

Daniel Gwynn Blog Update

Date: 12/21/16

Re: "Holiday Gas"

On 12/19/16, the day started out kind of quiet & mundane, with a hint of anticipation for a spot of fresh air after being locked in for 6 days straight. The previous days' temps were hitting below zero, so our yards were cancelled.

As we patiently waited for the guards to start running yard, the quiet was shattered by alarms of "They're coming! They're coming!" Looking out of my window, I could see a Lieutenant coming up the path with 6 heavily armed guards dressed in black riot gear, with a restraining chair in tow. They were coming to extract a prisoner.

On the bottom tier of my pod, The Lieutenant approached a cell with the extraction team on standby. He asked the prisoner if he was coming out, to which he replied, "For what?" The Lieutenant said, "So you can be transferred to SCI-Graterford for court." The prisoner refused. The Lieutenant shouted his commands for the prisoner to come to the door to cuff up a few more times. The prisoner continued to refuse, so the command was given for the team to get ready. The crackling of the taser-shield popped with intimidation. The door slot was dropped, and a 10 second blast of tear gas was shot into the cell, and the slot slammed shut. I could hear the retching coughs of the prisoner as he struggled to breath; the gas was burning throughout his throat & lungs. The Lieutenant asked if he was ready to cuff up, to which the prisoner pantomimed his consent by following The Lieutenant's directions for surrender (the gas obstructed the prisoner's speech). The prisoner was cuffed, placed in the restraining chair, and wheeled to the Triage room. He was checked out by a nurse, then wheeled off the block. The entire incident was recorded by a guard with a hand held camera.

When I came out of my cell to go to the yard, I was immediately assaulted by the cloud of gas wafting throughout the pod. The gas escaped the cell, and contaminated this section of the block. My throat & lungs was on fire, and I was only exposed to a residual percentage of what the prisoner got. The other prisoners on the pod had to be removed until the gas dissipated. All of this because he didn't want to go to court.

