

07 MAY 2020

PRISON UNIVERSITY PROJECT
POST OFFICE 492
SAN QUENTIN, CA 94964

DEAR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING THE RECENT GIFT RECEIVED IN ALPINE UNIT OF SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON'S SOUTH CELL BLOCK, HOUSING INMATES IN RECEPTION STATUS. SUCH ACTS OF KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY ARE RARELY SEEN HERE, ESPECIALLY IN THESE TRYING TIMES. THANKS TO FRIENDS OF THE PRISON UNIVERSITY PROJECT / MR. TAMALPAIS COLLEGE FOR FUNDING THE PROVIDED GIFTS.

I ARRIVED INTO RECEPTION STATUS AT SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON ON 16 DECEMBER 2019. I AM 64 YEARS OLD, WITH EXISTING HEALTH ISSUES. IN MAY 2019, I FINISHED A CHEMOTHERAPY AND RADIATION THERAPY TREATMENT REGIME THAT SUCCESSFULLY RID MY BODY OF STAGE 4 ANAL CANCER. BASED ON BIOPSIES OF MATERIAL GATHERED DURING A FEBRUARY ANOSCOPY, THERE IS NOT YET ANY EVIDENCE OF THE TUMOR RE-APPEARING. I AM AWAITING AN MRI WHICH WILL SPEAK TO THE CONDITION OF THE LYMPH NODES WHICH WERE CANCER-RIPPEN, BUT

AS A RESULT OF THE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION, THE SCHEDULE FOR THE MRI REMAINS UNCERTAIN. I HAVE UNFORTUNATE SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE RADIATION TREATMENT THAT WILL LIKELY BE PERMANENT, AND ARE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH IN A PRISON SITUATION.

IN ADDITION TO THE CANCER ISSUES WHICH I HAVE SO FAR FOUGHT SUCCESSFULLY, I HAVE HYPERTENSION (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE) FOR WHICH I AM PROVIDED MEDICATION. I HAVE ALSO BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH A HEART CONDITION, FOR WHICH I AM PROVIDED LOW-DOSE ASPIRIN AND CHOLESTEROL-LOWERING MEDICATION. FINALLY, I HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH CLAUSTROPHOBIA AND ANXIETY, FOR WHICH I AM ALSO PROVIDED MEDICATION. MY SENTENCE IS BEING LEGALLY APPEALED, AND MY ATTORNEYS ARE HOPEFUL WE WILL PREVAIL IN THE APPEAL. AGAIN, THE COVID-19 SITUATION HAS EXTENDED THE TIME FRAMES FOR LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

LATELY, MY ANKLES HAVE BEGUN TO SWELL SORELY, WHICH I UNDERSTAND REPRESENTS A BLOOD CIRCULATION ISSUE AND WHICH LIKELY

SPEAKS TO THE HEART CONDITION. PERHAPS DUE TO MY MEDICAL CONDITION, PERHAPS DUE SOLELY TO MY AGE, MY SIGHT AND HEARING ARE DETERMINING.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE AN EXPERIENCE I'VE HAD WHICH ILLUSTRATES WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE A PROBLEM WITH HOW SQSP IS HANDLING THE COVID-19 SITUATION, IN PARTICULAR WITHIN THE INMATE POPULATION. IN LATE MARCH MY CELLMATE COMPLAINED OF A SLIGHT COUGH AND TIGHTNESS IN HIS CHEST. HE HAD JUST CHANGED THE TYPE OF INHALEMENT MEDICATION HE WAS TAKING FOR ASTHMA, BUT HE REPORTED HIS SYMPTOMS NONETHELESS, TO BE SURE IT WASN'T COVID-19. ON THE MORNING OF 26 MARCH 2020 HE WENT TO A MEDICAL CLINIC AND DID NOT RETURN TO THE CELL. I WAS WORKING IN ALPINE UNIT, AND WAS SENT TO OUR CELL AND ASKED TO PACK HIS PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, WHICH I DID. I WAS TOLD MY CELLMATE HAD BEEN SENT TO A QUARANTINE SITUATION. I WAS THEN TOLD TO PACK MY OWN PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, AS I TOO WAS TO BE SENT TO QUARANTINE. I PACKED MY THINGS, AND THAT AFTERNOON I WAS

TAKEN TO THE CARSON UNIT OF SOUTH CELLBLOCK,
THE DISCIPLINARY UNIT, HIGHER SECURITY.

THE 'HOLE' FOR INMATES IN RECEPTION
STATUS. I WAS ASSIGNED TO A SINGLE-CELL,
AND WAS GIVEN A RADIO. I WAS PLACED
INTO QUARANTINE IN THE CARSON UNIT ('HOLE')
IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON OF 26 MARCH,
AND STAYED FOR 9 NIGHTS / 10 DAYS. DURING
THAT TIME, I WAS NEVER GIVEN MY PERSONAL
POSSESSIONS. I HAD NONE OF THE BOOKS I HAD
GATHERED, NO READING MATERIAL. I HAD NO STAMPS
OR ENVELOPES. I HAD NO HYGIENE PRODUCTS (SHAMPOO,
CONDITIONER, MOUTHWASH, FLOSS, ETC.). I WAS GIVEN
A RADIO. I WAS TAKEN TO A SHOWER THREE
TIMES A WEEK. I WAS NOT GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY
FOR A TELEPHONE CALL. I HAD NO MEANS WITH
WHICH TO COMMUNICATE WITH MY FAMILY.
I HAD NO OPPORTUNITY FOR YARD. IN ESSENCE,
I WAS TREATED WITH DISRESPECT, BY THE
INSTITUTION AND THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED
FOR THE MOST PART. I NEVER DISPLAYED
ANY SIGNS OF SICKNESS. I NEVER BROKE
ANY RULES TO BE PLACED INTO THE 'HOLE'
IN CARSON. YET I WAS TREATED AS THOUGH
I HAD BROKEN RULES. THE DISPARITY

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BETWEEN WORKING ONE DAY IN THE ALPINE UNIT, INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE, HAVING MY FAMILY'S LETTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, WRITING AND PUTTING OUT FOUR LETTERS A WEEK TO FAMILY, AND BEING ISOLATED THE NEXT DAY IN THE CARSON UNIT (THE 'HOLE') WITH NO COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY, NO PERSONAL LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, COMMISSARY, ETC. COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE GLARING.

I FOUND OUT LATER THAT MY CELLMATE HAD BEEN PLACED INTO QUARANTINE IN THE EAST CELL BLOCK, AND WAS GIVEN HIS PERSONAL POSSESSIONS THAT SAME DAY THAT HE WAS MOVED TO THE EAST BLOCK.

I UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO QUARANTINE THOSE WITH SYMPTOMS, SUCH AS MY CELLMATE. AND THOSE ASYMPTOMATIC, SUCH AS MYSELF. BUT BECAUSE I HAPPENED TO BE PLACED IN THE 'HOLE' I WAS PUNISHED (NO PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, NO PHONE CALLS, NO FOOD) WHILE MY CELLMATE WAS NOT. THEN THE CDCR MEDICAL STAFF, IN THEIR COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING THE COVID-19 SITUATION, ALWAYS INCLUDE THE PLEA/ADMONITION TO REPORT SYMPTOMS / DON'T HIDE YOUR SYMPTOMS. I WAS NOT ALONE IN MY EXPERIENCE.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF QUARANTINE, AS EXPERIENCED BY ME AND OTHERS, BECAME WELL KNOWN. I AM NOT DISCUSSING HEREIN WHAT MY FUTURE DECISION WOULD BE RELATIVE TO REPORTING SYMPTOMS I MAY DEVELOP IN THE FUTURE. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE SAFE TO SAY THAT MOST WOULD NOT REPORT SYMPTOMS IF SUCH REPORTING RESULTS IN DISRESPECT, PUNISHMENT, AND UNDOE HANDSHIP.

AND I AM AN ACQUISITIVE PERSON. DURING MY MONTHLY FLUSHING OF A PORT CATHETER THAT I HAD SURGICALLY IMPLANTED FOR MY CHEMO-THERAPY SESSIONS (IT REQUIRES 'FLUSHING' EVERY 4 WEEKS TO KEEP IT FUNCTIONAL) A SQSP NURSE STUCK HIMSELF WITH THE NEEDLE THAT HAD STUCK THROUGH MY SKIN AND INTO THE PORT. WHILE I KNOW THAT I HAVE NEITHER HIV OR HEP-C, WHEN THEY CAME THE FOLLOWING DAY TO SEEK MY VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT TO TEST MY BLOOD FOR THE AFORE-MENTIONED, I SIGNED THE AGREEMENT WITHOUT HESITATION BECAUSE I RECOGNIZED THAT THE NURSE WOULD, UNBELIEVABLY,

BE CONCERNED ABOUT HIS EXPOSURE. I
CONSENTED TO THIS TESTING EVEN
THOUGH IT MEANT A FURTHER, AND
UNNECESSARY, EXPOSURE TO A POTENTIAL
COVID-19 CARRIER AND COMPLICATIONS. BUT
I CONSENTED VOLUNTARILY TO THE TESTING
BECAUSE IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

IF I SHOULD DEVELOP COVID-19
SYMPTOMS IN THE FUTURE, I DON'T KNOW
WHAT I WOULD DO, GIVEN MY EXPERIENCE.
YET THE CDCR WANTS SUCH SYMPTOMS
REPORTED. THE ABSURDITY OF THIS SITUATION
SHOULD BE CLEAR TO ALL.

BY THE WAY, THE TESTS CAME BACK
NEGATIVE, AS I KNEW THEY WOULD, AND I SUSPECT
THE NUNE IS RELIEVED TO KNOW HE WAS NOT
EXPOSED.

PERHAPS YOU CAN POINT OUT HOW THIS
DOES NOT TRANSLATE WELL INTO INMATES
FREELY REPORTING SYMPTOMS, TO THE SRSP
ADMINISTRATION. I HOPE THEY LEARN FROM THIS.

AT ANY RATE, THANKS AGAIN FOR
PROVIDING THE GIFT. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE
THIS NOTE FOR WHATEVER PURPOSE YOU SEE
FIT, AND IN ANY WAY IN WHICH IT

CAN HELP.

REGARDS,

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PS OF COURSE I DON'T WANT MY SHAVING TALK
EXPERIENCE WITH YOU TO RESULT IN FURTHER
HANDSHIPS TO ME. THANK YOU.