

August 6, 2011

" On Being Transgender - Part 3 "
By Jennifer Gann

In conclusion, I will end this three part series "On Being Transgender" with my feelings and hopes for the near future, and some long-term goals for myself.

First of all, I will continue my pursuit of higher education. I currently have about 21 units of college credit, from completing a semester of courses at San Bernardino Valley College in Spring 1990, while confined at the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) in Norco, and a couple of correspondence courses from Coastline Community College at Pleasant Valley in 2005-06.

Additionally, I will continue to educate myself about my American Indian cultural heritage, and Cherokee traditional customs. I will continue my spiritual practices as a devotee of our sacred Mother Earth, of Wakan Tanka, and my Guru.

In the near-term, I hope to

be able to enroll in some more college correspondence courses. I am very interested in American Indian and Women's studies. I also hope to learn all that I can of Cherokee tribal traditions, and become a registered tribe member.

As a transwoman prisoner activist, I plan to continue political education and organizing of other prisoners, particularly around LGBTQ equality and civil rights, through USW and the United Front for Peace in Prisons (UFPP).⁸ I will also continue blogging, and trying to build AMP as a true revolutionary feminist vanguard — i.e. from the vantage point of indigenous and Third World women. AMP stands in solidarity with groups such as the Women of All Red Nations (WARN)⁹ and the Out of Control Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners (OCC).

As for the long-term goals I have set for myself, ultimately, I seek to have SRS and breast

augmentation to complete my gender transition. However, as a "Three Strikes" political prisoner and lifer, this will not likely happen unless the law is changed, or I am given a sentence reduction and parole date.

In the mean time, under the new Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA) national standards being implemented by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ);¹⁰ specifically, Section 115.42, which mandates "individualized determinations" of whether to house transgender inmates in a male or female facility;¹¹ I will continue to seek transfer to a women's facility.

As a transwoman prisoner and sex-abuse survivor, I am inappropriately housed in a maximum-security men's facility with convicted rapists and sexually violent predators (SVPs), and am forced to double cell with male inmates against my will under threat of disciplinary action! Here you have an outrageous, criminal injustice being perpetrated upon vulnerable

LGBTQ prisoners by the Government and state officials, who deliberately jeopardize their personal safety by facilitating unrestricted contact with known rapists and SVP inmates! ¹²

Furthermore, I am subjected to sexual harassment and mandatory strip-search body inspections by male correctional officers, in direct violation of the prohibition of cross-gender strip searches. ¹³

Contrary to redneck, sexist prison officials' discriminatory opinions otherwise — I AM WOMAN! Hear me roar!!! My physical appearance and gender identity is female. I'm small at 5'7", 165 lbs., with long, auburn hair, "pretty" green eyes, and B-cup size breasts. I do not belong in a men's prison with rapists!

Therefore, I pray for the day when I can be transferred from this hell-on-earth, living nightmare, to a women's facility, with my sisters in the struggle.

— Viva las Amazonas!

In the spirit of Crazy Horse!

Notes

1. See e.g. Madrid v. Gomez, 889 F.Supp. 1146 (N.D. Cal., 1995).

2. <http://www.syda.org>.

3. <http://www.gicofcolo.org/Newsandupdates>.

4. In California state prisons, protective custody is known as a "Sensitive Needs Yard" (SNY) placement, which is used to house inmates with a variety of safety concerns, including gang dropouts, LGBTQ prisoners, sex offenders, and inmate victims of assault.

5. The Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP), which provides legal services to the transgender community, was named for her, <http://www.srlp.org>.

6. <http://www.prisoncensorship.info/usw>.

7. See "AMP Political Statement" (amended and revised, March 8, 2011).

8. <http://www.prisoncensorship.info/UFPP>.

9. See Peter Mathiessen, In The Spirit of Crazy Horse: The Story of Leonard Peltier and the FBI's War on the American Indian Movement, (Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 410-411, 421-22, 516.

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10. "Justice Department Releases Proposed Rule in Accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act", press release, January 24, 2011; <http://www.justice.gov/print/f/PrintOut2.jsp>.

11. For further information on this issue, go to: www.justdetention.org.

12. According the Government's own recent estimate, in a Department of Justice report, at least 216,600 people were sexually abused in prisons and jails in 2008, and 17,100 of these were juvenile detention cases. — "New Government Report: At Least 216,600 U.S. Inmates Sexually Abused Every Year", Action Update, March 2011, (Just Detention International, 2011); p. 2; <http://www.justdetention.org>.

13. See California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 15, §3287(b)(3) & (4), which states in part: "Body inspection of clothed female inmates shall be conducted by female correctional employees only... Male correctional employees shall not, under any circumstances, perform non-emergency body searches of

female inmates."

END



My trans-sister Me:Shell in Old Sacramento