

Fr. John! So, I'm catching up on older comments I never got to respond to due to my unexpected move — there are at least 3 from you! I'll cover all here, and I apologize for that AND the brevity. I'm trying to get new posts written as well, a series describing this rather sudden and hugely eventful transfer.

It sounds like your inside editor, B from Louisiana, has the same basic view of the terminology issue (inmate vs offender vs prisoner vs convict, etc) that I do. "Offender" is truly offensive, deeply presumptuous in all the worst ways... a label only a cop (or cop lover) could love. No one should ~~use~~ ^{use} it — it's really no more than a slur. I approve and applaud your terminology choices, especially embracing "inmate" at a time when many people are trying to stigmatize it out of existence, but do so out of ignorance, stupidity, or both. There's a heavy P.C. push to eliminate it in some circles, even the entire State of California, and even some nominally abolitionist, purportedly pro-prisoner publications, like Vanguard Incarcerated Press, have caved to pressure by some inmates to eschew the word "inmate", not realizing that the inmates who oppose the label, at least in California, oppose it on the atrocious grounds that they come from a time and a mindset where many inmates specifically used the word "inmate" only to refer to other prisoners they considered inferior to themselves. Those prisoners called themselves "convicts", used as a term of pride and respect, reserving "inmate" to refer to others they felt were below them. It was a linguistic tool for establishing and enforcing hierarchy, and those same inmates who refused to call themselves inmates but used it for others to show contempt, today they lead the push to abolish "inmate". Thank you for resisting and opposing their control efforts. :-)