

July 7, 2021 @ OSCI (T-20 days to release)

Hi everyone!

A lot has been happening in my life as my time to release winds down. I have my court cases held off until after I get out. I have a new criminal defense attorney to handle my post conviction stuff. He seems like a good guy and pretty knowledgeable. I have high hopes on that front.

Of course, as I write this I'm dealing with some high levels of anxiety based on another front. I had my 2nd call with my parole officer this morning. Things are worse than I had originally feared. I'm having second, third, and fourth thoughts about getting released.

For those of you that have been reading this blog, you'll remember that I have anxiety and depression issues. This didn't help matters any. The bottom line is that I will have no access to the Internet/technology when I am released. My PO will not even permit me to have my institutional flash drive or tablet (even though the later is locked into the institution WiFi and cannot access the Internet away from the prison). All I can have is a flip phone for making calls.

What's even more disturbing is that I will not even be able to go to Walmart without a chaperone. Having been locked up almost my entire adult life and most of my family deceased I don't have one of those readily available. She also said something about having someone do grocery shopping for me or have them order online for me and pick it up for me. I have no clue how I'm to become self sufficient if I can't do something as basic as go shopping.

It may not seem like a big deal to someone with a lot of family or friends for support but for me it's devastating. I don't know if I want to scream or cry. Maybe both. It gives me a headache just thinking about it. I'm shaking my head as I write this, knowing that in 20 days I won't be able to send in a new email for posting despite my being "free".

I have more access to computers and the Internet in here than I will have on the streets. I have a tablet that can download movies & music, play games, type up papers and send emails. I have access to legal research and court websites (State courts and federal). I can have a USB to store my legal documents. I can use JobNet to look at potential jobs. I can also do educational courses with computer materials and class aids. In twenty days, I won't even be able to do that.

Think about this...what would you do to try and live "free" without the Internet/technology in a rural/small town setting? Now imagine that you're starting out fresh with no job, little money and without friends/support. Then add in the thought of having to report to someone on your progress weekly that has the power to throw you in jail at any time. This person can track you every move through a bracelet that you are forced to wear upon penalty of new criminal charges. You'll receive an average of 4-5 calls a week from a center where they monitor and track you in real time. What would you do?

In reality, I'm asking "What should I do?" What can I do? Fight? Sue them? Say "screw it" and do what I want regardless? Enjoy my "freedom", live it up while fully expecting to be back behind these walls before Christmas? Maybe even Thanksgiving? Hey, I can be back in time to participate in the holiday games here. Stack up some money here and there so I can live large for the remainder of my bit.

God, I hate how I sound but these are the thoughts running through my mind... I can't... I'm just not seeing a whole lot of upside. I appreciate the response to my post of June 8, 2021 by Julianneashford. She was very positive and I'd love to follow her advice. It's really hard for me to be that optimistic in general. I'm looking at her kind words and recalling the conversation with my PO. Or rather, my feelings as I talked to my PO. Like I'd just had the wind knocked out of me. I expected restrictions and jumping through hoops but I expected to start with something better than nothing. My mistake for thinking I suppose.

How can something that is supposed to feel good feel so bad? Voiceless, helpless and pretty much hopeless now. I even brought up the program Covenant Eyes. One of my good friends took the trouble to find out that this was the program that the DOC uses for people on supervision that need to be supervised online. My PO doesn't like that program. So, therefore, she "hoped for a better answer". So did I. I figured if other people are allowed access with that as a safeguard then it should be good for me also. My mistake for figuring also.

I'm gonna cut this off now. I have more I'd like to say but I'll have to save it for another day. This is too much for me right now. I don't know what I'm going to do about this. I'm open to suggestions. Damn...I'd hoped for at least a little better this time around. Right now I can't see anything beyond me coming back here and being better off than I would be out there. How fucked up is that?

Stay safe and sane all. I'm doing my best to follow my own advice.

Tony