

Daniel Gwynn Blog Update

Date: 2/8/15

Subject: "Strip Search Policy, Week One"

It's been a crazy week with the new procedure of enforcing Deputy Zaken's version of the Restricted Housing Unit's (RHU) strip search policy, as it applies to capital cases: "Capital case prisoners must be strip searched every time they exit their cells." So in the spirit of compliance, the Capital cases has been exercising their rights, in accord with prison policies, by braving the frigid cold temperatures (26°-8°) all week long to occupy all 28 single kennel cages. Each day, approximately 70 prisoners on death row has signed up for their 2hr. yard exercise, which has caused the guards to run 3 yards instead of 2. Strip searching 28 prisoners for each yard is time consuming, and it has now taken 1hr. 10min.-1hr. 30min. for them to fill up the first & second yards. Before this strip searching policy, it only took 20-30min and capitals would exercise the privilege to double up with a yard partner, which would take up considerably less time & space. But now, the guards have to run a third yard which runs into 2nd shift and disrupts the days normal operations. At first, they tried to run the yards on the regular schedule, but it took too long to get everyone out. The 2hr. clock for the yard started when the first prisoner was put out, so because it took 1hr. 10min. to get everyone out, 20 prisoners were burned out of various increments of time. The second yard, they tried to clock the 2hrs. after the last prisoner came out, but that too failed, giving those who came out first 3hrs. of yard and took too long to bring back in. The third yard were burned out of yard completely because the block operations were severely disrupted, and the staff disoriented. (They were given make-up yard on Saturday.) One guard was removed from the floor because he couldn't handle the pressures. The next change they tried was to clock the prisoners individually as they came out, meaning they would be brought back in sequentially. This proved to be just as troublesome. Deputy Zaken & Major Leggit has been determined to make this policy work, and refuse to admit that they were wrong. Major Leggit was so determined to break our spirit that he ordered for us to be put out in 8° (with the wind-chill) weather, thinking that no one would show. To all of the guards surprise, they

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had to run three yards again--full house!!! Normally, yard is canceled due to inclement weather when the temperature are below 20°. The process of running the RHU according to Deputy Zaken's version of the policy, has caused major disruptions to block operations, frustration, agitation & confusion. He has created a hostile environment. The death row population has submitted close to 500 grievances this week so far. Personally, I was delayed by 38min. for my law library time; I received 2 cold meals that sat out on the tier for an hour; I haven't received my phone calls on time; and I was denied a shower at the end of my work day. There has been many other disruptions: late getting visits out; library schedule; showers; meals; paper-work& and cleaning the block.

Over the years with various administrators, things has gotten worse for death row prisoners, and it continues. We are in this RHU by sentence not disciplinary problems. Yet the administration continuously impose punitive measure upon us. The unit manager Mr. Longstreth has been quoted by the Reading Eagle (When Death Means Life, 12/16/14) on how well behaved the Capital cases are. If this is the case, then why do the administration continue to implement behavior modification policies which disrupt the calm. The public needs to pay more attention to what happens to us in here.