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# Sex-for-Snitching Ring Reported at Massachusetts Prison

November 2, 2010

tags: [Massachusetts Department of Corrections](#), [MCI-Norfolk](#), [suicide rate](#)  
by James Ridgeway

A prisoner at the Massachusetts Correctional Institute at Norfolk has written to Solitary Watch to report the existence of a "sex for information" ring run by guards within the prison. He says the existence of this hitherto unknown operation is responsible for the state's high number of prison suicides. The inmate suicide rate in Massachusetts is four times the national average, with eight suicides this year alone—including one in June at MCI-Norfolk, the state's largest medium-security prison, which also had two high-profile suicides last year.

The prisoner, who says he has become the advocate for others too frightened of retaliation to talk, himself fears retaliation from within the prison. He has reported the ring at MCI-Norfolk to the Massachusetts Department of Corrections and has, he says, already been interviewed by Assistant Deputy Commissioner Paul DiPaolo, the state official in charge of stopping rape in the prisons. In granting this interview, the corrections hierarchy is bypassing lower-down officials within the prison, according to the prisoner. Each prison has an official responsible for rape suppression.

In a letter to Solitary Watch, the prisoner, who chose to remain anonymous over concerns for his own safety, wrote:

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Abusive and sadistic guards move weak and vulnerable prisoners into housing units they oversee and manipulate them into engaging in sexual activity with each other (many of these men are homosexuals, sex offenders and men with mental health histories) and then

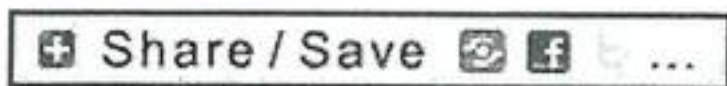


they [the guards] force them to become informants under the threat of revealing their secrets to the general population.

In another letter to a friend, the same prisoner wrote:

The officers that are involved in this ring are also behind...abusive treatment that makes this environment hopeless (suicides), and issue a disproportional amount of disciplinary reports, as well as create so many abusive situations through manipulating informant information, creating false rumors about prisoners, and spreading CORI [Criminal Offender Record Information] protected information around the prison. They have gotten away with it for years here at Norfolk, and each time a prisoner attempted to bring it to light they were transferred, had weapons placed in their cells, were tortured with cell searches and strip searches on an almost daily basis, which eventually lead to the general feeling that you could not address these issues. As I am sure you know I DISAGREE! This all lead to this "sex for information ring." They got so bold, so brazen, that they dared to do the unimaginable. Men have caught HIV because of it, may have been subjected to unspeakable abuse that could not be proven, and to complain could make your life so much worse.

The Massachusetts Department of Corrections would not comment on this report when we queried the department on behalf of *Mother Jones*. "We cannot confirm this and do not comment on investigations," DOC spokesperson Cara Savelli wrote in an email. She turned down a request for an interview with Assistant Deputy Commissioner DiPaolo: "I'm sorry but your interview request has also been denied."



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