

Center For Constitutional Rights

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/blog/2017/07/21/released-solitary-i-had-forgot-how-good-sun-feels>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The CCR blog

Solitary confinement has no boundaries and is an infinite pit of corruption, lies, sadistic behaviour, pain, loneliness and self destruction. It is a blessing for someone like CCR to give you a voice and shine its light on those of us who need it most. Its a breath of fresh air which renews our hope and reminds us that wonderful people do exist and are fighting for us every day, thank you!

I was housed in one of the most notorious security housing units (SHU) in this country, known as Pelican Bay State Prison for 17 years. I was only 22 years young when I was tossed into solitary confinement, just a kid after years of solitude, mental and emotional torture came out a man with nothing to lose.

I lost it all in the SHU. My mother passed away from diabetes, my brother passed away from leukemia, my sister died in a car accident and my brother passed away overseas a hero for this country. I never got to give them their proper goodbyes.

I ask myself: was this part of my sentence or punishment? My confinement to the SHU turns out was illegal, but many like me lost more than their freedom. Just because someone claimed I am a man of status and influence. Due to that information I was punished in the worst way.

Year after year I realized I wasnt going anywhere anytime soon so I decided to focus my energy on my education and law studies. After multiple A.A. degrees and certifications, I along with others similarly placed chose to do something about it, not only for ourselves and our families, but for future generations that would take our place when we made space by dying or paroling. After countless appeals, letters and multiple hunger strikes, we finally took a stand against oppression.

17 years later I was released to general population (G.P.). Because Im no longer considered a threat or dangerous, my transition to G.P. has been somewhat smooth. I am engaging in education/self-help programs. All I see are kids like me (when I first came into the system) lost and looking for some guidance. The youngsters teach me things and have lots to talk about. I tell them my experiences in hopes they learn from them. I get yard every day for 2 hours which is a big change from the SHUs concrete box, 23 ft. by 11 ft. It is awesome to have the freedom of choice to choose who you want to talk to and see their faces and expressions. I have been out of the SHU for 1 years and I still cant get used to the fact of people touching me or shaking my hand. I believe its from years of sensory deprivation.

As of today I have not received a contact visit from anybody. As I said before I lost my family so I have yet to experience the feeling of a family or loved ones visit, but I do live the happiness through others who come back from visiting with loved ones and tell me what they eat and show me their pictures. Maybe one day Ill have a visiting experience to share. Just not today, sorry

The first time I went outside was a cloudy day and 5 mins. into the yard it started snowing, soft cotton-like snowflakes, I let a few land on my palm It was awesome. Until that day Ive never touched snow. It snowed throughout the whole yard. I took it as a welcome from up above. I also stayed up all night looking out my window watching it snow. The next day, the snow thick and the sun out, I had forgot how good the sun feels on ones skin or how the window in a cell can make a big difference to your emotional and psychological state.

One of the simple pleasures I have been deprived of was real food. The stuff served to us is slop with a fancy name, but for the first time once again someone gave me chicken (KFC) purchased from a food sale and pizza (Lil Caesars). My taste buds went wild. I had to eat it slow to make it last. Im not sure, but I think I even closed my eyes with every bite those food sales I heard so much about and recently experienced are the next best thing to a visit.

In order for the freedom and human rights we all seek and deserve, please continue to give your support to all equal rights movements. Your support is more valuable than you can imagine for families, women and men in my situation.

Please support CCR for they have a common goal; equal justice for all. Feel free to email me at: www.jpay.com/cesarabalosk85613 or write me direct to the address below whether its to shed some light on my day, share an idea or just to say hello. All mail is welcomed and will be answered.

Sincerely,

Cesar Abalos

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[View the discussion thread.](#)

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