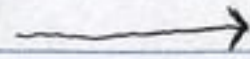


* HOUSE OF DESTRUCTION *

I approach my 19th year of incarceration, for which I was sentenced to life imprisonment, for crimes that I'm actually innocent of. I proclaimed my innocence then (in 2003), and I continue to declare it now. Prison is a stark, uncaring, and inhospitable place, where souls become lost, and hearts become hardened. A place that is crowded and congested in a hostile environment, where love and privacy does not exist. A place where the "air" is toxic, and with each breath that you take, you breathe in the choking fumes of hatred, hostility, revulsion, and bitterness. Prison is an abnormal environment that does not offer any real reform, it's a place that was meant to deform you psychologically.

I approach my 15^{1/2} year of being held captive, in the bleak confines of solitary confinement. Referred to by prisoners as the "box" or "coop" (as in chicken coop), solitary confinement is extreme isolation. It is essentially a prison within a prison. In the "coop", you can practically smell the misery, hatred, and anger oozing out of people's pores. This is a place where overflowing thoughts overwhelm you, and unbearable loneliness cripples you. A place where hearts become frozen, minds become decayed, and hopelessness replaces hope. Solitary is the burial ground for souls, and is the flower that blooms mental anguish and emotional devastation.

I approach my 38th year of existence, and throughout the years that I spent on this earth, I have endured many hardships and harrowing experiences. I became a captive of the prison system at the age of 19, and the unfortunate reality is that I've spent half of my life in servitude. Prison offers no comfort, or compassion, so whatever innocence I had left, has been shattered and reduced to rubble. Prison is agonizing enough, yet my corrupt overseers decided to bury me deep within the desolate confines of isolation.

Even though some things have changed in recent years, it does not erase the 

distressing times that i've endured. For many on the outside, it's hard to Fathom the FACT that I have spent my 20's, and mostly all of my 30's in A "box", or the FACT that I went close to a decade without using a phone, or watching television. There was also A period of time when I spent 4 years indoors, without ever going outside. So despite the few reforms being made for Solitary Confinement, nothing can be done to unbreak my heart, unshatter my spirit, and unrattle my mind. Nothing can be done to erase the lonely days that I have experienced, or sleepless nights I suffered. Nothing can be done to undo me becoming desensitized, angry, bitter, irritable, or socially withdrawn, because the damage has already been done to me, within this "HOUSE OF DESTRUCTION."

Submitted by: **TROY HENDRIX**