

Program Interrupted

Life in prison is always uncertain. Inmates are relocated at any time. It is a fact that I became especially aware of recently. A "transpack" ducat slid under my door one night at 9:30 p.m. I was to pack and to report for transport to another prison the next morning. The guard offered no explanation; in fact, he made no comment at all.

The notice was a shock to me. I took part in positive activities and I had no disciplinary write-ups. The guards and free-staff considered me a model inmate. The move made no sense. I went to see my program counselor first thing the next morning. The man was as surprised as I; he checked the computer. No mention of a transfer was in my files; He said it must be a mistake because the documents indicated I was scheduled for retention at Valley State Prison. Several phone calls later, he ascertained that the command came from the top. The bureaucrats in Sacramento ordered it.

The plan was to send me to a prison by the city of Chino. The institution was far away and had less to offer. My education, self-help

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programs, employment, and over-all plans were disrupted. All of this trouble happened without notification. Procedures were ignored. Inmates usually go to committee before they have any changes in their program. I received no such consideration.

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The staff at the new prison told me the move to Chino was for medical reasons. The institution houses "high risk medical" patients. I am so healthy that I rarely see a doctor. Neither my new counselor nor my new doctor know why Sacramento assigned me as a medical risk, thereby making this move necessary. The transfer greatly harms the chances of my being ready for the upcoming parole hearing in 2020. The last prison is a "Re-entry Hub"; it was designed to have the programs available to prepare each inmate for release. California Institute for Men at Chino is not as conducive to those kinds of activities. The yard where I live has the least opportunities; yet, I am adjusting quickly.

My college semester was interrupted at the start. I am caught up, but I struggle to maintain the needed pace in one course. I have fewer resources with which to work. I have three

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 classes to complete. In one, I need to use a certain textbook, of which the prison only has ~~two~~ two copies available. A handful of students share them. The class is the hardest one in which to do my work in a timely manner. A lack of access to the necessary material is a huge barrier. I push forward because the petition for my degree is already submitted. I look forward to receiving an Associates of Science degree in Business this Spring. I hope to obtain employment soon. An interview in the education department is looming before me. The head of the department will notify me when it is scheduled this week.

In closing, prison life is unstable. Inmates are subject to the whims of their keepers. I persevere under trying circumstances. In spite of the obstacles caused by my transfer, my goal of achieving an Associates degree is obtainable. I hope to receive both employment and an A.S. in Business soon. Please pray for my efforts and check back for future developments.

Patrick

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