

"CRACKED MIRRORS"

I often reflect on the countless experiences that I have experienced during my existence, and this reflection brings with it a mixture of euphoria and melancholy. My heart swells with elation, whenever my thoughts recall the blissful moments when I was free, and far removed from servitude. The moments when my thoughts were filled with ambition, aspirations, and high hope, not pain, misery, and hopelessness.

I entered the realms of solitary confinement in 2006, and my placement has extended over a span of 13 years (and counting). This confinement was "supposedly" designed to "help", not hurt, but in all actuality, it inflicts nothing but destruction and devastation, upon the mental and emotional well being of anyone subjected to these conditions. The destruction that I seen in others around me, was a "mirror" reflection of what I seen in myself. Nevertheless, I remained in denial for many years, because I feared being the person that I seen reflected within that cracked "mirror".

Becoming a product of ^{my} environment has made me desensitized, and I lost a huge chunk of normalization. Before my placement in solitary, I had many flaws, but subjection to these isolated conditions for so long has exacerbated most of my flaws, and created a few new ones. I clearly recognized the exacerbation of my flaws upon seeing my reflection within this cracked "mirror".

For quite some time I avoided looking at my reflection, because I was unable to accept who I had become. I did not want to be —

inflicted with the Shu Syndrome like everyone else around me, but I eventually realized that this infliction is inevitable. This cruel confinement was designed to bend and twist your will power, test your resolve, and eradicate motivation. The subjection to this extreme isolation has been burdensome, and has placed tremendous amount of strain on my mind and spirits.

I cannot narrow down, or pin point one particular thing that consistently motivates me, to maintain my constructive attitude. Today I could be motivated by a song, tomorrow motivation can come from a book or letter, and next week I could learn and be motivated by the mistakes or success of others. Unfortunately, the things that may motivate me today, could discourage and dishearten me tomorrow. Motivation is necessary in this dispiriting environment, especially since depression and demoralization is inevitable.

Everyday I fight to avoid being blanketed by the dark clouds of depression. Everyday I do all I can to keep a tight grip onto my sanity, because insanity threatens me daily. And everyday I build up the strength and courage to face the person reflected within this cracked "mirror".

By: TROY HENDRIX