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RE: RESPONSE TO Te & C. (POST).

GREETINGS.

I JUST FINISHED READING YOUR POST REGARDING MY SUBMISSION ON GANG LIFE. AND IT WAS REALLY INTERESTING.

NO, I DON'T TAKE ANY RESPONSES TO WHAT I WRITE AS ANYTHING MORE THAN DIALOGUE. WE ALL HAVE OPINIONS.

BUT BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER I NEED TO MAKE THIS CLEAR, I AM NOT TRYING TO PROMOTE GANG ACTIVITY. I AM SPEAKING FROM MANY YEARS OF MY EXPERIENCE AS A GANG MEMBER.

BUT THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF GANGS, NOT JUST IN THE U.S.

BUT ACROSS THE GLOBE. AND WITH EACH THERE ARE RULES, POLICIES AND LAWS. SOME ARE MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN OTHERS. SOME ARE WELL

DISCIPLINED AND ORGANIZED. WHILE OTHERS NOT SO MUCH.

ONE THING THAT ALL HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT THEY ARE EXPECTED TO KEEP THEIR MOUTHS SHUT. AND NEVER DISCLOSE INFORMATION ON THEIR GANG OR ITS MEMBERS.

THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST SERIOUS OF ALL EXPECTATIONS. AND USUALLY WILL RESULT IN SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS IF VIOLATED. AND ANYONE THAT JOINS A GANG IS TOLD THAT BEFORE HAND. SO A GUY CAN'T LATER SAY HE DIDN'T KNOW. AND REALLY HAS NO EXCUSE FOR TELLING ON HIS FRIENDS.

IT'S ONE THING FOR SOMEONE TO GET OLDER, OR WISER AND DECIDE HE SHOULD TAKE A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. BUT THAT DOES NOT MAKE IT ALRIGHT TO TELL ON YOUR FRIENDS.

THE DEBRIEFING PROCESS HERE IN CALIFORNIA IS NOT JUST FOR A GUY TO TELL ABOUT ALL THE THINGS THAT HE HAS DONE. HE MUST TELL EVERYTHING HE KNOWS ABOUT HIS GANG. AND ITS ACTIVITY.

ALOT OF GUY'S DON'T KNOW A HELL OF ALOT. SO WHEN THEY DECIDE TO LEAVE THEY ARE FORCED TO MAKE UP STUFF.

AND YES, I KNOW THIS FOR A FACT BECAUSE IT'S BEEN DONE TO ME. WHERE GUYS HAVE BIAMED ME FOR THINGS THAT THEY KNEW WAS A DAMN LIE.

over →

II

THE PRISON GANG UNIT IS AN INTELLIGENCE GATHERING UNIT. AND THEY ACCEPT ANY DAMN THING A DEBRIEFER WILL GIVE THEM. I WAS ACCUSED OF ALOT OF THINGS BY GUYS THAT I HAVE NEVER MET. OR EVEN SPOKEN TO.

MANY GANG MEMBERS HAVE MANY PERSONAL REASONS FOR LEAVING THEIR GANGS. AND IT CAN RANGE FROM BEING TIRED, BEING USED, MISTREATED, OR TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF. AND MORE.

BEING IN A GANG IS LIKE JOINING THE MILITARY. YOU CANT JOIN THE MILITARY AND GO TO IRAK AND DECIDE YOU DONT WANT TO FIGHT NO MORE. YOU LEAVE YOUR A DESERTER. YOU GIVE UP YOUR. YOUR A TRAITOR.

REMEMBER, NO ONE IS TWISTING YOUR ARM. OR PUTTING A GUN TO YOUR HEAD TO JOIN. YOU DO THAT YOURSELF.

AND IVE KNOWN GUYS THAT HAVE WALKED AWAY FROM THEIR GANG AND NEVER TOLD ON NO ONE. THEY HAD ALSO DID ALOT FOR THEIR GANGS AND WERE WELL RESPECTED.

BUT THERE ARE THOSE WITH EVERY EXCUSE YOU COULD THINK OF. AND SOME COME OUT WITH SOME GOOD ONES.

BUT THE BOTTOM LINE IS, AND THIS IS WHY I WROTE THIS PIECE. IF YOU DONT WANT TO BE A GANG MEMBER THEN DONT JOIN. IF YOUR NOT TOTALLY SURE IF ITS FOR YOU. THAN DONT JOIN. IF YOUR WONDERING IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND IF YOU COULD SPEND A LIFETIME BEHIND BARS. THEN DONT JOIN.

ONE THING THAT IVE LEARNED IN ALL MY YEARS IS THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS "FOREVER" I HEARD THOUSANDS OF GUYS SWEAR THEY WERE THERE FOREVER, FOR LIFE. AND NONE OF THEM ARE AROUND ANY MORE. ASK ME IF I EVER SAID THAT? AND I'D SAY NO, I NEVER SAID IT. BUT IVE BEEN AROUND GOING ON 40 YEARS NOW. I LOCK AT SOME OF MY OLD FRIENDS. AND THERE'S ONLY A FEW OF US THAT GO BACK THAT FAR.

YES. SOME GUYS DECIDE THEY WANT TO CHANGE, AND THATS OKAY IF THEY CAN CONVINCED THEMSELVES I GUESS IT IS. I PERSONALLY DONT CARE ABOUT THE NEXT GUY OR IF HE'S STILL THERE. I ONLY CARE ABOUT ME HOLDING UP MY END.

ITS TRUE THAT I CAN NOT SAY WHATS IN A GUYS MIND. WHY HE DOES WHAT HE DOES, BUT I REALLY DONT LOSSE ANY SLEEP OVER IT. SEE THEY HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT. SEE THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE OF ~~BE~~ DECIDING YOU WANT TO CHANGE AND DO SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE WITH YOUR LIFE. AND DECIDING YOUR GONA TELL ON EVERY BODY YOU MET.

ITS A DAMN HARD DECISION A GUY HAS TO MAKE WHEN HE COMES TO THAT FORK IN THE ROAD. BECAUSE IT WILL EFFECT EVERYONE AROUND HIM.

III.

I'VE KNOWN SOME FRIENDS OF MINE THAT BECAME RELIGIOUS. AND I'VE KNOWN OTHERS THAT USED IT AS AN EXCUSE.

BUT LIKE MANY OTHER THINGS IN LIFE, EVERYONE HAS DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE SAME SUBJECT. MY ONLY COMMENT WOULD BE THAT IF YOU'RE NOT CUT OUT FOR THAT LIFE, THAN STAY OUT OF IT.

OKAY ^{IM} SWITCHING GEARS. BECAUSE I REALLY WANTED TO COMMENT ON CHIEF JOSEPH. I AM VERY AWARE OF HIS STORY I READ QUITE A FEW BOOKS ON HIM. AND IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD MOVIE TOO.

BUT CHIEF JOSEPH WAS NO CHOICE, HIS TRIBE WAS NEARLY WIPE OUT. AND HE WAS CORNERED. THERE WAS ONLY ONE DECISION, LIVE OR DIE. HE HAD WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITH HIM. HE COULD HAVE DIED, ITS AN HONOR TO DIE FIGHTING, BUT WHAT OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. HE HAD TO MAKE A DECISION AND CHOSE TO LIVE ON A RESERVATION. THE SAME DECISION THAT GERONIMO AND SITTING BULL, AND RED CLOUD AND MANY MORE HAD MADE. IT'S NOT THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO FIGHT, BUT THEY WERE OUT GUNNED. THEY KNEW THEY COULD NEVER WIN. COULD YOU IMAGINE WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF EVERY NIGHT.

GERONIMO SAID HE WISHED HE HAD FOUGHT ON, AT LEAST HE WOULD OF DIED ON HIS OWN LAND. HE NEVER SAW HIS LAND AGAIN. HE HATED LIFE ON THE RESERVATION, BUT HE WAS ALSO VERY OLD. IN HIS HEART THE FIRE STILL BURNED BRIGHT, BUT HIS OLD WEARY BONES COULDN'T CARRY THE FIGHT.

MANY OF US SITTING IN THE SHU HERE, WE BEEN HERE 25 YEARS NOW. WE AREN'T CRAZY, NOR ARE WE FOOLS. WE DON'T NUMBER THE MANY THAT WE WERE WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED HERE.

ALOT OF OUR FRIENDS WAS DECIDED TO LEAVE. THEY DEBRIEFED, OTHERS PAROLED AND WERE NEVER HEARD OF AGAIN.

THE REST OF US ARE ALL LIFE'S AND MOST OF US HAVE THIRTY YEARS OR MORE IN PRISON AND IN THE SHU ALTOGETHER.

IV.

WE CANT GO ANY WHERE EVEN IF WE WANTED TO.

I THINK IN A WAY WE DID CHANGE SOMETHING, BECAUSE NOW THE FIGHT WAS CHANGED, FROM FOCUSING ON EACH OTHER, TO FOCUSING ON THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION AND ABOLISHING THE SHU.

I DOUBT ANY ONE WOULD EVER USE THE SAME WORDS CHIEF JOSEPH USED, IN ANY SENSE, BECAUSE THE FIGHT CONTINUES, AND MUST CONTINUE ONLY IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. AT LEAST FOR NOW.

PRISON IS NOT LIKE ANY EXPERIENCE, UNLESS YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH IT YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT. AND THE SHU IS IN A CATEGORY ALL ITS OWN.

IN A FEW WEEKS I AND OTHERS HERE IN SHU ARE GOING TO BE LET OUT OF SHU. THEY TOLD US WE WILL BE MONITORED, GIVEN DRUG TESTS PERIODICALLY, AND WE CANNOT ASSOCIATE WITH OTHER GANG MEMBERS. SO THEY EXPECT US TO GO OUT TO GENERAL POPULATION AND HIDE FROM EVERYONE. AVOIDING ANY AND ALL CONTACT.

SO WE ARE BASICALLY BEING TOLD TO MENTALLY STAY IN AN IMAGINARY SHU. VERY LITTLE OUTSIDE CONTACT, AND TRY TO STAY OUT THERE. I SEE THIS AS A VERY HARD TASK, BUT I AM WILLING TO GIVE IT A TRY. AS ARE OTHER INMATES. I WILL BE WRITING OF MY WEEKLY ROUTINE OUT THERE, AND DESCRIBE MY DAILY ACTIVITIES IN A JOURNAL.

YESTERDAY I WAS TOLD OF SEVERAL OTHER GUYS WHO WENT BEFORE THE (DRB). SOME WERE RELEASED TO GENERAL POPULATION WHILE OTHERS WERE PLACED IN THE STEP-DOWN PROGRAM.

CDCR IS MAKING SURE IT CONTROLS WHO IT LETS OUT OF SHU AND WHO IT DONT. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ME AND THOSE OTHERS WHO WERE KEPT IN SHU.

WE HAVE ALL BEEN HERE FOR 25 YEARS. AND THATS ALL THAT SHOULD MATTER AND BE CONSIDERED.

WE ALL DROVE UP HERE TOGETHER 25 YEARS AGO. AND WE SHOULD ALL BE GETTING OUT OF SHU AT THE SAME TIME.

4.

I guess the best way to describe the prison system is that there are two classes of inmates. The first is the convict, or solid person. Before there was all this bullshit of gang violence, the convict was the man. Then there were the others known as yard birds. These were prisoners that were just there.

Today due to all the gang activity there are prison yards that are filled with P.C. inmates. Of course there are other inmates thrown in with them. Some are homosexuals, and others that are rapists, and child molesters, and others are just too soft to make it on a regular yard. Could be they are too young, or their appearance is of a soft inmate. And they ask for protection rather than go out and have to prove themselves on a yard.

There are many reasons why a person decides to request protective custody. That is not what I am pointing at directly. What I am saying is if you join a gang you know what you are doing. Don't later start telling on your friends, if you walk away from it. That is something that you must live with.

I have met a lot of people in my years, and I could see that they would not make it on a long run. And I've told them straight out. They should go home and find another means of fun.

I also met some ex-gang members when I was a kid. They became youth counselors, and training school directors, probation officers, and more. And they really thought of themselves as a good example. Of the ability to tell me that they been through it all.

Well I can tell you that they may think of themselves as having gone through the ringier. But I know they haven't. Each generation has its own style of gangs. There is nothing like the gangs of today.

These are the type of people I believe you're talking about. Who got an education and changed their lives.

That was good for them. It worked for them. Some people can do that. Others, it takes much longer before they begin to look around and ask, is this what I am going to do forever.

It's taken my mind 45 years before I started to ask me myself that. And I think a lot of us older guys in the shu. All began to question that.

VII.

WHICH IS WHY WHEN THE HUNGER STRIKE CAME UP. ALOT OF US AGREED THAT IT WAS BEST TO WORK TOGETHER AND ONLY THEN COULD WE MAKE THIS WORK.

OUR GOAL AT FIRST WAS TO RAISE THE MONEY TO ~~REPAIR~~ RETAIN A LAW FIRM TO REPRESENT US IN A CIVIL RIGHTS LAW SUIT. BUT EACH OF US HAD TO PUT IN SOME MONEY. THIS WOULD TAKE ALOT OF TRUST.

BUT EVEN THOUGH ALOT OF US ARE IN AGREEMENT, TO STALL THE GANG VIOLENCE IN PRISON. NOT EVERYONE IS ON BOARD. SO THERES STILL ALOT OF WORK TO DO.

YOU SAY THAT THERE IS STRENGTH IN PUTTING IT DOWN. (THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN TWO WAYS). I SOMETIMES WOULD SAY I'LL PUT IT DOWN. BUT WHAT I MEAN IS, THAT I HAVE NO PROBLEM HURTING SOMEONE. IT'S ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING I'LL DEAL WITH IT NO SWEAT.

BUT I'M THINKING THAT YOU MEAN IT IN A DIFFERENT WAY. SUCH AS (IT MAY BE BETTER TO PUT A STOP TO THE PROBLEM OR RESOLVE IT ANOTHER WAY.

AND YOUR RIGHT, IN SOME CASES BUT NOT IN ALL, SEE IT'S LIKE THIS THING TO STOP ALL GANG VIOLENCE. WHICH IS WHY CALIF. HAS THE BIGGEST SHU INDUSTRY IN THE WORLD. WE DID IT TO OURSELVES. NOW WE ARE GOING TO TRY TO BRING IT UNDER CONTROL. BUT AS I SAID, NOT EVERYONE IS ON BOARD. AND WE MUST BRING EVERYONE UP TO SPEED.

MY FRIENDS HAVE BEEN TELLING ME THAT I SHOULD GO OUT TO GENERAL POPULATION AND STAY OUT THERE. WELL I'M GOING TO TRY. BUT I CANNOT CONTROL HOW OTHER PRISONERS THINK AND ACT. ONLY MYSELF. ALL I CAN REALLY SAY IS THAT I WILL TRY. BUT IF ANYONE GIVES ME A BAD TIME I WILL BE BACK IN SHU FOR ASSAULT.

I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR TRYING TO SAY. I THINK. BUT YOUR NOT DESCRIBING A GANG MEMBER'S POINT OF VIEW. YOUR DESCRIBING THE POINT OF VIEW OF SOMEONE WHO IS NO LONGER INVOLVED IN GANG ACTIVITY. OR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY. IT'S VERY DIFFERENT.

YOUR 50 YEARS OLD. IT'S TAKEN YOU HOW LONG TO REACH THE POINT WHERE YOU ARE NOW. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SEEKING CHANGE.

THIS KIND OF MAKES MY POINT. I SAID IN AN EARLIER POSTING THAT FOR GANG MEMBERS OR YOUNG GROUPS OF KIDS IT TAKES MATURITY, GROWING OUT OF IT BEFORE THEY SEE THAT WHAT THEY'RE DOING IS WRONG.

OTHERS NEVER GROW OUT OF IT, LIKE ALL OF US SITTING IN THE SHU. WE STILL SEE OURSELVES AS REPRESENTING. I'M A GRANDFATHER AND SO ARE MOST OF THESE OTHER GUYS.

FOR SOME PEOPLE THE DECISION TO CHANGE COMES SOONER THEN IT DOES FOR OTHERS. BUT IT DOESN'T WORK FOR EVERYONE. OR IT TAKES LONGER FOR IT TO SINK IN ON SOME PEOPLE. LIKE ME.

VII.

AS FAR AS SOME OF THESE GUYS WHO CHANGE BECOMING FUTURE LEADERS, I DOUBT THAT OF ANY OF THE PEOPLE THAT I KNOW, AND OF THOSE I AM REFERRING TO.

SEE THESE ARE HYPOCRITS, THEY TURN AGAINST THEIR FRIENDS, AND IN MOST CASES LIE ABOUT THEM. THIS IS CALLED DEBRIEFING, NOW THEY ARE LET OUT OF SHU, AND INSTEAD OF TURNING THEIR LIVES AROUND, THEY ARE STILL USING DRUGS, COMMITTING CRIMES AND COMING BACK TO PRISON.

THESE ARE NOT FUTURE LEADERS OF NOTHING, THEY ONLY SOUGHT A WAY OUT, AND ANYTHING WOULD DO.

YOU SAID THAT YOU TURNED AROUND YOUR LIFE. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU WERE INTO, BUT IT WAS OBVIOUSLY ILLEGAL. NOT DO I KNOW HOW SERIOUS IT WAS. BUT OBVIOUSLY YOU CONTENT WITH YOUR DECISIONS. I AM NOT GOING TO JUDGE YOU, YOUR LIFE IS YOUR OWN. AND YOUR PATH IN LIFE IS FOR YOU TO DECIDE.

AND THATS WHERE WE COME TO THE FIRST DECISION YOU MADE TO DO WHAT EVER YOU DID. AND YOU NOT MADE THAT FIRST DECISION TO STEP OVER THE LINE, YOU WOULD NEVER OF ENDED UP IN THE SITUATION WHERE YOU LATER NEEDED TO CHANGE COURSES.

AND THATS WHAT IM TALKING ABOUT AND ITS DIRECTED MORE TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION, WHO CAN STILL BACK OUT AND START OVER AGAIN.

SELF RESPECT IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF A PERSONS LIFE BUT EVEN MORE SO IF HE IS A PRISONER. AND EVEN MORE IF HE IS A GANG MEMBER. BECAUSE YOU MUST LIVE WITH WHAT EVER DECISION YOU MAKE. IVE DONE THINGS THAT I REGRET, BUT I HAVE NEVER DONE ANYTHING IM ASHAMED OF, AND I NEVER WILL. I AM NOT SPEAKING FOR ALL GANG MEMBERS ONLY MYSELF AND THOSE I KNOW PERSONALLY.

ONE OF THE REASONS THAT I AND ALOT OF THESE OTHER GUYS HERE HAVE BEEN IN THE SHU FOR 30 YEARS IS BECAUSE WE WOULD NOT DEBRIEF AND TELL ON OUR FRIENDS.

ALOT OF US ARE ENEMIES, BUT WE HAVE TO RESPECT THE FACT THAT WE ARE STILL HERE. AND WE FIGURE WED DIE HERE IN THE SHU.

DEBRIEFING WAS NOT AN OPTION, I HAVE FRIENDS THAT ARE LIKE BROTHERS TO ME.

NOW AFTER 30 YEARS ITS PAID OFF, WE ARE BEING LET OUT OF THE SHU.

WE HAVE NO IDEA IF ITS A SET UP, OR HOW LONG THEY WILL LEAVE US OUT THERE IN GENERAL POPULATION.

VIII.
But we didn't have to tell on anyone to get out of the hole.
And when we leave the SHU, we can still hold our heads up, and still
be proud.

Now put a debriefer or a guy in P.C. in that same situation,
and you can bet it's a completely different feeling, and that's
what they chose. I cannot feel for them, they knew what they got
themselves into.

I have a daughter and grandkids on the Cherokee Reservation,
and I am very proud of them. I've studied the Native American people
and the Native people of Mexico, and I'm proud to be related to them.

Well I was expecting to be out of here by next week but a counselor just
told me I will probably be here another month and a half.

but the good news was that I can order another package, even though
I still haven't got the first one. I can also make a phone call. But I think

I will pass on that because they put you on the speaker phone.

I've been told by a lot of folks that Salinas Valley Prison is not a very
good place to go, too many problems. But it's very close to my hometown,
and I'm willing to go and check it out. The worst that can happen is I
end up in the SHU again.

Okay I'll close here.