

Eliminating Inhumanity in Prisons

Thank you, Unknown Officer (I'll call you "Fred", just to make it easier to address you), for your thoughtful, honest admissions about the widespread abuse + even murder of prisoners by prison staff.

Before something can be fixed, people must know that it's broke + how it's broke. Your comments help people understand this + I hope that you will continue sharing your insight + even criticism, where it's deserved, of the articles I post.

Yes, the root of the problem seems to be that officers + even many other staff, don't see prisoners as humans, or fellow humans, worthy of dignity and respect. (Of course some officers + staff do see us, or some of us, as fellow humans). And it's easy for officers to come to that conclusion, given that the majority of media (e.g. "COPS", "Lock-Up", etc.) about prisoners portrays them all as animalistic, retarded + entirely degenerate. Most people who don't work in prisons think/assume the same.

There are people in prison who fit that profile of prisoners. But there are many others who do not, people who are genuinely good people who, for one reason or another, wound up in prison, people like:

- George —, a Mexican-American guy on my unit, who despite being built like — better than Superman — is always polite, honest + spends his days exercising and participating in Bible-study + worship services with other prisoners, on the soccer field (this seems to be how he's overcome his crack + heroin addictions, which "drug" him into crime + prison...);

- Ronald D. Cole, my buddy here, a timid, polite, 50-ish Mormon, who looked me in the eyes + told me he's doing life for a courtmarshalling because he shot someone who was trying to invade his property + thus pose a danger to his family. All Cole does is study + draw art + watch the news on CNN;

- me — I can't help but try to cheer up those around me, don't use drugs or alcohol or tobacco, don't prey on people, and spend my time studying a variety of subjects (e.g. cosmology, physics, psychology), creating art + wrapping up lawsuits.

There are many other people in prison who are friendly, decent, trustworthy, and doing their best to be good, considerate human beings, even though some officers + staff actively obstruct this, will them

to be... subhuman, untermensch, as the Third Reich would say.

Of course, this place is not a supermax. In a supermax or in the SHU, here, or in seg units ^{elsewhere,} there will be a lower percentage of truly decent, good prisoners... YET THEY WILL BE THERE! I know, because I was one & I've met others!

It is obscene for prison staff to look at a prisoner as scum when the prisoner is not scum or is stripped of all hope or possibility of ever being redeemed, particularly when the prisoner was doomed & groomed from birth to be scum, a loser, a prisoner.

If staff/officers are all-powerful, as they are in SHUs, supermaxes & seg. units, then they are also all responsible for the deformities that they nurture in their captives characters.

Some staff in my state's supermax let me be decent, resulting in me helping other emotionally disturbed younger prisoners stay out of trouble, helping myself understand myself & the world better, etc. Other staff took every opportunity they could to lash out at me, write me up, extend my punitive status & they reaped what they sowed.

You speak of "the very core of corruption within human nature," but, as sadistic & hypocritical (& thus despicable, to me) as abusive prison staff are, I do not agree that it's due to human nature, that it's inevitable. You are a good example why, as were a handful of guards I knew in Wisconsin, as are an even higher percentage of staff here at Coleman & USP.

Peer pressure plays a role - &, like me, you have to be rebellious to reject the role (an abuser) your peers expect you to fill/play, as I am rebellious, thus enabling me to not get high, not sell dope, & otherwise not be the stereotypical piece of shit prisoner.

I firmly believe that we must consider any problem rationally, logically - scientifically - in order to solve it, which may include the scientific analysis of emotions & prejudices that are not scientific. Thus I'm hesitant to call abusive staff "evil" - ignorant, even stupid, cowards, assholes, but not evil.

Unfortunately, people abusing, killing, etc. other people is natural. It happens all the time. But that doesn't make it right, wise, honorable, admirable, etc. We have a pre-frontal cortex, which can enable us to overcome our baser instincts, enable us to understand what game-

theorist researchers have discovered — that doing unto others as you'd have them do to you + being willing to forgive transgressions is the best strategy.

But you + I know that the U.S. prison system does not run on those principles. Instead it runs on hard economics — locking up mostly poor people so other mostly (rural, white) poor people can work rather than live on welfare or crime (like those they guard). In Wisconsin, prison is the new dairy farm + who wants to see the cows they milk for a living as full-fledged human beings, who love + are loved, who think + feel + can care?

A prisoner who can care may come to realize that he will experience less pain if he stops caring. I've been there + I know that chronic abuse does cause such apathy. Ironically, such a flat affect was held against me when a psychologist cited it as evidence that I was a psychopath, not a human being.

Now that was evil. I forget her name, but recall that she'd written about childhood sexual abuse + was deemed an expert in the field, was a victim too. She knew better.

By the way, as Victor Frankl noted in Man's Search for Meaning, even in Nazi concentration camps there were guards who were humane, had compassion for prisoners. We need people like that, people like YOU!

It will not help anyone for you to kick yourself or hate yourself due to what your co-workers do. But what can you do to make things right?

You depend on your fellow officers for safety, so betraying them poses a danger to you. You + I know this. It's quite possible that your fellow officers or supervisors retaliate against you should you expose or even fail to support their abuse. But can you go on living with yourself, without killing yourself with booze, pills or even a gun? (Two guards in WI killed themselves with shotguns, at work, after abuse in a juvenile prison was investigated).

You should do what you know is right + it may be necessary for your health!

You might want to consider "debriefing" to the U.S. D.O.J.'s Civil-Rights for Incarcerated Persons Act (C.R.I.P.A.) division, or making yourself available for interviews by solitarywatch.com or other journalists. Stop covering up for abusive staff.

Before you just disregard these suggestions, please consider that I am an ex Aryan-Circle (A.C.) member, which means

that I do have a hit out on me, that I will be killed by the A.C., if they get the chance. Part of the reason I'm an ex-A.C. member is that I "ratted" on staff who were torturing + sexually assaulting other prisoners; when I did that, I was hit. I also dropped out because I will not support people who deal or use drugs, gangs, or scumbags, which is what I learned the A.C. has become + maybe always was. (I never was!)

So, I'm not suggesting that you put yourself out there without having already put myself out there.

I don't know what the cure is either, but it sure isn't playing along with the sickness! I just can't help but oppose it, even though I've almost always been betrayed, burned + back-stabbed by those I've tried to help.

Regarding WWII, Winston Churchill said something like:

The only reason evil flourishes is because good men do nothing.

An old Odinic quote that I've always liked applies too:

Do right + fear no one!

I hope you do right Fred + wish you well in doing so!

With Respect,

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