

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

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Sometimes There Are Positive Changes In Prison

It's not all bad all the time in prison. Not quite. Every once in a while something good happens. I thought I'd tell about a good thing that happened recently.

One of the worst aspects of Stanley (and many other newly-built prisons) is the furniture - or lack thereof. Stanley was equipped with round steel plates approximately 12" in diameter instead of chairs. In the cells and dayrooms we must sit on these uncomfortable pie pans because that's what they installed instead of chairs. I'd like to take the person who designed these nightmare seating accommodations and super glue him (or her) to one of those seats for about 3 days so he (or she) can get some idea of how much misery he has caused hundreds of thousands of prisoners. But I digress.

Clearly, these steel plates are one of the worst aspects of living in Stanley. There is no comfortable place to sit (I personally believe the whole point of these steel plates is to make it as unpleasant as possible for prisoners).

A few weeks ago, the warden ordered 3,000 plastic chairs - two for every cell in Stanley. He had the steel plates removed from the cells and placed 2 chairs in each cell. What a relief it is to finally be able to sit in a chair in my cell.

I don't know why the warden did but I've heard 2 rumors. One rumor is that too many guys were falling out of the top bunk and injuring themselves when they landed on the steel plate (which was bolted to the wall). The other is that a prisoner who recently committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell used the steel post to tie off the sheet (or whatever) he used to hang himself. If the second rumor is true, as tragic as the guy's death is, at least some good came out of it.

Thanks Warden! :)