

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

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Bridge of Voices, Forum for Understanding Prisons
29631 Wild Rose Drive
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Dear Forum for Understanding Prisons:

I am writing to you because I've just finished reading your Bridge of Voices, Newsletter from December 2015, January 2016 that another resident allowed me to view.

I have two issues: one concerning my time (sentence) and the other concerning the misplaced priorities of residents being able to help provide for family vs spending money with them at canteen or at one of the three outlets they allow.

I am here for "Party To A Crime First-Degree Intentional Homicide." I came to W.C.I. on July 18, 1996. I have a life sentence with a parole eligibility date of July 16, 2061; 65 years. I came here at 20 years old. I am now 40 years old. I want to make clear from the outset that I am guilty of taking part in this heinous act. I wasted quite a few years convincing myself that I wasn't and trying to get free on legal technicalities. Ten years ago I surrendered my life to the Lord. I have not looked back. I had well before realized that it was I who did wrong, caused Mr. Thompson to no longer be with his children, his wife, his co-workers and friends, deprived my own daughter from being raised by a responsible, loving father, took myself away from being a role model for my little brother, and helping my aging father and aunt out who have always been there for me. I see now the full impact of my crime - to the individuals and community. I wanted you to have some background.

Since being here, I have incurred one major conduct report for "Enterprising and Fraud" of which I fought until I ran out of funds to do so. Two social workers testified that they knew of my business plans and encouraged me to make future plans for whenever I'm released. They were both leaders in the Cognitive Intervention Program I completed and began assisting others. This was a very critical time in my incarceration, but also in my growth as a man, because my primary source of income had been ripped away and I was now being punished for trying to better myself and make plans that involved being a productive member of society. Also, I'm told I'm committing a crime and then the court agree "only" because I failed to state my parole eligibility date in my brief, which was their explanation for denying my brief. Looking back I can't help but thank God that I didn't just give in to my mental state of hopelessness and give up. Moving on, I've completed all my recommended programs and have attained my H.S.E.D. Currently I'm educating myself in math and history. I've held a job for the majority of my time here and I am presently a Payroll Clerk at Badger State Industries. Although I have one title, I am also the Inventory Clerk, Production Clerk, Purchasing Clerk, and Quality Control. Having not had any experience with computers other than in high school, I've taught myself Microsoft Word, Excell, Access and Power Point. As I have the means at times I help those who help the poor, widowed, and fatherless. I want to be a help not a hindrance in this world; to my fellow man.

I realize that you are already moving on helping change the rules for Old law Inmates and have written proposed changes of P.A.C. 1.06(16) through (20). As you can see I have basically been given a 65 year sentence with a "then we might let you go" at the end. I have served over 25% of my sentence. I have been re-nued and my desire is to let all that I do be done with love. I have been denied medium two times, because of the length of my sentence, even though there are those with life sentences in mediums and even minimum prisons. I would like to know do you see any relief I can receive on sentence modification? If this be not your field, can you point me to someone? I have deserved to do time, but I do think my sentence was so lengthy to make a statement. What statement? I know not.

My second issue involves the funds we are allowed to send to our families for assistance. Society is very quick to call imprisoned parents "deadbeats" or other names, but as usual they don't get the full picture. "This institution" allows residents to send \$25 a month to family. This is the same amount we are able to send to charities. No matter how many children one has you are only allowed to send \$25. Many men in here would love to send more as issues and needs arise in their growing children's lives. What quality shoe is a teenaged child going to get for \$25? By the way they do not allow us to purchase anything for our family over \$25. What does this do to the child's psyche and thoughts of us as well as our own feelings of helplessness, knowing you can and want to provide help to your family, but you're not being allowed to. Asked why we are not able to send our families more than this and the reply is, "one maybe using the money for illegal activities." But asked why we are not able to purchase things over \$25 for them the reply is, "because that's the rule". There maybe one or two social workers left that will think reasonably when they see a person has four kids and is wanting to send all he can on birthdays, Christmas, help pay for school activities, etc. Here is the strangeness of this matter: We may purchase for ourselves any amount of things from the catalogs they've made contracts with and you have items in there over \$200. We are allowed to spend \$42 a week on canteen. Yet we are able to provide for our families only \$25 per month no matter the help they need. Does this make sense? How does this teach responsibility, let the child know you're doing what you can with what you got, in the situation you're both in - you haven't neglected that responsibility? It doesn't. It does cause feelings of neglect and abandonment. I think this is designed to pull the family apart, by financial tension. I am of the belief that those out in society would much rather hear that men are in prison earning those little wages and sending it to their families to assist them as best they can, instead of buying the newest things they've put out in their catalogs. What do you think? This is definitely a rule that needs changing. Please help us help our families.

I believe the issue here is control of our money. I do not believe that we are receiving all the interest on money that is in savings accounts. They have what is called a Release Account here. 10% of any of the money we make on a job or that comes in through the mail gets put directly into this account. I believe it started out that \$500 had to be put in there, now \$5,500 has to be put in there. They claim as the cost of living goes up so will the money that has to be put into that release account. This has all kinds of problems. They are treating us as if our cost of living is going up, but it isn't. They continue to raise prices on canteen goods yet lower pay to the residents that handle food, clothing, and cleaning. That makes no sense. Then you have residents such as myself with a life sentence whom they've basically said, "you have no future to look forward to" so why does a lifer even have a Release Account if not for a burial fund? There is much to this, but mainly I ask that you would look into the way inmates finances are being handled.

I thank you for your commitment to fairness and justice, for reaching out to this population who might not otherwise be heard. Thank you for giving voice to the many who had something to say, but were not being heard. I look

forward to hearing from you. I will also be having my family to contact you so that you can give them some specific ways they can get involved.

Sincerely,

Danny Conner

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