time... I personally witnessed night Officer H take a grievance from Mr. C's door, drop it on the floor, and use his shoe to jam the grievance back under Mr. C's door."

Charlie F, Adult Detention Complex, Salt Lake City Utah (5/24/10)

"... I've been forced to live three men in a cell house with a camera over our living quarter one of our cellmates is forced to lay on the floor due to his age he shouldn't have to. But we are forced to shut up or we would be pepper sprayed or shocked by taser again. The phones won't permit us to call out to the Marshall's office when we ever get the telephone."

Howard H, Calcasieu-Parish Correction Center, Lake Charles LA 70602 (6/6/10)

"... I had an emotional breakdown and kicked the door to my cell. I realized that I had broken my leg by kicking the door and called on the intercom for help, stating that I hurt my leg. No one responded. I continued to lie on the floor and call for help. After about 20 minutes, staff responded... they returned about fifteen minutes later and told me to move away from the door so they could see me. I informed them that I could not move because my leg was broken. They responded that unless I crawled across the floor they would not call for a nurse. I was able to drag myself a total of about six feet away from the door, it took over a half of an hour to do so... Staff and the nurse left again. The nurse returned about fifteen minutes later with twelve security staff. Staff entered my room, then grabbed my arms, handcuffed me, and rolled me on my back, held my broken leg down, then pulled up my pant leg, causing me extreme pain. I was left to lie on the floor until emergency transport people arrived about thirty minutes later... I was diagnosed with multiple fractures to my right leg... I was arbitrarily denied all my breaks while in isolation from the time of my injury until after surgery. So I was locked in my cell 24 hours a day. My knee has been permanently injured, and I lost feeling in the dorsal side of the leg and three toes..."

(6/2/08)

... On or about November 13, 2003, I complained of intense pain to my lower back from a cyst where my skin swelled greatly, and then broke

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and bled as a result of being in bed because of my leg injury... When the nurse arrived, she merely placed a gauze pad over my bleeding skin and left. I explained that it was necessary to lance the cyst in order to drain the fluid... when I received no further medical help, I eventually felt forced to puncture the cyst and drain it myself, because the pain and pressure were so great. The MSOP refused to provide me with a doctor for this condition until the end of December 2003. The doctor at the hospital recommended surgery. The facility failed to arrange surgery until February 24, 2004 when a golf-ball sized cyst was finally removed.”

Arthur S, Minnesota Sex Offender Program, Moose Lake MN (6/8/10)

“In the ten years since my initial stay at Passaic County Jail, inmates have, and are continually being forced to live in absolute squalor; which exposes them to a variety of parasitic infections like scabies, lice, ring-worm and crabs, as well as skin diseases like MRSA and impetigo. This filth contributes to the obvious infestation problem.”

Michael B, Passaic County Jail, Passaic NJ (9/14/09)

“I came down with something called cellulitis. Cellulitis is a bacterial infection of the skin which if left untreated may cause septicemia, a potentially fatal condition. Now I was sick with cellulitis in my foot. And for three weeks the condition had got so bad the prison call 911. And I was taken to St. Francis hospital where I stayed for 7 days with one day in the ICU.”

Kofi B, New Jersey State Prison, Trenton NJ (7/16/10)

“On about 2006, at Bexar County Jail in San Antonio, I pick up Hepatitis C, along with Staph infection that caused me to have a blood poisoning, in which caused a cyst, that grow on my neck, and had to have an operation on my neck now I have a scar on my neck from my ear to the bottom of my neck, in the area of 10 to 11 inches long... I didn't have anything wrong with me when I got into the county jail, now in prison I can't get no treatment, until my liver goes out, then it's too late...”

David P, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Stiles Unit, Beaumont TX

In a system where 95% of people in prison return to our communities, the impact of cruelty and poor medical practices isn't just a matter of human decency. They involved, among other things, serious public health concerns with both immediate and long term implications. Public health issues including Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, HIV, mental illness and symptoms related to post traumatic stress disorder. Many leave prisons without any of the medication, which formed the bedrock of their treatment, thereby risking diffusion of these diseases.

Bonnie Kerness, "From Slavery to the Prison System: Human Rights Violations in America." Monmouth University Human Relations Advisory Committee, February 19, 2009

Mental Illness

“... people who have mental illness will get sprayed with mace first, then they’ll shoot gas three times in the cell before they run in four to five suited up men to put the inmate in the ground and handcuff and shackle. Usually when this happens to anybody who gets a use of force they are stripped naked, *all* property including mattress is thrown out and you don’t get fed next meal for the fact they have to do paper work...”

Ruben Z, Estelle High Security Unit, Huntsville TX (3/17/10)

“I’ve had serious mental illness since childhood, ‘bipolar disorder’ and behavioral problems, ‘intermittent explosive disorder’ and I’ve got intellectual functioning disorder! As well as chronic seizures, grand mal seizures... my mental illness went 100% untreated for my first couple years in prison! Which caused me to be put into confinement... I’ve been in ‘strip cells’ with nothing but a steel bunk in the middle of winter and no heat in the cell house and had the officers spray water in my cell and on myself, and I would stay like that for up to 10-12 days at times! With the whole cell having a thin layer of frost! ...I cut myself so bad the guards got sick upon seeing my wounds! ... I was injected with lots of psych meds, placed in 5-point restraints for very long times... I was so paranoid... my mental help was a super mega dose of psych meds and a box car segregation cell!”

Bobby B, Tamms Correctional Center, Tamms IL (5/7/10)

“On March 5, 2010, an adjustments hearing was held and K was convicted in absentia. Fred N’s [the hearing officer] record of the hearing alleges that K waived his right to be present at the hearing, to have a representative, or to call witnesses. K was found guilty of using threatening language and disrespect. K was sentenced to 340 days segregation, the loss of visits for 150 days, and the loss of 1,000 good conduct days. In imposing the unusually harsh and cruel sentence, N obviously gave no consideration to K’s mental history or condition, and there’s no reason for an inference that N even cared whether K was mentally capable of knowingly and intelligently waiving his rights... Inmate K has a history of mental illness... On the afternoon of Marchth, when the consequences of the adjustment hearing were cautiously explained to K, he presum-

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ably cut himself and was subsequently moved to the suicide watch area of the institution...

... On February 2, 2010, I was housed in a segregation cell next to a mentally ill inmate... he aroused a great deal of commotion... because he was coating himself with human feces, spreading the same around the cell and on the cell door window – from which he was licking the waste. **Security staff reacted to this cry for help by initially threatening, to no avail, to deprive the patient of his food ration.** Within a few days the poor soul was rotated out of the area and away from other inmates aware of the patient's neglected condition...

Again on February 19th, 2010, a mentally challenged inmate named Momid W was exiting the housing unit #5 adjustments hearing room, from which he seemed to have been somewhat propelled. Inmate W was cuffed from behind, and just as he cleared the door frame he was struck a vicious blow to the back of the head by a correctional officer to his rear. The blow knocked W to the floor where he was then kicked and pummeled by two officers before he was painfully lifted and drug out of sight by the handcuffs that secured his arms behind his back..."

*Norm P, Western Correctional Inst., Cumberland, MD 3/9/10 (written),
5/18/10 (received)*

"This guy has 40 years in Prison and it has taken a great psychological toll on his mind. He has illusions, paranoid + very psychotic... The young officers like to taunt him, and provoke a response to give him a ticket."

S.D.P., Upstate Correctional Facility, Malone NY (5/20/10)

"... taken from 'a letter to all who will listen, take what I have to say seriously and open their mind to accept the truth... I have heard voices (and still do) and seen things that other people don't see (and still do) and any time I try to seek help, I am either laughed at and called a liar, or even worse, punished by being placed in a freezing cold cell with no clothes'... it is well documented that he has had mental health problems... he states his history of self-mutilation... psychologists conclusions state: 'Mr. P obviously had some serious mental health problems even before he began being housed in isolation; he has been housed in isolation almost the entire ten years that he has been incarcerated. Mr. P believes that the sensory deprivation... has had much to do with his

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acting out through custodial assaults... he begins to develop suspicious and paranoid feelings... relieve[s] the stress by self-mutilation and acting out'... he gives this account of the treatment he did receive in the Special Offenders Unit: 'I was placed in the restraint bed due to a self-harm attempt. While in the restraint bed I was assaulted by an officer... came to the restraint bed, to conduct a 'cert check' on the restraints... C/O Shaw open hand smacked me, extremely hard with excess force, two times in the right side of my face... ”

From prisoner advocate on behalf of Kyle P, Washington State DOC (5/30/10)

“... even though the use of chemical agents/ad[ministrative] seg[regation] on mentally ill unconstitutional, the practices continue... I was angry because I was not given a suicide blanket, it was winter and lack of heat is used to modify behavior. I was pepper sprayed without prior mental health consultation and evaluation.”

Steven D, Western New Mexico Correctional Facility, Grants NM (6/8/10)

“A considerable number of prisoners fell, after even a short confinement, into a semi-fatuous condition, from which it was next to impossible to arouse them, and others became violently insane; others still, committed suicide...”

Victor D, Oklahoma State Prison, McAlester, OK (9/28/09)

“I am reminded of mentally ill Frank H in New Jersey, who was forced into an isolation unit. The guards taunted and teased this man, made him dance as he begged them for cigarettes, water or food while they laughed. Frank H killed himself.”

As told by Bonnie Kerness, explaining reports received (11/09)

“In New Jersey I've received reports of the use of something called the 'chicken suit,' where the mentally ill are forced to wear clear plastic suits during their stay in the Special Needs unit in a county facility. In essence they spend their days naked.”

Anonymously told to Bonnie Kerness (2009)

... the trend toward deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill in the 1970s was its own social movement designed to take people out of the dreadful conditions in mental asylums and place them in community



The following four testimonies are regarding the suicide of Matthew Bullock, who suffered from mental illness, had attempted suicide six times, and had been sentenced to serve in a secure mental health facility:

“Officer B, C, McC, P, R and M **encouraged prisoner Matthew Bullock to kill himself**, called him child molester, kicked on his door, and deprive him of protection against suicidal tendencies. Specifically I recall on 8/26/09 and 8/27/09 Officer McC was bragging that it was him (McC) that made Bullock commit suicide and that he would like to see other inmates kill themselves. On 8/27/09 correctional officer McC stated that he is going to make the baby raper ‘[name withheld]’ kill himself too. The days following up to the date that prisoner Matthew Bullock committed suicide Mr. Bullock was complaining about being unable to breathe in hot cell with the bright light shining in his face 24 hours a day. Prisoner Bullock was in a camera cell and told the officers that he would kill himself. The RHU officers moved inmate Bullock to a cell without camera and provided him the means to kill himself. No officers made any rounds to check on Bullock on the 2-10 shift. Therefore Mr. Bullock being under the pressure of solitary confinement and being treated less than a dog committed suicide.”

Carrington K, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Twp PA (9/17/09) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter - Institutionalized Cruelty p.14

“...They...told Matthew Bullock that they don’t take his suicide threats seriously and that if he wanted or needed a helping hand to assist his suicide task/threat...**the officers here at Dallas definitely caused this inmate to kill himself** by agitated him in various ways and by totally ignoring his health problems/conditions.”

Isaac S, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Twp PA (8/24/09) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter - Institutionalized Cruelty p. 15

“A man named Matthew Bullock died in K-A-48 cell of Dallas RHU. Officer B worked along with officer M. **Officer B was an instigator**. He was making comments of how we’ll ‘all get your day’ and ‘we’re just saving

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tax dollars, it's a depression.' When inmates screamed man dying get him help. They lounged around making comments of obscene nature to which I can't repeat in detail. No one knew his family to tell them the real story and be able to offer them affidavits and testimony so they can get justice. Surely they were given a trumped up version of their loved one's death. May God Bless his soul!"

*Lawyer L, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Twp PA
(undated) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter -
Institutionalized Cruelty p. 16*

"Since I got to this prison I've been in the RHU more time than the general population. I need someone to help me because **I should have been Matt Bullock**, I hung myself Nov. 15 '08 and all these people did was lock me in a room naked for 18 days and take [away] every medication that had helped me. I wouldn't have hung myself if they would've listened to me. If they wouldn't have continually messed with all my medications."

*John P, SCI Dallas Restricted Housing Unit (confinement), Jackson Twp PA
(11/5/09) source: Human Rights Coalition-Fed Up Chapter -*

treatment centers. The money to realize the second half of the vision never materialized, however, and many of the mentally ill were left on the streets and subsequently arrested. As a result, jails and prisons have become the primary sites for many people to receive mental health services...

We believe that we should stop treating mental illness as "criminal" behavior, and use health-care responses rather than police responses to behavior that results from mental illness. If there is a return to greater use of mental hospitals, these should be available to patients and their families on a voluntary basis. Instead of continuing investment in more prisons to house mentally ill persons in facilities not equipped to treat them, we should invest more in secure but treatment oriented hospitals for the violent mentally ill, and in community mental health services to treat nonviolent mentally ill persons as outpatients.

*Laura Magnani and Harmon L. Wray, Beyond Prisons:
A New Interfaith Paradigm for Our Failed Prison System. Page 30, 126;
American Friends Service Committee, 2006.*

Use of Force and Devices of Torture

International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Article 4

1. Each State Party shall ensure that all acts of torture are offenses under its criminal law. The same shall apply to an attempt to commit torture and to an act by any person which constitutes complicity or participation in torture.

Article 10

1. Each State party shall ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition against torture are fully included in the training of law enforcement personnel, civil or military, medical personnel, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention, or imprisonment.
2. Each State Party shall include this prohibition in the rules or instructions issued in regard to the duties and functions of any such person.

Article 11

Each State Party shall keep under systematic review interrogation rules, instructions, methods and practices as well as arrangements for the custody and treatment of persons subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment in any territory under its jurisdiction, with a view to preventing any cases of torture.

Article 13

Each State Party shall ensure that any individual who alleges he has been subjected to torture in any territory under its jurisdiction has the right to complain to, and to have his case promptly and impartially examined by, its competent authorities. Steps shall be taken to ensure that the complainant and witnesses are protected against ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of his complaint or any evidence given.

“On June 19, 2004 [correctional officer] S ordered that I be placed

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in four-point restraints after I set the water sprinkler off in my cell...S forced me to remain in restraints until June 22, 2004 without ever talking to or observing me. While already restrained, defendant S then ordered that I be involuntarily injected with anti-psychotic drugs (unknown to me at the time) at the suggestion of non-medical LTSU [long-term segregation unit] staff. Prison guards physically held me down while a female nurse forcibly pulled down my underwear and injected me in the buttocks with a needle.

I was injected with Haldol at defendant S's direction, with full knowledge that this drug is known to cause restlessness and muscle spasms in patients. Due to me being restrained and unable to stretch, defendant did this as torture. While in these restraints, I urinated and defecated on myself several times and was made to live in it for several days...When I asked...Saavedra why he was denying me placement in a treatment unit and singling me out, he stated that I shouldn't 'complain so much' and that I'm 'nothing but a lab rat.'"

Andre J, SCI Fayette, LaBelle PA (11/09)

"The C.O. Michael J hold the black metal box, the one that goes with the handcuffs and the chain around the waist. He hold with the left hand and passed the rest of restrictions to Officer M. Having done that, the C.O. J did as if he was leaving the cell, but suddenly he turned around and balancing all his weight, he extended his right fist and hit me. Right below of the left eye inflaming my left eye, knocking me down in my back in the bunk, and jumped on top of me and began striking me with both of his fists, on the face, neck, torso area, and in the chest. The C.O. M. J hit me several times with the black metal box. The black metal box slipped out of his left hand but he was on top of me. And continue beating me like a beast. The C.O. M was standing at the door just watching the C.O. Michael J beating me."

*Sergio F, Florida State
Prison, Raiford, FL (3/19/10)*



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“if someone don’t know what they [correctional officers] think we should do then they gas us, shoot us with bombs, shoot us with a paint gun that has rubber balls in it. Then took a strip cell put in black box. Chains and leg irons until we decide to do as they say or the warden comes and says to take you out, so you got to pray that a tour comes so you’ll be out before all that.”

Jeff H, Federal Correctional Complex, Oakdale SMU, Oakdale LA (undated)

“Some years back I was at a gathering where someone brought a black box attached to handcuffs and asked me to wear it for 45 minutes. The box was so heavy that the pain was immediate. I was unable to think of anything for those 45 minutes except pain. People have described wearing it for hours and in at least one prison, the person has to wear it during his entire window visit.”

*Bonnie Kerness presentation to the
National Religious Campaign against Torture (11/09)*

“In June 2004 I was beaten and chained to a metal bed with no food and water for 3 days...”

Chris G, Saguaro Correctional Center, Eloy AZ (4/29/10)

“The authorities here at Lewisberg, being carried out by staff in regards to excessive (sic) use of force and the discharge of chemical agents (gas) is and has been an ongoing problem since I arrived in 6/2010. I have to be very cautious what I write in this letter because the mail is often tampered or so I have witnessed. This is a chemical agent go happy (gas) prison. When someone is gassed, we all have to endure it. When people fight, staff does a very poor job of trying to prevent it. They would rather you fight so they can gas you or shoot you with spray ball pepper ball gun or grenade you and burst your ear drums. Two weeks ago myself and my cell mate tried to avoid getting in a fight by telling staff that we aren’t getting along before we got into a fight. The unit manager told that that he will not move either of us.”

P.D., Lewisberg Penitentiary, November 15, 2010

No Touch Torture

University of Wisconsin professor Alfred McCoy [author of *A Question of Torture, CIA Interrogation, from the Cold War to the War on Terror*] writes, "... interrogators had found that mere physical pain, no matter how extreme, often produced heightened resistance."

...The CIA's psychological paradigm for "no touch" torture fused two new methods, "sensory disorientation" and "self-inflicted pain," whose combination, in theory, would cause victims to feel responsible for their own suffering and thus capitulate more readily to their torturers. Refined through years of practice, sensory disorientation relies on a mix of sensory overload and sensory deprivation via banal procedures, isolation then intense interrogation, heat and cold, light and dark, noise and silence, for a systematic attack on all human stimuli. The fusion of these two techniques, sensory disorientation and self-inflicted pain, creates a synergy of physical and psychological trauma whose sum is a hammer-blow to the existential platforms of personal identity. (McCoy outline, 4-5)

In 2004, the Red Cross reported: "The construction of such a system. ... cannot be considered other than an intentional system of cruel, unusual and degrading treatment and a form of torture." (McCoy outline, 9)

From In Contravention of Conventional Wisdom by Cheryl Welsh,

"I'm... writing on behalf of the victim F because he doesn't know how to read or write... F requested for his cell to be sanitized, Sgt. D reply was that it had already been done which is a lie because I was standing at my door and they had just moved another offender out. They refused to clean the cell out, all inmate F did was kneel down on his knees, and laid down on the ground. This happened right underneath one of the

CNN Blog August 24, 2010

“Officials at a Los Angeles County jail plan to test out an invisible head-beam weapon originally developed by the military as a way to subdue brawling inmates by making them feel ‘intolerable heat.’

The technology, called an Assault Intervention Device, is a non-lethal weapon developed by Raytheon Company. It originally was scaled down for use at the jail.

The device ‘emits a focused beam of wave energy that travels at the speed of light and produces an intolerable heating sensation that causes targeted individuals to flee...’

Deputies have tested the device, which is controlled by a jail officer using a joystick.

‘We believe that technology can help solve problems facing the corrections community, including addressing issues of inmate violence,’ Sheriff Lee Baca said during a news conference...’ The device will allow us to quickly intervene without having to enter the area and without incapacitating or injuring either combatant.’

... Officials say they hope the device can help quell inmate assaults and reduce prison violence. Its use will be monitored by the U.S. Department of Justice’s National Institute of Justice and Pennsylvania State University.”

From <http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2010/08/24/l-a-jail-tests-intolerable-heat-beam-on-brawling-inmates/>

cameras on this wing. Sgt. D and Officer R got to the ground one on each side, and for no reason what so ever Sgt D striked the right side of inmate F’s face five times with a closed fist, when Fisher turned his face to the other side officer R also striked him with a closed fist five times, he turned his face to Sgt. D striked him five times, then officer R picked F’s head off the ground and smashed it into the ground face first three times after that other (illegible) arrived and told Sgt. D to step away.

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Inmate F had his handcuffed behind his back, never at any time did he spit, kick, or become verbally or physically aggressive at any time. There is no way he could have hurt anybody while being handcuffed and also escorted by two officers. He was taken to the hospital. I usually tell myself **I don't stick my nose in anything that doesn't concern me but damn what I seen done to this innocent individual was fucked up to the point where I wrote a step one grievance and which I immediately received a response back saying my statement would be included in the 'use of force'...** and the following day they brought back inmate F back. He had a broken nose, bruises and knots on both sides of his face, and the doctor from the hospital advised him he had one or two broken bones and fractures in his face. They were supposed to do a follow up but the guards here refuse to take him to medical retaliating against him for no apparent reason.

Other things multiple officers do is refuse to feed inmates if they find out a certain inmate filed a complaint step one grievance against them, they throw out outgoing mail, or which is really fucked up give a offender another person's mail on purpose, people who can't speak English are mostly victims of this bullshit deny them medical or jacking them for their food...The people here with rank are out of control... my point is yeah we're in prison for breaking the law, but we're still human beings and deserve to be respected as one especially if we don

Ruben Z., Estelle High Security Unit, Huntsville TX (3/17/10)

“...it's not just the conditions of the prison or lack of programs and proper medical attention. It's also the way we are treated by the guards and staff. We have to walk through a gantlet of guards who are wearing helmets and swinging and banging their night sticks in a threatening manner as we go to and from chow, or any movement. They talk to us like we were dogs, cursing at us, threatening us, it's insane! Prisoners are being beaten! When they pull you over for a pat down, they manhandle you, slapping your sides, grabbing your leg and giving it a quick yank, and what not doing their best to get us to say something.”

Ralph K., New Jersey State Prison, Trenton NJ (9/11/08)

“Having heard that guards at SVOP in Sussex County spray and beat inmates 'for sport,' I arranged to be sent to the 'sanction pod' at SVOP

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in Georgetown... On May 9, I saw two guards approach an inmate from behind, as he was **walking away from them**, spray him with pepper spray, hit him, and slam him into the steel door. This attack was unprovoked and unjustified, and all too typical!... On May 11, a Cpl. M and a Lt. C attacked me... While I was handcuffed, silent, and seated in a chair, they sprayed me with pepper spray, picked me up – snatched me out of the chair – threw me to the asphalt, kicked me in the head and deliberately injured my arm... they then threatened to repeat this behavior every hour.”

Kenneth A., Victor B-1 DCC, Smyrna DE (11/7/07)

“I was... thrown from the wheel chair or rather it was snatched out from under me I was tackled to the ground and held face down completely helpless. I did not resist in any way; this all happened so very fast... another CO who was pressing my face in the ground took me by my hair and slammed me face down in the ground several times very hard till my mouth was filled with dirt and bleeding and my face was kicked very hard by a CO D.”

Fred W, Red Onion State Prison, Pound VA (11/3/07)

“On January 29 and 31, 2010, and February 1, 2010, at Ely State Prison, sixteen inmates were involved in cell extractions over a non-emergency situation where staff only wished to assert authority. Ten were subjected to brutal physical abuse at the hands of staff where no mediation was used to achieve a ‘peaceful’ resolution. Three of these inmates went to the infirmary for medical treatment while others were denied treatment... The incidents of January 31, 2010, were predicated by staff smearing the bloody face of an inmate across a window as a show for inmates to witness and was further exacerbated by the same staff member saying, ‘you’ll bleed like bitches’ if the inmates continued to be disruptive.”

John N, Nevada State Prison, Ely NV (5/10/10)

“In 2007 because of my outspoken activism against torture, I was assaulted, battered and placed in outside hospital for multiple injuries, including broken left ankle-bone. Upon my return to same prison, I was tortured with a host of violations that went on for months. I had to re-break and re-set my own ankle bone that had been dislocated due to

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being forced to walk without a cane, walker, or crutches. I was denied showers, hot water, placed in a cell where an exhaust fan in over heated pipes and extreme cold... I was, and now, denied medical care for outstanding medical problems...”

Reginald M, Auburn Correctional Facility, Auburn NY (5/15/10)

“... For at least the next 67 days... I was literally chained to the metal bed frame in the middle of the cell, by a 3-4 foot section of heavy tow chain with defective shackles (no working safety locks) tethering me there for 24 hours a day. I was given perhaps at best six showers during this period of time and only three opportunities to change my clothing... the room temperature stayed at near freezing, and there were large fluorescent lights directly over the bed I was tethered to, that never turned off. When I complained to the Sheriff’s deputies, I was told there was no on/off switch for the lights in my cell and there were likewise no temperature controls accessible.”

Michael D, New Jersey State Prison, Trenton NJ (5/11/10)

“On Sept. 5 1996 I was call out for a legal pass inside the L.A. county jail 9:00 A.M. I was toward the control booth, several deputies sitting on the bench. One deputy told me to tuck my shirt in, I comply. He told me to put my hands inside my pants pocket. So I exit the door, to the legal unit. Deputy S, stop me, told me to face the wall. He search me, told me, I was going to the “Hole.” I ask him, for what reason I was going to the hole. He said insubordination. I told him (S) I did not do anything , during his escort by the control booth. I was upset, told him fuck you. He release his non-handcuff behind my back. Stood in front of me in aggressive stand. I holler for help, call the sergeant! This help was directed to control booth officer. He [S] jump on me face forward, cuff his legs to sweep me. Both landed to floor, I am partially standing, while he is on the floor, choking me out. The others deputies sitting on the bench “looking,” not stopping him, until I got out from his choke-hold... the other deputies from the bench, told me to put my hands behind my head and get on the ground. I was kick in the head, ribs, rupture ear drum.”

Al M, Soledad CA (5/24/10)

“... I was physically assaulted and injured while I was handcuffed. As

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a result of this abuse, I received injuries to my lumbar spine, neck, head, shoulders, and hand. I haven't been able to walk because of this assault and injuries. As a result of this incident, I also suffered many other acts of retaliation. I was starved and denied food and water a lot, sometimes as long as 5-6 straight days... Other acts of retaliation and abuse include: being shocked with an electric body immobilizer device; being forced into a restraint chair... and was neglected and left to live on the floor, and in very filthy and unsanitary conditions for approximately nine months; during this time I was tortured with a bright florescent light that stayed on for twenty four hours a day."

Sam R, Graterford Correctional Facility, Graterford PA (6/4/10)

"While in a locked room strapped to a metal bed face down naked, an officer came in and shoved his flashlight up my rectum ripping open my anus because I was yelling for water to drink and it interrupted him watching a football game on TV. The BOP has, for 20 years, refused to make corrective surgery. I was stripped and handcuffed to a chain link fence in a freezing snow-ice storm for seven hours because I was ten minutes late to an appointment... I was sprayed with chemicals and a chemical fire extinguisher for having a Christian cross on the wall of my cell. I was handcuffed to a wall and sprayed with a high pressure fire hose... I was forced to stand on a foot stool while three officers handcuffed my hands above my head to a chain link fence and then the stool was removed to leave me dangling in the air for four hours... I was forced to stand in a telephone sized room for 27 hours without food, water, or toilet breaks... I was subject to mace and pepper spray... I was 'toilet bowled' twice... 'toilet bowling' is like water boarding. Three officers handcuff your hands behind you, knock you to the floor on your knees, put your head inside a toilet bowl so that your face is submerged. Officers hold you down while another flushes the toilet ...

Five times I suffered a 'hook up' for arbitrary spiteful reasons. The hands are handcuffed and I am lifted up and the chain of the handcuffs are draped over a tall door so **I am dangling with my feet off the floor. It takes less than five minutes to be agonizing.** They leave you hooked up until unconsciousness, then let you drop to the floor by raking you off the door... [officers] locked me in solitary confinement for 10 days handcuffed and shackled to a metal bed. During that time they would extinguish their cigarette butts on my body and flip hot ashes in my face

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and eyes and place meal trays just out of reach. Once I yelled for water to drink. **The officer rammed the nozzle of a chemical fire extinguisher into my rectum and flooded my insides with liquid and chemicals that caused me to scream with agony.** Another officer told me to shut up or he would kill me and used his boot to kick me in the head...

Once when I was strapped spread eagle to a bare metal bed an officer put an electric stick (like a cattle probe) to my scrotum and zapped me and because the pain caused me to lose control of my bowels he stomped on me and cursed me for making a mess and I had to lay in it (and urine) for 4 days... My friend Barry begged and pleaded to have the lights turned out in his room. Officers sadistically laughed at the suffering they caused. **Barry tore out his own eyes so he could get some sleep. They all laughed at him and abused him greater. Later – he killed himself.”**

Coy P, FMC Devens, Ayer MD (6/10)

“Five very big cowboys – correctional officers – took me to a special control unit, placed me in restraints and tortured me for over two hours to punish me for grievances and/or legal action on their friends and co workers... they screwed their knuckles into my temples, bent my wrist backwards until the cartilage popped and cracked, pulled my neck back as far as they could without breaking anything, made me yell, scream, beg, cry, defecate/urinate due to the excruciating pain, for over two hours.”

Jose E, Colorado State Penitentiary, Canon City CO (5/30/10)

“... a transport team arrived to transport me to Western State Hospital. I have been on good behavior and was surprised to see the sergeant strap on my leg the 50,000 volt electrical device commonly called ‘the bandit’ and then wrap over the Velcro antenna with several layers of black duct tape. I was chained hand and foot, with waist, wrist and ankle restraints... We stepped outside to leave, and as my calf compressed to step up to the transport cage in the van, the 50,000 volt device activated – for 13 to 18 seconds they say, but it seemed like forever. I screamed in pain. It felt like forks were stabbed and twisted into the nerves in my calf...

I told the C/Os and sergeant I had been shocked, but they denied it,

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and refused to inspect the device or my leg, or remove it. They stated: 'We would have heard beeping if it really went off.'... as I reached into my box of legal work, my calf compressed and again I was shocked with 50,000 volts – on sensitive, pre-shocked skin in exactly the same spot as before due to the tight Velcro and duct tape. I again screamed and screamed and screamed, as my back arched. I was still chained hand and foot, but with no C/Os holding me, I flew back and smashed my head and upper back into the cement floor... As I rolled over to crawl for help, Sgt T, witnessed by C/O Jose P, started to peel off the duct tape. It went off again, and again I screamed, and finally Sgt T jumped on my leg and tore loose the duct tape and let the antenna loose, released the Velcro and removed the device from my calf... when they pulled it to one side, it set off the 50,000 volts, as it was a tampering security device which they had negligently duct taped to my calf...

“I am at a loss as how to truly convey the prison experience to another human being... what words can paint the feeling of a heavy metal baton striking you across the back and head while handcuffed? How does one properly express what the taste and feel of pepper spray is like as it burns your skin and steals your breath away? How can one accurately portray having hot water from a hose poured on your body to wash that orange spray off, as you stand naked and shocked gasping for air? **And just as you think you are at the end of your rope with how much pain you can endure, you are left in an open yard, under the sun for hours to cook, before being placed back into the cell you were not so long ago forcibly removed from.** There you are, still naked, with nothing to wear and keep you company but the lingering aroma of pepper spray coating your entire cell.”

Robert F, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City CA (6/5/10)

“I was being escorted from receiving and release to the administrative segregation unit of High Desert State Prison. A couple of Correctional Officers walked up to our single man cages with instructions that were explained very quickly. Due to the long day in the cage I said I understood, so we could go on with the escort to our cells... I turned around into a handcuff position, as I was waiting to be handcuffed he placed one cuff around my right wrist then said, ‘let me show you something.’ Staying in a handcuffed position in a single man cage, I turned my head slightly to the right to see him drop the other cuff. Then with my right

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wrist and arm he twisted to get me into a submission position. It was very painful as he pulled my right arm completely out of the handcuff hole, automatically caused my left arm to pull back into the cage! As he yelled, ‘put your hand back out of the cage, put your hand back out of the cage!’ I was unable to without inflicting pain on myself, but I did. Then pulled me out of the cage handcuffed, with a few more words said but no resistive act at all, they ended up taking me to the ground in a ‘hog tie’ position... as he started to punch me with a closed fist around my left eye about seven times... he then kned me twice in my eye breaking the orbit bone of my left eye. All the while I was handcuffed.”



Curtis H, Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility, Tutwiler MS (6/2/10)

“... for approximately 45 minutes guards threw stun grenades. Along with the stun grenades, thrown in by hand, staff placed the barrels of grenade launchers through the windows and shot canisters of tear gas into the unit. I remember seeing one prisoner get shot in the face with a canister of gas. The staff used an explosive device to open the doors and entered the unit in gas masks and in crews of three, beat and handcuffed every prisoner. After enduring all of this, I was then hit in the face with a baton that they call a ‘**nigger beater**’.

As told to Bonnie Kerness by a recently released prisoner describing his experience in a Federal Prison (February 2010)

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“... a piece of board 3 feet wide and six feet long that is covered with towels. The prisoner is stripped and shackled spread eagle to the board. The board is then inclined from the wall. 3 times a day the guard comes in with cold chow and a bedpan. If you have to use the bathroom, you do it in the bedpan. You are not unshackled. The guard holds the bedpan under you!”

Anonymous prisoner's description of restraint bed

“I was repeatedly a victim of the stun belt, waist and leg chains. They secured two additional chains around me placed on my neck and wrapped twice with the loose ends secured to my waist chains by small paddocks, I was then made to kneel down and a second chain was looped around my ankle chains and secured. All of this was done during court dates in holding areas. I hadn't been convicted of anything. When they first began using these tasers in US prisons, the people in prison were quick to warn us that **often what begins in prisons finds its way to being used outside of prisons.**”

Anonymous

“I write to you in Spanish because I don't want the people here to read this letter and hit me or throw chemicals that burn at me... Since I arrived the guards have thrown chemicals at 8 inmates...When the inmate started to respond to his insults they grabbed him and threw chemicals at him... The inmate that lives with me on this cell... they woke him up at 3am they handcuffed his hands and ankles and they hit him. They broke 4 of his ribs and they are holding his mail because he hasn't received any. When the inmates start to talk by the door the people who work here shut down the ventilation, sometimes for two or up to three hours. There are no windows here so it gets really hard to breathe. The workers here feel untouchable because they are a big group and they can take care of each other. The majority of the abusers are white... Today I saw an inmate that seemed to be sitting on the floor (there is more air on the floor) one of the guards who works here told him to go back to his bed or he would throw gas at him. He left and came back with a sergeant and started to insult and threaten him. Please I ask you not to use my name.”

Anonymous, Taylor Correctional Institute, Perry FL (6/28/10)

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“ ‘How do you describe desperation to someone who is not desperate?’ began a letter to me which went on to depict everyone in the Control Unit being awakened by guards dressed in riot gear holding barking, salivating dogs at 1am every other morning. Once awakened, the prisoners were forced to strip, gather their belongings while feeling the dogs straining at their leashes snapping at their private parts as they are trained to do. He described being terrorized, intimidated, and the humiliation of being naked and not knowing whether the masked guards were male or female. These went on for months, until activists inside and out were able to stop this senseless torture. If we think back to slavery and to images of the civil rights movement we understand that dogs have been used as a device of torture for hundreds of years in the U.S.”

Bonnie Kerness. “Social Movements and the Evolution of the Modern Nation State.” Speech, U.S. Social Forum 6/25/10

Contraband Surveillance Watch

Notice of Change to California Department of Operations Manual (NCDOM) 2008, Chapter 5, Article 19: Arrest, Search and NCDOM #08-14

52050.23 Contraband Surveillance Watch

... the inmate may be placed in a medically approved controlled isolated setting on Contraband Surveillance Watch (CSW) under constant visual supervision observation until the contraband can be retrieved through natural means, or is voluntarily surrendered by the inmate...

- The inmate shall be placed in one pair of boxer shorts, one T-shirt, and one pair of socks, or an approved jumpsuit with or without a T-shirt or boxer shorts.
- As an added method of security, inmates maybe placed in two pairs of boxer shorts with the openings placed/worn in the opposite direction of each other.
- The legs and waist of the boxer shorts and/or the arms and legs of the jumpsuit will be taped closed to restrict the inmate's access to their body cavities.
- The inmate shall remain under constant visual observation at all times while on CSW.

52050.23.4 Mechanical Restraints

The inmate shall be placed in waist restraints with handcuffs attached and leg restraints during the duration of the time period that they are placed on CSW.

Four point restraints may be authorized when an inmate is disruptive or combative in accordance with CCR Section 3268.2 (c), and when approved by HCM or their designee.

The use of four-point restraint equipment shall be documented in the inmate's Uniform Health Record (UHR) in accordance with CCR Section 3268.2 (d)...

52050.23.7 Voluntary Bowel Movement

When the inmate requests to have a bowel movement, the custodial

staff assigned to CSW shall:

- Provide the inmate with a portable toilet, or use of the previously lined toilet in the isolated setting.
- Release one of the inmate's restrained hands to facilitate his bodily functions.
- Once the inmate has completed the bowel movement, the portable toilet or toilet liner shall be immediately retrieved or removed and the inmate will be re-secured in the restraint equipment.

52050.23.8 Removal from Contraband Surveillance Watch

The inmate may be removed from CSW when it is reasonably believed that the contraband has been relinquished or it is determined that the inmate is contraband free. Normally, inmates will be retained on CSW for a period of not less than 72 hours, or the inmate may be required to complete at least three bowel movements free of contraband prior to being removed from CSW.

We received about a dozen testimonies describing Contraband Surveillance Watch, expressing prisoners' unfamiliarity with such conduct – all from California. A number of them are below:

“We were placed into two separate cells. In order to get off Contraband Surveillance Watch we had to give them 3 clean bowel movements in a plastic bag as Corrections Officers watched, we eventually were removed from Contraband Surveillance Watch 3 days later because it was determined that we had nothing secret on our person. It's bad enough we went through torture and discomfort for three days but to go through that because of lies is really disturbing. The whole Contraband Surveillance Watch procedure consisted of us being shackled at our ankles, a waist chain around our waists, at our hips we were handcuffed to the waist chain.

Also they connected a hard plastic mitten to each handcuff and made us insert our hands in these plastic mittens in which they securely close. On top of that they taped a diaper to our bodies, which was humiliating; over the diaper they taped a jumpsuit to our bodies as well. They tightly put tape around our ankles, thighs, waist and arms. Sometimes the tape would be so tight it semi cut off blood flow to my arms or legs. It was

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truly three days of torture and discomfort. We have never experienced that kind of situation in our lives. Can you imagine being shackled and taped up from upper to lower body for three days?”

Jose H, High Desert State Prison, Susanville CA (5/10/10)

“Prior to being placed in one of these cells, a person is not only made to wear nothing more than one pair of socks, one thin state t-shirt and two pairs of boxer shorts which are then ‘tightly tape up’ or wound numerous times around each leg and waist areas of each pair of shorts but they make sure – even if they’re not supposed to – that this very sticky, adhesive tape connects or is also wound around the skin of both your legs and waist areas. They then place you in leg irons, waist chains with additional locks used to shorten the chains on the cuffs so your hands are against your waist to where any type of movement is very strenuous and limited...

Whenever I am being confined in one of these [CSW] cells, needs to use the restroom – be it to urinate or a bowel movement, which three are mandated before ever being released from this torture chamber. This very sticky tape that tugs at your skin whenever you move and has been wrapped numerous times around the skin of your legs and waist areas, are sadistically and maliciously un-wound and then once you’ve finished handling your business, is then re-wrapped as I’ve previously stated to where after three or four of these excruciatingly painful sessions, your skin becomes raw with deep red welts where this tape has been applied over and over.”

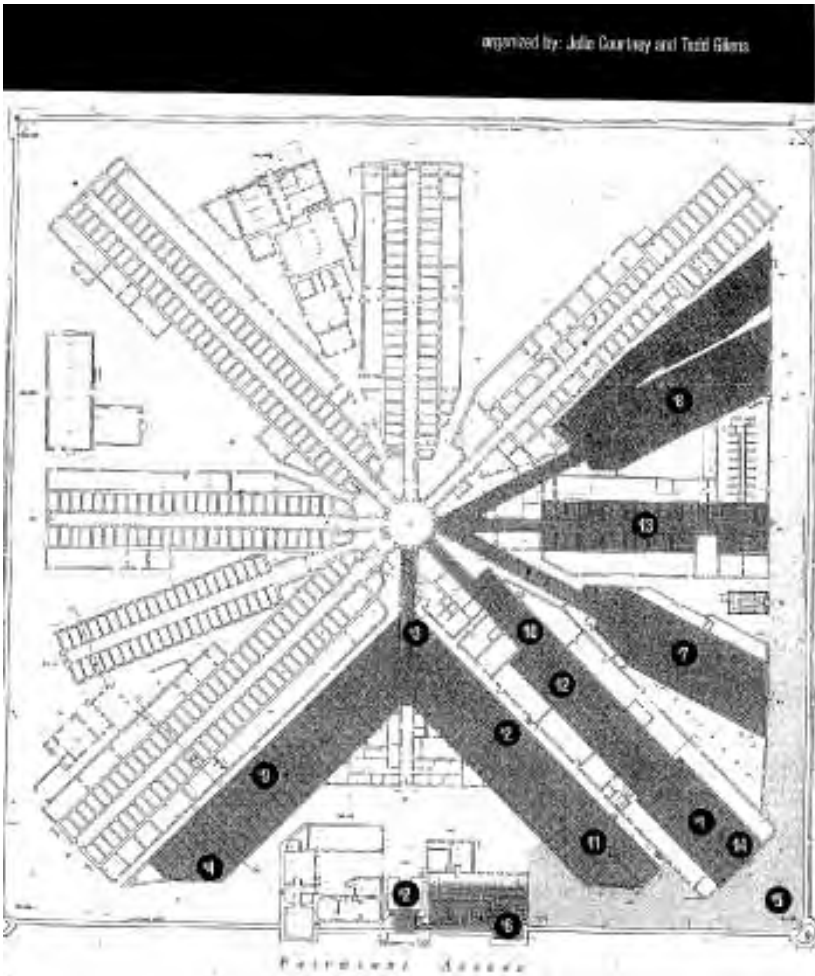
Duke B, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City CA (5/18/10)

“I was placed in a 4 ½’ x 8’ empty holding cell. This is where the torture began. The guards placed chains on my legs, chains and cuffs on my waist. Then they put velcro/nylon tube gloves on my hands, followed by my [illegible], then they put heavy and hard plastic PVC pipes on my arms. What was going on? I asked. The sergeant told me I would be like this until I gave three clean (free of contraband) bowel movements. That’s not all they began wrapping duct tape on my ankles. Then tape above my knee caps, followed by tape on my thighs, and finally duct tape on and around my waist. And so for four days and three nights I continuously remained in tape, chains, torture tubes, and shackles

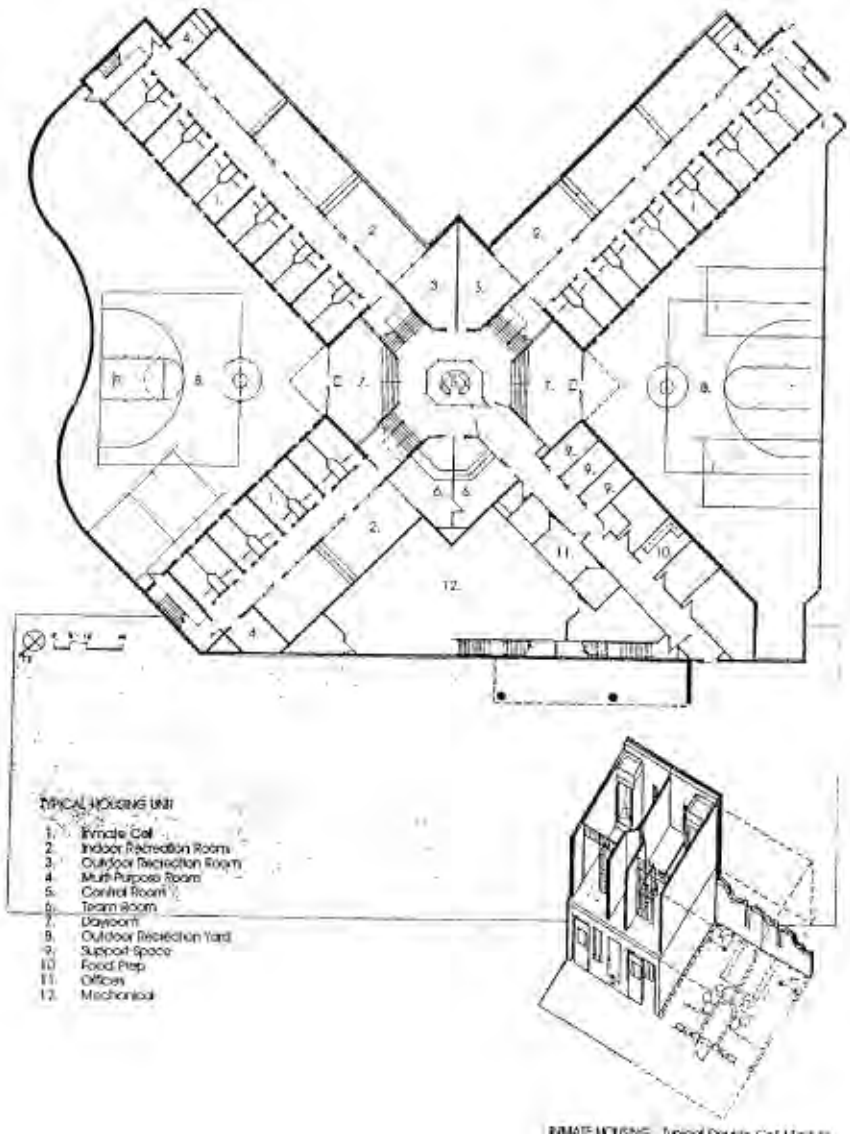
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They'd drag in a thin, old, used, and dirty unclothed plastic mattress. That's all I had. But I couldn't sleep, because I couldn't move my body limbs in any sleep positions due to my circulation being cut off. I had breathing problems... so I couldn't sleep on my back. I couldn't curl up to stay warm, because the chains, tape, and tubes cut off my circulation. So I froze, shivering, angry, frustrated, delirious... I went without

Eastern State Penitentiary, 1800's



Current Federal Institution ADX, Florence, CO



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blankets, sheets, a pillow, toothbrush, toothpaste, a shower. I stank of body stench. I told them of my numbness, I can't sleep. I was freezing... when I had to use the restroom, they'd have me defecate in a bucket with three guards surrounding me. When I had to eat, it was with my dirty hands. Even though I gave them five bowel movements they said two were not big enough."

Dan T, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City CA (6/2/10)

"Dear Ms Kerness and the people working for the StopMax Campaign, I am writing you to send you this link to a shocking article that was received by me, it was written by Brandon G who is incarcerated in Utah State Prison, Uinta One unit (supermax). He witnesses human rights abuses and sends his testimonies out to a few friends. I place it on his blog that I recently opened for him. His testimony has been forwarded to AFSC in Utah and I believe also to the DOJ, but that was last year. Up to now, these human rights abuses keep on happening day in day out. What can we do about it?

Thank you for your consideration and time,
Sincerely, Annabelle Parker (The Netherlands)"

"Let the avenue to this house be rendered difficult and gloomy by mountains and morasses. Let the doors be of iron, and let the grating, occasioned by opening and shutting them, be increased by an echo that shall deeply pierce the soul."

*Dr. Benjamin Rush, Quaker reformer, 1787,
describing Eastern State Penitentiary*

In 2000, the U.N. Committee Against Torture noted egregious violations of international law going on in U.S. prisons, including the use of electric stun belts and restraint chairs, prison chain gangs, sexual assault of women and detention of minors. Those violations continue every day in U.S. prisons and speak of an attitude of demonization of "others". We are seeing now with the treatment of Iraqi prisoners that it is a crisis extending beyond prisons into wider U.S. society.

*Bonnie Kerness, "America's abuse of prisoners didn't begin in Iraq."
Newark, NJ Star Ledger 5/18/20*

Racism

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Article 2

States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among races, and, to this end:

- a. Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation

Article 4

States Parties condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one color or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights expressly set forth in article 5 of this Convention, inter alia:

- c. Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination

Article 5

In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:

a. The right to equal treatment before the tribunals and all other organs administering justice;

b. The right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution

“He had me on the wall. He was searching me. Then he took his hand and was feeling my genitals, like, fondling it and groping it... I looked toward my left, and it was Officer C, I looked at – what is he doing? This is R, he just grabbed me, threw me to the ground and, call the code, call the code, call it in. He put handcuffs on me. He was, you know, punching me, you know, hitting me, hitting me with the flashlight. Officer D and the other guy, MR, they came... all three of them started beating and kicking me, beating me, stomping me. I was lying on the ground handcuffed... I’m lying there while they were all hitting me. This K, out of my left eye, I was trying to look at his name tag, trying to see his name. He was punching me in the jaw... He came over, lifted my head up, called me a spic, and that was it... he said, I got you now. He hit me in the head. I got you spic.”

Michael M (6/10/08)

“On 11/7/09, Sgt. K and JD delivered me my religious kosher bag at dinner time. Upon pulling the brown bag in my cell, I immediately noticed something moving in it. I slammed the bag down and out ran a mouse which I was able to kill, its blood on my floor, my food, jelly, and my legal work. When Sgt. K came to my cell to collect trash he kept making a ‘squeak squeak’ noise all the way down the tier and when he reached my cell, he stated ‘the mouse was from Sgt. R was it good?’...I note that my kosher bag has been smashed, contaminated with disinfect and trash, feces and now a mouse, which I am sending to HRC as proof of my claim...”

Andre J, p19 HRC-FedUP, SCI Fayette, LaBelle PA (12/7/09)

[witnessing assault on Andre J] “...officers M, W, C, W, and W making racial remarks while repeatedly striking prisoner J with loud strikes of blows repeatedly...’We told you we were going to get your black ass nig-

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ger...told you we would get your nigger ass.”

Carrington K, p20 HRC-FedUP, SCI Dallas, Jackson Twp PA (9/17/09)

“Several inmates described an incident when staff let one inmate on the floor with rectal bleeding and refused to take him to get medical attention,’ according to the state researchers’ report. When guards arrived, they said ‘It’s the fucking nigger again, let him die.’ And they left him there.”

*“Probe uncovers strip searches, chains and racism at prisons,”
Sacramento Bee, 5/9/10*

“Perhaps one explanation for this deplorable condition (re: officer oversight of prisoner behavior and violence) is best exemplified by the infantile, laissez faire attitude of officer R: **‘Let the niggers kill each other.’”**

Norm P, Western Correctional Institution., Cumberland MD

“They took all my clothing, bedding, hygiene (sic) – and left me in a cell with zero clothing and zero property – naked to sleep on concrete for two weeks; and they feed me segregation food (sic)/food ground-up like dog food. I tried to kill myself, but they didn’t stop this treatment... they are still stripping mainly African-American prisoners of their clothing, bedding, mattresses – and just placing them in stripped cell naked to sleep on concrete for 3-days... the other day a young black male flashed a white female guard and he was stripped of all clothing, beat-up.”

Nate G, Columbia Correctional Institution, Portage, Wisconsin 5/22/10

“Mr. F, an Iraqi Refugee who lost family in Iraq. He is 26 years old and has 20 years left to serve in prison. He is a born comedian; Muslim... Sgt. F yells to Mr. F., ‘Iraqi reject queer, no self respect pussy, come on! **I’ll celebrate your death...**”

Brandon G, Utah State Prison, Uinta One Facility, (11/12/08-11/19/09)

“A sergeant caught my fingers in the tray slot after I filed a grievance on him for using racial slurs, and pushed on it until he heard the bones break and me yelling, then in a loud voice ‘I tried to break your fucking hand not just your fingers, but that should stop you from filing on us

good- ol-white folk.””

Jose E, Colorado State
Penitentiary, Canon City
CO (5/30/10)

“...Staff have worked together in subjecting me to an intentional, malicious, sadistic and discriminatory campaign of harassment in retaliation for my cultural/’religious’ beliefs and race and for my filing institutional grievances about SCI Greene staff’s harassment.”



Ricardo N, SCI Greene, Waynesburg PA (6/1/10)

Solitary Watch frequently receives notes from prisoners, many of them in solitary. From time to time, they share excerpts with readers. Solitary Watch removes the names of prisoners and prisons to protect the writers of these letters.

“I’ve been in solitary confinement since October 2008 after prison guards conducted a sweep of all Hispanics which the department classified as ‘Northerners’ (Hispanics from San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento, etc.) As a result of this sweep me along with about 50 other Hispanics were put in solitary confinement under the pretext that we were being put under investigation of being prison gang members and ‘investigation.’ The first time I was allowed back into the general population. This second time around, however, I was validated as a prison gang associate. Based on a fabricated confidential ‘staff report’—prison staff purported to have seen me included with gang activity I couldn’t... cross examine the evidence because it was confidential. I knew that the alleged incident was fabricated as it never occurred. Similarly prison staff also used confidential information provided by confidential informants

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who were seeking lenient treatment from their own misconduct”

— California

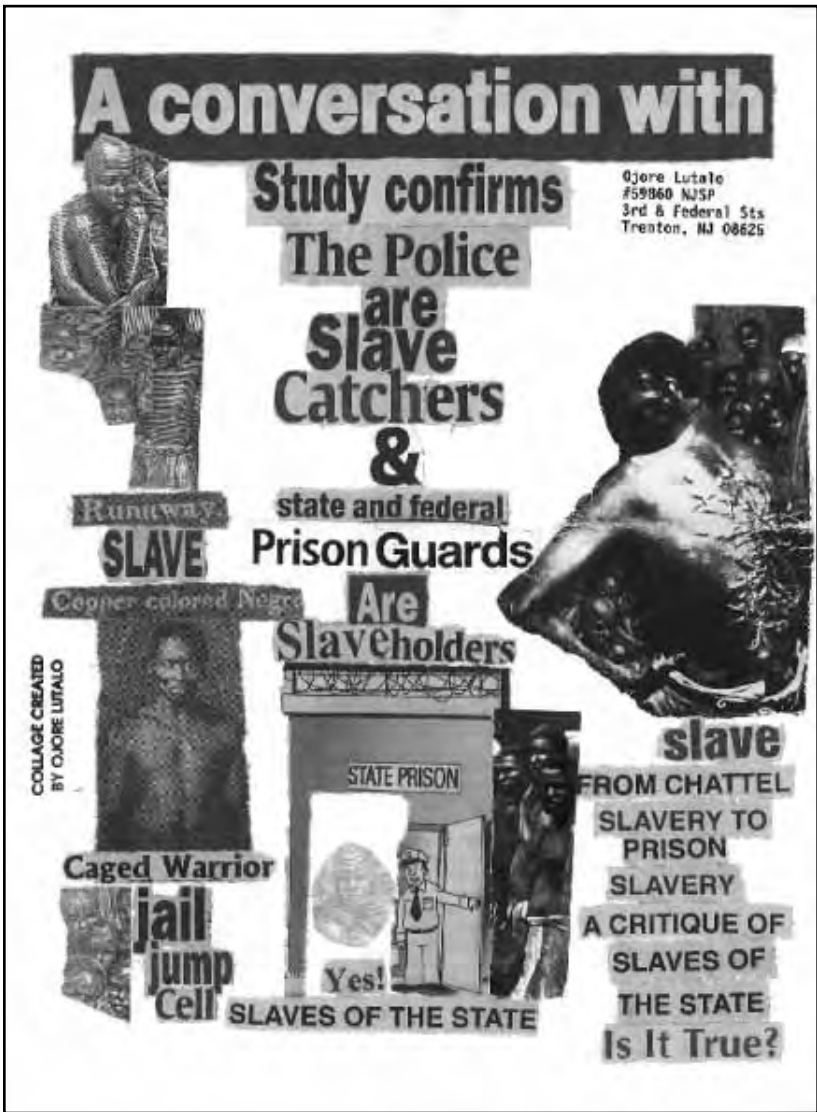
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“I am still in lock up here. I am in the same clothes. I have not been able to call my family, shower, for over three days. No property, no canteen, nothing. There is a list they go by and I am not on that list yet I am being moved from room to room by this cop over here named....., he have threw (sic) out my things each time. He told cops that I assault women CO’s, which I don’t. this cop is putting my llife in danger. Today I went for an x-ray and once more he moved me. I was moved this time into a condem (sic) room, no water, nothing. My last room my light was out. He does something to have me moved. I have been in this room for almost 3 hours having to hold my water. I am on too much meds to do this. I don’t feel safe around this cop. I don’t want PC (Protective Custody), but something needs to be done. I see this cop setting me up, he have state to me already that he kills Muslims like me.”

Anonymous, Northern State Prison, New Jersey, November 29, 2010

Certainly, in the criminal justice system, the politics of the police, the politics of the courts, the politics of the prison system and the politics of the death penalty are a manifestation of the racism and classism which governs the lives of all of us. Every part of the United States criminal justice system falls most heavily on the poor and people of color, including the fact that slavery is mandated in prisons by the 13th Amendment of the US constitution. The 13th Amendment reads “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States.” While most of us don’t give this amendment a second thought, it really is at the core of how the labor of slaves was transformed into what some people in prison call neo-slavery.

Bonnie Kerness, “From Slavery to the Prison System: Human Rights Violations in America.” Monmouth University, February 19, 2009



Collage by Ojore Lutalo



Collage by Ojore Lutalo

Women in Prison

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Article 1

... the term “discrimination against women” shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, or human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civic or any other field.

Article 2

d. To refrain from engaging in any act or or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation

g. To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 5

State parties shall take all appropriate measures:

a. To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women...

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)

Article 3

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women

Article 2

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

c. Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs

Article 4

States should condemn violence against women and should invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women and, to this end, should:

c. Exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the state or by private persons

i. Take measures to ensure that law enforcement officers and public officials responsible for implementing policies to prevent, investigate and sensitize them to the needs of women

“The housing CO (guard was conducting a cell-to-cell search for ‘excessive toilet paper’... So the CO asked Doris how many rolls of toilet paper were in Doris’s cell. Doris answered ‘I see three.’ Well it turns out there were more than three rolls stacked beside the toilet and this angered the CO... ‘I’m so sorry, I didn’t know’ Doris says as she leans over to look at the stack of toilet paper. In leaning over, she may have inadvertently touched or brushed against the CO’s uniform. After all, Doris is 70 and balance can be a problem. Now the CO is angrier than ever and yells at Doris... Enter new, more aggressive Sgt. S for a show of dominance. He was overheard to say:

‘I’ll make sure she gets arrested,’

‘I’ll body slam that old bitch.’

... the new Sgt. sends the goon squad to escort Doris back up to the program office. There she is spread eagle against a wall, feet kicked out

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to a wider and wider stance by aggressive Sgt., pat searched, handcuffed and escorted for a medical evaluation. She was then sent to Ad-Seg ('the hole') for 60+ days... The sequel to all of this – is now 6 months after it all happened – is Doris's seriously deteriorating health. She has now suffered a perforated bowel requiring emergency surgery secondary to debilitating ulcerative colitis [a disease closely related to psychological stressors]. She's lost more weight than she can afford to lose and looks more waif-like than ever. As Dostoyevsky writes, 'the degree of civilization a society exhibits is best determined by how it treats its prisoners.'"

Jane D., Correctional Institute for Women, Corona CA (on behalf of Doris) (4/22/10)

"I was locked in isolation. I was scared and cried a lot. I sat there day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. Not once was I ever taken out of my isolated cell. I was in a separate building and was not allowed to buy canteen, was not allowed recreation, library, television or church. I was prevented from making telephone calls or having visits. I was allowed a short shower, after which I was locked back in my cage. My cell had a window that was four inches wide and three feet long. The window was wide enough to fit one eye. I needed fresh air so badly that I started to rub my nails against the rubber seal around the window, it was thick and hard rubber but I wanted air. I rubbed for months. My nails broke down but I continued to scrape. **The pain and blood didn't disturb me.** It took me 8 months to get a tiny opening. I felt worse than a caged animal. I spent three years there and have phobias where I still need to be enclosed in my cell..."

Judy V, Edna Mahon Correctional Facility, Clinton NJ (2005)

"Michelle O was serving one year at the Ohio Reformatory for Women, a state prison in Marysville, when she was molested by a male guard... When O reported the first assault to prison official J, the official told the inmate that the male guard was being transferred from the facility and was 'just a dirty old man.' That same evening, the male guard assaulted her again... another prison official who launched an investigation ordered O placed in solitary confinement, where she was hand-

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cuffed... in the first assault, O was ‘fondled’ by the guard, who then told her ‘I’ll get you tomorrow, watch.’...

(from a report by “Just Detention International”)

Inmates describe a range of incidents, including violent encounters, threats and pressure to submit to sexual advances, trading sex for goods and favors, and relationships that were seemingly consensual... **women who report sexual misconduct are routinely sent to solitary confinement**, unusually harsh conditions in the hole or at ORW may compound the trauma... stripped of basic privileges and locked in isolation for 23 hours a day...”

Jean Casella and James Ridgeway, Solitary Watch (5/3/10)

“... My friend is currently being raped and the guard is threatening to hurt her child and family if she tells... this inmate was not asking for money just for rape to stop and to be sent out of state for no one to know she had been raped. You see when inmate reports rape by correctional officer she is labeled RV5 – that means she had sex with correctional officer – it does not matter that she did not do it willingly. That lets all the other dirty cops know that she is an easy target for them because after an inmate tells she is treated so badly she will never tell them again. She suffers harassment, discrimination, gets her personal property broken ‘accidentally’ by officers, etc. Unreal you say, but it happens all the time... they knew I had been raped... they said they moved me down the hall as their remedy for stopping the rape, 100 feet away and he continued to get me.

They put me in segregation where he got me daily and even came in on his day off to get me. He physically injured me and to this day CDOC does not have to repair or accommodate the damages he did. He bent my thumbs backwards so I have severe arthritis which causes severe pain when I try to type, eat, or do anything involving hand use. Damages included: torn rotator cuffs in both shoulders where he would throw me against the walls; torn meniscus tear from when I jumped from a ladder when he pulled down my pants – I landed on concrete floor and did permanent damage to my knee, limp and hurt all the time; broke two ribs; stomped on feet and broke toe so now I have hammer toes – facility tried to cover it up and one of his friends that I later reported for raping

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an inmate forced me to wear shoes too small... my feet bleed when I do not wear deep dish shoes; this officer sexually abused 11 other inmates but they were all released but because I am doing a life sentence they decided to intimidate me... **it happens to lots of lifers since they cannot tell for fear of retaliation and when they do, they get harassed.**

When they cannot take any more and try to commit suicide if they do not die they charge them with abuse of medical care and make them pay for hospital visit – so they need to be successful or they lose 20% of their \$12 a month pay... We are never given decent jobs or living arrangements like non rape victims. We are constantly given false write ups and put in segregation on the littlest things... in the last 14 months because of my RV5 rating another officer, as he stated, ‘you will never tell again since you got screwed so bad by CDOC you learned your lesson. Then he forced me to perform. I had no choice, **when one is grabbed around the neck and breathing difficult it is easier to comply and besides I learned that if you resist you get broken body parts and I can’t take any more of them.** So I did as required. But my friend is still going through it and needs help. This RV5 rating makes you open to all who want to get you and remember CDOC does not have to fix broken parts that were gotten in rape cases even when MRI and X-rays show the damage... **it never stops and once a cop has an inmate they become serial rapists because no one stops them.”**

Anonymous, Colorado Dept of Corrections, Pueblo CO 5/26/10

...Another plaintiff, Cora F, was 17 years old in 2006 when she was charged with retail theft. A year later, she missed a court date, and a warrant was issued for her arrest. A year after that, officers showed up at her house, and took her in when she was eight months pregnant. A couple weeks later, in a prenatal checkup at the jail, it was discovered that F’s baby had no heartbeat. She was taken to the county hospital, where her arms and her legs were shackled to opposite sides of the bed. Doctors tried to induce her, but it wasn’t until three days later that she went into labor. Even then, F says, she was left with one hand and one leg shackled to the bed. ‘It was difficult to try to have a baby like that,’ F says. ‘Especially by this being my first baby. It was so painful ... and you can’t move around like how you want to.’ After delivering her stillborn child, F was allowed to hold the baby for 20 minutes...

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... No one is sure just how many incarcerated women give birth each year; Saada Saar estimates it to be about 1,300. Nor does anyone know how widespread shackling is.”

Angela Hsu. “Difficult Births: Laboring and Delivering in Shackles.” National Public Radio, 7/16/10. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128563037&ft=1&f=1070>

“In one high-profile case in 2009, Marcia P, a 48-year old inmate at Arizona’s Perryville Prison, was baked to death in the midday sun. P, whom court records show had a history of schizophrenia, substance abuse, and mild mental retardation, was serving a 27-month sentence for prostitution. On a day when the Arizona sun had driven the temperature to 108 degrees, she was parked outdoors in an unroofed, wire-fenced holding cell while awaiting transfer to another part of the prison. A deputy warden and two guards had been stationed in a control center 20 yards away, but nearly four hours had passed when she was found collapsed on the floor of the human cage. Doctors at a local hospital pronounced P comatose from heat stroke, and she died later that night after being taken off life support. (Two local churches stepped in to provide a proper funeral and burial.)

The Maricopa County Medical Examiner ruled the death an accident, caused by ‘complications of hyperthermia due to environmental heat exposure.’ This despite the fact that P had blistering and first and second degree ‘thermal injuries’ on face, arms, and upper body.”

Jean Castella, James Ridgeway. “When Summer is Torture.” Mother Jones, 7/27/10

<http://motherjones.com/mojo/2010/07/heat-wave-kills-prison-inmates>

Pregnant women shackled to the bed during childbirth. Long periods of isolation as punishment for minor infractions. No privacy in the bathroom; no right to dress without the risk of being observed by male guards. Being separated by thousands of miles from your children. Yet to me, the most insidious, damaging attack on women prisoners in the U.S. is the routine pat search by male guards, repeated several times daily. React with anger (as you might if a man molested you that way on the street) and you will be

punished and sent to the hole. The very rules of the institutions constitute human rights violations.

*Laura Whitehorn, Inalienable Rights: Applying International Human Rights Standards to the U.S. Criminal Justice System.
American Friends Service Committee.*

How You Can Get Involved

Below is a list of actions you can take on behalf of prisoners suffering human rights violations, and their families.

Pay attention to the media.

Read widely and maintain a broad vision of books, newspapers, magazines, the internet, and documentary films. Use this report as a starting point or a next step. Contact authors and media sources with questions. Research solutions that have worked and those that have failed. Leverage the power of blogging, Facebook, and Twitter to be heard.

Talk to the formerly incarcerated.

Get the perspectives of those who have suffered human rights violations. Talk to their co-workers, neighbors, and family members. Hear their stories in detail.

Know your rights.

Learning one's civil or human rights is a critical action item for everyone, especially defendants, incarcerated people, their families, and their advocates. It is important for individuals taking action to know what international treaties, conventions, and declarations—and the Constitution—state.

Join an organization and form coalitions.

Group action can often yield better results than individual action. Many formerly incarcerated youth and adults, activists and advocates, and community members lead organizations that work on a wide range of related issues. Join such an organization. Form a coalition; many organizations work on incarceration issues, but more of them could pull together to advance their cause and reach the critical mass needed for action.

Conduct surveys.

Community surveys are an effective way to get necessary information

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and insure that efforts match the priorities of the most affected persons. They also help to find and build relationships with these people.

Engage officials.

Make it a strategic focus for affected individuals, organizations, and coalitions to meet with officials to express their concerns or make recommendations or demands.

Take the following steps to meet with officials:

- The organization or coalition should study the problem and solutions;
- Decide on the meeting agenda (list of items to be discussed);
- Decide what approach to take, including which persons will speak on which points, and which persons will take notes;
- Send a letter to the officials, first by regular mail, and later, if you receive no response, by certified mail that makes reference to the first letter and includes a copy. The letter should state the problem and solutions (with any proof you may have) and if a coalition, should be signed by as many of the member organizations as possible.

At the meeting:

- Bring copies of documentation of the problem as well as the letters sent to officials, and your agenda;
- Be prepared to ask tough questions and get answers. Stick to the agenda set by the group, and do not get sidetracked by allowing the participants to change the agenda or use up time with speeches or unrelated issues. Where officials promise to take action, set timetables and deadlines and timelines;
- End with an agreement for next steps, even if only for follow-up.

As soon as possible after the meeting, debrief, decide on next steps, and send a letter to the officials highlighting the next steps, including

timetables and deadlines.

Hold public events.

Many organizations and coalitions hold private meetings. But public events can bring attention to the issue and attract new members. For example, forums, panels, and town hall meetings allow leaders and experts to explain problems and solutions and answer questions. People who have experienced problems can talk about their situation and be offered assistance.

Choose a location close to the people that you want to reach. Create and circulate flyers about the event. Send announcements to community newspapers. If there is confidence that the attendance will be good, invite the media by sending them press releases. Again, use Facebook and.

Do outreach.

Outreach is important for organizations and coalitions to make others see and hear them. Find out where the affected people are and bring the outreach to them. Use the media. Letters to the editor may not be printed but may still have an influence on the way the editors cover your incarceration issue. Write articles and submit them to community papers, which often look for outside material. Post articles on internet websites and blogs. Tweet. Give the source of all claims and facts: expert testimony, quotes from people who have been through the experience, or statistics collected from official sources or community surveys. Be careful and accurate.

Collect information and report it.

Gather data and statistics from online search engines or from official sources using open records or Freedom of Information Act requests (laws that require governments to provide information about their expenditures and activities). You can request the information from officials during meetings (see above) but sending a certified letter to the public information department of the appropriate agency can be far more effective. Request that the officials give you the information in electronic form (on a CD or an email attachment) in case there are copying fees.

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Review the information for data that supports humans rights issues. Put the information into fliers or reports that will offer proof of the problem's seriousness. The best reports combine victim's stories with statistics and other facts, and end with recommendations and demands and a plan for achieving them.

Observe.

Watching and monitoring the activity is an also excellent action item. For example, teach inmates how to observe and report abuse to the "outside."

Lobby.

Meet with legislators, supply them with the statistics, victims' stories and other evidence. Legislators not only have the power to introduce bills that can become laws, they also can hold hearings that bring attention to these issues.

APPENDIX

The Story of Ojore Lutalo

The story of Ojore Lutalo is unique—as is the story of every prisoner represented in this document. We tell Ojore’s story more expansively because he was our “ground zero” person when he wrote to AFSC in 1986 after having just been placed in Trenton State Prison’s (now re-named New Jersey State Prison) Management Control Unit (MCU). That control unit was opened in 1975 and was modeled directly on San Quentin Prison’s “O” Wing. Ojore wrote asking what a control unit was, why he was there and how long he would have to stay there. He described extreme isolation with 24/7 lock down, limited or no contact with other people, and a psychological warfare that we now know as “no touch torture.”

In one of his early letters, Ojore wrote: “How does one go about articulating desperation to another who is not desperate? How does one go about articulating the psychological stress of knowing that people are waiting for me to self-destruct? I did not do anything to deserve this.” Ojore went on to describe being awakened by guards dressed in riot gear holding barking dogs at 1 a.m. every other morning. Once awakened, the prisoners were forced to strip and gather their belongings, while feeling the dogs straining at their leashes snapping at their private parts. He described being terrorized and intimidated, and the humiliation of being naked without knowing whether the masked guards were male or female. If we think back to slavery and to images of the civil rights movements, we recognize that dogs have been used as a device of torture for hundreds of years in the United States.

We monitored Ojore from 1986 through his court-ordered release from prison in August 2009. During the time he was kept in isolation, we confirmed that he, along with others in the MCU, were being held there for political reasons—for their beliefs. Ojore was considered a black radical capable of imparting his radical belief system to others. The AFSC was able to communicate this to The Bergen Record newspaper reporter, Bill Sanderson, who in 1992 wrote a newspaper article on Ojore and others called “New Jersey Political Prisoners Do Hard Time in

Solitary.” In that article, Bill reported: “Since 1986 Ojore N. Lutalo has been in solitary confinement at New Jersey State Prison, locked alone in his cell 22 to 24 hours a day. He isn’t being treated this way because he broke prison rules – if he had, he would have been returned to general prison population years ago. Instead, in a nation that venerates freedom of thought, Lutalo is a political prisoner – one of 77 inmates segregated from other convicted criminals because prison officials fear their political and religious ideas could foment trouble. Because Lutalo broke no rules, prison officials say his placement in the management control unit, or MCU, isn’t punishment. But inmates say life is hard enough in NJ State, the state’s most dangerous and most secure, prison, without enduring the MCU’s enforced isolation and idleness.”

In 1994 New York Channel 9 reporter Peter Fuentes did a piece for their news programs headlined “Prison Politics” confirming that the “New Jersey Department of Corrections says these prisoners are dangerous because they have strong political or religious ideas and are capable of leading others to riot.” In 2001, a documentary film maker received permission from the Department of Corrections to film “In My Own Words,” a 45-minute documentary about Ojore which aired on a New Jersey cable station and at venues across the country.

After 16 years in isolation, Ojore and many others were released from the Management Control Unit based on the finding of a Special Master ordered via court litigation 2002. For those of us at AFSC’s Prison Watch and others who monitor friends and loved ones in isolation units, the act of “disappearing” someone is common. Family members call from all over the country, frantic because they have not heard from a family member via an anticipated call or letter. This happens especially frequently in the “special needs” or mental health units in supermax prisons throughout the country. The absence of contact with the loved one causes alarm, and often no one responds to the family’s calls of concern.

From October 13th, 2005 through October 18th, 2005, Ojore suddenly disappeared from contact. For a month prior to his disappearance, no one had heard from him via mail or telephone, nor was he allowed to have visitation. No one could get any information from the Department of Corrections about his well-being.

He was held incommunicado in New Jersey State Prison’s mental

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health unit, called 1-C by prison workers and the “boom-boom room” by prisoners. There he was not allowed to make telephone calls, send or receive personal mail, receive personal or legal visits, or take part in any activities at all. He was held in complete isolation suffering the worst form of “no touch torture.”

What follows are excerpts from Ojore’s experience. Imagine the thousands of people experiencing something similar in prison cages across the country. Imagine that this is happening to someone you love.

Thursday, October 13th, 2005 – “The lockdown started around 1:30am, when a cell extraction team of several security guards, dressed in combat gear, woke me up and said: ‘per orders of the warden, you are to be moved to 1-C (the so called mental health unit).’ So I started thinking, why the ‘boom-boom room,’ since it is well known that I do not suffer from any psychological decompensations.

I get up and I start feeling around in the darkness of the cell for my clothing because they turned the power off. The sergeant asks for a flashlight, but they don’t have one among themselves. I got dressed for the unexpected, but I could not find any thermal underwear in the dark.

As I enter 1-C, I see four or five cells located behind a floor to ceiling fence with another fence built around the first cell, in which I am placed. They uncuff my right hand and tell me to place my hand behind my head and they do the same with my left hand and then tell me to turn around and strip. I go through the strip search motions: raise my hands, open my mouth, stick my tongue out, lift my private parts, turn around, raise my right foot, bottoms up and then I spread the cheeks of my ass. Then they tell me to turn around and face the wall until they leave. They leave and I turn around to put my clothing on, only to find out that they took my clothing with them. There I stand, naked in a cold water cell, standing next to a puddle of water!

I find that I am in a ‘close-watch-cell’! One camera is over the dirty, uncovered foam mattress on the floor, which is also dirty. The other camera is located over the cell door. The cell light is also located high up against the wall and the white burning lights stay on twenty four hours a day, making sleeping difficult and your eyes start feeling like they have sand underneath your eyelids. Focusing becomes difficult. The vent in the cage is high up against the wall, and blows out freezing cold air

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24 hours a day. The only bedding I am given is lying on top of the dirty uncovered mattress and are two paper thin sheets. I tear up a sheet to cover up the puddle of water on the floor to keep my bare feet dry and wrap the other sheet around my body...

I start to feel the coldness of the cage assaulting my naked body... I can feel my body starting to shake so I get off the sink and start pacing the floor. When I grow weary of pacing the floor, I sit atop the stainless steel sink hugging my body with paper sheet. I entered the boom-boom room at 1:30am.”

Friday, October 14th – “...at 9:30 am, they gave me back my clothing! The telephone is ringing with calls coming in from other prison security guards wanting to know Lutalo’s status, if I had lost a sense of myself, meaning if Lutalo went crazy. I grow weary of pacing the floor and sitting atop of the sink, so I cover the dirty foam mattress with a paper sheet and lay down fully dressed and doze off. I wake up to the sound of splashing water, to see water leaking from the ceiling and running down the wall and seeping under the mattress. I call the guard who comes to the cage door. I ask if he could move me to another age. Now the water is running underneath the cage door. Two hours later they move me into cage #2 which doesn’t have the 24 hour camera watch. Cage #2 has another dirty foam mattress with two paper sheets atop it and is just as cold as Cage #1. I start pacing to generate some body heat. The stool and the cage shelves were removed, the light switch has a steel plate over it and the wall sockets have steel plates over them. The cage light stays on 24 hours a day. The floor, toilet, and sink are filthy!”

Saturday, October 15th – “Just like I was illegally place in the boom-boom room, it was illegal for the warden to have me placed in a cage that was condemned. I stayed in cage number two until Saturday afternoon when a sergeant came to the cage and told me that I was being overed to ‘1-C overflow.’

The put me in cage #1 and I entered the cage to find a steel bed frame bolted to the wall and floor, with another dirty foam mattress and a working light switch. The cage had two mounted close watch cameras and was just as cold as the other cages. I was given two security toothbrushes, a small tube of toothpaste, a bar of soap and one dirty very thin cotton spread and four paper wash cloths.”

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Sunday, October 16th – “You call this a democracy?”

Monday, October 17th – “My eyes are hurting more from the glare of the 24 hour bright white lights! You call this a democracy? I feel the coldness of the cage assaulting me. I pace, I doze, I cover the dirty mattress foam mattress and lay down. The way I am now being treated is illegal. This cage is condemned. You call this a democracy?!”

Tuesday, October 18 – “At 12:40 am, five guards came into the cage with a nurse. The sergeant told me that the nurse wanted to take my vitals. I thought this was a strange request since I had not requested any medical assistance and it was 12:40 am with five guards standing there. The nurse only took my blood pressure and left the cage without taking my temperature, pulse or heart rate or asking any questions about my medical history, which I thought was all a part of taking one’s vitals. Around 8:30 am on Tuesday, three security guards show up and told me that I am being moved to the Management Control Unit. I am handcuffed and escorted to the MCU. I enter MCU and Cell # 6 opens up, the door echoing. I step into the cage to discover that I am in another ‘close watch’—one with another dirty foam mattress on the color and a camera mounted to the ceiling. The stool and cage shelves were removed, the light switch has a steel plate over it and the wall sockets have steel plates over them. The light stays on 24 hours a day. The floor, sink and toilet are filthy.

I still do not know why I was placed on no contact status, why I was placed in the boom-boom room or why I was re-interned in the management control Unit. All of this without ever breaking a single rule! You call this a democracy?”

October 20, 2005 – Once Ojore was able to be in touch with us and others, he let us know that he had illegally been placed back in the Management Control Unit. No charges, no reason – and after a Special Master had released him three years prior. When I called the Department of Corrections, it took many conversations before I was bluntly told that this was at the request of Homeland Security.

*Bonnie Kerness, American Friends Service Committee
Stopmax Conference (6/08)*

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In yet another incident of Ojore “disappearing” without any reason, he was removed without explanation from the MCU and placed in a bloody cell. If we remember the photos coming out of Abu Ghraib of the “no touch torture” where the man was forced to stand for hours with his arms out, not moving, we can picture what went on in this bloody cell for the six hours he was forced to stand there. Again, this is happening every day, throughout the United States. It is torture that occurs without any chemical or physical abuse. When he was finally able to contact us, the AFSC received pro bono cooperation from Jean Ross, an attorney who wrote to the Department of Corrections:

“... it was immediately apparent that something was seriously wrong. There were streaks of blood visible on the backs and side walls of the cell, and on the glass window of the cell door. The floor was visibly blood-spattered, to the extent that the blood adhered to Mr. Lutalo’s boots. There was also blood in the sink. Nevertheless, Mr. Lutalo was locked in that cell and he remained there for 6 hours... Mr. Lutalo was then moved to cell #5. He was not allowed to shower after this second transfer, so he had to wash the blood off his boots in the sink of his new cell. Mr. Lutalo then observed prisoners in white jumpsuits and white rubber gloves enter cell #1, with plastic bottles of yellow bleach and red plastic toxic waste bags. He later learned that the previous occupant of that cell had attempted suicide about a month prior to his placement, and that the cell had not been cleaned since that time.

The protective measures ordered by some member of the prison staff imply that the dangers of exposure to blood borne infection were known by some responsible member of the prison staff. This raises the question, then, of why Mr. Lutalo was placed in cell #1, in its original bloody state, by the persons who transported him to 2B Left.”

From lawyer Jean Ross’s letter on behalf Ojore Lutalo, New Jersey State Prison, Trenton, NJ (8/31/07)

During the quarter century that we monitored Ojore Lutalo in isolation, he was never assaulted either physically or chemically. The “no touch” torture he endured consisted of sleep deprivation, screeching sounds, extreme silence, extreme cold and heat, intentional situational placement, humiliation – a systematic attack on all human stimuli.

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After 22 years of living in isolation, he was released from prison in August of 2009 via court order. On January 26th, he “disappeared” from an Amtrak train, and was accused of “endangering public transportation” and arrested in La Junta, Colorado. Because of his unusual name, national newspaper articles incorrectly assumed he was Muslim and that he was connected to Al Qaeda. He received death threats via the Internet as a result of those newspaper articles. A judge dismissed all charges one week later. Ojore has filed civil litigation.

Glossary

AD-SEG – Administrative Segregation: a punishment unit designed for prisoners who have received a disciplinary infraction and have been found guilty by the administration’s Prisoners Disciplinary Committee and received a fixed amount of time to be served in this punishment unit

Article – section of legal document, such as, UN Conventions and Covenants defining international human rights laws

Black box – restraint device; a weighted box with handcuffs attached to sides, can also be attached to belly chains and other bodily restraints

Boom-boom room – Slang term for mental health unit where prisoners are monitored by camera

BOP – Bureau of Prisons: a federal law enforcement agency subdivision of the United States Department of Justice, responsible for the administration of the federal prison system

CADOC – California Department of Corrections

CDOC – Colorado Department of Corrections

CDV – Conduct Violation

CMU – Communications Management Unit: a recent designation for a self-contained group within a facility in the United States Federal Bureau of Prisons that severely restricts, manages and monitors all outside communication (telephone, mail, visitation) of prisoners in the unit. In 2006 and 2007, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP or “Bureau”) secretly created the Communications Management Unit (CMU), a prison unit designed to isolate and segregate certain prisoners in the federal prison system from the rest of the BOP population. Currently, there are two CMUs, one located in Terre Haute, Indiana and the other in Marion, Illinois. The CMUs house between 60 and 70 prisoners in total, and over two-thirds of the CMU population is Muslim, even though

Muslims represent only 6 percent of the general federal prison population. (Center for Constitutional Rights definition)

CO – Correctional Officer: a person charged with the responsibility of the supervision, safety and security of prisoners in a prison, jail, or similar form of secure custody

CSW – Contraband Surveillance Watch: if probable cause exists that evidence has been swallowed and that it is retrievable in usable form, the search process may be intensified as provided in this article, the inmate may be placed in a medically approved controlled isolated setting on Contraband Surveillance Watch (CSW) under constant visual supervision observation until the contraband can be retrieved through natural means, or is voluntarily surrendered by the inmate. See California DOC policy for more information

DOM Section – Department Operations Manual

EBID – Electric Body Immobilizer Device: any non-lethal defensive electrical device approved by the Department to temporarily immobilize an individual

International Covenant (on Civil and Political Rights) – a binding agreement setting terms for conduct, signed by members of the international community

Isolation – isolation units are sometimes referred to as Secured Housing Units, Management Control Units, Departmental Disciplinary Units, Controlled Movement Units, Long-Term Segregation Units, Closed Custody Units, lockdown units, or “the hole.” Isolation units house prisoners who are confined to their cells for twenty-three or twenty-four hours per day. Control units have relied on sensory deprivation, constant unpleasant noise, or having the lights on twenty-four hours a day, creates a different form of sensory assault, with similar effects

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Long-Term Segregation Unit – see “Isolation”

MCU – Management Control Unit: a non-punitive isolation unit for prisoners whom the administration perceives as having political or religious convictions of which they do not approve; or having the ability to influence others so as to pose a threat to the orderly operation of an institution. Prisoners entering the MCU are not placed there for violating administrative rules, and do not have a fixed amount of time to be served

No-Contact Status –No contact with other prisoners is permitted

No Touch Torture – a set of practices used to inflict pain or suffering without resorting to direct physical violence. Practices include sleep deprivation, sensory disorientation, solitary confinement, humiliation, extreme cold or heat, extreme blinding light on for 24 hours or extreme dark.

Protective Custody – Removal of a prisoner who is perceived as being a target of other prisoners by the administration and placement in an isolation protective custody unit

RHU – restricted housing unit. See “Isolation”

SHU – security housing unit. See “Isolation”

S.I.D. Officer – Special Investigations Division officer; described by the New Jersey Department of Corrections as being responsible for investigations into violations of the laws of the State of New Jersey and violations of the administrative code for the NJDOC by inmates, employees and those individuals who visit NJDOC facilities

SMU – special management unit. See “Isolation”

Supermax—A maximum security prison or prison unit in which prisoners are subjected to strict solitary confinement and extreme measures of control, inspection, and surveillance

Security Threat Group Management Unit (STGMU) – Type of

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isolation unit used to segregate prisoners identified by the prison administration as gang members

VCU – video conferencing unit



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