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## Injustices in the System: The True Way of Change Is within the System

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# INJUSTICES IN THE SYSTEM: THE TRUE WAY OF CHANGE IS WITHIN THE SYSTEM

JAMES R.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

This is to inform you of the things. Continuous negligence going on here in IDOC. Social distancing is non-existent here. If you live next to or above someone, you are just 27 inches apart. They're not taking this issue seriously. They are just acting as if it's just a common cold or flu. Then when someone died under their care they made it into a joke. Staff openly stated he was going to die anyway. IDOC's mission is to "protect the public, our staff, and those within our custody." How can you say that and openly joke and not care for our health?

IDOC is under the impression this virus cannot be passed through touch. If not, why wash your hands? It's simple: it's passed through touch also. My life was put in jeopardy, and everyone else's here. We were sentenced to do time, not to die or risk death. My life isn't a gambling tool, and no one else's either.

I know the public or government officials don't care for us because we can't vote and we don't matter. This practice needs to stop. The CDC and public health districts need to come in and actually see for themselves and do a surprise walk through, because everyone knows when government officials do come in. IDOC makes sure everything is put together.

These dorms are a cesspool of contamination. We are just going to get sick again. They go against the HIPAA law. They tested for COVID on December 29th and on January 2nd Sergeant Wilson came and told two people they tested positive and they have to go to G Block. Medical hasn't told anyone. They do sick call in the tier, not in the medical part of the facility. So if you put Health Services Request in—that's a medical concern form—they come see you in front of everyone and talk about your medical condition.

They (IDOC) say to us you can't get sick again. This is horrible advice. I tested positive in July 2020, because IDOC staff did not wear masks until June 24, 2020, when they found out E block had COVID.

Then the number of infected isn't properly reported to the public either. Then HIPAA violations of just openly discussing our medical issues is against all health laws. Corizon, the contract health care provider for prisoners, just threw a pamphlet telling us all we were positive. All 72 just from one out of six tiers. There are at least 864 people living in dorms here at ISCC that had to have tested positive alone. Because only a few of us took this seriously. I did and still got sick, so their numbers to the public are wrong. They reported about 700 then numbers dropped

to 500. Then they said it was our fault because we weren't reporting symptoms, which wasn't true.

We were threatened with time in the hole if we reported symptoms. But taking our word for it isn't going to be believed, because inmates are seen as lying all the time, when the truth is IDOC lies a lot of the time to cover themselves. Their past should come back just like ours does. I heard that CCA (now CoreCivic), who used to run this prison for profit, raffled off assault rifles and took from inmate management funds for staff cookouts and parties, and \$4 million of taxpayers' money just disappeared and they only paid back \$1 million. There is betting on inmate fights that are in different gangs. And this is just some of the things that are known. Imagine what y'all don't know or see.

And these are the people you want protecting you? Well we don't trust anything they tell us anymore. They played with our lives and still expect us to listen to them. Everyone's entranced with police when this is where true injustices are taking place.

Staff wasn't prepared and really didn't care for our lives. They did not wear masks until there was proof the compound had it.

Someone needs to hold IDOC responsible for potentially costing lives based on pure negligence and not bringing these issues to light. You're just as liable for trying to silence our injustices.

If someone on the "streets" infected someone with a virus they'd be charged and held liable due to their irresponsibility. Where is our justice? As we inmates have seen no one cares for our rights or lives. We don't matter. It's seen as a common cold and we just need to shut up. We weren't sentenced to a potential death sentence. And to play it off as a joke is horrendous and insensitive to people's families. The stresses this is causing is widespread and on a breaking point we are trying to do this diplomatically and still not being heard.

They are only listening to the staff who have lied and deceived the public on the actual numbers, and that staff were negligent on response and handling of this virus because they only care if it affects them personally.

These people take an oath to protect and failed to do so. We want our justice. Overcrowding and negligence caused mass infection. Everyone is supposed to be protected by our government officials and staff. We don't feel safe or trust these staff members with our lives, and you shouldn't either.

We need to know the long term effects of this virus on our bodies. No one is giving us any information, just that we were infected by the COs here. IDOC gave this to us and needs to take responsibility, not just with words. They do play prison politics. If something happens to me investigate staff because they are the biggest gang in here and are more corrupt than the public really knows.

## II. LIFE OF A PRISONER

One day on October 21, 2018, inmate John D. was walking into the chow hall. Blocking the doorway was a Correctional Officer making everyone go under his arm. Instead of going under the CO's arm, John D. opened the other door and walked through. As John was in line for breakfast, the CO walked up to John and asked if that was meant to be defiant? John D told the CO calmly that it was and that no one should be subjected to being made to do something just because you have power

over someone's life. The CO took offense to how John D. responded and the calmness that he was speaking. So this CO got angry and threatened to knock the rest of John's teeth out. John just laughed and told the CO "he'd try" and asked if it made him feel superior to make fun of someone with a birth defect. The CO then stated he wouldn't try, it'd be a guarantee. John D. then just calmly grabbed his tray with this CO trailing behind to his seat. John noticed a lieutenant, superior above the CO. He walks up to the lieutenant and tells him of the situation of the CO threatening him. The CO followed and heard, and as soon as John says this to his boss he then says "again, it's not a threat it was a promise." All the lieutenant says in response is he'll "talk to him."

John is so upset that he is no longer hungry. He gives his tray away and goes back to his cell for the next four days. This CO constantly threatens John in front of everyone during that time. On October 26, all the emotion built up of holding everything in comes to a head.

It was after dinnertime. As John walked back into the unit hallway the CO was with another CO. He said, "yep, that's the punk there." John said, "don't call me that." This CO got up and walked over to John and said: "What are you going to do about it, punk?" and shoved his stomach into John. John rolled his eyes and told the CO to respect his personal space. The CO became so angered by John's calm response that he told John if John thought he was so tough he should go into the multipurpose room and they'd find out. As he said this to John he again shoved his belly into John. John snapped and started to walk over to the multipurpose room. A friend of John tried pulling him back but John had had enough. He walked into the multipurpose room.

The CO told his partner he was with to lock the door behind them. As soon as this came out of the CO's mouth, John felt more threatened so he hit the CO with everything he had built inside and knocked the CO out cold. His partner then calls in the code for an officer down and rushes at John spraying OC spray telling John he was dead meat. Now John can't see, so he feels more threatened than before and starts swinging at the direction of the spray. John feels what he takes as a punch to the head. He is able to grab a hold of the CO's arm. They wrestle for a second as the CO gets a hold of John's neck in order to take John down. John responds as if his life depends on it and picks the CO up and slams him down knocking the wind out of the CO but the CO doesn't let go of John's neck and continues to choke him. So as John feels faint he reacts with extreme violence and squeezes the CO's privates until the vomits on John. John then releases the CO as soon as the chokehold is released. John still can't see and feels someone else try to grab a hold of him, so he swings at the person hitting them. Then he hears a ton of keys and knows it's the response team of ten Cos and squares up even though he can't see. A CO that knows John tells him who it was and to calm down so they could figure out what happened. John then calmly turned so he could be cuffed.

In response John was placed in ad seg for three years for assaulting officers. The COs were never punished, and instead were given paid leave and insurance claims. The CO created a combination of comments and actions that should have cost him his job. Now John has a hate for the system of Idaho and its practices of systemic failures. He tries to fight them legally, but feels he isn't being heard.

## III. LIFE OF A PRISONER

I have not been able to get the proper care in a timely manner. I've been coughing blood since 12/27/20 and have not been seen by a provider. I've been waiting on ultrasound, medical shoes, and a hernia belt since September 16, 2020. Their excuse is "due to COVID" and "short staff" and "we are trying our best." I did not get my ultrasound until February 2021. It shows that I have a hernia. On the 7/12/21 I went to see a surgeon for the hernia, who told me I don't have one. But IDOC and Corizon has documentation of me having a hernia.

When you submit a concern form, they are supposed to answer in seven days. But I have numerous forms and proof they take 19 days or 1–2 months to respond. And they don't answer them correctly, they just respond to them the way they want, so they can say they responded.

They don't remove individuals in a timely manner if they test positive for COVID. Medical staff never inform someone that they are positive for COVID—it's always a CO who informs them. They tell them to pack your shit you're going to G1, and let them use the phone and kiosk, shake people's hands, and take them three hours later.

They don't give us N95 masks. Only staff get them. On Channel 5 is the IDOC news and it says if quarantined N95 masks are required.

They put us on quarantine on the 29th and said nobody would leave to work in the kitchen. But they still, in fact, let people exposed to COVID leave quarantine to work in the kitchen. On 1/5/21 they asked all kitchen workers to the foyer and told them that there will only be two shifts and ten workers. But B tier is still on quarantine and they are still letting people go to work when there were four people positive and no deep clean or proper cleaning spray.

They won't give us proper masks or gloves. Correctional Officers talk with disrespect. IDOC has people that are minimum custody or civilian custody with no points, qualified to be at a work center or parole but they keep them here and they get COVID.

## IV. LIFE OF A PRISONER

From June 2020 until February 2021, they had us on lockdown. I couldn't have classes and no recreational time outside. When they did open it we had to go with just our tier and no workout equipment or basketball. Eventually they gave us a basketball, but every tier uses it. When done we give it to the office and they are supposed to clean it but they still won't let us use the equipment. Since we are on quarantine we can't go outside no matter what. We can't work out in the dayroom of the dorm with our shirts off. We can't go to mental health class or education or self-help classes. Since July there haven't been classes.

I have a mental health plan and goal and I'm supposed to be monitored and talked with for a certain amount of months but that hasn't happened.

I never get my meds on time. I'm only on Seroquel and three other mental health meds. Sometimes I don't get it until 9 or 10 pm. Also they are not on top of making sure my meds are refilled. I have to wait from one to four days for them to be refilled, and during that time I have no meds. We never eat at the same time. They serve us in Styrofoam trays and most of the time have to microwave the food.

They put ISCC on secure status for COVID and cancelled classes but let people close to getting out finish their classes. IDOC singles people out and chooses to do what they want. On 6/28/21, they opened up to allow B block here at ISCC can go outside and do some classes, but still no mental health classes.

Medical says because of COVID and short staff and because we are in prison things happen that they can't control. Just be patient. We can never speak to sergeants. When asked we always have to send a concern form. They can give us a DOR if we don't have a mask on in the dayroom but they don't give them out if you ask. They haven't gotten in trouble for not wearing masks in March, April, or May or while they are in the bubble. Giving us the virus.

Prisoners have rights and we don't get correct medical care in a timely manner. We have to put in an "HSR"—a medical concern form—to see or talk to medical about our issues, but the time we are able to get them is at service move and the forms are usually out of stock. So we have to wait. They are neglecting our medical needs. We don't get religious services. They expect us to be calm but we don't have access to what we need. But they will open up things for eligible parolees but can't help the mentally disabled. IDOC is focused on the wrong things and is not addressing the issues they should, and they are not caring for our lives in general.

#### V. TWIN FALLS

This wasn't just 100-block it was everywhere in the jail.

In 2018–2019, when Twin Falls was waiting to get funds for a new jail they kept on arresting people. I was at Twin Falls County Jail. I was in protective custody 100-block. It held 16 people minus the two cells that held one person in each for disciplinary actions. But when I was there it had eight cells with two to a cell but with the overcrowding they had three to a cell: two in bunk and one on a cot. They closed the doors every count time and every night. They had 22 people locked in cells and normally six on cots outside, but if they had to they put nine on cots. Barely room to walk. I wrote a kite on tablet to my counsel Ben Anderson about violation of the Eighth Amendment. I even asked to get info on how to file a civil lawsuit, but never got a response. I asked for copies but the jail said the lawyers/public defender has to get them but then my counsel said they can't get them.

I was given someone else's medication. When I went to sleep I woke up, jumped out of my cot, hit my lip on the bottom of the bunk and split my lip open while I was asleep. I asked the pill call nurse why I had a different med. She said oh it was probably just a trial pill. I said then why would I only get it one day, she said idk. Then the next day I explained to the next pill shift and she showed me the pill and I said yeah that's it. She said that she gave you someone else's pill. It was a higher dose of Seroquel but never was addressed.

Jails are over packed. In June 2019 I had to put in a kite to use the bathroom because I was on a cot, the doors were closed, and the only thing I had access to was the shower. They wouldn't open a cell for me to use the bathroom. They were doing this so they could get funds for a new jail. Medical couldn't address issues in a timely manner. Their excuse was there are too many inmates and not enough medical staff.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Idaho's prison system is overcrowded and systemically run to keep its prisoners locked up. To the taxpayers and anyone else they lie to, telling the community that they provide us with tools for rehabilitation and that we are released if we accomplish these classes: not everyone is released even when completing what you are told to do. Plus staff incites an environment of violence that is blamed on errors. There were "errors" where staff let out wrong walks in order for fights to happen. Or they move someone to a gang walk just to see them assaulted. I personally have heard staff place bets on how long someone will last. But as a prisoner and motorcycle club member my word isn't enough to change it.

Here in Idaho you don't get out on your fixed time. You're given a release date a year out and if you even get a simple DOR (Disciplinary Offense Report) you are flopped or told to top out your time. If I was caught even saying these things I'd be placed in administrative segregation with the excuse that I'm somehow inciting violence or a riot. There are a lot of things I know that staff do that causes a lot of Idaho's prisons to stay full, to line their pockets. When we had CCA, a private prison, staff stole over \$4 million from taxpayers by filling ghost shifts where no one was on post. But in logs, there was a name posted and that person was paid, and staff would throw parties off of prison funds. Whenever there is an inspection everything is run smoothly for show. There are a few rights issues that are broken every day, but no one really cares about prisoners' rights.

Staff have tried inciting violence by making everyone angry. By turning off our air as punishment for three days straight until our families call down to complain. Even the good staff are part of the problem because they won't say or do anything to bring all of this to light. There is probably more going on. No one knows but staff. This is why us inmates call it "Idaho Department of Corruption," due to its unassuming appearances to the public. But I am a prisoner and I am aware, but I'm not going to be seen as credible.