

It's Tuesday, December 20, 2011 around 3:15 A.M. and I noticed Michael sitting on a concrete slab in a 6 foot wide, 12 foot long, and about 9 foot tall segregation cell at Waupun Correctional Institution. Michael Ray Charles Green is writing something on a tablet of paper and I am Michael's sub-conscious, just observing, but he is aware of my presense.

Michael is dressed in standard state issued segregation orange top and bottom garments, a tan colored T-Shirt underneath the orange top, 3 pairs of faded green and extremely worn out, dingy, and torn socks, an over-stretched midnight blue stocking cap covered with tiny lint balls, and on his feet are a pair black Nike sandals. The temperature is extremely cold, yet doesn't seem to bother Michael. "I've gotten use to it," Michael thinks. "That's why I've continued to let my beard and mustache grow out. You know, I've been growing it for about 50 days now. I look like an Arab, I know. If I was on the streets I probably wouldn't get any attention from the ladies while looking this rough." Michael's dreadlocks are twisted down and from a distance, if you squinted your eyes, you would probably think Michael has a small afro. "If I untwist them, they'll be beyond shoulder length. I really want my roots and new growth to lock up faster, so I twist them like this in hopes of training it to lock faster. Plus, it helps keep my head warm in this cold cell."

Almost the entire cell is the color of off-white and the walls look like they could use a good cleaning and maybe even a new paint job. If you look closely on the walls, you can see in various areas, old food stains, mildew along the base, foreign matter, pencil marks and drawings, a few paint chips, spots, and globs of dried toothpaste probably used as an adhesive for hanging photographs or a calendar maybe, a few pieces of masking tape, and who knows what else is on these concrete walls. "Cell cleaning and sanitizing is usually done on Saturday mornings. Staff offers the use of a toilet brush, broom, dust pan, mop, and a disinfectant cleaning rag and then these items will be returned to staff after use," Michael explains. "They give you only one cleaning rag to clean an entire cell, which I think is not sanitary at all. I usually use the rag to clean the toilet. Then I give the rag back because I don't want to use a rag that has cleaned a toilet to also clean the walls, mirror, and other areas. It just doesn't sit right with me."



There is only one window which is located center of the back wall. It's about the length of an adult's entire arm and about wide as an out-stretched hand. Looking out the window is no sight to see at all. Look out the window and down is only gravel, up is a dark blue sky, and forward is a tall concrete wall where the sky is the only sight above the barbed wire.

On the entrance wall to the left at eye level is a stainless steel intercom communication call button. "They say these call buttons are to be used for medical and or mental health emergencies only, and that routine questions and needs should be directed to appropriate staff through written correspondence or as regular rounds are made. If you use the button for anything other than an emergency, you could be subject to disciplinary action. It's really crazy because sometimes even if you have an emergency and press the button, no action is taken anyway. It's a big joke," Michael expresses.

A few inches to the right of the button is a small mirror with toothpaste spattered on it. Just below the mirror is the intercom lighting system button for operating the lights. There are 4 light settings for the light system. The lighting system is designed to keep the lights on 24 hours a day and there is never a time when there is complete darkness. The lowest setting is dim light, push the button once and it gets brighter. Press the button a second time and it will get even brighter and push the button a third time and it gets its brightest. The fourth time the button is pushed, it returns to the first setting of being just dim. "My Aunt had a lamp that had this same technology in the late 80's." The actual light fixture is located at the top of the left main wall. The 3 fluorescent lights are about the same size of the left main wall.

Just below the stainless light button is a combination stainless steel sink, toilet, and drinking fountain, all molded together made by Acorn Engineering Co. There are also 2 rods for hanging towels or wash cloths connected to this molded stainless steel combination unit. There are 3 buttons for activating either cold or hot water and to flush the toilet. Either cold or hot water button only requires a simple push and release to activate. Once activated, the water flows similar to that of a drinking fountain. The unit will dispense 20 seconds of water and disable itself for an additional 30 seconds, so if you press the button again, nothing will happen until the 30 seconds is up and the unit has reset itself. Flushing



the toilet has the same principle function except the toilet's disabled time is 5 minutes after pressing the flush button. "Really bogus if you ask me. I mean, who wants to smell bodily fluids for 5 minutes? What you have to understand is that sometimes when inmates do the um, #2..., in prison it is custom to give a cursory flush, especially if you plan to be there for a while. But this, ..., this is crazy! But I can understand their reasoning though," Michael speaks of the State of Wisconsin and Department of Corrections. "I think they choose this system to eliminate inmates wasting resources. It must be cheap, affordable or expensive but yet in the long run, cost effective and efficient."

The floor is extremely cold as well and walking barefoot would be stupid and would almost certainly send chills up the spine because even with 3 layers of socks, Michael mentions that he can feel the cold floor still.

On the right side of the cell connected to the right hand wall is the 8 foot long, 3 foot wide, and 2 foot high concrete slab that Michael is now still, still sitting, writing effortlessly. Bedding looks as if Michael just woke up because the lower half is still neatly intact while the upper half is tossed over. The blankets look fairly thin but extremely used. They are not comfortable looking. One is brown and one is beige. The sheets are white but you can see right through them. On the sheets you can see all over lint balls, different strands and types of human hair and follicles, and who knows what else. Michael explains, "The prison doesn't wash 'em properly. They don't care because they don't have to sleep on them. I've complained several times but complaining seems to be useless and it's like talking to brick walls." Slumped in the corner, between the back wall and right side main wall of the concrete slab is an uncomfortable looking pillow covered in a pillow case in the same type of condition as the sheets. There is a mattress a top of the slab, however the actual concrete slab looks to be absolutely more comfortable.

As Michael continues to write whatever he is writing, I notice he is writing on a concrete slab which is located on the back wall which is also the length of almost the entire back wall and extends out about a foot. It looks like it could be a mantle/desk area. Michael is sitting on the concrete slab on the backside next to the back wall with his legs underneath this mantle/desk area. Next to Michael's feet are a pair



of orange state issued slip-ons. On the toe of each slip-on is marked in black permanent marker the number 15, maybe symbolizing or to identify the shoe size. They look extremely worn and used as well. Also underneath the mantle/desk area, I noticed 3 brown paper grocery size type bags. One bag is empty, another is full of ripped up pieces of paper, probably trash, and the other bag has only two brown 12" expanding wallets.

"I got all of my music lyrics in that one. I got a lot of album lyrics in there from various artist, anyone from Lil Wayne to Young Jeezy to T.I. and Eightball and MJG. In the other wallet, I got all of my legal work and discovery material in there. I hardly ever go in that one." Michael assures while in stride to his writing whatever he is writing.

Just above the brown bags, sitting on top of the mantle/desk, I noticed another brown 12" expanding wallet. Michael explains, "Oh yeah, that got all my stuff in it that I use everyday." Michael gets up to show me the contents inside the wallet and explains, "You see how organized I am? Every file is in a labeled folder that is in alphabetical order and chronological order. I have everything here in this wallet that the prison has on me pertaining to information. It's kind of like my own personal history wallet. I have everything from my conduct history to my educational, medical, and program history in this wallet." Michael goes on for a short while but then returns to the concrete slab and concrete mantle/desk area to write whatever he is writing on his tablet of paper.

Then, I noticed Michael has books neatly organized and stacked against the wall on the mantle/desk area. Surprised, I asked Michael if the books were his personal books or if they belonged to the prison. Michael responds, "The um, those 3 books right there, those books belong to the prison. The guards gave them to me when I came to the hole. I haven't read them though. I really don't get into those kinds of books, fictional books. And those other 4 books, yeah those are mine. They belong to me. Actually, Mom bought them for me." I asked Michael if he actually read the 4 books his mother bought for him. Then, registering my question, Michael stops writing and grins without even looking up, half-modest, half embarrassed at the question, as if these were books everyone reads as children. "I wouldn't have them if



"I didn't!" Michael sighs. "The books contain information but not the information is up here," Michael points to and taps his forehead lightly. "Now they're just books, only used as and for reference." The 4 books were, My Mother's Rules by Lynn Toler, Heart of the Soul by Gary Zukav and Linda Francis, The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle, and A New Earth by Eckhart Tolle. Then I asked Michael what he thought of Eckhart and he responded, "Honestly? I don't! With all due respects, the author is of no importance to me, I'm only interested with the information given."

Moving on without argument and a moment of awkward silence, I glanced behind the books and saw a few hygiene products, some misc. papers, a roll of toilet tissue, 2 decks of playing cards, and a few holiday cards. Michael excused himself as it was now 5:00 AM exactly and he wanted to make his bed.

I watched Michael make up his bed similar to a soldier in the military and asked him if that style was an institutional policy and procedure. Michael replied, "No, I just feel better when I make my bed like this. It took a lot of practice to get it just right." Michael then offered me a seat next to him but I declined and choose to remain standing with notes in hand. Michael choose to speak to me as he began writing again.

"Breakfast is served in about an hour, around 6:30 AM everyday here. Today, I think we're having hash browns, scrambled eggs, toast, jelly, peanut butter, 1 milk, 1 butter, and maybe farina. You can have some of mine if you like, it's one of the better meals they serve here. After breakfast, the officers come around and serve medication to those who have medication and pick up the breakfast trays."

Interrupted by sounds of someone seeming to be speaking in tongues or in devilish voices, this person is heard very clearly and from a distance down the long hallway from Michael's cell. Michael continues, "Yeah, it gets like that sometimes. You get use to it though. Mostly everyone is asleep right now but jackasses like that wakes everybody up and creates chaos. I don't know if he is really possessed but something is surely wrong with him. It gets really wild in here at times. They scream, yell, sing, kick and beat on their walls and doors, some inmates



flash their private parts to other inmates and staff, others smear bodily fluids over themselves and their cells, while others gangbang or hurt themselves with suicidal actions. The worst I've ever done was maybe disturb my neighbors by rapping loudly or talking loudly with other inmates down the hall. Other than that, I don't really cause problems. The rest of my day is as is. Whatever happens, happens. I really look forward to lunch, dinner and then mail call. Mail call is when the guards come around and deliver mail. They usually deliver mail at 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Once mail call is over, I usually respond to the mail if I get some or I'll go to sleep until the next day. Sometimes I read the books I have or the music lyrics or I write my own song or two.

Michael then picked up the writing pad and decided to lay down on his neatly made concrete slab of a bed with notebook now on lap and upper back on the pillow and wall at the same time. Noticing he was left handed, he held the bottom right corner of the pad with his right hand and held his pad for stability. Michael looked like a Giant laying on the slab and I could only imagine how uncomfortable sleeping must be for him. Michael paused his writing and looked up at seemingly nothing, almost in deep thought and gazed into space. I could tell something interesting was on his mind but didn't disturb him. I watched him jerk his head shoulder to shoulder as if he were working out kinks in his neck. Then I noticed his right foot rapidly moving back and forth from left to right as if he had restless leg syndrome. Then, out of nowhere, he just leaned over and gently laid the right side of his face on the edge of the mantle/desk area while still laying on the slab and then held his right hand against his right eyebrow and cheek as if to be thinking in a more comfortable state. He let out a strong-deep breath and sighed. Foot still rocking 100 miles an hour, he closed his eyes. Notebook gently fell out his hand. The light setting was at its brightest and Michael yawned softly.