

Reply ID "Solitary Panel"

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Greetings Dear Panelist and Audience Members:

Having spent more than 25 consecutive years in solitary confinement status across several states, within some of America's worst prisons, I have directly experienced or have witnessed every conceivable condition and every known atrocity of contemporary American penological practice. This unfortunate experience, I think, has given me some unique perspectives that few prisoners can match.

In today's parlance the term "Solitary Confinement" could well be regarded antiquated in the sense it is more an umbrella term which now includes state-of-the-art facilities called "Supermaxes," "Control units," "special housing units," "health and segregation complexes," and a litany of euphemistic names. They all hold one common trait: **acute isolation.**

During the Reagan Era defunding of mental health facilities nation-wide had the effect of creating an epidemic of "street people." This, along with "The War On Drugs" and prison expansion, both Reagan-Bush policies, left many without adequate mental healthcare and drug treatment programs support. Consequently many were sent to fill the expanding prisons. Those who couldn't adapt or conform to the structured demands of the prison environment, and prison officials, having given up on the concept of rehabilitation, without resources or experience on how to effectively treat the mentally ill or the drug addicted, consigned many to

languish in solitary confinement with the rest of the undesirables, and to add more chaos to that environment.

Prisons and mental institutions, if expressed on a genealogical chart, fall on a close common line. So today we have a sort of incestuous marriage between the sciences of penology and psychology, i.e. prison management and psychologist: Each of today's state-of-the-art prison facilities in design and purpose were devised by and built to the specifications of psychologist. Most, if not all, are sensory deprivation chambers, in part or whole. Sensory deprivation chambers are no less than experimental torture chambers designed to inflict acute forms of isolation on its subjects.

Originally invented to test the effects of severe isolation on animals. Today this de facto torture is being used to study the effects of acute isolation upon the behavior control of American prisoners. Isolation is the greatest, most destructive instrument to the human psyche and spirit in the tool box of prison officials. These sensory deprivation units and prisons constitute not only conditions of "solitary confinement," but also constitute ongoing forced human experimentation, the deleterious effects of which prisoners have very little recourse to protect themselves psychologically or legally from.

Besides being ongoing experiments at a macro-level, there exists a veiled aspect of modern American penology that even versed prison activists are unacquainted with. I'm referring to the low-intensity (covert) forced psychological experimentation (for behavioral change purposes) conducted upon certain targeted prisoners and directed and overseen by behaviorist in collusion with prison officials. Sophisticated techniques of psychological coercion and coercive manipulation are tested;

aversion therapy, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, among other things, are used to try to forcefully shape behavior.

I'm addressing this panel firsthand; for several years now I have been subjected to these tormenting methods as incredible as that may seem. At present I am being subjected to the techniques and tactics of a vigorous attempt to insidiously condition me through means of reflex conditioning. These techniques are being directed upon me in a covert way, involving skillful and elaborate manipulation of the environment, i.e. continuously placing me into orchestrated situations, etc.

Most people are skeptical upon hearing these claims. Americans are easily deluded that their prisoners are not being mistreated, let alone being psychologically tortured and brainwashed; and so it is no enigma to me how the German people likewise were deluded at the Nazi atrocities right under their noses. It took me a while to understand what I was being subjected to and learn to develop some sort of defense. I often wonder about the prisoners who have unwittingly or will unwittingly suffer these methods. I will not abandon them in this fight.

These facilities, in function, are similar to the "re-education" centers operated by certain communist governments in the past, except in America its veiled but not completely invisible to those who have eyes to see. Re-education and (forced) behavior modification are but euphemisms for what is, in fact, brainwashing. The prisoners exposed to this extreme form of solitary confinement, for long-term, is put in peril of losing his sanity, or suffering an array of psycho-somatic illnesses and effects. In some cases the prisoners' behavior is ~~was~~ unwittingly modified either through voluntary group participation, or insidiously via forced

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tactics and techniques as they have been attempting with me. It is supposed that should the latter strategies not work, then the prisoner will be given no reprieve until she/he succumbs to death or insanity under a withering onslaught of coercive psychological pressure. In many ways these methods often can be more effective than pain, torture, drugs or the use of physical brutality.

What I need, and what I am directly requesting of this panel, is that you join me in being proactive on this issue. I request assistance and support to file and litigate a lawsuit on behalf not only of myself, if successful, but every prisoner in solitary confinement throughout this country. Without strong support I will be crushed by the juggernaut Prison Industrial Complex should I take on an issue half-cocked. I need fraternity in struggle and the assistance of an attorney and a psychologist who will extend some pro bono assistance with information and resources, and an effort of trying to locate an attorney and psychologist in my area who will litigate and/or testify in support of a civil trial. The most effective way to attack and solve this problem of overuse of solitary confinement is from the inside-out and the outside in. Only together in solidarity can we possess such a unique position.

I earnestly ask that panelist Attorney Grainne O'Neill, Jules Label and Dr. Stuart Grassian open a correspondence with me, taking this as my first letter and an S.O.S directed to them, but as well I invite all of the panelist and any pro-active and concerned audience members to contact me at the address given at the head of this open letter.

Thank you.

Peace And Love, *John McKinley Boy*