

AMERICA IN PERIL

A creation of concentration camp in Wisconsin: The Torture Chamber

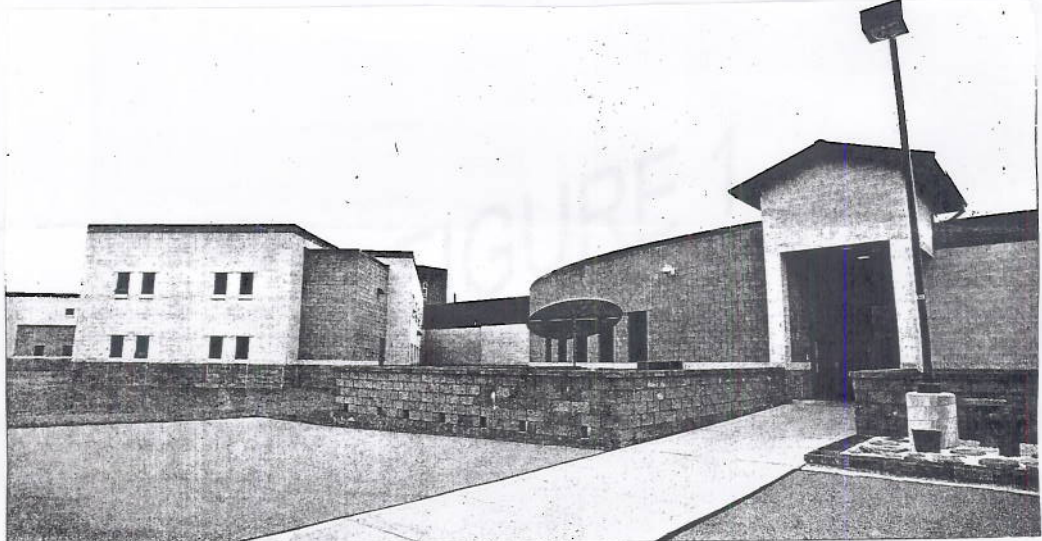
PART II

By Hung Nam Tran

Most people think of concentration camps as places where Nazi Germany burnt Jews to death. History had also shown us that these killings were not limited only to Jews. The Nazi called their concentration camp as "labor camp" in which political dissenters, human right activists, resistant forces, criminals, homosexuals and any other types of undesirable element of society were also placed here for the purpose of preventive detention. As Hitler put it, "the purpose is to protect the Fatherland from dangerous criminals who might be a threat to the State in the future." The communists in Russia, Poland, China, Cuba and Vietnam had also subjected their own people in this same type of treatment. Instead of concentration camps, the communists called theirs, "re-educational camp." Like the Nazi and the Communists, the United States and twenty sovereign states have also erected these concentration camps in modern times based on the same method and ideology as the Nazi, Communists and Fascists before them. Today, the political correct term for these torture chambers is classified as "treatment center." The most notorious of which is the one based in Mauston, Wisconsin which called itself, "Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center."

Nestled about 30 miles north of Madison, Wisconsin, Sand Ridge houses about 400 people whom the State claimed to be the most violent people on the face of the earth.

Does that mean mass murderers, child killers, pedophile priests, drug traffickers, mafias, kidnapers, gangsters or terrorists locked up inside this facility? The surprising answer to many is NO. Many of these

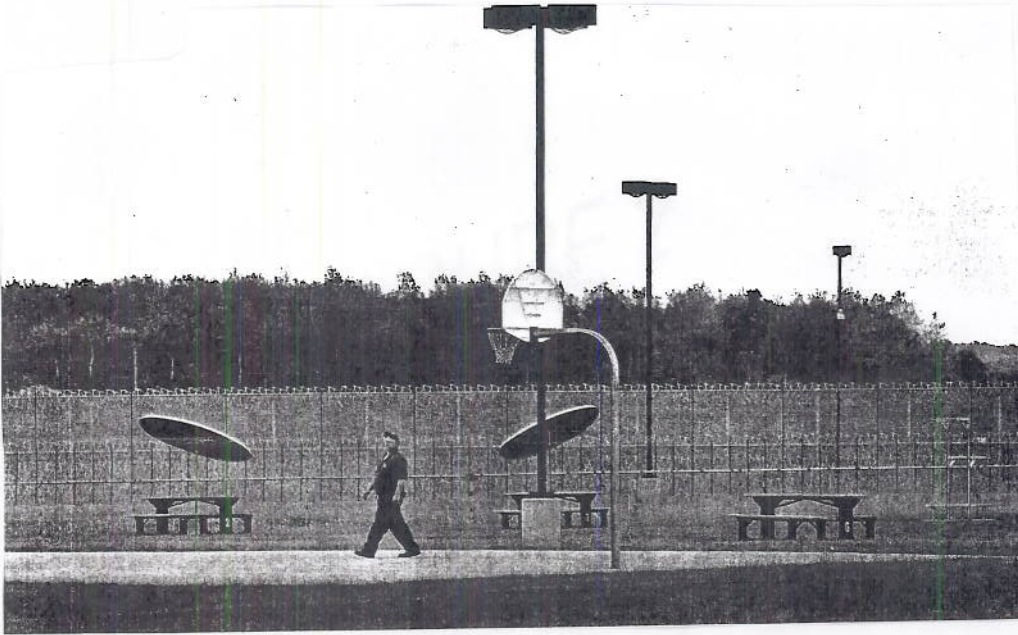


individuals confined in Sand Ridge are mostly typical sex offenders whose relationships had gone awry or juvenile delinquents whose violent aspect of their crimes are statutory defined and the severely mentally ill who had spent most of their lifetime in mental institutions. When politicians such as Sen. Alberta Darling stated these individuals are

violent or dangerous, most people would assumed that such people had committed violent acts such as killing, maiming, cutting, torturing or had used physical force against their victims. Nothing is further from the truth. According to Wisconsin law, violence means touching, grabbing or even having a consensual relationship with someone underage. Many juveniles who have sexual experimentations with their peers and mostly boys would be subjected under the law and be classified as a "sexually violence person." Because Wisconsin law punishes anyone who has sexual contact with minor and almost always boys are often prosecuted then be classified as a sexually violent predator regardless whether those boys had consensual relationship with their mates. When both victim and perpetrator are underage and males, they almost always can be charged as sexual assault one another and served time together. This is a common occurrence at Sand Ridge where victims and perpetrators knew each other intimately and subjected to the same punishment for the same crime. Unlike Wisconsin, however, most states would not be subjected their children with these type of treatments. The most shocking aspect of it all is the very serious violent criminals who known to kill, maim, shoot, decapitate, assault and committed other violent acts do not qualified under Wisconsin's violent act because the law aimed squarely at sex offenders after they completed their prison sentences while allowing these dangerous killers roam the street. According to Wisconsin law and the Wisconsin legislature, serial killers, child murderers and violent gangs are not dangerous enough to confine after they completed their prison terms but sex offenders are. When a legislator like Representative Dean Kaufert, Republican of Neenah, WI, claimed individuals confined at SRSTF are the "worst of the worst", he was deliberately misleading public sentiments when serious offenders like serial murderers, kidnappers, child killers or other career criminals freely roam the street without fear.

Yet to politicians of all stripes, Sand Ridge existence is justifiable despite the cost up to \$142,334 a year while incarcerating an offender only cost up to \$31,806 annually. The reason for disparity of cost is because the law first presumed these individuals are mentally ill in need of treatment and to incarcerate them without justifying evidence of guilt, thus, specialized services would be required to correct their conditions so they can no longer be dangerous to society. What the public does not know is that this is the biggest fraud and fleecing of taxpayers in the history of mankind. There is nothing operational different between Sand Ridge than a typical Wisconsin prison. Nor there is any psychiatric care given to these individuals at all. In fact, no residents ever graduate from any treatment program runs by Dr. David Thorton at Sand Ridge. There is no psychiatric doctor, psychiatric nurses, mental health workers certified, licensed or registered to work with residents on a daily basis. In fact, even Sand Ridge itself is not certified by the Bureau of Quality Assurance, an agency in charge of all mental health facilities in the state. Practically, all the staff at this facility came from the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and trained by the DOC including the newly hires. What unique about Sand Ridge is the way it being operated not as a treatment facility or a prison but rather a torture chamber for experimental purposes.

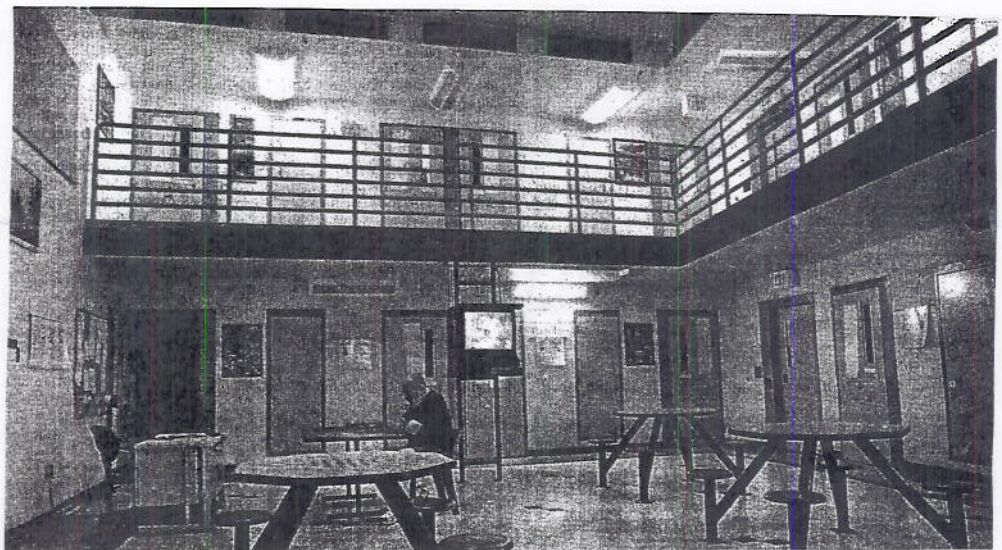
Outsiders looking in cannot distinguish the difference between this facility and a typical prison. The perimeter is surrounded with a razor fence while a security guard armed with a shotgun driving in circular outside the fence and ready to shoot anyone who refused to take "treatment" or decide to leave despite staff constantly reassuring that such "treatment program" is voluntary. It is the only facility in the country that has an electrical fence situated from inside the recreational yard



and pose serious potential suicidal hazards to those from within. Motion sensors and other high tech devices are strategically placed to prevent escape despite the fact that there was not a single escape attempt occurred in the entire decade Sand Ridge under operation. The interior also shows no different than a typical segregation unit in a maximum security prison. Metal doors, stainless steel furniture, concrete slabs use as beds, metal toilets, sinks and hard concrete floors. Outside the unit, a locked and secure door separating each wing and a security portal segregating residents from the rest of the facility. Situated right in the middle of all housing units are guard stations and two mini-guard stations nuzzle inside the housing unit no larger than a typical tennis court with as many as ten personnel at a time guarding no more than 25 residents. Directly outside the cell window is another razor fence encasing the unit. Unlike most prisons, residents are not afforded a bed, desk, drawer or any other type of furniture. Despite blandness of the interior, there is a more sinister atmosphere taking place daily inside these fences.

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Residents here at Sand Ridge are faced with the highest death rate than any other institution in the United States. This is partly due to the experimental torture techniques designed to incapacitate and deprive residents of any physical normality. The other part is due to lawmakers, judges and administrators condone, encourage and ignore the reality that residents are subjected to daily torture. In fact, they even ensure residents continuously keep remaining here indefinitely, in effect, to destroy all hopes and to obliterate many of the residents' will to live. Physical assaults, verbal abuse, emotional deprivation, family separation, social isolation, psychological terrors and sexual humiliation are common sports at Sand Ridge. What about treatment as paraded by the Wisconsin legislature and state psychologists? There is no treatment available to provide a positive impact on anyone or any type of treatment traditionally designed to heal as society known it. Rather, treatment here means torture or infliction of mental, emotional, physical and social pain on the unfortunate victims of preventive prevention in order to induce violent reactions. This way, legislators such as Rep. Dean Kaufert and his conservative Republican ruthless machine can claim that these individuals are so dangerous that they cannot be treated at all. They then can convince their constituents that the exuberant money spent is justifiable as a mean to secure societal safety. And of course, who would want to argue with that.

But what if these individuals are not as dangerous as Kaufert and his conservative Republican manipulations made them out to be? And what if there is no treatment but just plain torture of human beings? Would society then assented to such barbaric means to justify its morality simply because they are sex offenders? Of course, there is Bush/Cheney neo-type who condone tortures and who would have no problem of imposing violent acts on other human beings to justify treating violence but society as a whole need to re-examine claims from conservative Republicans like Kaufert. No matter how noble torturing American citizens including children who have made lapse of judgments but there must be another way to protect citizens from future criminal acts without needlessly causing pain as mean to rationalize crime and punishment.

Sand Ridge Secure Concentration Camp is stacked with former Rambo like prison guards and stern individuals who strongly believe their harsh methods serve well intended public policies. They certainly are backed up by many conservative Republicans in both houses of legislatures, the governor office, and the conservative Wisconsin Supreme Court. The federal courts are no better. Many of these bureaucrats do not believe sex offenders have any civil rights and even stripped them of their human rights as well. In May 2010, Barbara Crabb, a federal judge based in Madison western district, ruled that the condition of confinement at Sand Ridge is not so uncommon than any other jails and prisons, thus, plaintiffs could not state any claims for relief. She continues to dismiss excessive force lawsuits in droves. This means if Sand Ridge residents who had been assaulted by guards or torture because policies directed them to do so would be acceptable under Crabb's analysis because these are the same conditions endured by inmates. When residents complained about the degree of brutality, its widespread and

systematic torture, she dismissed it just as a few isolated incidents. Crabb rulings had bolstered prison staff mentality of deliberate indifference to residents' safety.

There are serious emotional and psychological abuses of patients (residents are called patients) as well. Residents are subjected to rules and regulations that designed to prevent them to have any normal human interaction with one another or with their families. They are deprived of legal materials or phone calls to attorneys. Family, friends and defense attorneys must submit to various intrusive background checks and procedural hurdles just to talk to a particular resident. If family members inquire about love ones, staff would claim confidentiality law prevent them to disclose whether or not such resident is even there while the institution has no problem notified probation officers or stamp residents' mails so the public aware when patients try to communicate with the outside world. Normal residents are locked inside housing units with very little physical movement including the mentally retarded and those with high psychopathy. A resident who experienced psychotic episodes would be subjected physical beating, locked down or strap naked onto a concrete slab for hours by correctional officers without any doctor supervision. There is no psychiatric nurse or doctor monitor the treatment imposed on residents by nonmedical personnel on a daily basis. The facility does not provide education opportunity or degree in which residents can improve their educational prospects nor residents are provided with work or allow creating or running a business in order to learn self-sufficiency skills. Residents are not permitted to cook for themselves, assist one another with grooming, lend, borrow or visit each other's cell despite these are acceptable and most common practices in both prisons and jails in the United States. Furthermore, residents are not allowed to hug, hold hands, disagree with staff, has emotional outbursts, show frustrations or even cut their own hair.

Residents often are subjected to punishments which were not rationally or legitimately related to treatment or the purpose of confinement. SRSTF staff consistently refused to address mental health issues or permits private professionals to do an independent evaluation or inspection. Those who speak out about the need for psychiatric treatment for those who are mentally ill or complain about the lack of mental health treatment were subjected to discipline including physical assaults and other type of disciplines. That because the institution orderlies or nursing assistants have completely control over residents medical supervision including writing progress notes and in charge of discipline residents as well. Disciplinary methods include the use of strip search, seclusion, isolation, shackle and restraint. If residents protested against these types of "treatments", stun gun, tazer, billy club, and pepper spray can be applied to enforce silent. Sand Ridge policies permitted these acts intentionally in order to create significant degree of harm to residents even when minor infraction occurred. Staff are the biggest threats to residents at this facility. In addition, Sand Ridge created an environment specifically to inflict psychological and mental torture. Residents are systematically being isolated and prohibited from express any emotional reaction such as comforting one another. They are also prohibited from expressing any emotional reaction

or assist each other due to physical disability. Yet, the nursing assistants whose duties to assist residents not only refused to do so but think their only job is security and discipline. Residents are barred from having contacts such as visits to their own children if the children are under the age of eighteen. Nor can residents receive phone calls from loved ones. Sand Ridge even uses food as a means of punishment. Residents are allowed only a 1400 calories diet. Additional food would be provided if the residents "voluntarily" sign a statement affirming the institution provides treatment or participate in this fraudulent claim. Those who refused to sign such statement or acknowledged that there is no treatment would be forced to live the most degrading and inhuman conditions with severe restriction imposed on physical movements. In fact, the condition of confinement at Sand Ridge is so intolerable that many residents relieved stress by acting out violently despite the fact that many of these same individuals spent decades in the department of corrections without any physical altercation or have a history of physical violence. And that is exactly the purpose of research or reaction Sand Ridge's administrator such as Steve Schneider intended to produce.

Why? Because it is difficult to label these residents as the "worst of the worst" or the "most dangerous" when the majority of them did not have any violent conducts in their records prior to admission. Also, politicians such as Jeffrey and Scott Fitzgerald who are Republican leaders in the Wisconsin legislature and represented Sand Ridge's district could no longer justify the high cost of incarceration against those who had completely paid their debts to society and at the end of their sentences see their earned releases taken away arbitrarily by these politicians. To validate the assaults on liberty and freedom, these politicians need to demonstrate to the uninformed public that these individuals are so dangerous for release by pointing out violent conducts inside a secure facility and the public needs protection from them. What a better way to provide evidence of a violent nature to those who do not have a history of it than by inducing high level stress and psychological mayhem. When faced with a condition so abysmally inhumane, understandably, some will react in a violent way as a means to relieve stress. And when that happened, the nursing assistants then quickly documented those reactions to affirm public belief that these individuals need to be locked up for the good of society and their own good. Interestingly, despite various mental abuse, physical torture, emotional humiliation and sexual assaults visited upon these ex-offenders, few ever strike out in a physical way. In fact, there have been less violent incidents occurred at Sand Ridge than any other state prison and even smaller rate than at any typical mental health institution. Instead of admitting that these harsh tactics are failed experiments, these torturers continue to insist residents at Sand Ridge still posed a high risk of harm to the public despite the factual documented data from the U.S. Department of Justice showed that sex offenders have the lowest recidivism rate than any other criminal groups. By implementing psychological torments, Sand Ridge can point out at the result where residents have serious lack emotional bonding or the ability to properly function in society if released. What Wisconsin politicians and the public failed to realize, the lack

of social bonding or emotional stability is directly resulted from years of abuse by Sand Ridge's ruthless policies. Any normal person when prevented to have any normal social interaction with others over a long period of time certainly can attest disconnection with others due to sustain psychological damages. Evidence clearly has been shown that Sand Ridge's residents had high level of psychopathy was the direct result of such cruel treatment. Overwhelming majority of residents has become highly psychopathic even though they were never experience any psychosis symptoms during their entire term of incarceration prior arriving at Sand Ridge. The Wisconsin Department of Health's record substantiates this point.

These brutalities and appalling experiments are not defensible by any contemporary standards of decency. Incarcerating American citizens based on the idea that they might be a danger to the state in the future is not only repugnant to our Constitutional heritage but tormenting them to induce psychopathic traits is beyond disbelief of any civilized society. When government bureaucrats' power are left unchecked without any accountability and actively supported by other branches of government, they often turn into ruthless dictators. It is incredible that any society would allow its legislature to create law specifically condoning physical violence against its own citizens and use legal means to violate every human right imaginable. Unless citizens are willing to stand up and denounce these barbaric methods, government officials eventually would incorporate the same tactics against general public as a whole. Many prison security measures have spread silently to the masses over the years by utilizing the police as agent of social control to inhibit freedom. Any person who suspected of committing crime or believed by government agents as a danger to the state can now be locked up not only under criminal statutes but under civil scheme as well. It is a matter of time, when every action of an individual can be deemed dangerous by the government and a need for such agents of control to step in. Preventive detention then will be the norm under the guise of security. That day is not very far away when the government will literally strips all inherent rights guaranteed by the Constitution to every citizens. Freedom will cease to exist if the public does not demand these concentration camps to shut down now or destroy its conservative power base. For those who naively believe the government will not invade theirs privacy, take away theirs liberty, restrict theirs freedom or take away of theirs way of life if they just blindly follow the government direction, they are sadly mistaking. Individuals at Sand Ridge are not incarcerated for any criminal acts. They are incarcerated because the government thinks they *might* commit future criminal acts. And if you don't think this can happened to you, watch closely at the security measures implement at airports nationwide in the near future!