

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2011/08/23/voices-from-solitary-injustice-anywhere-is-a-threat-to-justice-everywhere/>

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by [Sal Rodriguez](#) | August 23, 2011

The following letter was written by an inmate at the California Correctional Institution at Tehachapi, California, who had been placed in solitary confinement in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) after being validated as a gang member. Written on July 31st, the letter highlights institutional problems at CCI and makes various recommendations. It also declares support for the goals of the Pelican Bay hunger strike.

To whom it may concern,

Greetings, please excuse the interruption. I just wanted to take this brief moment to shed some light on some matters here at C.C.I. (California Correctional Institution). First of all, my name is [name withheld]. I'm a validated inmate thanks to CDCR's unfair and abusive validation system, and as a result I am now serving an indeterminate SHU term at C.C.I. SHU in Tehachapi, CA.

Where not only I but all SHU [inmates] whether here for disciplinary or administrative reason[s], are all subjected to the same punitive treatment and enduring the same harsh poor living conditions while here in the SHU. I know this is not the proper way for an [inmate] to resolve a grievance outside the [inmate] appeal system but the sad truth is the institution appeals coordinator or the IAB provide little to no remedy. Not including the long process it now takes with the appeal system[s] new set up, the whole process is extensive and exhausting. It can be discouraging when all your hard work and effort bears no fruition at the end. SHU [inmates] have done everything they can to go about resolving these issues correctly. Through CDC 22 form-requests, inmates 602, now even to the point of no longer accepting their food trays/lunches from C/Os and still nothing. Their indifference leaves me no other choice but to reach out to you with these issues. I don't expect you to leap into action and launch an investigation, but I do hope you'll take this letter into enough consideration to look into these problems.

Which are as follows:

(1.) C/Os provide inmates with inadequate cleaning supplies. C/Os claim the institution has a member that states: inmates are only allowed only bar of state soap per week, but fail to present memo when requested. A bar of soap is insufficient to maintain proper cleanliness standards. Especially if you're an indigent inmate who has no source of finance to self support, to purchase hygiene through the inmate canteen. A bar of soap is not going to last if you're bathing, washing and cleaning your head quarters daily. It'll be gone in three days. Disinfectant, toothbrushes once a month insufficient. Staff are supposed to provide inmates with disinfectant, soap bar, tooth powder weekly. Toothbrushes one every two weeks due to bristles are fragile and wear down after a week. Scrub pads every two weeks and supply dental flossers.

(2.) Haircuts: hair cuts are supposed to be one time a month. But are never ran, staff use every excuse not to do haircuts. I've been trying to get my hair cut since I've been here (4-_-11) and it's already the end of July.

(3.) Yard: I've been here in CCI-4B facility since April __, 2011. I've only been to the exercise cage yard one time out of the three months. The institution's incapability to run a consistent and adequate yard schedule is unacceptable and a violation to our 10 hours a week. The institution's effort to rotate eight buildings with 32 cages a week is futile. They can easily utilize the concrete yards for the mean time while new cages are being built. This would help expand more yard time for individuals that don't get to make it to the exercise yard cages that week.

(4.) Books: When the institution receives book orders from our family/loved ones it takes up to sixty days or longer for the institution to pass out your book to you and to do this, most of the time your book(s) become missing and you never receive them, you'll never know when your books arrive because the institution doesn't inform you and they hold on to them for months before they give them to you. All book orders whether books are hard or paper bound are sent to the institution for screening. This is where the delay happens, books are screened in days. However, they hold on to them and let them pile up for months, then send them to the facility in one big bulk. Solution: all paper bound books can be sent and screened by mailroom, so they can be forwarded to the facility with mail, that way you receive your books as they arrive. This is how other prisons do it.

(5.) Productive programs/constructive programs: C.C.I. provides no educational programs. Inmates are unable to acquire a GED likewise

rehabilitation. How are inmates supposed to reform if the institution provides no programs to rehabilitate or education courses?

(6.) Privileges: SHU inmates are being deprived to enjoy the full extent of their privilege Group D. The institution has put further constraints on allowable items SHU inmates can purchase through vendor packages, items that meet the privilege group criteria or clear the exemption section.

The institutions underground rules grant them the power to impose more punitive treatment on SHU inmates. By saying the institution doesn't allow it or always brushing off every single SHU inmates request/or complaint with no response. So If SHU inmates are unable to resolve issues with floor staff or find remedy in the inmate appeal what other options do we have other than these protests? Now inmates all around California are involved in the statewide hunger strike that started in PBSP-SHU. SHU inmates at PBSP SHU 5-core demands are reasonable and legitimate and obviously inspire enough inmates to help motivate the spirits and hearts of all inmates to refuse eating as a last hope for better change in the SHU.

In conclusion to this missive I would like to thank you for your time and listening to my current dilemma. Hopefully someone will acknowledge and adhere to the cruel and unusual punishment were subject to endure as a whole. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere and our stance for equal justice as human beings will not go unrecognized. As a whole who choose to uphold and maintain our high standards of living and still have high regards for our physical and mental well being even while housed in the SHU



Sal Rodriguez was Solitary Watch's first and most prolific intern. Based in Los Angeles, he served as an editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register and the Press-Enterprise, and is now the opinion editor for the Southern California News Group.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 30, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 19, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 6, 2022

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DOWN WITH THE SHU!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THE GUARDS ARE LAIRS AND HAVE BROKEN THE LAW THEY UP HOLD!! 2/3 OF THOSE WHO RUN THE PRISONS SHOULD BE IN PRISON!!! NO INMATE SHOULD BE HOUSED IN THE SHU FOR 4, 5, 6, 7 YEARS. NO CONTACT WITH THEIR FAMILIES. VISITS 1/2 HOUR AND MOST OF THE TIME LESS THAN THAT. THE PHONES ARE ALWAYS TORE UP AND YOU CAN NOT HEAR MUCH OF NOTHING. TREATMENT OF THE INMATES ARE LESS THAN HUMAN AND MEDICAL CARE IS WORST THAN WHAT ANY PRISONER OF WAR WOULD RECEIVE. DOWN WITH THE SHU NOW, NOT TOMORROW BUT NOW!!!!!! WAKE UP THOSE WHO HAVE POWER TO MAKE A CHANGE BEFORE ONE OF YOUR LOVE ONES GO TO PRISON. DOWN WITH THE SHU, DOWN WITH THE SHU. LETS COME TOGETHER TO FIGHT THIS THING. DOWN DOWN DOWN WITH THE SHU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

This is so very sad. CDCR treats inmates as poorly as the worst can get and they have gotten away with it for way too long. The leadership, beginning with the Governor and going down to the COs, needs a thorough and closely monitored education and change of philosophy. The mission of the CDCR as it stands, correction and rehabilitation, is a miserable failure. When will the voters of CA wake up and realize the cost of the systems failure?? When one of their sons or daughters or other close loved one is arrested and goes to prison that's when they'll understand that's when they will care

kick the states ass my siser of justice kick them in the ass and hard if i may say please i cant stand prisons that do this crap you know what pisses me off most about Ca is they call there self CDCR they have the nads or balls to call it coreshions and rehiltashion ok i see some CDC but there sher hell not CDCR less they forget they put rehabiltshion at the end there name yet i see not any happening even so they should not treat inmates like there no one i am with you on this all the way and for all who want out may there be a light in the darknes of justice

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