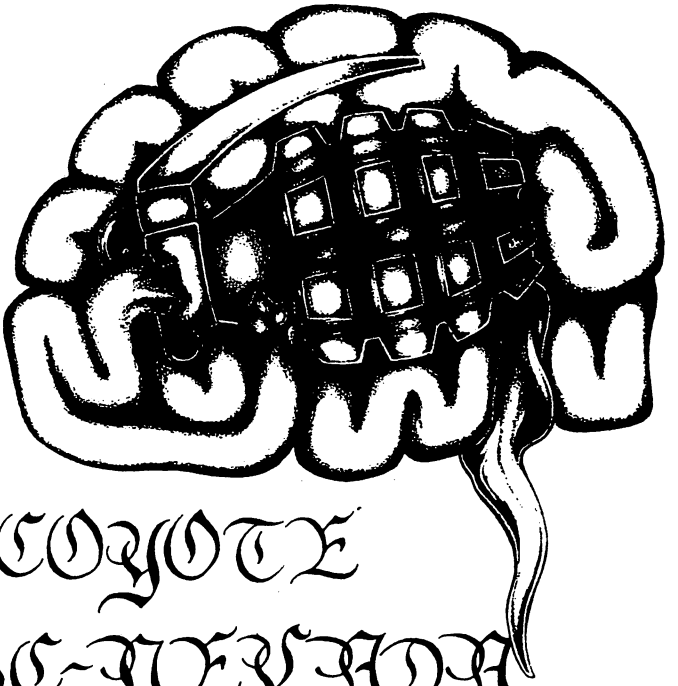
BRAIN-GRENADES

Hand Grenades For The Brain



EL-COYOTE
ABC-NEVADA
PRISON-CHAPTER

- IN THE COMPANY OF FOUR WALLS -

In between four white walls

I contemplate

And in between these four white walls

I marinate

I use this time of loneliness

To think of all the thoughts that could be thought of

With these four walls I share my homeliness

For these walls I have much love

These walls know my feelings, they know who I

Love and who I hate

They watch over me when I sleep

And they're there to help me concentrate

They're there when I stress, they're there

When I rest

They're there when I fear, and when I'm

Hurting inside they're always near

These four walls listen when I'm mad

These four walls just may be

The best company I've ever had

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All essays were written by Coyote Sheff
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I probably could make this acknowledgement page only a brief, one page thank you note, just listing everybody's name and say thanks, but I can't do that. 'Cuz I'm real. When I acknowledge someone, I want them to know that they are truly acknowledged by me, truly appreciated by me, truly loved, truly respected and truly honored by me. Everybody who knows me, knows that's the kind of person I am. I'm never half-ass when it comes to extending my heart to those who I love and appreciate. I will always put all of my heart into my relations with my loved ones, friends and comrades. I couldn't do it any other way.

* To my beloved Mother, Sara (known to everybody as "Moms") who has given me breath, given me life (and life is good), thank you Moms, for enduring the pain to give birth to me, thanks for always being there for me, thanks for believing in me, thanks for standing by my side through all the heartbreaks and struggles, thanks for teaching me, thanks for helping me, thanks for caring and thanks for inspiring me to be "smart like my Mom." I love you, more than the world, more than the universe, more than the stars and the sky, the sun and the moon. That's how great my love is for you.

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me that's a beautiful thing. I love you so much Katy, you're such a wonderful person, thanks for everything you've done, thanks for shining your love and light my way. 5

* To my truest, realest, downest, most dedicated comrades: THE BURNING RIVER COLLECTIVE! You know who you are, you're the realest comrades I've ever had. Thanks for standing by my side when things started to get crazy (you know what I'm talking about.) Thanks for believing in me. Thanks for helping me with this zine, the printing, the copies, the dedication and all the stuff you've done to help me get this together. I believe in you, I honor you. I appreciate you, I admire you, I respect you to the fullest and I recognize the realness in you! Abe, Ryan, Abigail you are my people, my comrades, in the truest form of the word! Thank you for being real! *Free Donny!*

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* Amanda (Miss Charm) you are the first girl that I met, when I moved to Nevada, back in 1996. We've been through a lot together and I've always been glad to have you in my life. You've stayed by my side through these 10 years of incarceration. You've given me 12 good years of loyalty, love, friendship and dedication. I couldn't ask for more than that. You've given me so much and done so much for me, I look forward to another 12 years of what we have, and another 12 years after that.

You're a warrioress, you've been through so much pain, you've been to prison, you've struggled, you've fallen, but you never gave up and you keep fighting, keep trying, keep going. I admire that about you. A single mother, just coming off of parole, trying to raise your kid up right. Trying to provide for him and I know it's hard, but you're doing it and I admire that, too. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you. Your family is my family and my family is your family. My love goes out to Gabriel, Sue and Jesse, I love all of you! You are my charm, I love having you in my life, thank you. Thanks for being real.

* To my homegirl Marcella, you are the light of my life, my sunshine, my joy, my love. You are the reason my heart keeps beating. I appreciate you, I respect you, I adore you. You've made my life so much easier, so much better, you're conversation is wonderful. You engage me and you always bring the best out in me. You've stood by me and held me in your heart for 12 years believing in me and motivating me and shining in my life like the sun. You've given me your loyalty, your time, your dedication. You've given me your love. You've stood by me through my incarceration and I appreciate that. I want you to realize that I feel your love, I feel your pain, I feel your joy, I feel you to the fullest and I really dig you. You are so true, so real, so special; you're beautiful, you're wonderful, you're such a great person, a good woman and I know a good thing when I see one, so it would really be nice to have you around for awhile. I'm glad to have you in my life Marcella, I appreciate you. Thanks for believing in me, thanks for loving me.

* Charles "The Octopus" Perroud, you are un-fucking-believable, Bro! They don't call you "The Octopus" for nothing! I appreciate your comradery, I respect your support and I really admire your spirit and dedication. You are a good friend and a great comrade. Thanks for your support with helping me put this zine together, the printing, the copying, the time and thanks for putting up with me after hassling you on the typos and corrections. I appreciate having your comradery and friendship. I wish the best for you and I hope we can collaborate on bigger and better projects in the near future. Thanks for everything, Bro!

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My love, respect and appreciation goes out to all of these people as well: Darcy of the A.F.S.C. in Oakland, California, thanks for being by my side, thanks for being real, let's pick things up where we left off. Sean Swain and the Conditions Factory, true comrades, I appreciate the work you do, the good stuff you produce, I honor you and I am a

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* Finally, to everybody who has a copy of this zine, *Brain Grenades,* I need your help with spreading consciousness. I ask each of you to make 20 copies of this zine and send 10 in to different prisoners and pass 10 around to folks of the free world. Thank you. Thanks again to everybody, I love you all. You've been good mentors and great friends to me, I appreciate the realness, and I've learned and gained things from each and everyone of you, thank you.

"You know our love will not fade away"
~ The Grateful Dead ~

This zine was finally completed on May 20th, 2008.
Written entirely by Coyote.
Please write to me at:

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P.O. Box 1989
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Something as beautiful as freedom; something that good; something that great could never be free. It seems like it always comes with a price. Trust me when I tell you that it's a high price we have to pay for our freedom, especially if you come from the gutter, born into oppression, born into poverty, it's a high price for anybody who has to live in this world of capitalism because they have found a way to make all people pay for the good things in life.

I feel like I've been paying the price for my freedom for the past 17 years, so when these gates open for me; when I can feel the fresh air in my lungs and when I can feel the sunshine on my face, I want the feeling i get to be worth it. I want the feeling that I get as soon as I step out of these gates to be worth all the pain, all the heartache, all the suffering that I've endured. I want that feeling to be worth all the madness I've gone through in my life. I want to feel it in my soul. I want my soul to know what freedom feels like!

I've paid for my freedom. I've paid for it with the pain of my soul, I've paid for it with the blood of my flesh, I've paid for my freedom with damage to my heart and damage to my mind and I know that because I know how this incarceration has scarred my psyche. I've paid for my freedom, **so give me what I've got coming, give me what I've paid for!**

Everybody in the world needs to feel a sense of purpose. A purpose for living. A purpose for being. A purpose for feeling good. A purpose for suffering. A purpose for dying. Many of us in this world are lost, confused, damaged, partly because we don't know our purpose. We subject ourselves to all kinds of abuse and torment; we search for a meaning and a sense of self-worth in materialistic things, like money and possessions. We join gangs, join religious groups, join the military. Women will sell their bodies, not only for money but also for the sense of purpose and people will cling to the first thing that pays them any serious kind of attention. People will do drugs, chasing that feeling, chasing that high 'cuz to them that high feels better that being conscious in this screwed up world. We are running around lost in this world with no real sense of purpose.

I've sat in these cells, in this prison, going through all kinds of crazy, fatal and drastic situations. I've been afflicted by so many devastating things, that have somehow become normal in our everyday lives and I've seen this madness, I've seen its face, I've looked in its eyes, and my heart has been afflicted by all of the pain and suffering that we have to go through in this world.

I've lived in this tormenting hell, going through the motions, just trying to live this penitentiary lifestyle and trying to keep my head above the water, but I've found that no matter how you do your time you will still be afflicted by all of this foulness, you will still be damaged. I've sat in these cells,sat in solitude, trying to find myself, looking for my own purpose in life.

There were times when I thought being a gangster was my purpose. There were times when I thought being a criminal was my purpose. There were times when I thought being a convict was my purpose. I was all of these things and still am a convict, but these are not my purposes in life, they're my struggles. I realized, as I sat here and reflected that those were only purposes that served me, and yet there are thousands of people who suffer and struggle just like me and worse. The more I reflected on that, the more I realized that it's not about me anymore. I will always be a part of the counter-culture, but I've realized that my purpose in life isn't about me, but about striving to assist others who struggle alongside me.

As we sit in these cells searching for meaning, searching for truthful understanding, we begin to comprehend things in ways we've never understood them before. We begin to understand ourselves, our situations and our struggles and once you've embraced these understandings you begin to take steps towards purging yourself from your old ways of thinking and constructing the old ways into a higher realm of thought, until you become conscious, not only by how you think, but conscious in all that you do. Once you become conscious you don't see things like you used to and you begin to feel renewed, enlightened and alive. You take on a new passion for life.

I am a social prisoner. I have become politically conscious and spiritually motivated while in prison for a "social crime". I don't feel the need to twist up my crime to make it seem like i am a political prisoner because I am content with being a social prisoner. I don't feel the need to be considered as a political prisoner to make what I have to say seems valid. I am living in these trenches, behind enemy lines, everyday. I am going through it on a daily basis and as

long as I am truthful with who I am and truthful with what I'm saying I know people will be able to connect to it and deem it as valid, and if for some reason certain people choose not to take me seriously, that's their loss. 9

I can understand why some 'rades might feel the need to be considered political prisoners, because political prisoners get all of the attention. But as social prisoners, as conscious prisoners, as anarchist prisoners, or as imprisoned radical intellectuals, we have a place in this struggle too and if you are resourceful enough and active enough and if what you have to say is valid and as long as people can connect to it, then you can get your voice heard just as much as any political prisoner, but if you're just doing this to get yourself some attention, or just to get your voice heard, with no real intentions of striving to make a difference, then you're doing it for the wrong reasons. If you are serious about your concerns and serious about your activism it wouldn't matter whether you were considered a political prisoner, or a social prisoner. All that matters is that we want to do something good and make a difference. We want to help people who can't help themselves. When it comes down to it, that's all that matters and if you aint about that then you're only living for yourself.

When people on the streets read this zine, I hope they will want to get more involved with prisoners in meaningful ways. When prisoners read this zine, I hope it will inspire them to take a critical look at their own situation, and maybe even help them to get organized and to start taking action to make things better where they're at. I want people to understand that prisoners are a people who long for real human contact, we long for real social contact, we long to establish and maintain real, truthful relations and meaningful, substantial connections with people on the outs. We need people to stand by us during these hard times, we need people to get involved in our struggles, and we need people to help us ourselves.

Being institutionalized, addicted to drugs, materialism, violence, being a member of a street gang and being a prisoner and trying to overcome all of these things, these are my struggles, these are my afflictions, but this zine isn't about one man's struggle, this booklet is about the system, about prison, it's about all the people in prisons who struggle just like me. This zine is not about anarchism, it's a zine about imprisonment, struggle, resistance, life and survival, written by an anarchist prisoner.

I see prison as a place that takes people who have been damaged by poverty, neglect, abuse, racism, and addiction and keeps them damaged and damages them even more, so that they're always held down in life. I write this zine to expose a piece of what the system does to us, how we can survive it, why people need to get involved in prisoners struggles and movements and I wanted people to understand, from the perspective of one man who has gone through it and who is still living it and trying to rise above it.

People do not realize that i have been fighting most of my life. Snatched up as a youth, against my will no doubt, and placed in various institutions and juvenile facilities for 7 years. I got out when I was 18 and came to prison when i was 19. I was already "institutionalized" before even coming to prison. It is a struggle that has made me stronger, though it is a sad situation that many of us face in these graveyards.

I don't write about it to brag about it (I'm not *that* "institutionalized") because it's nothing to brag about, it's nothing to be proud of. Though I feel no shame or self-pity for my own painful experiences, I don't feel proud of them either. There's mixed emotions and mixed blessings that come with all of this. I am appreciative of the things that have made me stronger, disgusted that there are millions of us living like this, grateful that my mind is not only still intact, but even sharper than ever, and I'm heartbroken that there are thousands and thousands of people who won't ever be able to rise above this madness and oppression, ever.
I write about it to show people how this barbaric system deprives us of our youth, deprives us of our emotions, deprives us of our senses, deprives us of our freedom and our humanity. From an early age, many of us are deprived of these essentials and slowly we begin to manifest into institutionalized, anti-social, predatory savages.

There are lots of people who don't understand, can't understand that I've spent the majority of my life in institutions and prisons since the age of 11, but this is a very real situation. People need to be made aware of what we are going through in these institutions, even prisoners need to know what's happening to them, what's really going on, underneath the surface. People need to understand that our lives are real and that the things that we are going through in here are very real, and mothers and parents need to understand that they should keep their kids out of the hands of pigs.

I write about resistance, because there is nothing more important than resistance in a situation like this. Resistance is a means to survival. I have been resisting all of my life, since the age of 11, and for the first 3 years of my captivity, from the ages of 11 to 13, I spent most of that time strapped to a bed, alone in a cold, desolate timed-out room, where the walls were pale and the air was stale, not much different than where I'm at now, but I'm not physically strapped to a bed anymore but psychologically, I am confined to a world of darkness, because I cannot envision or even imagine what life would be like, outside of this cell, outside of prison. I'm 30 years old now and as I sit here and try to reflect on the fact that I've survived for 3 decades, I try to figure out what that means, and all I can think of, is that it means I've lived 3 years longer than Bobby Sands and if I can survive for another 3 years, I will have lived as long as Jesus Christ and I guess that means that I'm surviving.

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My mind is sharper than the razor-wire that surrounds the prison that contains me. If it wasn't I wouldn't have been able to survive this constant isolation and sensory deprivation for years on end, I'd already be brain-dead, or intellectually dead, or even delirious, like a lot of others in here who unfortunately suffer from some kind of mental illness. Nothing wrong with me, I'm no more messed up than most of the people in society. The only difference between them and me, is if you were to do a CAT-Scan or MRI on my brain, the image that you see on the cover of this zine, is the same as the image you'd see on the MRI: A BRAIN GRENADE! Explosive minds are created in these prisons, for those who resist, for those who think, and for those who strive to elevate themselves, in spite of the infectious and foul conditions we have to live in. Explosive minds, dangerous minds, revolutionary minds, for those who resist.

This place, this graveyard, cemetery, dungeon, hell-hole, whatever you want to call it to make you feel better about being in it, has devastating effects on all who dwell here, whether you're resistant or not. But the more you resist the more you survive. I won't say that being here and going through this madness hasn't had any destructive or negative effects on me or hasn't done any damage, I could never say that. This suffering, this madness has done plenty of damage to me, in so many ways and I may never recover from some of it, but the point is that nobody is immune to the effects of constant isolation, or constant prison madness. You cannot live like this and not be affected, no matter how strong you are or how much you resist, it has a devastating effect on everybody, more devastating for some than others, that's why it's important to stay active, stay healthy, and to keep resisting, keep striving, keep elevating yourself.

I'm conditioned to live in this place like this, I don't have a life sentence, but I'm conditioned to live the rest of my life like this, living like a dog, and that's sad. I have to get out of prison one day, some day and I'm going to have to get out and recondition myself and my mind, my life and readjust my way of thinking and living and that's going to make surviving out there harder for me that it is to survive in here. In the back of my mind I know I have a life to go to out there, I have family and friends who love me and care about me, but as I sit here in the midst of this constant madness, all I can see is that I have made a life for myself, right here in this graveyard. I don't yet recognize a life on the other side of these walls, fences, gates, so I don't think about it much, I don't think about getting released. So it's a heartbreaking; painful situation for us in here. We can't see a future for ourselves that exists beyond these walls, beyond this life; we don't think about these things, we are stuck in a rut, stuck in a maze. We need people to get involved in our lives in real ways, get involved in our struggles in meaningful ways, to help us envision a life outside of prison; we need to have a clear picture of freedom inside our minds. We need people to help us grow, help us elevate, help us organize, help us survive, live and heal. We have a lot to overcome, a lot to heal from. We need people to help us see and recognize a life for ourselves on the other side of the darkness, and the people who don't ever have a chance of getting out of here are in need of the most love.

A prisoner doesn't need books to become a radical. If the 1st amendment rights were completely stripped from prisoners and if they were to disallow any type of books, or reading materials into these prisons a prisoner can still be wild and radical as his or her heart is. They could take my books, zines and reading materials away from me, and if I just sit back and observe what goes on around here, thinking deeply about the things I see and think deeply of the underlying causes behind all of this, I can write about this madness all day long. So, you see ,we don't need books to become radicals, we need books to become intellectuals. Books are powerful tools. Prisoners need people to send them books so that they can further their intellectual growth. We need people to send us zines and serious reading materials so that we can take it upon ourselves to resist the aura of intellectual death that permeates through these walls and steel doors. We need people to help us organize study groups and intellectual, spiritual and political

movements on the inside of these coffin-like cells and to help us spread truth and intellectual growth amongst our comrades who dwell in these cemeteries with us. We need knowledge so that we can liberate our minds from this constant oppression, so we can gain consciousness and so we can take the initiative to rise ourselves, up and above this constant death, destruction and devastation.

I came to prison when I was 19 and I quickly learned and assumed the mentality and ways of being a convict, things aren't what they were when I came to prison, they've gotten worse for us in here, but I haven't changed much, I haven't deteriorated. Once you've been sent to prison you have to keep in mind that there's only 3 things that can be taken from you, or only 3 things that you can LOSE: Your mind, your manhood or your life. I've stood up many times, against my oppressors, and they came in and took my television, took my property and charged me restitution. But you see, they can take my T.V. (I don't watch it anyways), but if I haven't lost my mind, then they haven't taken nada. They can take my privileges or my good time (life goes on) but as long as nobody has taken my manhood from me, they ain't took nothing. They can take my money, my property or any other material possession they want, but as long as they haven't taken my life, then they haven't taken anything.

It's been 10 years that I've lived inside the depths of the prison regime and I haven't lost my mind, my manhood or my life, so I guess you can say I'm surviving. I was always taught that a convict is someone who sticks up for himself, stands up for his rights and who looks out for other convicts and that it's better to lose your so-called privileges than to lose your manhood, it's better to take a stand than to be walked all over by people who think they're mightier than you because they have the law on their side.

And so, in that sense, being a convict is like being a revolutionary, but on a smaller scale. In fact, all these struggles, riots, conflicts and acts of resistance against our oppressors is actually training and preparing us to take it to another level. We've turned these prisons into training grounds for revolutionaries. We've come from being convicts and developed ourselves into imprisoned radical intellectuals, so you see; this has just been another way for us to make a bad situation into a better one, because that's what we do.

Rather than allowing ourselves to be destroyed by prison, we sit here contemplating, trying to find ways to destroy the prison. In Abbie Hoffman's book, **Steal this Book**, when he gives instructions on how to build a pipe bomb, he writes, "The basic idea to remember is that a bomb is simply a hot fire burning very rapidly in a tightly confined space". I think that's what we are, we're not just prisoners, as we sit and dwell and develop in the confines of these cells, our hearts burn like a raging fire, and our brains are like bombs, a hot fire burning very rapidly in a tightly confined space.

Consciousness permeates through these walls and fills the atmosphere of these graveyards, they can't imprison consciousness, they can't stop it, as long as we have our minds intact and continue to use them as weapons, and they can't stop it. We sit here locked up, confined, and slammed down, thinking of freedom; the thing that's so great, but costs so much, and the more we think about it, the closer we are to it....

So here is some of my best, break the chains, smash the system writing, I hope you're ready for this!

Until prisons have been abolished,

Coyote
ABC – Nevada
Prison Chapter
December 15th, 2007

For letters of encouragement or support, write to:

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Ely, Nevada
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Or write to my comrade

Anthony Rayson
South Chicago ABC Zine Distro
P.O. Box 721
Homewood, Illinois
60430

NOTE:

Feel free to make copies of this zine and send it to prisoners, prison activist groups, free books to prisoner bookstores, newsletters and to advocacy networks, etc. Anyone who would like to write me, or make any comments, or who would like to get involved in my activism, struggles or movement could write to me at the address below. I am a prohibited from receiving letters directly from other prisoners, but would like to hear from everyone, everywhere.

This zine is dedicated to my fallen comrade: Silencio, (May you rest in resistance carnal) killed by the hands of the pigs in the Washoe County Sherriff's Office, (the county jail in Reno, Nevada). We miss you Bro.

In Solitude I Suffer

Though I am loved, I am alone, left to sit and suffer in a cold, desolate cell of confinement. On the other side of these prison gates I have many people who love and care about me, who are touched by my courage and compassion, and who are moved by my love for them and by my love for life, freedom, and justice. The sad reality, though, is that they're out there and I'm in here, alone . . . .

I am surrounded by people who like to think that they're my enemies, surrounded by foulness and perversion, and blanketed by sheer coldness. I have no friends, just a few people that I talk to from time to time, people who share no true feelings of connectedness with me; their conversations might be good sometimes, and comforting, but there's no camaraderie between us. People in here will talk to you one day and then decide that they don't want to talk to you ever again; that's just the way it goes in here. It's something that a prisoner has to deal with, knowing that the only person in here that you can truly depend on is yourself.

We have to find ways to deal with this loneliness so it doesn't take us under. Overcoming loneliness is a huge part of survival in prison. Loneliness is painful. It's agonizing to my soul. To know that I could be in here, in this world, with other people around me, in cells next to me, above or below me, and still feel unconnected to anyone, and still feel like I don't really know someone, or that nobody really understands me, and to feel like I cannot truly trust another man in here – it defines the feeling of suffering. To be alone is to suffer.

In solitude I suffer. My heart dies, my blood turns cold and the spark of life leaves my eyes; when you look into them now all you can see is anger, pain, loneliness, and suffering, and all I can do is sit here and ask myself, what have I done to deserve this? What did I do to have to be forced to live in such torment?

For I know in my heart of hearts that I'm a good man. I know in my heart that I live by the principles of righteousness, respect, honor, integrity, fairness, equality; and I know that I am a man who has stood up for my beliefs and who has stood up for my rights, and who has also been beaten down for standing up for them. But still I am left to live in solitude, like I am some kind of piece of shit or something.

In prison that's the price we have to pay for being a man who stands up for himself and for what he believes is good and right. We have to pay for that by sitting and

suffering in solitary confinement until the authorities feel that they have broken you down. They try to break your will, break your spirit and your determination, and they try to destroy you. The things that we see as good and the things that we see as being right are the things that we are being punished for.

I sit here in solitude, feeling so alone. Tormented by my loneliness, and even though another man lives in the cell to my right, and another man lives in the cell to my left, and a man lives in the cell right above me, I feel no connection with any of them; there's no trust between us and absolutely no sense of camaraderie, and it kills me inside.

I understand that all of this is by design, and I want to be strong, I want to resist, I want to overcome, because I know I can't give in, I know I can't surrender, I know I can't let my oppressors break me; but deep down inside I know that no matter what I do, I cannot win, for either way they are slowly destroying me; whether I fight or surrender, they have already won. But I just can't give them the satisfaction in letting them know that they've destroyed me with loneliness, so I continue to fight and I continue to resist, because anything less would be suicidal . . . .

From the depths of my restless soul,

Coyote

Ely State Prison, Nevada

October 25, 2007

"The Importance of Resistance"

In the atrocious conditions of "solitary enslavement" the need for resistance is as significant as the need to breathe. To surrender to such madness would be equivalent to committing mental suicide. It is important we keep our minds sharp like knives, because our minds are our most effective weapons and whether you realize it or not, the oppressors are working to nullify your senses and your mind through the subtle means of psychological warfare.

Only people, who are evil, immoral and corrupt use psychology to manipulate, control and oppress. For those who don't know, psychology is the science of mind and behavior,

some study this particular science to get to the root of why certain people do what they do and act like they act, so they can find ways to treat, heal, help and cure. Others study this science of mind because they have dubious intentions in mind, like manipulation and mind control. 14

So you see it's all a mind game. We've got the captors' playing their little minds games on us and what's worse is we even got prisoners playing mind games on other prisoners. I guess, because they got us living in cages like animals, some of us have the idea that it's okay to behave like animals, but the truth is this is a foul place that we're living in and the need for resistance should be evident.

What is resistance? Resistance is overcoming the negative and destructive aspects of the prison environment. Resistance is living by a healthy, productive, and honest set of standards. Resistance is becoming wiser when people want to see you fail, resistance is becoming stronger when people try to make you weak. Resistance is knowing; it's breathing; resistance is "being."

Resistance has everything to do with the way you do your time. Some people choose to do their time by standing at their doors talking all day, usually about insignificant bullshit and some people choose to pass their time by sitting in their cells, 'fantasizing' all day. If that's how certain people choose to use their time then that's on them, but if that's how you're using your time, then, don't complain about how fucked up your life is and don't cry about your living conditions when you aren't doing anything productive or positive to uplift yourself or to make things better where you are at.

If you don't know, in these control units, super max prisons and maximum security prisons, these pickle-suits and oppressors are really trying to knock us off and burry us alive

in these graveyards and they've got plenty of strategies on how to achieve this. Painstakingly, a lot of us prisoners are 15 operating as pawns in their game and don't even realize it. A lot of us in here have dedicated themselves to study and you'd think that's good, but sadly, I've seen a lot of prisoners studying books on strategy, power, and warfare only so that they can use those strategies on other prisoners thinking that's what they have to do to get by in here, or to get ahead. Just as our oppressors abuse their power, a lot of us abuse knowledge in the same way, and this is a tragedy.

It is definitely important and necessary to acquire a sense of strategy, this is in an imperative tool towards achieving resistance, but first we must come to realize who our true enemy is. Is it the guy who is locked in a cell, all day, just like you, going through the same shit you're going through? Or is it people who keep you under the gun, the ones who have you locked in that cage, encouraging you to fight your own kind? The ones who are getting rich off of your suffering?

Study is an important form of resistance, just like exercise, because it prepares you mentally, as exercise prepares you physically. To me, studying is more than just reading a book; it's reading everyday and studying what you've read, it's taking notes of what read and memorizing those notes, it's writing about what you read, in the form of book reports, critiques, book summaries, chapter summaries, essays, articles, papers, etc...Those who are serious about their studies shouldn't have problems with taking notes and writing reports about what they've read. Knowledge is no good if you don't put it to its respective use, and one of the most effective ways of putting your knowledge to use, in my opinion, is by putting it in writing. When you write to educate, motivate or inspire, you are demonstrating a form of resistance.

Not only is study an important means of resistance, but

it's important for many reasons. Those who want to get their lives right must first get their minds right, and what better way to do that than through study. There are all kinds of things a prisoner can study, if you want to accumulate knowledge on all kinds of things then study-up on whatever materials you can get your hands on. If you want to learn about a particular /4 thing, then pick a subject, take at least six months to a year to master that subject then move on to another subject. This isn't easy, it usually takes outside support to acquire the necessary books and materials, you can't expect the prisoncrats to provide you with these materials, so it's important to maintain a solid connection with people on the outside, let them know your sincere about your intentions to learn and grow while in prison and I'm sure they'll help you if they can. Also, when you're done with the books and materials, after you've gotten all you could out of them, it's always a good thing to pass them on to other prisoners – who you know will put them to their rightful use – because good materials are hard to come by in these graveyards. Study is important for many reasons, this is a good place to do it, take advantage of your time, and use it wisely.

Resistance is critical when you're living in critical situations. By practicing solidarity and acknowledging the need for unity, you are enforcing resistance. It is the design of the system to keep us divided, powerless and suppressed, and when we go against that design by coming together as a united prisoner class, we are then practicing the ultimate form of resistance.

Communication and socialization are also key factors to consider, especially if the conversations you are having are productive and uplifting. Keep in mind, not only are your captors out to deprive you of your senses, but these solitary confinement cells are also designed to deprive you of your ability to be social and to socialize. To be able to socialize is an important element in being human. I've had some good

conversations with some of my fellow convicts that inspired me to sit down and write an essay. You don't always have to be the guy in the conversation who is always trying to instruct or teach, there's allot of people in here who have interesting 17 **stories and insights, sometimes it's good to just sit back and listen. It's always a beautiful thing to see convicts working together, striving towards the same end and helping each other along the way while igniting a fire in the hearts and minds of others try not to forget; we are all under the same gun.**

Resistance is uplifting you and others, resistance is survivalism. Resistance is preparation. The need for resistance is the same as the need for food and water; it provides sustenance, bringing life to a world where there isn't any life. They've got us living real foul in these graveyards, going against our own kind, surrounded by psych-patients and weirdoes, no real medical-care, no programs for prisoners and now, here at Ely State Prison, they are *forcing* prisoners to cell-up with someone. The food is foul, the rules are designed to belittle and sometimes even dehumanize us, even the water we drink, the air we breathe, it's all foul. If these aren't good enough reasons to resist then I don't know what is.

If you know what it is this system is doing to you then you should understand the importance of resistance. They got us living like animals because they want us to believe that we are animals, the more barbaric we act the more the door opens for them to come in and strip us of all our privileges and rights, then they can build more locked down units, bring in more beds, build more prisons and make more money off of us while we suffer. These people aren't trying to do anything to help us; they aren't trying to do anything good for us. Regardless of what they want us to think, we are human. We are in this together, we are all going to suffer together, so why not resist together?

We must stay true to ourselves and disregard that which is not true. Remember, what comes from the heart reaches the heart! Whatever you do, let your intentions be pure and from the heart. Don't get caught up in the evil and the madness that surrounds you, don't let it consume you, but rather strive to rise above it. Do something with your time; make something of your live. They want us to believe that "no matter what" we are destined to fail, that "no matter what" our lives will never amount to anything, that's only true if you believe it. The times we are living in, the situations we are faced with, and the things that are happening are very critical right now. You won't accept another prisoner calling you a punk, but you'll accept the administration treating you like a punk? This shit is crazy; it's time we collaborate, its time we resist.

Coyote 18
Ely State Prison, Nevada
2006

Please note:

To the people on the outside who read this, if you know or write to someone in prison, it is important that you get to know more of the struggles that prisoners go through, and, if you can, try to play an active role in their developments, transformations and transitions back into society; especially if he/she is doing time in a maximum security prison. Because these prisons are designed to cut him/her off from society and break him/her down completely. Usually a prisoner who is locked down in a cell all day, every day, doesn't have much to be happy about or to look forward to, except maybe getting a letter in the mail, it's a very depressing situation. That's why it's always good for a prisoner to maintain an open line with people in the free world. So, if you're writing a prisoner, please try to understand what kind of struggles he/she's up against and then to be there to support him/her through these dark times.

PRISONS:

Prisons are not here to help us. Prisons are not here to rehabilitate us. U.S. Prisons do not stop, deter, or prevent crime and they never will. The people in power can continue to lock people up and they can keep building more prisons and crime is still going to happen, because we live in an unbalanced world. Everybody wants to be in control, everybody wants to be able to control other peoples' opinions, actions, and options. Nobody wants to break away and take control of their own lives.

It doesn't matter whether we are in or out of prison. The way we are living as people is foul. If you are in prison, however, then you have the opportunity to really sit back and think about things. Whether you take advantage of that opportunity or not, is up to you. We can sit back and think about revolution, freedom, life, and death. We can sit back and think about creation and destruction. We can use this time to destroy our old ways of thinking and reconstruct new ways of thinking and new ways of living in the world.

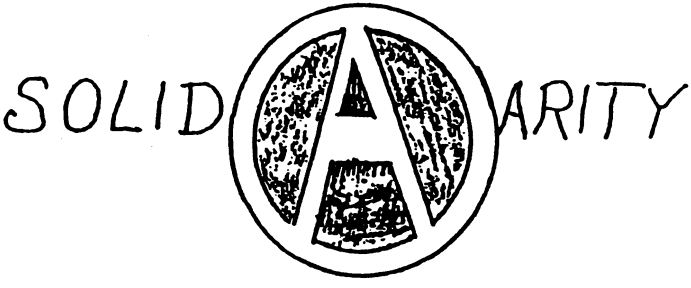
Prison has no place in this society because there are as many criminals in this society as there are in prison. Even the people in power can be considered criminals. What kind of people are they who let the poor suffer while the rich get richer? What kind of people are they who value money more than another person's life? The people in power get to define the meaning of a criminal only because they are the people in power. I could tell you that the people in power are as criminal as I am, but it wouldn't matter because I am in prison and they are in power. What they decide to do with their power will never be in my best interests because who am I but a prisoner? What the people in power do with their power will rarely be in the best interests of the people, because who are they but powerless people?

So, they leave us with two options: we can be powerful or we can be powerless. We can have or we can have-not. Of course, everybody is going to try to be a person of power and the ones who don't are going to be the ones who end up getting controlled by the people who have power. In this way, we conflict with each other as we strive for power. All the while, the people who really have all the power benefit from our conflicts, because they're the ones who control our options. As long as we give them that control, they are going to do whatever they want with their power, whether we like it or not.

This is what I think about while I'm in prison, but one should not have to be in prison to think about these things. I should not be in prison, because this prison sh[illegible]d not be here. Think about that.....

From a cell, I salute you!
El Coyote 2007
Ely State Prison
Anarchist Black Cross
Prison Chapter

Note: Here's a revolu[illegible]ionary idea: "Lets hear what the 'scum of the earth' have to say"!



WE ARE THE INFINITE VOICES OF THE MANY SOULS LOST IN DARKNESS, HERE TO AWAKEN THE MINDS OF THE CONFINED AND TO UNCONFINE THE MINDS OF THE UNAWAKENED. LET THESE WORDS BE HEARD AND NEVER MISTAKEN. LET THESE WORDS BE HEARD AMONG THE FLOCKS AND HERDS OF THE SO-CALLED DSTURBED AND THE PEOPLE WHOSE HEARTS KEEP BREAKNG. LET OUR WORDS BE CURES AS WE SPEAK FROM THE SOUL, THESE BEAUTIFUL NOUNS AND WONDERFUL VERBS, LET THEM FLOW.

I KNOW THE TRUTH, SPEAK THE TRUTH, AND LIVE THE TRUTH, SO LET ME STEP IN THE BOOTH AND SPEAK IT TO THE YOUTH. 'CUZ IF THEY'RE NOT CAREFUL AND WISE IN THEIR WAYS, THEY TOO COULD BE ROBBED OF THEIR YOUTHFUL FRUITS. THEM BOYS, THEY FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS. THEM BOYS, THEY ASPIRE TO BE WISE. YOU CAN HEAR IT IN THEIR TONE, SEE IT IN THEIR EYES. THEM GIRLS, THEIR SPIRITS SHINE ON MOONLESS NIGHTS. THEM GIRLS, THEY ARE THE BEARERS AND BRINGERS OF LIFE. YOU CAN FEEL IT IN THEIR BEATING HEARTS, SEE IT IN THEIR VIBRANT SMILES.

THEY ARE LIKE SEEDLINGS, TRYING TO RISE ABOVE THE WEEDS, WITH THE RIGHT KIND'VE NOURISHMENT, THEY CAN GROW INTO BIG, STRONG TREES. WITHOUT FOUNDATION, WE HAVE NO PURPOSE, WITHOUT LOVE, WE HAVE NO ASSURANCE, WITHOUT PAIN WE HAVE NO WISDOM, AND WITH OR WITHOUT PRISON, WE HAVE NO FREEDOM! POOR PEOPLE, LET US UNITE! LET'S STAND TOGETHER AND FIGHT WITH ALL OUR MIGHT! THEY SAY *WE'RE* WRONG, SO LET'S MAKE IT RIGHT! IN THE STREETS WE DIE AND IN CAGES TOO. LIFE IS A STRUGGLE, THAT'S SO TRUE, BUT IF IT ENGAGES ME, THEN IT SHOULD ENGAGE YOU TOO!

WHICH TRUTH IS IT THAT YOUR SHARP TONGUE SPEAKS? THE TRUTH THAT HURTS OR THE TRUTH THAT SETS YOU FREE? SPEAK TO ME, WITH YOUR WORDS SO WISE, SPEAK TO ME AND LET THOSE WORDS FREE OUR MINDS. LET THE TRUTH UNLEASH US FROM THESE CHAINS. LET THE TRUTH RELEASE US FROM OUR PAIN. LET US BREATHE, LET US LEARN, AND LET US LIVE.

IN THESE CAGES, IN THESE CELLS, IN THESE PRISONS AND IN THESE JAILS, IN THESE COFFINS, IN THIS HELL, I'VE WAITED YEARS FOR REALITY TO REACH ME, LIKE I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL OF THIS TIME FOR MY CAPTORS TO UNLEASH ME. I'VE SWAM IN MY SORROW AND BATHED IN DESPAIR. I'VE COVERED MY WOUNDS WITH THE SALT OF THE SEA. THE PAIN I'VE ENDURED HAS BEEN SO SWEET TO ME. BECAUSE I'VE LEARNED THAT ITS BEEN PLACED THERE WITH THE INTENTION OF TEACHING ME....

COYOTE

AUTHORITY ABUSE

occurring everyday...

The penitentiary, what's it all about? It's a sad tragedy, with backwards ass people doing backwards ass things, thinking that they're really doing something. If self-destruction is something worth doing, then yeah, you're really doing something! The penitentiary, where you get stripped of your soul and learn to replace it with a heart full of hate, and they tell you it's just the process, "where boys become men and the weak get their heads caved in." That's how they make a man out of you, so you better be on your toes fool, better stand up to anyone who challenges you. This is what you learn in the penitentiary, this is all part of the process, where we go from being human to becoming savages, it's all part of the process. Process of elimination. The process of dehumanization. The process of self-destruction.

It's all fun and games until you get slammed down, locked in a box all day, every day, for years on end. Then it ain't fun no more. That's when you take all the distorted things that you've learned, about being a convict, about being a gangster, about being a rider, and all that shit and you hold those things tightly to your chest, until they become even more distorted under these locked down situations, got you feeling like Superman behind these steel doors. When you come off lockdown you can't wait to put your superpowers to the test! Then they slam you down again and again, until eventually they've labeled you "dangerous" and won't let you out of that cell, ever again. You've handled your business, you've defeated your enemies, but what have you accomplished?

It's a sad situation that they've got us in. The things we'll do for a little respect, not even realizing we are destroying ourselves in the process. All this fighting, stabbing and killing, trying to be a soldier, ain't doing nothing for you or your people. It's not winning you or your people any real victories. We are up in here going through these crazy situations, fighting for bragging rights, and while we dig our own graves these pigs are shoveling more dirt and pouring it over us, burying us alive up in these graveyards.

Too many fools feel the need to tell fools who they are, what they're about, who they're affiliated with and what kind of shit they be into, but don't you know, there's too many undercover snakes and fakes in the game to be announcing yourself? Don't you know it's better that they don't know? Don't you know how to represent yourself by the way you carry yourself and conduct your business rather than with miscellaneous words, talking about you've done this and you can do that, man, you ain't done nothing that the next man hasn't done, so who are you trying to impress?

You call yourself a man, but you're sweating what the next man says, does and what he thinks about you. You feel the need to express yourself, you have to explain yourself, and to someone who doesn't even care about you, what the hell? Too many fools playing mind games, too many fools selling out over nickels and dimes, talking about they're hustling. Fools be wanting shit, but don't know how to shoot their line out the door and get it – some fools don't even know how to make a line – but this is what it is, the penitentiary and that's the nature of the biz.

If you don't have a little hustle about yourself, then you shouldn't want for nothing. If you can't stand on your own two feet – first and foremost – then you have no business trying to ride with a click. Money ain't everything and friends ain't shit. At the end of the day if you've still got your mind intact and if your spirits are still strong, that's all that matters. If you're coming out of today with more knowledge than you had yesterday, *then* you're really doing something!

You call yourself wanting to be respected, but you have no idea what true respect is, and

have no inclinations on giving any respect to the next man. You've got it twisted homie! You're chasing respect, but losing yourself in the process. You're chasing money, but losing your own sense of worth in the process. You see all these funny-money motherfuckers who like to flash and flaunt the things they have, just to impress another motherfucker. If they really wanted to make an impression, they'd share some of that commissary and help a motherfucker out who ain't got nothing. And as for respect, half these fools ain't worthy of your respect, half these fools in this system are undercover rats and the other half don't give a fuck about you either. There's no need to try to break your neck to get some respect around here, all you have to do is respect yourself by making intelligent decisions that will help you advance your position in life, and keep it real with the people who keep it real with you.

Don't get caught up in all this madness, it ain't doing nothing to better the situation for us. Too many motherfuckers talking about they're soldiers, but never put in work, too many motherfuckers acting like they're killers, but never killed nothing, too many motherfuckers wanting to be pimps, but ain't got no hoes, too many motherfuckers talking about they're hustlers, but ain't even got a TV in their cell. This shit ain't about nothing. Snap out of it! Open your eyes homie and use your medulla oblongata and realize that this shit ain't about shit.

Motherfuckers talking about they're running shit, but they let this system get to the mess that it is now and have no intentions of cleaning it up, because they'd rather run around acting like they've got some kind of pride or something. As if going against your own kind (for years and years at a time, without trying to resolve anything) is something to be proud of. They ain't knowing 'cuz the so-called shot callers ain't taking the time to show the little homies right from wrong, real from fake or any of the other kinds of lessons that will help them rise above these crazy circumstances.

There's no self-discipline, structure or real organization amongst most of these fools, motherfuckers are locked down in these cells, going crazy, losing their minds. Some people don't know how to do time and weren't built to do time like this. They have no self-respect, let alone respect for the next man. They have no sense of self-sufficiency. They let their so-called pride and emotions get in the way of more important issues like unity or solidarity, they're too busy grandstanding for the next man, to be concerned about what's really going on around here, and what's really going on around here is that we're all under the same gun, locked down under the same oppression, going through the same shit and the only people who's running shit around here is the administration and they're running all of us into the ground and we're helping them do it! That's what's really going on around here. That's the real spill and if you ain't feeling that, then you're missing the tip.

When the walls get cold the soul gets cold. When you're living like this, locked down in a cell all day, every day, you've got to stay active. It's under these type of situations that a person's most creative side comes to light, either that or they're just sitting up in these cells wasting ticks on all kinds of irrelevant things, just letting their lives waste away, fueled by hate, motivated by rage, insistent on destruction, minds deteriorate, souls evaporate and your life just ticks away.

We're going crazy up here, losing touch with ourselves, losing touch with our values and foundations, the things that hold us up. We're losing with the things that really mean something, and we're letting our minds dwindle, as we stay focused on senseless irrelevant things. That's what happened under these locked down situations, our thoughts and ideas become warped and get suffocated under these smothering conditions. We are unable to develop anything substantial amongst one another and any real growth on a collective level is stunted as these cell doors close tighter on our fate.

The only thing we have left, as we sit up in these cells, is ourselves. We try to engage in self-maintenance, keeping our bodies strong and healthy, our spirits alive and intact and our minds sharp and constantly tested. Because the mind is powerful when cultivated. The mind is dangerous when elevated. The mind is unstoppable when educated. We must strive to use our knowledge to achieve power and then we must use that power to help and heal, not to destroy or kill, and we cannot forget the spiritual aspects of our struggles.

This is the penitentiary, the "big time", the place that is glorified by the youth in every hood, barrio and set in every city and state, nationwide. There are a lot of us who want to teach these youngsters how to be true to their set, how to be true to their barrio, neighborhood, gang or click, but there aren't enough of us trying to teach these youngsters how to be true to themselves. Real talk.

There are a lot of motherfuckers preaching about this and that, but nobody takes them seriously because there isn't any action behind their words. If there isn't any action behind what you say, then nobody's listening. You've been locked up for 20 years, *so what?* You've been a member of a group, gang or organization for 15 years, *so what?* What have you done in those 15-20 years that's going to make me want to hear what you have to say, not only hear, but actually sit down and listen to what you have to say? And I don't want to hear about what you did 5 years ago carnal, I want to know what's cracking right now? That's what's up! Because these youngsters don't want to talk and they damn sure don't want to listen. All they want to do is act! But whether they "act like a fool" or act reasonably and with a matter of intelligence, while striving towards bigger and better things, is the difference that truly matters. It's the difference we have to try to make if we're going to make any difference at all. These youngsters are coming up under all of this degeneration, and it's doing nothing for them but making them degenerate.

Here in Nevada's maximum security penitentiary, I often hear other prisoners talking about how glad they are that they'll soon be leaving this prison to go to a medium security prison. They hate it here so much that they can't wait to get transferred to another prison, but after they leave this prison things will still be just as bad for the people who have to remain here. Everybody seems to be sitting in these cells with that "better you than me" attitude, yet they wonder why things are so bad and they complain about it and they can't wait to get transferred. But a transfer isn't going to solve the existing problems of our living conditions.

A lot of us are quick to speak up and complain about the numerous issues and atrocities here, but are quick to get somewhere, rather than trying to assist in making situations better while they're here. It's that type of selfish attitude that contributes to this madness that everybody can't wait to get away from. If you hate it so much while you're here, then why not try to do something productive about the situation? If you hate it so much, then why not try to contribute in some way that will make things better where you're at?

As crazy as it may sound, the thought doesn't cross too many minds in here. Most of us have already surrendered to the fact that the things are the way they are, 'cuz that's the way they're gonna be. We don't seem to realize that there are, in fact, things that we can actually do to make things better for ourselves where we're at. We don't seem to want to make things better for ourselves where we're at. We don't seem to understand that the way they've got us living up in these cells ain't the way we're supposed to be living. We've got much more coming to us than this fucked up shit right here. We don't have to be living like this. We shouldn't be living like this, but the sad truth is that we act like we like living like this.

Rather than allowing real to recognize real; rather than trying to settle our conflicts and trying to come together under principals of solidarity, we are forced to learn how to survive doing time in lockdown. Instead of trying to learn how to move forward as one people, we try to endure as individuals. We sit up in these cells hating on the next man 'cuz he's from a different click or 'cuz he's another race, and when the pigs come to our doors to feed us, or when they take us out to the rec yard we joke with them, laugh with them and fraternize with them. We have more conversation for these guards than we have for one another and I *know* that ain't right!

24

The administration here at E.S.P. intentionally houses protective custody inmates, psych-patients and informants in the cells next to us or around us and I see a lot of good dudes falling victim to these pigs' strategies, 'cuz they don't understand that these P.C.'s, weirdos and psych-patients are detrimental to the solidarity of the rest of us, and that they're also detrimental to our overall mental health and well-being.

People don't understand exactly why they should stay away from people who cooperate with the police, people don't understand exactly why they should be careful around weak-minded, spineless people who will probably fold under the slightest amount of pressure put on them by the pigs (or anyone else, for that matter). People don't understand why they should stay clear of people who aren't in their right minds. And they don't understand that we should not accept these sick in the head people living around us. They're not supposed to be kept locked down in segregation like this, they're supposed to be in a facility for people who have mental illnesses, where they can get some treatment. Some of us understand, but there's still a lot of prisoners who don't understand that these fools are foul and that we're living foul, just by living around them, and there's nobody around here who seems to want to pull them up and explain to them how these P.C.'s are detrimental to our unity in here, and how it ain't right to be kicking it with them like you'd kick it with a comrade.

All I know is that I'm not in here wasting ticks, I'm active and ALIVE, 'cuz that's the only thing I know how to be. I speak on this shit, because I care about what goes on around me, I care about the way they've got us living in here and I know we ain't supposed to be living like this. I'm surviving in here and my spirits are intact. I just see a lot of foulness in here sometimes. I pay attention to my surroundings 'cuz I'm not the kind of person who can be alive, with two good eyes, but not see. Once you've become aware of what's really going on, underneath the surface, you start to realize how fucked up things are, and with that level of consciousness, you begin to want to do something, to make changes, to make things better.

The foulness from the pigs doesn't surprise me, but it's the lack of comradery amongst the prisoners that really fucks me up. It's hard to understand how some dudes would rather get caught up with some funny-style P.C.'s than keep it real with some real motherfuckers. It's crazy. These are just some of the things that are detrimental to the comradery amongst prisoners and it's all a part of the design put in place by the operatives of the system. When I first came to prison I was lucky enough to be schooled by some decent-minded people who took it upon themselves to show me that a good motherfucker doesn't let another good motherfucker go without, but now I'm seeing all of these good motherfuckers caught up with these foul motherfuckers over some nickels and dimes – fucking crumbs man!

These locked down situations have fucked us up in so many ways, and many of us begin to let go of the principles they've held on to tightly for so many years. And some of us have these same sets of principles so distorted, that it has us wanting to battle each other, over the slightest bullshit. These locked down situations are suffocating us and keeping us from being able to organize

on any real type of level. As more good motherfuckers turn into funny-style motherfuckers the situation for us continues to deteriorate and then we've got these youngsters coming into this fucked up system, under all of this foulness and under all of this deterioration and they quickly learn to become just as unprincipled as the rest of us, and instead of using this time to do something substantial, they let their lives waste away on destructive bullshit, just like the rest of us are doing and the only people who are sticking together through all of this, are the pigs.

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When I talk to some of these convicts that I know who have also seen things go from bad to worse around here, hoping that they can help me make sense of all of this, it seems like they're disgusted about all of this foulness and degeneration too. It's definitely good to have these kinds of discussions with other prisoners, 'cuz it sometimes leads to productive and uplifting endeavors and it's always good to know that there are other motherfuckers who feel the same as I do, but these days, these conversations usually end with one of us throwing our hands in the air and saying, "It is what it is."

Man, I'm so tired of hearing "It is what it is"! Every time I hear someone trying to use that catchphrase to explain why things are the way they are, it just tells me that they know things aren't the way they should be, but aren't really willing to take any true strides or to make any real effort to do things that will lead to making our situation closer to what it's supposed to be. All I know is, if it is what it's supposed to be, then you'd know, like I know, that it ain't what it is.

It is what is it 'cuz we can't get along, we are so divided in here that it doesn't make sense for only a few of us to try to take a stand, while the majority sit back and twiddle their thumbs, thinking they have something to lose if they get involved, or that they have something to gain if they stay out of it. But, real talk, if we could actually get along, if we could settle our disputes and learn to coexist with one another, then these assholes would have to take this prison off of lockdown and they'd have to give us what we've got coming!

The way we're living up in here ain't right, this ain't just about being a convict, the issues we face and the issues that need to be addressed are much deeper than that. We must organize ourselves and each other. We need to be able to lift our own people up out of the gutter and move in a more clear and insighted direction. We must be able to organize around the fact that we are all being held captive by the same people, who don't give a fuck about us one way or another. We must reach out to the people on the streets, get them involved in our causes, and make plans with them to organize and build. We must organize ourselves in here and we need people out there to help us do that, but we're just gonna be stuck and stranded in these same drastic situations if we can't get it together and if we can't make attempts to work with one another. Right now, we can't even come together to take a stand and resist against our oppressors and I know that ain't right!

In the meantime – and this is some mean time – we are going to be sitting in these stuffy ass cells, doing turtle time in the confines of solitude and some prisoners are going to be losing their minds, some are going to be losing their sense of principles, some are going to be losing their hearts and some prisoners are going to be losing their souls to this insanity. This is life in the penitentiary where everybody behind a locked door wants to be a tough guy, it is what it is, we are living foul up in here and all we can say about it is, "It is what it is."

Of course, there are many of us in here who are going strong and staying strong, their spirits are alive, they're engaged in all kinds of activities and they continue to remain active, while striving for more uplifting and productive things. They refuse to lay down, they refuse to give in or give up, they're happy to be alive, 'cuz believe it or not, they love life. It's always a beautiful thing when you

can sit back and say that you love being alive, even in a dreadful situation like this! All you can do is be who you are. It's all about what's in your heart. It's definitely good to know that there are still people in here who can keep it real with themselves. As long as you know who you are and as long as you can continue to keep it real with yourself, then you will always be free, no matter where you're at or what situation you're in, you'll want to keep going, keep striving, without the slightest hint of wanting to give up! Real talk.

BRAIN GRENADES

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From the cement and steel, real thoughts of resistance are manifested, born and bred in the minds of those who have been infested by poverty, crime, racism, and addiction. As we stand in long lines to be arrested and chained, arraigned, tried and convicted, and then sentenced to prison, as we continue to live in pain like its nothing, but just another part of the game. We sit, we think, ponder, and reflect, until we see the sudden truth. Then resistance begins to flow through our veins.

We sit here and we prepare ourselves for hardships, we train for stamina, we train for strength, we train to break-not only the chain, but also the link, making very sure that the things we say are things that make you think. Resistance-training: what a beautiful and real idea! We strive to make our minds sharp like box-cutters and our bodies as hard as steel. We strive to make our oppressors not only see, but also feel, that our aggression is so very real, so we try to make them understand that they could never break our will.

In prison we learn that time is life and life is time and the unwritten rule is, "if I don't fuck with yours, then you better not fuck with mine." We let our words be radical forms of art and they carry on to the outside of these walls and light fires in peoples' hearts and minds. It goes to prove that the best parts of who we are cannot be confined or constricted to these desolate graveyards.

We speak the truth as we know it, so others can know what its like to live in pain, but still remain strong, truthful, and resistant. We live by the truth that our hearts retain, spreading consciousness from cell to cell, raising awareness from one tier

to the next, bringing unwrapped gifts of prolific, reflective thought, letting truth pervade through the walls that confine our bodies but never our minds.

It has somehow become natural in a primitive environment like this to see so many people full of hate, resentment, anger, and hostility. With our peripheral vision we've seen prison give birth to predation and we've seen how predation can eat away at a prisoner's soul until there's nothing left but the aura of vile wickedness, foulness, and corruption.

But, with our clear and insightful vision, we've seen prison give birth to creation and we've seen creation give birth to liberation and we've seen it grow and develop and turn into truth and beauty.

Yes, we've seen it all, as most of us were raised by the grim circumstances of poverty and will probably die by the fatal circumstances of imprisonment, left to wonder if we were ever free. Born into the state of confinement and bred to despise the system that oppresses us, struggle becomes a way of life and resistance becomes a state of mind.

In prison, we are living foul and on the streets we are living foul too. Our struggles are all connected, they are all related. From the streets to the prisons to the graveyards, it's all one big struggle. We are living foul on both sides of the fence. This is a real life struggle, and we are going through it every single day.

Sitting in a cell with our soul in our hands, we aim to change, elevate, and progress. We aim to develop our minds into weapons as we search for deeper understanding. We aim to develop ourselves into better people so that we can lift each other up and rise above this suffocating death that seems to want to swallow us alive. We keep our minds open, so truth can reach us, as we dwell in darkness.

Brain grenades, hand grenades for the brain, because our brains are our most powerful, most dangerous, and most active

weapons. We are here to blow your mind!

Autonomy, affinity, and action: that's what we believe in.

Until there are no more prisons,

COYOTE
Anarchist Black Cross Prison Chapter
Ely State Prison, Nevada

December 21, 2007
(Just another day in the graveyard)

Note: My comrade and mentor, Anthony Rayson puts out a zine called "Thought Bombs". So, in the same anarchist tradition, I wanted to put something out that would make people on both sides of the fence think. (Thinking is a beautiful thing). Instead of a bomb, I wanted to use a grenade. They are easier to carry and they're full of shrapnel!

SURVIVAL

Surviving is maintaining a strong sense of self, knowing who you are, knowing your surroundings and knowing the truth of your situation. Surviving is keeping your spirits intact and not losing your sanity, especially while in the midst of insane conditions. Surviving is holding on strongly to what you believe in and using those beliefs as a foundation to get yourself and others through hard times. Surviving is maintaining a disciplined, yet positive attitude through trivial times and tribulations, dilemmas and setbacks. Surviving is knowing the difference between wrong and right.

To survive you must have a clear knowledge of your enemy. This means knowing who your enemy is, knowing what your enemy is capable of as well as what the enemy is incapable of. Knowing your enemies strengths, weaknesses, ins and outs. Your enemy may never understand you, but you should always try to secretly understand your enemy.

Surviving is keeping busy, staying active and staying productive, unwilling to waste any time. Surviving is knowing, understanding and resisting the elements of oppression that prisoners are being subjected to. Surviving is having a good hustle and not being cut-throat or scandalous when it comes to making money or trying to get by. Surviving is knowing how to use what you have to make what you can.

Surviving is helping out other prisoners, in meaningful ways, and realizing that they are locked up, just like you, going through the same type of shit you're going through, struggling just like you. Surviving is being able to eliminate the negative and destructive elements of your life and environment and replace them with things like integrity and solidarity.

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Surviving is knowing the difference between heart and fear; honor and dignity; bravery and stupidity; ideas and illusions. Surviving is having a goal and/or plan and vigorously sticking to it, without losing your focus. Surviving is having determination; it's being able to wake up with motivation and going to sleep with gratification.

Surviving is not allowing yourself to become institutionalized and for those who have subconsciously became institutionalized, it's recognizing that you have become institutionalized and taking the steps toward correcting it before it becomes self-consuming. Surviving is being able to resist and to break the psychological chains of incarceration.

Surviving is making it through the day without bringing pain or problems on yourself and not bringing any heat down on yourself or fellow convicts. Surviving is knowing when to mind your own business and keep your mouth closed. Surviving is not being a coward, a follower, or a snitch.

Surviving is keeping your mind sharp and your body in shape and staying both mentally and physically prepared for unexpected circumstances. Survival is practicing, maintaining and encouraging solidarity. It's uplifting you and yours without oppressing/suppressing others. Surviving is making it to another day without having to look over your shoulder because of something you did to someone yesterday. It's being able to wake up every day without shame or regrets over your actions the day before.

Surviving is overcoming all obstacles set in front of you and coming away from them stronger and wiser. It's being able to handle confrontation; it's being able to show your face, be who you are and it's being able to face your fears. Surviving is being able to think for yourself.

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY IS UTTER FATUITY

Blind obedience: " I must obey my master of else...." SHEESH! All I can say to those who believe that is: " Lick those boots fool, keep licking 'till your tongue blisters!"

Blind and obedient we are. We do what we're told, when we're told, without question or rebuttle. Why? Because they've created a situation where we "have no choice" but to depend on them.

Well, we have other choices, of course, but they've made it appear as if our best choice is to depend on them. Helpless, little people is what we are. This strategy isn't new. It even says in Sun Tzu's book, Art of War, to be sure and give your opponent an exit, because it will weaken their resolve. That's basically the same thing they're doing to us. They've weakened our resolve by making it seem as if our only option is to be obedient, boot-licking slaves to their mighty authority.

We are always going to be restricted by our blind obedience, unless/until we figure out a way to live where we don't have to depend on their supposed authority. That means we must become our own masters over our own lives, and over our own destinies. We must create a situation that would allow us to provide for ourselves, think for ourselves and live without having to depend on "the master".

When I say provide and think for ourselves I'm not saying "let's be selfish". I'm saying lets be self-sufficient. Do we really need authroity to live? Do we really need authority to live a good life? Do we really need authority to live righteously? Is it possible to live a good, righteous, healthy life without having a master to watch over our every move?

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Respect for authority is utter fatuity. To have so much faith in authority is to have little faith in ourselves. To have so much respect for authority is to have none for yourself. We need to stop fooling ourselves into believing we need authority to live or to engage in society. Let's start looking at other options instead.

You can continue to lick you master's boots if you want to, putting all your faith and all your trust in a system that wasn't designed to give an actual damn about you or me. Keep licking their boots and while you're doing that, I'll be looking for other alternatives, trying to find ways to provide for myself without having to depend on the state or the system. Even if I have to spend the rest of my days living off the land, then there it is there.

I may be in prison, but that doesn't mean I'm the only one in chains. All the people out there in so-called society who mistakenly (or painstakenly) want to believe that they're free, are walking around in handcuffs too. Your rec-yard might be a little bigger than mine, but don't let that fool you. A lot of you are imprisoned by your own fears, especially the fear to be free, to live free, and to think for yourselves.

It is so sad to see people out there living like this, in blind obedience, not caring about the way things are or what's going on in the world. It is very disheartening to know that there are so many people in society who have no regard for life. And people wonder why I'm so hesitant to get out of prison and return back to society....

In truth and towards anarchy....
Coyote
Ely State Prison 2007

It's a Struggle

As the sun rises over the razor wire I get up and rise with it, ready to face another day in the graveyard. Lately, I've been making it a point to wake up hours before the sun opens its eyes, while these guards (day shift) are still at home, sleeping and snoring in their beds. I do this so that I can be ready for these pigs. I guess you'd have to live it to truly understand my mentality behind all of that. But today I woke up feeling good, telling myself, 'today's a good day to live'.

That's what it's all about these days: Living! Striving to live. I want to live good, I want to live right, I want to be healthy because healthiness is happiness. After 10 years of living this lonely, depressing lifestyle, I have become accustomed to this. I've become accustomed to hardship. I've become accustomed to pain. I've become accustomed to struggle and struggle has become a way of life. But there's something inside of me that yearns for another life, a life beyond these steel doors and concrete enclosements. A life that has value. A truthful way of living. A life of freedom. Unfortunately, there's also something inside of me that fears the possibility of having to walk into a world that has long become unknown to me. These are the internal struggles that boil and fester inside of me and I often wonder if they're killing me inside, or making me stronger, because I know these things have the capability of doing either or, but I guess it all depends on me, it depends on what's inside my heart.

Today I woke up feeling good and now I sit here with this cup of coffee in my hand, thinking I should write an essay that will give people a better understanding of what it's like to live in prison and some of the struggles that we are going through behind these enemy lines and now that I've got this pen in my hand I figured I'd let it bleed all over this paper, the way my heart bleeds as it tries to mend itself from being broken over and over again from living in such a heartless place, for so long.

I'm looking at this coffee mug; my comrade Diablo had scribed some artwork on it for me, it has some clowns, demons, skulls, prison towers, a drawing of a keyhole, and an hourglass, some women and there's some other artwork on it. I've had this mug for over 6 months now and it's survived a couple of shakedowns and I'm kind of surprised that I still have it. I wonder if I'll be able to hang on to it for the rest of the time that I'm in prison?

That's the thing about prison, it's an unpredictable place. You never really know what's going to happen so you condition yourself to always expect the worse. You already expect the guards to come into your cell and see something as beautiful as this mug and take it and throw it away because it's "contraband". And even though we know they'll take it, we still keep it. We have too much respect for ourselves to even think of adhering to such pettiness, we don't recognize these as rules, but more as acts of degradation against us.

Diablo put a lot of time into this mug, that's what he does, that's how he passes the time. This place is such an ugly place with all kinds of destruction and crazy stuff going on all the time, but you can always find someone in here creating beautiful things that will probably be confiscated and thrown away when the guards get their grimy hands on them. That's just the way it goes in here.

But like Diablo, who spends all of his time taking all of this ugliness and destruction and turning it into beautiful art, I sit here with this pen in my hand, letting it bleed all over this paper, doing the same thing Diablo does, but with a different medium. I'm just passing the time, taking all of this filthiness and foulness that I see and that I've been through and writing about it, turning it into something that people can connect to, turning it into a tool that will hopefully raise consciousness. That's what I do. That's how I cope. Without this pen I would've been destroyed a long time ago. I would've fallen under, or lost my mind, or something. Without this pen I'd have no positive outlet to release my frustrations, anger and pain and instead I'd have to resort to violence and destruction. It's either the pen or the sword and I've trained myself to be effective with both.

With this pen I write about what I see, experience and know. I know what cold steel feels like around my wrists, I know what it feels like around my ankles as it chafes into my skin until I bleed, like this pen bleeds, like my heart bleeds, like I've made these pigs bleed, just so I can make them feel my pain. I know what it's like to hold a sharpened piece of metal in my hands, swearing to myself that I'll put it through the neck of the first motherfucker that threatens or disrespects me. I know what the hard concrete feels like on my knees, I know what 3 rounds of shotgun pellets feel like in my legs, I know what pepper-spray tastes like, smells like and feels like as it burns in my eyes. I know what a taser feels like on my butt cheeks and I know what a pig's boot feels like in my back. I live this foul ass shit, breathe this foul ass shit and eat this foul ass shit, everyday. The people who keep me here tell me that they couldn't eat the food they serve me, they tell me that they couldn't live like this and I tell them I couldn't let someone live like this, but they don't hear me though...

In prison we live with our backs against the wall. Whether you're on constant lockdown or if you get to come out with the others, you still feel the oppressors boot on your neck, regardless. No matter how you're living or how you're doing your time, being in prison is a constant struggle. You go through many different types of situations while in prison, there are ups and there are downs, and all kinds of crazy things that start to become normal the more you adapt to living in these insane conditions; it's crazy. I've been through a lot and I've seen a lot and still I am constantly surprised. Just when I thought I've seen it all, something crazy happens and I'm shocked all over again. We've conditioned ourselves to feel no pity, to feel no pain, to show no emotion and we've conditioned ourselves to hate, hate and hate! When you lived under the gun, with your back against the wall you tend to see things in an extreme manner and I've come to realize that this madness has been slowly eating away at my insides, it has been destroying the goodness in me. Prison is a place that destroys the goodness in man.

Some might argue with that. They might say that prison is a place that contains men who have no goodness in them, and to some extent that might be true, but it's not the whole truth and anyone who says it is hasn't been living this crazy life like I have and they only see things on the surface. The sickness in man is a reflection of the sickness in society. You don't throw a sick man in prison to cure him of his sickness, that's just treacherous and inhumane. You don't throw a sick man in prison thinking it's going to eliminate the sickness from society. If that was the case, society itself should be locked up, thrown in prison, condemned, because society is the root and cause to most of the sickness in America. If crime is a social sickness or a social disease, what sense does it make to treat sickness with punishment? The American justice system is flawed and fraudulent. When I came to prison there was still a lot of goodness in me and I'm in prison 'cuz of the choices I made in life, not because I'm no good, but because I did not want to conform to the so-called standards of society. But prison has almost destroyed me and probably would have if I wasn't the fighter that I am.

A few months ago I watched them carry a body out (into the unit hallway) on a stretcher. A 25-year-old man killed himself in his cell because he had 2 life sentences and he couldn't continue to live like this. He didn't want to spend the rest of his life living like this. I didn't know the guy, but I heard he was a good dude and well-liked and respected by his comrades. He wasn't housed on my wing, but if he was I would've given him some good literature that would've caused him to look deeper into himself and that would've caused him to take a longer, more thoughtful look at life. I would've tried to give him some encouraging conversation, hopefully to inspire him to keep going, to keep resisting, 'cuz there's always something to live for. He was only 25-years-old.

The next day the pigs came around while feeding us our lunch and they were laughing and asking everybody if we wanted "hot dogs or suicide". They were being rude and disrespectful and they were making fun out of a serious situation. They have no regards for our lives, they don't care if we die or if we kill ourselves, they think it's funny when a 25-year-old takes his own life, they're heartless. That's why I call them pigs.

These guards are full of spite and hate and they're more vengeful than we are as they are always out to show us who's boss. These guards act like we're supposed to be scared of them, when I know in my heart that they're the ones who should be scared. I know that this big, strong, steel door isn't here for my protection, they've got me locked behind this steel door for *their* protection! They like to pretend like we're animals in a zoo, so psychologically it's like they're poking and prodding us with a long stick, rattling our cages, knowing they'd be a lot more respectful and considerate if there wasn't a door between us. The difference between a prisoner and an animal in a zoo is that the zookeepers are trained to love and care for and to be concerned about the animals' well-being, whereas the guards at prison despise us, fear us and hate us. So, they psychologically poke us and prod us and sometimes they even do it physically. The only reasons these cowardly guards are running around acting as aggressively as they do is because we let them. They're treating us foul because we're letting them treat us foul.

For some reason, people don't seem to see the seriousness in this shit. They don't understand that as humans we have the right to be treated with fairness and respect and they don't understand that it's a right worth fighting for. From the streets to these prisons we are living foul and people don't seem to understand how serious this is. They think by ignoring the problem it won't get worse for them. The truth is, if you're ignoring the problem, then you're allowing the problem to continue and if you let a problem continue, then sooner or later it's going to get worse. I think it's better to stand up for your rights and even to fight for your rights, than it is to accept living like a slave. It's better to speak up, stand up and to protest, than to lay down and get trampled on. I believe that if more people start taking direct action and stand up for theirs, other people will see that, and think to themselves, "it's about time," and they'll join in the protest and begin to stand up for theirs as well.

I've fought injustices all of my life. In every prison, every institution that I've been in, since the age of 11, I've sent a pig away bleeding. Never for nothing either, but always because they've tried to do me dirty or because they've tried to put their hands on me. I don't go out of my way to fuck with these pigs, but when they've gone out of their way to rattle my cage they've found out that I'm not the Coyote that barks, but the Coyote that bites.

They've tried to break me, they've tried to set me up, they've lied to me, lied about me in their reports, they've beat me, tased me, sprayed me with mace, shot me with a shotgun, they've hogtied me and left me in the middle of the floor for an hour, occasionally kicking me, stomping me or tasing me. They've strapped me to a bed, after forcefully removing all of my clothing, and left me there for 2 days with no water and no food. They've even sent other prisoners to attack me – or to try. These pigs have every reason to want to destroy me. I'm always going to have that in my heart; I'm never going to forget what these pigs are about. There are times where I can just snap and go after these pigs, that's always going to be in my heart, people just don't understand. But I'm not alone, there are hundreds of prisoners just like me, who have the determination and the will to be respected by all, the determination and the will to be treated like a man.

I feel that I have much to live for, but at the same time, there are times where I feel like I have nothing to lose and that's when I'm at my most dangerous, or the most reckless, because when I get like that I snap in to "combat-mode" and I just don't care. I don't care about pain, I don't care about consequences, I'm out for blood. I don't give these pigs no warning, I make no threats and won't get them when they're expecting it. I'll wait until I run across the first pig who has his guard down and let him have it. One pig is as good as the next. These pigs don't play fair and they

damn sure don't fight fair, so I use guerilla tactics when I go to war with them. I have the words "guerilla warfare" tatted on my arm and I've been known to practice it.

I've taught myself to live by my own rules of engagement. For every offense, for every injustice and for every act of disrespect that my oppressors engage on me, calls for an act of self-defense. Some acts call for me to speak up, some acts call for me to stand up, resist or protest, and some acts call for me to attack and use methods of all out violence. I never threaten or shout, because they see people who yell, curse, make threats or a verbal display of how tough they are as prisoners who are all talk and who won't put up a real fight. I won't go on a senseless rampage over small injustices, but I'll still stand my ground to the point where I'm letting them know that I'm not going to take that shit. Violence is always an option, but it's always the last resort. All disrespectful actions cause for reactions of some sort, nothing is to go unsettled.

It's hard, it's a struggle for real. As much as I want to overcome this life, I'm always gonna have that hate in my heart. I'm always going to be resentful of my captors. That's what this system has done to me. I'm an anti-authority motherfucker for real. My blood gets cold when a pig tries to exert his piggish authority over me. I go off.

As much as I want to rise above these circumstances, deep down inside I'm afraid that this madness might end up consuming me and taking me under before I ever get the chance to see the light of day again. This is a real struggle that I face everyday and that thousands of prisoners, just like me, have to either endure or who have already succumbed to their fate. I can't surrender, I can't let the fight in me die or fade, because that's suicidal. The struggle is to learn how to resist and keep resisting while finding ways to keep striving towards my freedom. The goal is to resist and overcome, not to resist and bury myself alive in the process.

The people that I write to on the streets, have been there for me in real ways: it's because of them that I keep going, that I keep pushing myself to resist. My family and loved ones, comrades and friends, the people who know me, they see so much good in me. They see my compassion and my kind and loving nature, they see all of the goodness in me, but there's a whole other side to me that they don't see, that has been bred into my nature since the age of 11. I don't let them see that side of me, because they wouldn't understand. I have these demons, these dragons, deep inside of me and that's where I try to keep them, real deep down inside, because when they come out, they come out on to a path of terrible destruction. People just don't know, I've been deeply damaged by the shit I've been through.

I'm so full of soul and my soul is good, but it's this place, it's these prisons, it can turn the kindest soul into the coldest soul. That's what this madness does to a man. That's one of the reasons I'm always trying to make more people aware of how important it is to build true, solid relationships between the people on the outs and the people in prison who are continuously going through these painful struggles. We've been placed in prison and separated from our families, separated from meaningful relationships with the only people in the world who care about us and thrown into a zone of war, deceit, corruption, negativity and destruction and forced to learn how to sink or swim and become as corrupted as the next man. They've thrown us in these prisons, stripped us of a sense of purpose, will, and spirit and slowly we begin to lose a real sense of connection with life beyond these walls and we become more and more tuned into this warped environment and more and more tuned into "the prison life", and as we become more and more tuned into this madness we become less and less tuned into truth and love and significance and we become less and less tuned into ourselves as we learn how to numb ourselves and brace ourselves and endure torment and suffer. We need people to get involved in our lives in real and meaningful ways, because they have taken us away from society and created an even more hopeless environment for us to live in, and we become even more anti-social and begin to feel like we have nothing to lose. When we feel we have nothing to lose we become reckless with our lives and we go all out, and we are destroying ourselves and being destroyed while having to live in prison. This is madness. We need people to get involved in our struggles and in our lives, we need people to write us and give us something meaningful to look forward to, we need people to send us books and literature so that we can have something real to connect to. We need that love, 'cuz this is pain and this life is hard on the soul.

In many ways prison is a place that has the potential to make men into warriors, but this is also a very distorted place and there's a fine line between being a warrior and being a predator. In prison we have to learn fortitude, we have to learn to endure all kinds of struggle and strife, in order to survive. Many prisoners tend to stay in good physical shape, 'cuz this is a place where people look at you and size you up. If they see someone who is out

of shape, who slouches, who keeps his head down or who looks like he lacks in self-respect or self-discipline, he will most likely be considered to be lazy, soft, or weak and sooner or later he will be challenged or tested. Most prisoners stay in shape, they stay battle-ready, because they know and understand that we live in a world where all weaknesses are to be tested, challenged and exploited.

So, in that sense, this place keeps you ready, it keeps you prepared and trained, like a warrior. But without virtue, without a heart and without a soul, instead of being a warrior, you become a predator. Predators are unprincipled, undisciplined, heartless, soulless people, usually preying on the weak to make themselves look strong. Warriors are brave, truthful, compassionate and wise. They'll fight and die for their clan, tribe or people. They'll fight and die for their beliefs and for their freedom. That's the difference between a predator and a warrior and I've seen prison turn men into predators, warriors and victims. It's better to be a predator than it is to be a victim, but it's better to be a warrior than to be a predator. I've seen it over and over again, the countless ways that prison can either make or break you.

I can sit here and say, "They can't break me," meaning they can't bend my will, they can't break my spirit, they can't turn me into a snitch or a piece of shit, and it's true, they can't. But they've turned me into a monster a long time ago, and in that sense, they have almost broken me, they damn near destroyed me. They've destroyed the wholeness in me, they've taken some of the goodness from me and without that wholeness and without that goodness, then what am I? They haven't broken me, no, but in many ways I feel like they've taken something from me. Something special, something sacred.

I'm still recovering from the things I've gone through, still trying to overcome the torment that my soul has had to endure. Everyday is another struggle, just to be able to maintain and stay cool. It's hard. It's a real challenge. Trying to get out of this place and make it through this without losing my mind or what's left of my soul is a true challenge.

Life is a struggle, but struggle is part of a warrior's life. I've been fighting battles all of my life, from battles with enemies, and battles with myself, to battles with life. My struggles have been physical, political, psychological and spiritual. They've made me stronger, more compassionate, understanding and wise. You can look into my heart and see that even though it beats with furious resistance, it also beats with love. Love for justice, love for truth and love for freedom.

There have been great warriors in history who have said that the greatest honor of a warrior is to die in a battle, fighting for his people, and maybe for them that's true. But I don't know if it's true for me. With each battle that I've survived, I've came out with vital lessons of life, I've came out with a greater understanding of my own life and my purpose and I've came out with a greater passion for life. I have come out of each battle with a stronger desire to live.

I'm still a fighter with lots of fight in me, but now the fight for me is a fight to survive prison and obtain my freedom, and if I can achieve that, my next fight will be to survive freedom, which is going to be the greatest challenge of all! It's a struggle to be here, in the hands of my enemies, but I'm ready to break free from these shackles that bind me and I mean *all* of the shackles that bind me and that keep me psychologically oppressed as well as the shackles that hold me down and keep me physically oppressed. I'm ready to take true strides to rise above the razor wire like the sun and I'm ready to shine in people's lives like the sun. I'm ready to face the challenges that await me and I'm ready to overcome those challenges. I'm ready to live truthfully, according to my own anarchist principles. Principles of respect, equality, mutual aid, direct action, truth and justice just to name a few. I'm ready to live right and I'm ready to live a good life and though I know it's going to be hard; a constant struggle, I'm ready!

In truth and towards freedom,
Coyote
November 14th, 2007

Note: Coyote is a 30-year-old social anarchist prisoner who has been in and out of institutions, jails and prisons since the age of 11. Since he has been in prison, he has become politically conscious and spiritually aware, striving to assist other prisoners to rise above the negative aspects of prison life and to take strides to better themselves and their positions in life. To obtain more of Coyote's thought-provoking, intellectual writings, you can contact: Anthony Rayson of the Anarchist Black Cross, South Chicago Zine Distro, P.O. Box 721, Homewood, Illinois, 60430 or you can contact Coyote personally at this address: Coyote Sheff #55671, P.O. Box 1989, Ely, Nevada 89301-1989.

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Quote: *"In every encounter I had with the fascists, in every instance where I felt fear, I have remembered the words of Che Guevara on that dirt floor and I have repeated them to myself as a mantra: "You're only killing a man... you're only killing a man..."*

So it is up to each of us to cultivate the guerrilla in all of us, to purge fear, to recognize the truth of our harsh reality. It is up to us to find others and dig down through the layers of interference and lies to discover the Che Guevara dormant in others, their capacity to be free and fearless, and awaken that vision of how things can be. That is a profound act of love." – Sean Swain, from "Each One, Teach One," Interview Series #3.

EACH ONE TEACH ONE

Each one teach one. That's how we get down in these isolated death camps. We've got to reach out to one another, teach each other, lift each other up, work together, strive together, collaborate, and conglomerate. We've got to start organizing ourselves as we sit and fester in these lonely death chambers. Good, solid, true motherfuckers need to start looking out for other good,solid, true motherfuckers and shake the foulness. We need to free our minds before we can free ourselves.

When you sit in a cell and take the time to think about your situation, your life, your struggles, you begin to see things for what they are. When you got good motherfuckers around you to share real gems of knowledge and truth with you, then you begin to see things in a whole new light. You begin to transcend yourself above and beyond the madness and you start to walk a more truthful path in life. There's nothing wrong with that.

Its hard to shake this shit. Its hard to rise above this crazy lifestyle. Sometimes it feels like we're stuck in a rut, stuck in the mud, stuck in the stickey stuff. But consciousness is a saviour, consciousness is the real deal. We sit back and read and study and think and educate ourselves. We use this time to better ourselves, to reconstruct our ways of thinking and reevaluate our ways of life. We use this as an opportunity to elevate ourselves.

Each one teach one. That's how we learn, grow, and develop. Its how we share, unite, and reach levels of real understanding amongst ourselves. Each one teach one. Learn from the next motherfucker. Stop acting like you know it all and listen and learn the things others can tell you and teach you. Exchange knowledge, pass it on to those who are worthy. Plant seeds of growth and water them, nourish them, and let those seeds of realness grow through the concrete and through the walls. From tier to tier, wing to wing, and from unit to unit, let it evolve.

Each one teach one. That's the real deal. If you see a good motherfucker struggling, reach out and help him out. Lift him up, encourage him, whatever you can offer to help him get back on his feet again. Each one, teach one, that's how we do it in these graveyards.

Until the walls fall down,

COYOTE
Anarchist Black Cross Prison chapter
E.S.P., Nevada. January 4th, 2008

HOPE FOR THE NIHILISTS

The glass is half empty people. The glass is half empty, I'm telling you. I can get out of prison and still not be free. How many people in America are free? None. Even the dear old president isn't free!

"Hope for the future." What a joke. I'll be happy when there is no hope left, then I can begin to strive for freedom. Instead of having things to hope for, try to imagine having nothing to lose. Once you feel like you have nothing left to lose, then you can say you know how I feel. Once you have nothing left to lose, you will be ready to strive for the things you have coming to you, including your freedom. Believe me when I say: "By any means necessary".

I'm trying to tell you, the glass is half empty, but what good is that gonna do. Raising awareness, planting seeds, for what? What good is it gonna do? All the stuff we're doing, always busy, getting stuff done....but for what? All the things we're getting done, what is it doing?
I can sit in this cold ass cell and write 3 zines in 3 days and send them out. Then, they'll get copied and mailed to people all over America, both in and out of prison. The recipients will read it and then pass it on. So fucken what? What's that gonna do? What's that gonna change? Nothing.

Fuck your little hope, fuck your American dream and fuck the dear old president too! I'm sitting in a cell, and I know the glass is half empty! Hope is a four-letter word. Those who hang onto hope, hang onto dreams, illusions, and lies. What is hope going to do? You hope for freedom cuz you don't have what it takes to fight for freedom. Hoping is not an action, its an excuse. If you hope for your freedom, then you don't truly want to be free.

I can never be free, until everybody is free,
Coyote

STRUGGLE

To live, to fight for what you believe in, to fight for what you have coming to you. To overcome adversity, to eliminate all distractions and to remove self-destructive influences from your life. To fight for your freedom.

To survive, to resist, to become stronger under dire circumstances, to revolutionize and politicize your mind while confined behind enemy lines. To fight against enemies who are more powerful than you, with no fear in your heart and no doubt in your mind.

To oppose the oppressive elements of the system, to oppose government and all elements of authority and power, while building yourself up, educating yourself and putting your knowledge into practice. To achieve self-discipline. To organize yourself and your people, even under the most extreme circumstances and to make solid connections with serious comrades, that will lead to uplifting movements.

Struggle is being able to maintain a sense of confidence while living under the most despairing situations, it's being able to stand your ground no matter what, it's being able to maintain a sense of self, while moving with purpose. Struggle is being able to move forward while striving against great odds.

Struggle is life and life is struggle. It's what makes us stronger, it's what makes us intelligent, it's what makes us grow inside. There's nothing like struggle, there's nothing greater than achieving the things you've set your mind on, there's nothing like helping your people rise up. Struggle is an essential to life.

Strategy and Power

Knowledge is power but for anarchists it's the essence of life. In a prison cell I sit, hungry for knowledge, but not power. My enemies are powerful, so to stay on my toes I have to be as smart, or smarter, than them. There are a lot of people in prison who are naturally intelligent but do not seem to realize or understand the depth of their intelligence because they have been caught in the system for so long. The system is oppressive to growth and intelligence. But even under these oppressive circumstances we can still grow inside, both intellectually and spiritually. In fact, it's usually in the confinements of a cell that many prisoners eventually take the time and effort to awaken the intelligence inside of them. Usually this is done as a mean to survival, because keeping the mind keen and clear of destructive thoughts or illusions is indeed a way to resists the psychological oppression that prisoners often go through in isolation.

In my essay "The Importance of Resistance", I briefly mentioned how a lot of prisoners study books on power, warfare and strategy only to end up using that knowledge on other prisoners. I would like to expand on that in this essay.

It is important that oppressed people and imprisoned people take the time to study strategy. It is even more important that we study and learn strategy as a mean to protect ourselves against corrupted people's manipulations and deceptions, but not to become corrupted ourselves and not to manipulate or deceive.

As prisoners we are a powerless people. In these maximum security prisons they've got us confined to these cells, we don't have power over anybody but ourselves. A lot of prisoners are under the impression that being powerful is to maintain power over other people which in truth only contributes to a "self-destructive mentality."

As an anarchist I don't buy into the concept of power and control. I am being held in prison against my will because of my enemies' power and control, so I know first-handedly that when people are given a position of power over other people, their power is abused and used to control and oppress. The only type of power that I strive for is self-empowerment. Self-empowerment is the only type of power that does not corrupt.

To learn strategy is learning how to survive. This is important in these dark corners of incarceration because most of us have inadvertently been trained to believe that we can't trust each other and that we have to survive by any means and that's their best strategy against us because it keeps us divided and conquered, under their oppression.

If you're locked down, confined and with nothing in your cell, studying strategy would be a productive way to pass your time. Even if you have appliances in your cell you should still try to find the time to study up on different strategies, because these are essential studies for anyone who desires to engage in resistance.

Study strategy, practice what you've learned, memorize and recite these lessons everyday and you will soon become one of the most cunning and strategic prisoners around. Just be sure to use this knowledge for the means of arming yourself and protecting yourself from other's deceptions and for the means of uplifting yourself and others and be careful not to let this knowledge corrupt you or make you scandalous.

Life in prison is a struggle. A lot of us are living real foul and doing "hard time" in here. Some of us don't have friend and family on the outside to send us money to buy food and hygiene products, so we are forced to hustle or go without. It's situations like these that turn a lot of us out, as we become unprincipled; doing scandalous deeds; being manipulative and dishonest just to make ends meet.

It's cool to have a hustle and to make money, but you'll get farther and feel better about yourself if you use creativity to make money rather than having to "be slick" just to get by. There are all kinds of hustles a prisoner can get going for himself if his head is in the right place and if he stands by his principles as a "convict." We shouldn't have to be forced to associate with rapists, child molesters, snitches and P.C.'s just to get by in here, we shouldn't have to be slick or dishonest just to make a couple of bucks.

It's better to have integrity than to live foul. People will get farther in life by keeping it real with themselves and with whoever they decide to associate with. These locked down situations are sucking the life out of us and depriving us of our ability to socialize.

They're trying to strip us of our souls in these graveyards. There're trying to decimate our minds, alter our senses and crush our hearts in here, to the point that we don't know who we are, what we're living for, or where we're going with our lives. We are living in devastating circumstances. We can't let them get us like that, we can't forget who we are, we have to really get in touch with who we are or else we will end up letting them determine that for us. We can't let them determine who we are. We have to know ourselves.

I know what I live for, what I aim for, what I struggle for. I know what I'm striving for and believe me, it's not power! Every day that I am alive is another day of resistance and every breath I breathe is an act of resistance. We are all struggling the same, but we're not struggling together. There are too many amongst us who are motivated by greed, power, materialism and corruption, causing others to take up the same attitude and behavior just to protect ourselves in this somewhat primal environment, and it is destroying us.

When it comes down to it, we don't have control over anybody but ourselves and the only time someone has control over us is when we let them have that control. Control is nothing. Power is nothing. There are more important things in life. Let us stop this madness, instead of trying to control other people's thoughts and actions, let us start trying to take control of our own lives...

"Resistance Is Survival"

For good reason, I am constantly writing about resistance. When your everyday life is being carried out in the confines of a cell in a maximum security prison, locked down indeterminately, deprived of the many essentials that are vital to being human, resistance is not only important, it is absolutely necessary. There may be a few prisoners around here who choose to maintain a lackadaisical attitude, but I'm not one of them. Resistance is my reality, it's how I think, breathe and live. Resistance is being alive, staying alive and knowing that you're alive. It's knowing that there's always something to live for, always a reason to keep going. It's keeping your head above the water without getting caught up, pulled under, or washed away in the strong current, or the rip-tide.

Resistance is being strong under the hardest situations. It's being disciplined under the most extreme circumstances. It's being active under the most dormant conditions. Resistance is being able to grow and develop and gain consciousness even while living in a suffocating environment. There are many things we can do to resist the slow, intellectual death that comes with incarceration. Some of these things include:

1) Being self-sufficient
2) Staying healthy and keeping your body in good shape
3) Knowing your enemy
4) Keeping your mind strong and constantly engaged
5) Engaging in acts of solidarity with other prisoners

These 5 things are just a few of the many things that you can do to resist the constant psychological, spiritual and intellectual oppression of incarceration, especially if you're doing time in solitary confinement, isolation, or disciplinary segregation or in any situation that has you on constant lock-down. I will take these 5 essential acts of resistance and expand on each one to give you an example of how you can incorporate these 5 things into your daily routine.

1) BEING SELF-SUFFICIENT

Suffice to say, while under the extreme conditions of isolation it is sincerely part of the design of our captors to try to manipulate us into a habit of compliance and to create a situation of dependency on them. Believe me when I tell you that they don't do this to place us in a position where they can help us, treat us, reform us, etc., but for the sole purpose of exercising their dominance and power over us, so that they can make it a point to show us that they maintain absolute control over the prison and over us (the prisoners), which makes it all the while more important to resist, because what they do with that control and that power has nothing to do with helping or healing us in any way, shape or form.

Being self-sufficient means knowing how to do things for yourself and it means knowing how to do things by yourself. It means not having to constantly depend on your captors. It is very hard not having to depend on them while in a maximum security prison because they have successfully created a situation where we have to depend on them for our meals, mail, recreation, phone and shower, but there are things that we can do to limit our dependency on our captors. A lot of prisoners are mistakenly under the impression that they'd be doing some hard time by limiting their contact with their captors, but on the contrary, being self-sufficient means knowing how to do time.

From extensively sitting in disciplinary segregation I have learned how to do time. I have learned how to apply myself and I've learned how to be self-sufficient. I know how to talk to and where to go to get the things I need, when I don't have them myself. I know how to get the things I need from other prisoners and I know how to make things that will make my time in a cell more adjustable. I do my own laundry in my cell, hang it up on an inmate-made clothesline and let it air dry. I cook my own food that I've ordered off of the food package or purchased from the commissary with the monthly money that my friends or family send me to survive in here. I make my own meals, wash my dishes, clean my cell (walls, floor, toilet and sink) and I shower and bathe in my cell.

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I've made myself a decent "shower hook-up" where I can bathe myself properly everyday, rather than having to be cuffed, shackled and escorted by the guards and made to kneel down in the filthy unit showers, every 3 days. By being self-sufficient I am able to keep myself much cleaner than I would if I were to have to depend on my captors.

I make sure to stock up on soap, I try to use it conservatively and I am careful to never waste it. When the bars of soap have been reduced to almost nothing I throw them in a cereal bowl and save them until I have a good amount. Then I crush them up and grind them until they turn to powder. After that I boil some water, pour the water over the powder soap (which is still in a bowl), stir it and mix it and then pour it into an empty mouthwash bottle and make liquid soap. It's good for doing dishes, and washing my hands. I also buy the shampoo packets from the commissary which are good for bathing, washing my laundry and cleaning the floor.

With all this time on my hands I am always doing something. When you hear someone out there on the tier saying that they're bored, that's someone who isn't surviving, that's someone who is steadily sinking and about to drown! Unless I am conversing or fishing with another convict I am hardly ever wasting my time or sitting around twiddling my thumbs, staring at the walls. Never that! I'm always busy. With all of this time on my hands I have learned how to use what I've got in my cell to make things. I make little tools and crafts that help me do the things that I need to do to be self-sufficient so that I can do this time as comfortably as I can in an uncomfortable situation. To be self-sufficient is the best way to be, it means you don't want or need for anything, because you already have all you need right here in your cell. It is a necessary part of survival in prison. Survival is resistance and resistance is survival. People who know how to do time don't get caught up in too much trouble or have too many problems. If you're self-sufficient then you don't have to get angry at the guards for slow-playing, or not putting enough state food on the trays, or any of that, it cuts out a lot of stress. If you're self-sufficient, know how to do time and got what you need in your cell, it eliminates a lot of arguments, disputes or petty squabbles with other convicts. It's all about knowing how to do time and being able to resist, under the most dire circumstances.

Some prisoners might not have people on the streets to send money or to support them, so this makes them completely dependant on the state and on other prisoners. This is a situation where one learns how to either get a good hustle going for himself (selling art, crafts or something), or how to become resourceful. There are many resourceful people in prison, because this is a place where you either learn how to use the resources available to you or learn to go without. Being resourceful is the same as being self-sufficient.

About 6 years ago I was looking through a prisoners' resource guide, looking for a place that provides books to prisoners for free. I wrote a form letter, got it typed up (for a stamp, per page) by another inmate, got it copied, and sent each copy to 5 books for prisoners bookstores. The letter wasn't just a letter asking for free books. I also explained how I was trying to get a study group going in here with other prisoners and that we needed all the materials we could get because we had created a plan to where we could read and study these books and materials together and then write reports and summaries on what we've read. I also explained that we were sitting in these cells with nothing, slowly beginning to deteriorate while on constant lock down, with no real support from the outside and we would like to take this opportunity to become militant and organize and educate ourselves as we strive for intellectual growth and development.

I didn't receive responses from all of the bookstores, but there was this one lady, an activist, who was touched by my determination to overcome these dehumanizing obstacles and so impressed with my idea of a study group that we've become good friends! Her name was Gina, that was 6 years ago and we are still friends to this day. I am so grateful to have her in my life, she has helped me get through some hard times. She has helped me out with moral and emotional support, she has helped me out with money, she copies literature for me so that I can pass these materials to other prisoners, she sends my articles to the **San Francisco Bay View** newspaper so that they can publish my articles and she sends me books twice a year. It's because of her that I have become so politically aware and involved, she has helped me develop myself into the socially-conscious prisoner that I am today. I owe a lot to her and would do anything for her. A couple of years ago she introduced me to her friend Katy, and Katy has become the center of my life! Katy is my best friend.

This is all due to me learning how to become resourceful. I was tired of living like this and tired of seeing others live

like this. I wanted to reach out to people on the streets and get them involved in our causes, I wanted them to help us help ourselves. Prisoners cannot do anything good or get any kind of good programs going without people on the outs getting involved in our dilemmas. Prisoners cannot become self-sufficient without the support from people on the streets. The way I used the resource guides to reach out to people is but just one example of how prisoners can learn to become resourceful and self-sufficient. But always keep in mind that these kind-hearted, caring and compassionate people are on our side. Do not try to manipulate or scam these people out of thousands of dollars, that's just foul. Keep it real with them and they'll keep it real with you.

2) STAYING HEALTHY AND KEEPING YOUR BODY IN SHAPE

Staying healthy is staying alive. You have to stay healthy in prison because if you get sick or injured while in prison you CANNOT expect to get any real treatment from these so-called medical facilities! Hell no! You've got to stay healthy! If you have any respect for yourself or any true regard for life then you should be able to understand the importance of staying healthy under these circumstances.

It's necessary to stay healthy in mental aspects as well as the physical. Keep your body heatlhy and maintain a healthy outlook on life. Healthiness is happiness. When you're healthy you feel good about yourself and about life and it's important to feel good, especially while you're doing time like this. This is the last place where you want to lose your determination and spirit or become disheartened. Misery loves company and prison is a place where miserable people will pull you under before you even know what's happening. So it's necessary to keep a healthy outlook on life. A good way to feel good about yourself is to feel good about your body.

One of the things that I do to stay healthy is drink lots of water. Water is an important, sacred element in life. Our bodies are made of 75% water, the earth is made of 75% water. Water is a key source to healthiness, it dissolves and transports other nutrients throughout the body, aiding the process of digestion, absorption, circulation and excretion an dit also helps regulate body temperature. Water provides sustenance, assumes formlessness, it cleanses, purifies and it flows. We need water.

I make sure to drink lots of water everyday to flush all of the toxins out of my system. I take vitamins 3 times a week and I try to eat right. I eat lots of seafood, lots of beans and lots of rice. I refrain from junk food, salt, mayonnaise and butter. When possible I eat things that have lots of dietary fiber, like broccoli, corn, beans, oatmeal and grapefruit. Fiber is good for you because it keeps your digestive tract healthy and cleansed, which is a key element in staying healthy. I try to keep all things in moderation because too much of anything is never good. I don't smoke or chew tobacco and refuse to allow myself to become addicted to anything while in prison.

I never lay down while I'm awake. As soon as I wake up I make my bed, then I roll my mattress up and stand it up in the corned where it's out of the way and I use my bunk as a desk. This keeps me busy and prevents the urge to lay down. I would rather pace my cell than lay down, at least I would be burning calories, moving around, keeping my joints warm and my muscles engaged, which is better than laying down and doing nothing. Laziness is detrimental to your health, it's detrimental to resistance and very hazardous to the mind and body while constantly confined to a cell. Try not to allow yourself to assume the bad habit of laziness. Boredom is a disguised form of laziness, so be sure to keep yourself occupied at all times.

Truth be told, you can get hemorrhoids from sitting around on your ass all day. As quiet as it's kept, there are a lot of prisoners here at E.S.P. who have hemorrhoids and not to be an ass or anything, but I know it has probably got to be fucked up to have to go the infirmary to get treated for hemorrhoids! I could never, ever let that happen to me, I stay on my toes, not on my ass!

The best way to keep your body in shape is by not letting it get out of shape. Truthfully, if you have any respect for yourself, if you have my pride or self-esteem then you're gonna take care of yourself the way you're supposed to.

Self-respect, self-esteem and self-discipline, all of these things are vital to your survival in prison. You have to be mentally strong in order to be physically strong. The same rule applies for stamina, you have to be mentally strong in order to make yourself go the distance.

True resistance is taking the control back from the people who keep your body locked in prison and confined to a cell. They have your body, yes, but at the end of the day you're the only one who has any real control over your body. You can determine how your body is able to move and you can determine what goes into your body. That's what resistance is. It's having control over all facets of yourself. Mind, body, heart and soul. If you have control over yourself, then nobody else can have that control over you. Resistance is becoming physically stronger in spite of living in conditions that try to deprive you of your health, strength, senses and of your freedom.

Exercise is a means to self-empowerment. It's a means of resistance and it is especially a means of survival. It is important to prepare ourselves physically while living in an unpredictable environment. It's important to be ready for the worse and ready for the unexpected. There are lots of different exercises a prisoner can do in his or her cell. Most prisoners are aware of what the most common exercises are, so I really don't feel the need to write the specifics on that.

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A full body workout is important. Most people like to work out their upper body, but choose to neglect their lower body workouts (legs). I try to do a leg routine twice a week and that's usually when I push myself the hardest.

Your legs are your foundation. They hold you up. It is most essential to maintain a strong foundation in life. If you stand for nothing, you'll fall for anything. It is always important to stand tall and to stand strong. Like the trunk of a tree. What would the tree be without the trunk? Whatever you do in life, whatever you believe, if you don't have a strong foundation, those things will fail to hold you up, and anything that isn't holding you up, is knocking you down. Your legs are your foundation, you must keep them strong. A foundation is like a support structure, so when I am doing my leg routine that's what I'm thinking about: how to build a proper support structure for Nevada prisoners.

3) KNOWING YOUR ENEMY

In Sun Tzu's timeless book, The Art of War, he made it perfectly clear when he wrote : « Know the enemy and know yourself ; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril. »

As we sit in these graveyards, fighting amongst ourselves, our true enemy is sitting back with a shovel full of dirt in his hands, waiting, wishing and hoping to bury us alive.

To know your enemy means to know all that you can learn about them, through intense study and observation. It means to know the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy, the ups and downs, the ins and the outs. Know the territory of the enemy. Look for exits and possible lapses in security.

I make reference to The Art of War, because it must be understood that we are in a battle everyday, while the pickle-suits get to deal with this shit. Dealing with it is a constant battle, because when you're living like this, you have to fight all levels of oppression, insanity and discrimination, which you are constantly being subjected to. You have to struggle to keep your sanity and you have to stand up for yourself and for what you have coming and you have to fight off the demons, just to try to keep a shred of humanity about yourself. So, yes, it's a struggle, a fight, it's a constant battle. We are at war here, our enemies are using psychological tactics to break us down and to strip us of our humanity and we have to fight off their attempts to keep us down and do us in like that, we have to resist.

We may think that other prisoners are our enemies, and superficially this might be true. When you examine this situation further and take a deeper look into why things are the way they are, you might want to ask yourself why you'd be so quick to think about murdering another prisoner, but the thought of killing a guard is the last thing on your mind.

Wait, before one of you rattling ass, running to the police ass motherfuckers reads this and turns it in to the goon squad, trying to get me caught on conspiracy charges, this is not about killing, it's about thinking. I don't believe in murder, so I don't promote it. I promote healthy, realistic thinking. If your thinking is of taking out another prisoner, before thinking about taking out a guard, then your thinking is all wrong. If you're a convict and the guy you're mad at is a convict, then what's the problem? You don't see these guards grabbing the shotgun and blowing off the head of another guard when he's mad, do you? No, they get along with each other because they have a purpose and they know what that purpose is. It's to make sure they keep belittling us with these petty rules and degrading us with these strip-searches and shackles and their purpose is to make us kneel down in nasty ass shower water, after someone else has bathed themselves in it and did who knows what else in that water. Their purpose is to show us that they're in control by making sure that our purpose is clear and it's what keeps them together. We lack a collective purpose, unlike them, and they have a hand in making sure that we lack a collective purpose. They can easily come together to fuck us over, write us up, send us to the hole, find us guilty, take away our so-called privileges, take away our appliances, take away our good time, take away our parole, take away our dignity, pride and humanity, take away our sanity, soul and life, but we can't come together to stand up for ourselves, because our thinking is so fucked up and so distorted, that we are too busy thinking about ways that we can continue to destroy ourselves and each other, rather than trying to come together on some real shit. They have a purpose that keeps them together, and we have a purpose that keeps us apart.

So, when I say knowing your enemy is a major factor in resistance, that's what I mean. If you really knew who your enemy was, then you'd know it ain't the guy in the next cell, over there, locked down like you are, suffering like you

are, waiting for his meals just like you, waiting on his mail just like you. Unless he's working with the people who keep you cornered and confined, oppressed and discriminated on, then he's not your enemy, you might think he is, or he might think you are, but that's only 'cuz you're not thinking clearly.

Before you can truly know who your enemy is, you must first come to know yourself. You must know who you are. If you are a Chicano or a Latino, and if you knew the history of Chicanos in the United States, you'd think twice before taking up arms against another Chicano. If you are a Chicano or a Latino in a Mexican gang, and if you knew your history, or the history of Chicano gangs in America, when, how and why they originated, you'd see that there's a deeper meaning behind all of this than Latinos fighting Latinos. If you studied and learned your own history and culture, you'd understand that your people are your people, not your enemy. If these Mexican prison gangs made it a requirement for each *soldado* to learn how to read and write about his own history and *cultura*, things would be heading in a different direction.

If you want to know who your enemy is, then first come to know who you are. This is the perfect time and place for you to figure these things out, take advantage of this opportunity, instead of doing something negative and destructive, try to see if you can do something good for yourself and your people, and see what kind of results you'd get.

I'm not here to promote nationalism, I represent the proletarian, the lowest of the low, regardless of what race they are, but when my people think they're my enemy, I'd rather they understand things for what they are, than for what they've come to believe.

4) KEEPING YOUR MIND STRONG AND CONSTANTLY ENGAGED:

A cultivated mind is a beautiful thing. To live in the most melancholy conditions, to sit in solitary and to be deprived of freedom, deprived of your senses, deprived of true human contact and contact with nature and to be deprived of love and life and to still have the ability to think freely and to think clearly; to still have the ability to learn and progress mentally and intellectually, even under the most unprogressive conditions, is a beautiful, powerful thing! It means no matter how dominant and powerful your oppressors are, you still prevailed, you not only survived but you came out smarter, stronger and wiser, and that can only come from true resistance.

A brilliant mind is a dangerous mind. It is essential to be able to think clearly under those uncertain and sometimes confusing circumstances. To think clearly, the first thing you have to do is: think. The second thing you have to do is: think some more, and finally, the third thing you have to do is: think, think, think! It is the process of thought. Get all your thoughts together and once you've initially thought about the things you wanted to think about, go over your thoughts again, think about them harder, think about them more. You are thinking about your thoughts.

Your mind is like a muscle, the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets. It is important to keep your mind active while you are in solitary. Stay constantly engaged in as many mental activities as you can, reading, writing, drawing, thinking, solving math problems, playing chess, arts and crafts, making things, breaking things, thinking things apart, memorizing things, reciting words, sentences, quotes and maxims or keep going over your own notes until you've got them memorized. The only time your mind needs to rest is when you're stressing or when you're sleeping. It is important to get enough sleep every day because that's when your brain regenerates itself and processes all of the things you previously learned that day.

You should try to exercise both sides of your brain equally. The left brain and the right brain. The left side of your brain controls the right side of your body; the left side is the problem-solving and the practical side. The right side of your brain controls the left side of the body; the right side governs emotions, imagination and intuition.

Prison is a place where you can take it upon yourself to strengthen and improve on your weaknesses and flaws. For example, let's say you don't know how to spell very well; well you can use this time to improve on your spelling a little bit each day. The same thing applies if you don't know how to read, draw or do math that well. You can use this time to teach yourself how to do the things that you don't know how to do, through constant practices, study, "trial and error", or whatever. You can formulate your own study program, whatever works for you, use it.

If you know what your weaknesses are, if you know what your flaws are and if you're sitting in isolation, this is a perfect time and place to improve on yourself, to better yourself, to be stronger, greater, wiser or even to master the skills you knew you have some of these things take discipline and discipline requires true mental strength. This is a good place and time to cultivate your mind and strengthen your weaknesses, get in touch with your talents, it's a good place to learn, grow and develop and refine your thinking. Come up with your own ideas, act on those ideas.

The good thing about life is that there's never only one way to see things. You can take this time and use it to sit back and think about things from all angles until you find the best way that suits you. There is no wrong and there is no right, there's just people who agree, people who disagree and people who agree to disagree. But if you find it exciting to engage in discussions with people who disagree with your way of thinking, you can use this time to sit back and analyze their way of thinking and try to discover how and why they've to come to the conclusion they've come to and if you still feel that your way of thinking is more on point, then you can use this time to get cunning and clever and find ways to make those who disagree begin to see things closer to the way you see things, by using their own theories against them.

It's all about using this time to cultivate your mind and applying yourself. There are so many people in prison who have brilliant ideas but never apply them or act on them, and then good ideas go to waste and get replaced with bad ideas. It's better to keep your mind engaged than to sit back and waste away and there's plenty of ways to keep your mind active and engaged. Just remember, a strong mind can't be fucked with. Cultivate your mind, embrace knowledge and apply it, embrace resistance and try it, free your mind and get dangerous!

5) ENGAGING ACTS OF SOLIDARITY WITH OTHER PRISONERS:

Solidarity: striving together, standing together, standing up for one another when the mighty powers that be try to gang up or take advantage. Sharing, conversing, assisting, uplifting, teaching, showing, demonstrating, mutual aid, helping a motherfucker out.

Don't be ashamed to help people out who don't have anything. If they seem solid and grateful for your assistance, then extend your hand without expecting anything in return.

It's important to teach your comrades craft, a trade, a hustle or how to make themselves useful so that they can get things going for themselves so they don't have to do scandalous shit to get by or have to associate with protective custody inmates, rats or weirdoes to get by. This keeps the conditions where you live stable, healthy and productive. It keeps the environment from deteriorating, because it keeps people from doing foul shit. Foul shit leads to more foul shit, which leads to hate and animosity, which leads to violence and destruction, which leads to us staying separated and divided while the guards keep us on permanent and constant lock down, intent on doing us any old kind of way.

If you see a good motherfucker struggling, going through hard times, falling under or beginning to lose his mind, then help him out, lift him up, encourage him. That's what solidarity is. A motherfucker shouldn't have to ask a P.C. or the police to help him, before asking a real motherfucker. When you're living in a place where there is no true sense of solidarity amongst those who are oppressed and imprisoned, then you know you're living foul.

Solidarity is the realest, truest, baddest act of resistance that can be practiced by prisoners, but has become the rarest and most uncommon occurrence in this day and age. When you engage in acts of solidarity you take the power out of the hands of the oppressors and restore it into the hands of the oppressed. It has become the administration's job to prevent this from happening, of course. The last thing the administration wants to see is prisoners running the prisons; they don't want us to have a sense of order amongst ourselves because it takes away their power and authority or control over us and when you take that from them and put it in the hands of the people, they know they're in trouble. Solidarity is an act of resistance that strikes fear in the heart of those that oppress and imprison us.

Solidarity is when trues kick it with trues, when comrades come together on some real shit, when real recognizes real and when everybody decides that being sucker-free is the best way to be, because they realize there comes a time when we have to separate the true from the false and come together and conglomerate on a real level of unity, participation and mutual aid.

Prisoners should begin to engage in frequent acts of solidarity, help others out, lift each other up, and strive to move forward, upwards and out. When we have each other we don't need anybody else. When we know what to do we don't need to be told what to do. When we have a truthful sense of order amongst ourselves we don't need government or authority. Solidarity is the truth, solidarity is resistance and resistance assures survival. We need to assure our survival because we are living in these prisons where the scarcity of a truthful life has become common place. There is no real sense of life in these prisons, just death and destruction, for the most part. When you're living like this; resistance and survival come hand in hand. We need to extend our hands to one another more often, because we are all up in this, struggling the same, and there's no real reason to allow ourselves to be divided when we are being ruled and dominated by a system that destroys us all the same. Solidarity is for real revolutionaries, solidarity is a way of life, an act of resistance and a truthful act of survival. People who practice solidarity recognize

that we are all being held captive by the same system, they recognize the oppressive elements of that system and they recognize how foul it is for us to be up in here going against our own kind or against each other, when there's already a big, fat boot on our necks.

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ONE FINAL NOTE:

This essay gives prisoners an outline of 5 acts of resistance that they can apply to their everyday situation while being held captive and confined to a cell in a maximum security prison, control unit, or supermax, all of which are places that require an extreme level of daily resistance. When you learn to apply yourself, you don't need appliances. When you live in these graveyards you are living foul, so you've got to keep your head above the water when swimming with sharks, you've got to breathe resistance and bleed resistance, and let your heart beat to resistance. When the captors cannot control you, then they consider you "dangerous". It's better to be dangerous than to be a slave. When you're being suffocated you have to breathe to stay alive. We are being suffocated, so we have to get some air into our lungs or else it's over. Resistance is about fighting for a breath of fresh air. Resistance is survival.

This essay can be found in my zine **"BRAIN-GRENADES: HAND GRENADES FOR THE BRAINS"**, which can be obtained for free to prisoners by writing this address and requesting it:

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South Chicago ABC
P.O. Box 721
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OR

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My name is Coyote and my heart beats with resistance!

El Coyote, 2008
ABC – Nevada
Prison Chapter

For the Cause

Below the moon we lie, wondering what's on the other side of the sun. Undisguised lies, soaking up the fruits of our fun, labor, work, sweat and toil. Backwards culture becoming soaked in crude oil. Prisons, camps and institutions, for those who oppose or who don't understand the hidden truths of the constitution. Hand grenades and AKs; assault rifles for the trifling minds, shackled by stainless steel, waiting to be taken and awakened by something real.

Down goes the sun, up comes the moon. Up for the cause, down for the cause, over and abroad, all for the cause, because without the cause we are doomed. Because, because, because, everybody wants to be the cause, but nobody wants to cause it to be. No cause for obedience, no cause for authority, no cause for Jesus, no cause for Santa Claus, because there's no cause underneath our Christmas tree.

Underneath the moon we die, wishing we had something more to live for. Something more, something more, because what we have is never enough and what we live for is only to acquire more stuff. Why should we be ashamed when our dreams burn in flames? Rise again, to become the anti-Christ, and walk without shackles and chains.

The moon is good because it shines in darkness. I can understand its purpose, I know its reason. It's the cause of many causes, the name of many goddesses, it's the turning of the tides, it's the eye in the sky, the need to fly, the reason the sun dies.

Freedom fighter, mind-igniter, come and free your mind. This is your chance to dance, open your eyes and see how the blind leads to blind, as the rest get left behind. You read, read, read, but never really think, because you've been led to the water and they made you drink. Think about the things you read, and I mean really think. Spending 2 hours reflecting on 1

sentence and then 2 hours on the next, and you will understand that your heart absorbs what your mind reflects, for the same reason there cannot be a cause without an effect. Think, reflect, absorb. Truth is revolutionary, because it sets you free. Freedom is revolutionary because it lets you be.

Be for the cause or be against the cause. Be the cause and let people be for or against you. Be the cause, because the cause cannot be, without you. Be for the cause, because the cause is for you. But just remember, and I say this with all due respect, that you can't be for the cause if you're not for the effect.

Letter to Boston ABC:

Dear Comrades,

At this time, I will still refer to you as my comrades, until you show me otherwise. My name is Coyote. I have started up the ABC prison chapter in Nevada with the support of Anthony Rayson of South Chicago ABC, Burning River ABC and Ryan of the Houston ABC. I am an anartchist and a member of ABC. I am *your* comrade.

Recently, I was made aware of the 5 paged letter that Boston ABC--you guys-- drafted up , in regards to the recent ABCN gathering. I have read your proposal on page 4, that addresses the desire for prisoners to be invovled with ABC, as well as addressing the need for prisoners' groups and activism to be supported.

It says that you are not offering network status to prisoners or prison groups. Who made this decision may I ask? And when you say "we", who is "we"? Boston ABC? Or ABCN as a whole? What is the reason behind your decision to not offer network status to prisoners?

If I may, I would like to offer my humble opinion on this report. You say that you stand in solidarity with those oppressed by the state. Do you know what solidarity is? Solidarity is getting involved with the people who struggle behind enemy lines, getting involved in our lives, getting involved in our struggles, because we all share the common struggles of government oppression, regardless of what side of the fence we are on. We are all up against the same enemy. If you were to help us get organized in here, if you were to help us get politicized in here, and if we were able to get organized with our comrades on the outs, then we can get things done. We would be moving in the right direction: closer to prison abolition.

You say that you actively seek to abolish the institutionalized slavery of the prison indurstrial complex. How do you actively seek to do that? By putting out a newsletter two times a year? That's far from actively doing anything close to abolishing anything. Take a look at the "A's" in Spain and they can show you what "actively" truly means.

A "twice a year newsletter" in my humble opinion, is a step backwards, not forwards. Ten years ago, a newsletter would've been a very effective tool in raising awareness. But today, its just not enough. Look at all of the newsletters that are out today. They do play a small role in the cause, but have little impact on making any difference in the situation that prisoners face. By putting out this "twice a year newsletter", and cutting prisoners off from being able to network and organize themselves in prison, you are taking this movement ten years backwards.

This is my proposal:
Work harder to politicize prisoners, so that they can become organized while behind enemy lines. The importance of prisoners being politicized and organized under these circumstances is an essential component of resistance. Without comrades on the streets, to truly get involved with our everyday struggles in here, we are doomed! I propose a movement where the comrades on the outs become organized, engaged and actively involved with the comrades behind enemy lines. Help the comrades in prison build, organize and start study groups and other effective methods and programs that willl not only help prisoners re-educate themselves and politicize themselves while in prison, but that will also motivate them to engage in essential acts of resistance; that will inspire them to build themselves up into educated, anarchist warriros, while fighting against the psychological oppression of incarceration; that will motivate prisoners to tear the walls down from the inside.

That's what I propose, but who am I but a motherfucker who lives this shit, breathes this shit, and eats this shit everyday, in the trenches, behind enemy lines, right? Do you know what its like to live in one of these cages day in and day out? The comrade who wrote this proposal for the ABCN, has he ever been in a maximum security prison? Does he know what this shit is like? To be connected to prisoners in a real way is to be connected to the struggle in a real way. A newsletter is good, but its not good enough. Your propsal suggests that ABCN minimizes their involvement with prisoners. If you want a *real* movement *for* prisoners, then give us the tools to run it ourselves. I'm speaking of a movement *for* prisoners ran *by* prisoners, because I don't believe that you truly share our concerns. Either that, or you just truly don't understand what we are going through in these prisons.

I would like to hear from you. I will be here, engaged in every day activism, even while I sit in a cell, and even from behind enemy lines, because the struggle never ends.

To the Brilliant Students of Asia I Class:

I am very thankful, to each one of you, for all of your wonderful, insightful letters to me. My soul has been profoundly touched. To know that people so young can be so conscious is a beautiful thing. For someone like me, who is surrounded by constant destruction, despair, and degeneration, to be made aware that such beauty exists in the world is like being made aware that I actually have a soul, and a beautiful soul at that! Your beauty has inspired me, and it has opened up the vessels of my heart in ways that couldn't be explained by the mere stroke of this pen . . . .

My essay, "The Importance of Resistance," was in fact written primarily for prisoners, to try to inspire them to take strides to rise above the depressing circumstances of prison. Living in prison is like living in a graveyard. There are some people in here who have no regard for life whatsoever. So, my essay was to try to inspire people to find reasons to live, to keep going, to persevere, even under the direst circumstances.

Resistance, to me, under these circumstances, means to live. It means to be aware of life. To resist is to live and to love being alive, because there are people on both sides of the fence who couldn't care less if we live or die in here, or if we suffer, or if we get out or not. There are people in this world who have been programmed to believe that all prisoners are worthless, pieces of scum, who deserve to rot in prison and suffer some of the most severe, inhumane treatment that a person can face. We could either surrender to that type of thinking in here, or we can resist and take strides to make ourselves better, smarter, and stronger. When you live like this, the importance of resistance is the same as the importance of breathing.

That's what my essay was about, to show prisoners that resistance and life go hand in hand in these types of situations. It's important that they are made aware of these types of understandings because it's like what I was saying about resistance being as important as breathing. We breathe every second of every day of our lives, but it's so

normal that we don't pay attention to it; we take it for granted. How could we take something as sacred as breath for granted? Without breath we have no life, so how can we take that for granted? So I write about resistance to make people aware of the things that are important to our survival in here.

This class was asked to answer two thought-provoking questions about life: 1) Is life worthwhile even if you suffer or endure a wide variety of experiences? 2) What is a good life and how do you know what a good life is for you? 48

The letters that all of you have sent to me have really opened my heart in ways that I didn't know could exist. They were amazing. These are questions about life, and to know that a class of students has been asked to sit back and think about life, and to know that my essay was used to provoke such wonderful thought in each of you – WOW, I don't know how to say how good that makes me feel! I wish that I could have gone to a school that, instead of having me sit behind a desk trying to learn about Christopher Columbus, Patrick Henry, and George Washington, etc., would have provided teachers that would have asked me questions that made me want to think about life! I hope you kids understand how blessed you are!

To show my gratitude for all of the wonderful letters you've sent to me, I figured it would only be right that I would try to answer those same 2 questions, and share my answers with the "Asia I Class," so that each of you could get a glimpse of how I feel about life, even while living in the confines of a prison cell.

1) Is life worthwhile even if you suffer or endure a wide variety of experiences? Not too many people know this, but being in prison is not my most painful experience in life; the truth is, my soul has experienced some of the most agonizing torment since the young age of eleven. My soul knows what agony feels like, but all of my struggles and all of my pain have made me who and what I am today. Among other things, it has made me stronger, made me wiser – and it has made me even more passionate about life, love, freedom, and justice!

I can truly say that I am so thankful for all of my struggles, I am so grateful for all of the pain and suffering that I have endured, I have been fortunate enough to turn misery into beauty and pain into love, and I believe that overcoming so much adversity has been one of the most meaningful things to have happened to me.

So, yes, I believe life is worthwhile no matter what you go through in life. There can't be any good without the bad, or any bitter without the sweet, and now I feel that all of the bad times are behind me and I look forward to getting out of prison and being able to live out the rest of my life, like it has just begun.

In many ways, the painful things that I have been through have taught me valuable lessons of life, and now I feel that I can survive, endure, or overcome any obstacle put in front of me from here on out, so with that said, I can say that in a way I am grateful for all of the pain I've endured, but there is still something about it that prevents me from wishing it on anybody else. No mater how many blessings pain has provided me, I still wouldn't wish it on you. I wouldn't want others to go through the things I've gone through, just so they can come out of it with a better appreciation for life, just as I wouldn't ask any of you to cut off one of your legs, so you could truly understand how great it feels to be able to walk. I wonder why that is? I guess that's something to think about 49

2) What is a good life and how do you know what a good life is for you? Life is a good life. To be alive is good. It is enough. At least that's what I think. What is a good life? To love and to be loved. I was surprised that none of you wrote about love, because I think that a good life is to be loved by someone, to be appreciated, and also to be able to love someone and to be thankful. Love is like life; it can be so painful at times and yet so beautiful.

A good life is living for others. To be connected to the soul. To be connected to nature and the earth. To be connected to the sun, the moon, and the stars. To be connected to the creator's creations. I believe life is about connection. I believe that we are all connected; we are all related, we are all created by the same creator, and, by that, everything in life is connected.

A good life is to be able to wake up every day and be thankful to be alive. To be able to live my days in a prison cell and still be able to say "I love life." To me, that's what a good life is. To feel sorrow for someone else's suffering. To feel good about someone else's happiness. Those are the good things in life.

Before I lay this pen down, I just want to say that all of you are blessed with the opportunities you have and I hope that you make the most out of them. I am inspired by all of you because it seems like you all have a passion to learn things on a higher level and understand things in a deeper, truthful way.

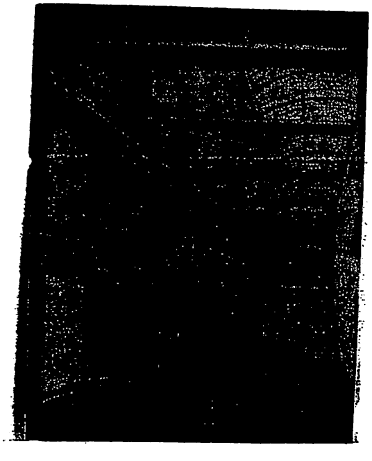
I never went to high school. I was kicked out of 6th grade and something inside of me rejected the idea of being limited to such a soulless education that is being taught to the students in public school and then of being measured by the standards of society on how successful I would be in life depending on how far I went in high school. There was something about all of that that just seemed untruthful and sad.

So, according to some people, I may not be smart because I don't know how many presidents there have been in the United States and because I can't name them in chronological order, and I may not be smart because I don't know division or fractions and algebra, and because I don't know these things I may never "make it" in life; but if I see a person out in the cold, who has no food, no shelter, and if I'm able to provide for that person, does that make me stupid? SO

There are some people in this world who would go as far as saying that people like me, people in prison, are the lowest, filthiest species on this planet. They say, lock 'em up and throw away the key. They don't care if I get out of prison or not, they don't care if I make it or if I come right back, they just don't care. I'm nobody, nothing; I'm the wretched of the earth, the lowest of the low, so why should they have any compassion for my struggles in life?

But, when I read your letters, it brought so much joy to my heart, because your letters showed me that there are people out there capable of caring about another person's struggles, pain, and sorrows. You guys have showed me the goodness in life, because each of you took the time to write me and showed genuine concern about who I am, what I wrote, and what I'm going through in life, and to me that's the goodness in humanity, and as long as there's still goodness in humanity, there will always be goodness in life.

May the sun forever shine on all of you and on each path that you ever choose in life! May the sun always shine on you with the same kindness that your hearts have shown me!



Stay beautiful!

Coyote

STAY BEAUTIFUL,
COYOTE

Brain-grenades: Hand grenades for the mind. Tools for opening up people's minds, helping them expand their knowledge. Tools for raising awareness, spreading consciousness. Tools for offering people real things to think about. If I'm truly capable of blowing up people's minds, then you can believe that I'll be putting all my heart into it. Anything that comes from the heart reaches the heart and that's what a brain-grenade is supposed to do. The mind, the heart and the soul are all connected to the body, just like the earth, the sky, the sun and the moon are all connected to the Universe. This is a *REAL* connection. As I sit here and reflect on what purpose those connections serve, I begin to realize that everything is connected, just like the words that are connected to this page have the capability of connecting to someone's heart and mind. Sitting in this cell thinking about things and putting my thoughts into writing so that others can connect to them is something that I really enjoy and it's also a real way for me to pass the time. It's productive, fulfilling, it leads to fruitful endeavors, it's not a waste of time.

With this pen, I realize that I have the ability to make people aware of true things that people are going through in these prisons. With this pen I can make people aware of the fact that prison is a depressing place and that it's heartbreaking how they've got some of us living in these gulags. *I mean, I can really make them understand!* And here I am, with this pen in my hand, trying to test its might, once again!

Because of the fact that there are more brave men and women speaking up and speaking out about the real tragedies that affect people's lives everyday. In so many ways, people are starting to become aware that there are more important things to concern themselves with, than what's coming on television tonight. These are important things. More important things than trying to decide what kind of video game you're going to buy, more important than Britney Spears shaving her head! More important than flipping through the channels, trying to find something to watch on TV! These are real life matters, and they are important.

Because people have been getting the word out more effectively these days, people are beginning to become aware of the fact that thousands upon thousands of men, women and even adolescent children are in these prisons, being warehoused. Not rehabilitated, not reformed, not learning important life skills, but being warehoused!

Ely State Prison is a maximum security prison where they've got everybody – including prisoners who aren't even maximum security risks – locked down in these cells all day. Some of these poor guys in here don't even know how to handle it. I see people sinking lower and lower into despair, I see people becoming deeply aggravated and turning into predators, I see people losing touch with reality and I see people losing their minds. I see these things all of the time and it really disturbs me. People who were once considered "unbreakable" and widely respected and known for their courageous resistance; known for standing up to the man and standing up to anyone who tried to tear them down; I see these same people losing it, becoming heartless, becoming foul and breaking all the way down after years and years of this sad, locked-down life. They just couldn't take it anymore.

I've seen the worse happen to the best of 'em. The truth is, we are all suffering from this constant torment and isolation. It affects all of us in some way, shape or form, whether we realize it or not. None of us are immune to it. Some people are *affected* by this

unfulfilling, unsustainable life, while others are *infected* by all of this constant deterioration. It seems like every time we take a breath we are inhaling this foulness into our lungs and like cancer it begins to consume us, some slower than others.

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In every state there is a prison like Ely State Prison, where thousands of prisoners are being warehoused under the same tormenting conditions. And just like me, there are people in each of these prisons writing to people on the outs, letting them know about their horrible living conditions, letting know that this ain't right! But even though it needs to be done, I'm beginning to think that it's not enough.

I feel that there's more that we can do from the insides of these trenches if you have the determination, the desire and the will to restore life and to bring a sense of purpose, a sense of humanity and a true sense of fulfillment back into these prisons and in the hearts and minds of your fellow prisoners. I feel that there's more that we can do if we truly care about the surroundings that we are forced to live in. I am someone who truly cares about the surroundings that I'm forced to live in, that's why I'm writing this article and that's why I'm making this zine and that's why I'm going to go out of my way to make sure *thousands* of people, (both inside and out of prison) across this country get a copy of this booklet!

I am someone who sincerely cares about the conditions we are living in as prisoners – as people – and I truly care about how our lives are being destroyed while living under these suffocating circumstances and that's why I do all the things that I do. It's one of the reasons why I'm so determined to get good literature, books and reading material into this prison and to get them passed around to people in here. I feel that it's important that people have something real to connect to and to think about while being forced to live under these detrimental circumstances. I try to do what I can to assist other prisoners in keeping their minds from deteriorating.

Good materials have been hard to obtain under these circumstances, we don't have access to the Internet or to a *real* library in here and we are only allowed to have a certain amount of books in our cell at a time and we can only have so much property in our cells before the so-called "Powers that be" decide that we're living "too comfortably" in here. Not to mention that it's against the "rules" to pass things to other prisoners. It's definitely a struggle, because the authorities have made it hard on us, not wanting us to take it upon ourselves to educate and better ourselves, so it's hard, but we are resourceful and always looking for ways to get around the petty rules just so we can get some sense of a life, in here.

In my attempts to get good literature around to other prisoners, one of the things that I do is select articles from various political newsletters, zines, newspapers, etc. I'll find good stuff that I think other prisoners will be able to connect with and relate to, anything that will raise the awareness of our situation, what we go through as prisoners, what we are up against and things like that, 'cuz as crazy as it may sound, there are a lot of people in prison who seem to be completely unaware that there are serious things going on, psychological things, beneath the surface, that are affecting them in devastating ways. There are also a lot of people in here who are still unaware of the elements of oppression, racism and classism and all of the other things that keep us down and divided. So, these materials are passed around to raise awareness.

I will also try to find books, articles and other materials that will assist prisoners in taking a deeper look into themselves and at life, things that will make people think. That's

what I look for. Philosophy, psychology, sociology, and sometimes even spirituality. I know that I can't reach everybody and not everybody that I pass materials to are going to put them to use, but that doesn't stop me from trying.

A lot of people don't know what's going on 'cuz they don't want to know, or because they don't care. Because knowing and caring would mean they would actually have to take initiative; it means they would actually have to do something about their lives and about their situation. They'd have to take action, think, strive, make changes, and that's too much responsibility for those who would rather put all of the responsibility in the hands of their oppressors. Then, there's some people who would rather prefer to swim in their sorrow and stay miserable, some people have already got it in their heads that they were born to fail, born to lose, born to die. Some can be reached while others are too far gone.

That's just the way it is, but it doesn't stop me from doing what I do. When I find articles that will raise awareness or the kind of articles that will inspire people into wanting to examine their own lives more closely, I will cut them out carefully and then I'll mail them out to my people – who I'm so grateful and thankful to have in my corner – on the streets and ask them to make a certain amount of copies of each article and when they mail the copies back to me I will put little packets together and I'll pas them around to other prisoners in here. Sometimes I'll even hold discussions or have little study sessions with them, talking about the things we've read and how they relate to our present situation.

Another thing that I really like to do is, I'll take notes, quotes, aphorisms, maxims, stratagems and proverbs out of the different books that I'm reading (books on philosophy, strategy, psychology, anarchism and political books). I simply write them down as I'm reading and later I will send them out to have friends and comrades type them or print them up, copy them and staple them and hook them up into little pamphlets or packets or even make them into zines, and then they'll send all of the copies to me. Once I get them back, I'll pass them around to other prisoners so that people in here will have a solid supply of good materials to read, study and to memorize. Because when you're sitting in solitary like this, it's important to have something real, something substantial to think about, anything to keep your mind from deteriorating. It's also good for the brain to try to read and recite something over and over again until you've got it hammered into your head. It keeps your mind and memory sharp. You've got to stay mentally active and you've got to stay sharp in here, under these conditions, 'cuz there are too many things that will knock you off if your mind isn't in its proper place.

Those are just a couple of things that I do to get good materials into the prison and around to other convicts in here. My cell is like an office. I have boxes and boxes full of manila envelopes that are filled with copies of all the materials that I have. I keep all of my manilas marked and labeled and I try to stay very organized. Like I said, this is just one of the things that I do, but the thing is, I feel that there are a lot of other prisoners who can be doing this or things like this, if they wanted to. It's not for everybody though, especially if you're one of the types of persons who is only thinking about themselves. Selfish people couldn't do this type of work. But if you're a person who is truly concerned about what's going on where you're at and if you truly want to help others (as well as yourself) rise above these deteriorating circumstances and if you truly wanted to assist in making the environment you live in a much more productive place to live in, this is one of the many things you could be doing.

Conscious prisoners have a chance to do things that will make a difference, and they

should take advantage of the resources they have available to them and the opportunities and take strides to do things that will have a positive effect on their living conditions. I encourage prisoners to start study groups, prison chapters, political or militant sects on their units, wings and tiers and to start implementing programs in their prisons that will help build each other up, educate and bring a sense of purpose to one another's lives, instead of tearing each other down and apart, do things that will restore a sense of community, comradery and solidarity amongst your fellow prisoners. It's time for prisoners to start becoming more conscious and more organized, while they sit and suffer behind enemy lines.

I hear a lot of people complaining about how miserable it is here at E.S.P., but not taking any real initiative to do anything about it. If someone has the nerve to speak up about things, I don't understand why they wouldn't have enough nerve to take direct action towards the things that they're speaking up about. If you have the desire to want to see things change, then I encourage you to take the strides and make an effort to bring these changes about. Do it yourself. If you have good friends or family on the streets who truly care about you and what you're going through in here and if they truly understood that you wanted to do something positive that will make a difference, I don't see any reason why they wouldn't want to help you out.

All you have to do is send them a copy of this zine and let them read it, because this whole zine is about the situations we go through as prisoners, the struggles we face, how to overcome them, how to get people involved in our causes and why people need to get involved in our struggles. Send a copy of this zine to your people, help them understand what you're going through and tell them that you really need them to be by your side through these hard times, tell them that you really need them by your side to make it through, to make it back out to the other side in one piece, tell them you need them by your side so that you can help others make it through these atrocities.

In order for me to be able to bring resources to Nevada and to bring resources to prisoners, I've had to learn how to become resourceful myself. I've had to learn how to find people to reach out to, and then find ways to reach out to them so they'd understand my struggles and I've had to find ways to try to get them involved in my struggles. Once they've seen that I was sincere and that my struggles were real, they were willing to help out in meaningful ways.

It took the pains of me having to explain to them that we are dying and being destroyed in these graveyards and if anything is to be done about it, then we are the ones who have to take the initiative and we are the ones who have to do the things that will make a difference. The police, administration, government and all of those filthy pigs who get paid off of our suffering, do not care about what we are going through in life, they do not care about our addictions or afflictions, they don't care about our struggles, they don't care if we get out of gangs, get a real education, get a job, or if we stop engaging in criminal activities. They don't care about what we're going through while we're in prison or when we get out. They don't care about us, because we don't care enough about ourselves. Once we start caring about ourselves and each other and start doing things that are going to make a difference, then these people in power are going to start caring, because once we take control of our own lives, then, that means they're not in control anymore!

Once I've explained these things to my people and once they understood, they were ready to start getting involved in my life and in my struggles in a real way! The pigs haven't killed me yet, so now I'm sitting here telling you how and what you could do to make a real

difference. *I'm giving you the game!* You're holding the knowledge in your hand right now. You are holding more than just a brain-grenade in your hand; believe me when I tell you that you're holding my heart in your hand!

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People in prison don't realize that there are things that they can actually do to make a difference, to change the game. People on the outs don't realize that they can really help prisoners get organized behind these enemy lines. It needs to be stressed that the people in prison can't make any real strides or be effective without the people on the outs. These are real struggles, real causes and people both in and out of these gulags have a chance to get involved in something real. This is something that can change the game for real!

From a prison cell I have been able to connect with real people, true comrades, who have given me the tools and assistance to start my own prison chapter. If I can do it, others can too. Conscious people can make a difference. I've become conscious just from sitting in my cell thinking, letting my thoughts lead to creation, letting my creations lead to real life changes. Thinking is beautiful. A thought is like a brain-grenade, ready to explode in the hearts and minds of the poor, the imprisoned and the oppressed. Waking them up to see that there are things that they can do to better themselves and to better their lives, regardless of what side of the fence they're living on.

As I sit here in this cell thinking about life and connection, I'm thinking of ways to live a good life and thinking about ways to make real connections with people. I sit here, putting my thoughts into writing, hoping that these words will be used as tools that open up people's hearts and minds and I hope my words will give somebody something real to think about.

El Coyote, 2007
Anarchist Black Cross
Prison Chapter

<u>Quote:</u>

"Just as you wouldn't let a pedophile watch your children, you don't want the agents of the state to decide what is allowed and what is not allowed to happen in your neighborhood. These decisions are the responsibility, duty and right of the people who are directly affected." – Anthony Rayson, from "Each One, Teach One" Interview Series #2

<u>Quote:</u>

"Prison only produces two things: suicides and revolutionaries. Suicides are those who are told they must comply with the rules and let the state diminish them, make them less, murder them inside-out. This is the prisoner who participates in self-murder even if the body remains with the rules and let the state diminish her or him, make the prisoner less, but the prisoner rejects the terms. The prisoner refuses to engage in self-murder and comes to understand that survival, real survival, demands that we each refuse to be invaded and contained and tamed.

Survival demands that we maintain our autonomy." – Sean Swain, from "Each One, Teach One" Interview Series #3

Time is Art
by
Coyote Sheff

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In these sunless cemeteries, otherwise known as prisons or penitentiaries, time is all we have, as we sit and dwell in these coffin-like cells. With this time we can either choose to let our minds decay in here, or we can take strides to revive our intellects while we fester in this life of barren darkness. The things that have the ability to create can also have the ability to destroy. Prison is one of those things. I have seen the creations of the mind in full effect in here, and, at the same time, I have seen souls being destroyed.

A lot of us who are constantly confined to these cages begin to think that life is over, or on "standstill" because of their confinement and they fail to realize that life is still happening, *our* lives are still happening, even while we sit in these cells. We can either surrender to the darkness or we can try to grasp the light that is hidden deep within ourselves.

Hopelessness, despair, hatred, contempt, not only for our oppressors, but also for each other: these are the feelings that we begin to assume every day. These feelings become normal. That is what turns this atmosphere into that of a graveyard. We begin to feel like life is over, because in essence it is. We are the "Living-Dead." The things that were once natural inside of us begin to slowly fade and we begin to die inside. The feeling of "life being over" is a very natural feeling in here; we become so secluded in this warped environment that it becomes more and more difficult to envision a life beyond these suffocating walls. The dreadful feeling of despair begins to set in, but if we can only hold on to a fragment of our souls, we can fight this feeling. It is necessary that we continue to resist these mental and spiritual sufferings that take place in here every day.

I hear other prisoners talking all the time, saying that they're bored or that they don't have anything to do in their cells, and it has become hard to understand how one cannot do anything *but* remain active while under such extreme conditions; but I guess everybody has their own way of "doing time," while there are some among us who really don't know how to do time at all, and that is devastating, 'cuz this ain't a game. We're living foul in these prisons; our lives aren't getting any better. We are a people who are being destroyed.

There are so many things we as prisoners can be doing with our time, there are so many things we can be doing to revive our minds, tune our souls, stay active, and there

are so many things we can do to resist the aura of intellectual death that lingers in and out of these seemingly inescapable walls. If you are in a maximum security prison, locked down in a cell all day and not doing anything productive with your time, then what are you doing?

The truth is, if you're living in forced solitude, slammed down in your cell all day, then you're living under some very extreme circumstances. Anything that deprives you of your freedom is extreme. Anything that corrupts your soul is extreme. Anything that slowly strips you of your sanity and of your humanity is extreme. As humans we have learned to adapt to just about any situation, but in the process of adapting to *this* situation, we begin to lose our sense of freedom, our sense of soul, and we begin to lose our minds and our sense of humanity; and, the more we adapt to this, the more we begin to forget how extreme this is.

This is the time when a "ride or die" mentality becomes appropriate. You can either ride and resist the circumstances and ride against the situation, or surrender to a slow death that will end up consuming your mind, body, and soul. I'm not suggesting that you do something stupid, but rather something intelligent, and do what you've got to do, mentally and spiritually, to resist the psychological oppression that you face everyday. I'm suggesting that you strive for intelligence, strength, and stamina. Try to think of reasons to live; try to find reasons to keep pushing, to keep fighting, and reasons to keep going. Ride or die.

These locked down situations are a slow and subtle psychological torture. We sit in these cells seething with anger and hate. We hate other prisoners. Why? We are too busy being eaten up by our own hate to actually take the time to consider why we can hate another person who is in the same situation as ourselves. We'd rather not think about that. Hatred is one of the most destructive, unhealthiest habits to ever happen to mankind, but we'd rather not think about that either. We are in a situation where we are already being psychologically tortured, and all we're doing is making it ten times worse by creating a situation where we make it more difficult to survive.

These locked down situations are no joke, but on the other hand, these situations can also be opportunities where we can choose to deeply examine ourselves. Examine our lives; past, present and future. Examine our situations. Examine our options. It is during this period of self-reflection that we should ask ourselves whether we are going to let this situation break us (mentally) or make us. Because the things that break you can

also be the things that make you, and sometimes we might need to be broken before we can be made whole again. Self-reflection is always a good thing, and by taking the time to step back and examine things more closely, rather than going along with the current flow of destruction, you are in fact engaging in act of resistance. 58

Under these circumstances we must continue to resist, because if you're not resisting the oppressive elements of confinement, then that means you're surrendering, which means you gave up your spirit and your will, and handed them over to your captors. This is why I'm always talking about resistance, because resistance is survival and as humans we have every reason to want to survive. When we live in conditions like these, we have every reason to want to survive. Resistance is so important, because there are so many negative and unproductive aspects of prison life that surround us every day, and if we give in to these things we are certain to become soulless, institutionalized beasts.

I know about being institutionalized, because I was institutionalized way before I even came to prison, just like countless others who have been locked up and detained since childhood, becoming accustomed to this crazy life. We've missed out on so many important, vital things in the early stages of our lives and instead we've had to settle for this sad, drab, institutional life, and believe me when I say it's sad. It's heartbreaking, if you want to know the truth.

So, when I write about resistance, I am writing from my heart that has tragically been broken by a life of incarceration, and I'm only 29 years old. I write about resistance because I know what happens to those who surrender. I've seen it. That's why I've been fighting all my life and that's why I will keep fighting for the rest of my life and that's why I encourage others to resist and to keep resisting!

Unfortunately, some people happen to think that resisting is complaining about everything. The truth is nobody likes a "complainer," so don't be one. Anything that is worth complaining about is worth doing something about; otherwise, you're just making a bunch of noise for nothing and all of that noise isn't doing anything but hurting other peoples' ears. You don't get things accomplished like that.

If you don't like the way things are and if you're unsatisfied with the conditions you're living in, the most productive thing to do about it is to try to find ways to make things better for yourself and for others. You can start out with little things, like taking the initiative to assist someone who doesn't have anything better to do with their time than to stand at their door all day and talk about nonsense, and maybe, offer them a good

piece of literature that will inspire them and maybe even try to encourage them to expand their mind and focus on things more substantial. Little things. You'll probably find that this will get you farther (and make you feel better) than sitting around complaining about things constantly.

It is only right that you are unsatisfied with the conditions you live in; prison is a dehumanizing place, and they've got us living real foul in these soulless cemeteries. That's definitely not something to be happy about. They've even got some of us believing that we don't have the right to be treated like humans. So, you wouldn't be wrong for taking a disliking to all of this. (I mean if you actually like it in prison, well then, maybe there really is something wrong with you.) It is how you handle your contempt towards your situation and what you do about it that determines if this will make you or break you.

Of course, there will be times when you hate it so much in here that you'll want to try to change things where you're at, and no matter how hard you try, nothing will change, and then you start to believe that there's nothing you can do that will make the slightest bit of difference or have any lasting impact on your surroundings. That's when you begin to come to terms with your mortality, which is always a good thing. You start to understand that the only thing that you *know* that you can truly change is yourself.

Despite what others may think, it's actually okay to change; it's okay to grow, develop, and transform your level of thinking into a higher or deeper understanding of self (this is a natural process of life), and once you begin to understand yourself, you begin to understand how to relate to things outside of yourself.

Prison has the potential to help make a lot of things out of a lot of different people, both good and bad, depending on how you look at life and how you do your time. I say "prison" has the potential to assist us in finding deeper understandings of ourselves and who we are as people, because in prison, time is all we have, and with time comes creation, as well as destruction, depending on which path you choose.

Not that I agree with everything that I've seen, but I have seen prison, or "time," make men into artists, writers, revolutionaries, paralegals, anarchists, college graduates, activists, body builders, astrologists, poets, rebels, craftsmen, warriors, deep reflective thinkers, analysts, strategists, philosophers, and even propagandists. I've seen prison turn men into Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Satanists, pagans, atheists, and even theosophists. I've seen prison turn men into animals, weirdoes, killers, perverts, and predators.

Creation and destruction. It all takes place right here in these desolate, barbed-wired graveyards. When time is all you have, you learn how to do things with that time. You learn how to *do* time. You learn how to do things that you wouldn't normally do, like sew, write letters, learn different languages, read books, exercise, and make crafts and things that will make your time easier. A lot of these are things that people wouldn't normally do in their everyday lives outside of prison. This can either be a place for you to truly get in touch with yourself and assist you in discovering your hidden talents, or it can be a place for you to really lose yourself, depending on what you do and who you associate with while you're in prison, or what you do while you find yourself alone, in a cell of solitude.

Personally, prison has done a lot of things for me, like how it has motivated me into becoming an activist, for example. Once I became aware of things on a conscious level, I began to see how truly messed up things are for us in here; I became aware of the constant self-destruction and degeneration that surrounds me. I became aware of the oppression, racism, and indifference by our captors, who are apt at keeping us divided and oppressed. Once I started becoming aware, I started becoming active. If you know what's going on, then, how can you not be active? How can a crazy, dreadful situation like this *not* turn someone into an activist?

Both the people who are in and the ones who are out of prison need to understand that these pigs don't care about us. Your captors don't care about you or what you're going through. They don't care if you starve, they don't care if you freeze to death in your cold ass cell, they don't care if you end up going crazy, they simply don't care about what you're going through while you're in prison. They don't care about our struggles in life, they don't care about the problems that most of us are probably going to end up having once we get out of prison, they don't care about our families or our children, and they don't care about any of that.

They are not here to help us; in fact, they're not allowed to help us. They are trained to be indifferent towards us; they're programmed to look at us as unremorseful, manipulative criminals. They are just as cold-blooded as they say *we* are! They call themselves guards, because it is their job to guard us, but how can you "guard" someone and not care about them? That's cold-blooded. They can't help us, won't help us. We have to help ourselves, and each other.

The way things are in these graveyards, it seems like *we* don't even care. We don't care about ourselves and we damn sure don't care about each other. We assume

these selfish behaviors and these predatory attitudes, because we don't care. Nobody cares about us, so why should we care about anybody else. That's what's going on in these prisons, from state to state, and it's destroying us. When we display that we have no control over our own lives, we allow people who don't even care about us to step in and assume that control over us. 61

We have to take control over our own lives; we have to stop being selfish and start being self-sufficient. We have to teach ourselves to stop being dependent on the state and to start being dependent on each other.

Time is all we have. Life is time and time is life. Even in these degenerate circumstances life still goes on. We can chose to live in eternal darkness or we can strive to become the light that forever shines, even in the darkness, like a torch, guiding us through. Time is art. Just as we are created and recreated, we too can create, recreate, and even procreate; we have as much ability to create as we do to destroy. Sometimes we



have to destroy or be destroyed before we can understand how to reconstruct ourselves. Prison is a good place to become tuned into these types of understandings. We are taught to think that "time is money," and then most of us end up getting locked up or destroyed for chasing after money, and, while we are locked up, many of us begin to truly understand the depth behind things that we once thought to be shallow, and the things that we once thought to be meaningful start to become shallow, and this is how we begin to become conscious. Once we assume consciousness, we start to understand that time really isn't money, and once we begin to understand this, then we begin to understand that time is art.

– El Coyote –

2007 E. S. P.

BLOOD IN THE SKY

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IN PRISON I'VE DIED AND ROSE AGAIN. BECOMING THE PHOENIX OF MY OWN CREATION, THE FRANKENSTEIN OF MY OWN MIND, FACING A NEW BATTLE, A NEW CHALLENGE, EVERY SINGLE DAY, DYING OVER AND OVER AGAIN, JUST TO KEEP RISING, LIKE THE SUN IN THE SKY, WHO ARE BOTH BLOOD, IN MY EYE AND WHAT I SEE IS WHAT THEY SAY, AS THEY RELATE TO EACH OTHER, EACH AND EVERY DAY.

THIS IS POETRY FOR THE IMPRISONED, WRITTEN BY THE IMPRISONED BODY OF A MAN WHOSE MIND IS FREE,WHEN THE SUN RISES, SO DO I, WHEN THE SUN SETS WHY DOES IT LEAVE ITS BLOOD IN THE SKY? CHALLENGE ME, I'LL HONOR YOU, BETRAY ME AND I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE, JUST LIKE A SCAR ON MY HEART, BUT THAT'S WHAT THEY MEAN WHEN THEY SAY TIME IS ART.

I'D RATHER SEE BLOOD IN THE SKY, THAN THE BLOOD OF THE LAND, BUT I ONLY SAY THAT 'CUZ I'VE WASHED ALL THE BLOOD OFF MY HANDS. NO GOD, NO MASTER, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DISASTER THAT WOULD, COULD AND SHOULD BE. WILL IT BE SOMETHING THAT I'LL EVER LIVE TO SEE AND WILL IT BE SOMETHING BETTER THAN ALL OF THE MISERY AND POVERTY THAT I'VE ALREADY SEEN?

PICTURE A SNAKE, SHEDDING ITS SKIN. PICTURE A CATERPILLAR, A COCCOON AND A BUTTERFLY, TRY TO REMEMBER THE BEGINNING AND THEN, TRY TO PICTURE THE END. PICTURE A PICTURE IN A PARAGRAPH. PICTURE A PARAGRAPH THAT MADE YOU CRY, YELL OR LAUGH. WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO FEEL? DOES IT FEEL LIKE FREEDOM?

IN PRISON I'VE DIED AND TRIED AGAIN. I'VE LIED AND FLIED AGAIN. I'D HIDE AND DECIDE AGAIN; THAT IT WAS TIME TO RIDE AND THEN RIDE AGAIN AND WITH ALL MY MIGHT I'D FIGHT AGAIN AND BECAUSE I'VE DONE IT BEFORE I MIGHT AGAIN, AS THE DAY TURNS TO NIGHT AGAIN AND IF THIS IS A DREAM I'M LIVING IN, THEN WHOSE FIGHT AM I FIGHTING IN? WHOSE DREAM AM I DYING IN? AGAIN AND AGAIN? BUT HERE I AM, TO BEGIN AGAIN, AS THE BLOOD DRIES IN THE SKY, LIKE THE TEARS FROM MY EYES, AGAIN I RISE, STILL I RISE, WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

EL COYOTE
ABC – NEVADA PRISON CHAPTER
ELY STATE PRISON
MAY 29th 2007



Thinking

Sitting in solitude, with my thoughts laid out on the hard, concrete floor and pasted to the walls, trying to make sense of them as I sit and stare, ponder and reflect.

I don't know what the guy in the next cell thinks about as he sits there, but I often wonder...

Today someone told me that there are a lot of "dead" people around here, dead but still breathing. I've been thinking about that, thinking about how people can let themselves fade away and deteriorate. I've been thinking about how or why some people in here can't take pride in themselves, take pride in their abilities. I've been thinking about what it is about this place that has stripped them of their determination to win, succeed or overcome.

Everyday I hear people say that they're bored, and to me, that means they don't know how to do time. There are plenty of things they could be doing, they could be making things, exercising, learning things, trying to improve at the things they aren't so good at, they could be reading, contemplating and thinking.

I'm sitting here thinking because I've since come to realize how beautiful it is to take the time to think, trying to make sense out of things, trying to see things underneath the surface of their external appearance, so that my *soul* can feel the truth of its meaning.

To do that, I have to think *and* feel. Two functions that the mind is perfectly capable of doing. Not only can the mind think and feel, but it can also perceive, reason and will. So, as I sit here in this cell thinking, I'm trying to connect my mind to my soul so that I can understand the truth of things that I think about. Truth is a beautiful thing. Thinking is beautiful too. Everybody should take the time to think.

If man thought his way to the moon, then I can think my way out of this room. The sky's the limit when it comes to what your mind can accomplish when put to good use. The mind is a dangerous thing when sharpened and refined. Dangerous. Some people might call it plotting. Other's might call it contemplating. But I call it thinking. Thinking is a true act of self-empowerment.

I once told one of my dear friends who I write to consistently that I'm living in solitary confinement. She wrote back and told me that her mind has been living in solitary confinement for years. That is, until she started writing me, she says. She has been thinking about the things I tell her, about being in prison, and she has been unleashing her thoughts on paper, thoughts about life, freedom, spirituality and justice. She has a beautiful mind, and she has shown me that thinking is revolutionary. 64

As a prisoner, I am fascinated by the idea that "anything made by man can also be destroyed by man." So, I sit here and ponder the ways to destroy the constructions that confine me. Many ideas come to me as I sit here and think. I have observed, studied and mastered my surroundings. I have studied and observed the weaknesses of each guard that comes through this unit. I have sat here listening, watching, absorbing and thinking. It really is a beautiful thing.

All thinking is good, but there's a difference between idle thoughts and intellectual thinking. There's a difference between day-dreaming and logical thinking. There's a difference between wondering and contemplating and there's a difference between fantasizing and critical thinking.

Intellectuals think, while gabbers talk. Creative people think, while boring people sulk and lull their lives away. Snappy people think, while depressing people mope. Successful people think, while lazy people do nothing.

Be a thinker and let your thoughts breathe. Let your thoughts give birth to ideas and let your ideas lead to production and creation and let those creations manifest into change.

Be a thinker and learn to think for yourself. Think and breathe and allow your thoughts to inhale the breath of life. The mind is powerful, dangerous, unstoppable, deep, reflective and very effective when put to its proper use. Cultivate your mind, exercise it, strengthen it, sharpen it, train it and use it. The mind is a weapon ready to be used ands when used properly, there can be no limits, restrictions or confines put on your mind. Thinking is a wonderful, beautiful, essential thing. Thinking is revolutionary.

Just a couple of thoughts from the graveyard
COYOTE
November 2007 Ely State Prison, Nevada

Many thoughts come to mind as I sit here in solitary. There are lots of ideas to entertain me and some that often provoke me and many that even challenge me. I'm grateful for each experience, I guess, because it seems better than allowing myself to sit here in still silence and allow myself to go uncomfortably numb or even brain-dead.

One of the things I've been tripping on lately is all of the people, the beautiful people, who are waiting for Jesus to come back in the flesh. This is one of the many tragedies that reveal to me – and maybe to you too, if you've got your eyes open wide enough – how messed up things are in the world and how people desperately need to hold on to something, just to keep hope alive. Because of how hopeless my situation is, as a prisoner, I know a thing or two about hope and about staying alive.

I know I'm not going to "score too many points" speaking against Jesus, but if people would only realize that my heart is full of love and not hate, then maybe they would "listen" to what I'm saying (can you really "listen" to a piece of paper?) rather than try to discredit me as some crazy anarchist devil-worshipper.

I have nothing against Jesus, the man who lived over 2,000 years ago. All I'm tripping on is the fact that all of these people, the beautiful people, have been waiting for over 1,000 years for the prophecies in the book of Revelations to happen, and if someone 1,000 years ago could actually see 1,000, 2,000, or even 3,000 years into the future – because nobody really knows "when" these prophecies are supposed to happen and a lot of people are still trying to debate what they actually mean – then, I guess that would make a believer out of me too. I would believe that I'm so incapable of thinking for myself that I would have to rely on a book, written by man over 1,000 years ago, to live righteously, because I didn't have any control over my own life. And I'd probably do what most believers do and wait until things go terribly wrong or until I've completely "fucked up" to pick up this book that's supposed to show me how to live righteously. But hey, I'm not here to shove "anti-religion" down anybody's throat; just as long as nobody's trying to shove religion down mine, then we're all right, because "Jesus is just all right with me."

As I've already mentioned, there are many things that come to mind as I sit here in solitude. Obviously, I'd prefer to be out there in the sunshine somewhere, studying all of nature's hidden little secrets. Unfortunately, I have little choice but to sit here alone in this cold ass cell. Sadly, all of the nature I am able to see – and not really connect with –

is through a rectangular slit on the back wall of my cell (just above the steel bunk that I toss and turn on) which is supposed to be a window. All I can see is the grass as it grows and dies and then magically comes back to life again.

Grass that I'm not allowed to walk on, roll around on, sit down or lay down on – all I can do is look at it and watch it change colors with each season. It reminds me of one of the poems that Assata Shakur wrote before she was radically liberated from prison: "No One Can Stop the Rain." In that beautiful metaphorical poem she wrote a line that said: "The guards say that the grass is unauthorized." I have that poem hanging on my wall, right next to the rectangular slit. I often contemplate her poetry as I stare out of it and observe what the grass is trying to tell me.

Occasionally, a solitary sparrow or an elegant black raven will land out there, peck at the ground a few times, look up, and then fly away, always taking a little piece of my soul with her. Last summer when I came back here to the Hole, I looked out of my rectangular slit and saw a beautiful blue jay out there. I took it as a sign that things were gonna be all right.

The other things that I can see out of this putrid rectangular view don't really do anything to add much sensation to the sense of sight. I can see a glimpse of other locked down units that house other prisoners, and by looking at their rectangular slits off in the distance, I can kind of see which cells have their lights turned on and which cells have their lights turned off at different times of the day (or usually night), and I can also see which cells have their rectangular slits blocked up from the inside, usually with their orange jumpsuits, which is the prison uniform for the people, the beautiful people, serving time in the locked down units, also known as "the Hole." By blocking the window with our jumpsuits, we are, in a way, displaying an act of defiance, but it's usually done just to keep the light – and sometimes the cold – from entering the cells. Some people prefer to dwell in darkness all day and all night. I've been through that phase a couple of times myself, but I don't block my window any more because I prefer to let the light in, because I need all the light I can get in my life right now.

When I look at these other locked down units, I sometimes wonder what the other prisoners are doing over there on those units. Are they flooding and burning? Are they banging their heads on the wall and kicking on their doors, or are they sitting silently in their cells, lost in deep contemplation? When I look over at the other units and think about this, it sometimes seems like those units are part of another world, completely set

apart from the world that they've got me trapped in. The administration definitely keeps us distanced and separated in here and not by accident either. 67

If I look beyond the buildings that keep us confined, I can see the razor-wire that keeps these buildings confined, and beyond that sits a lonely gun tower, off in the distance, obviously erected to intimidate the mind and to discourage us from thinking about radically liberating ourselves. I sometimes wonder if the guard who sits in the gun tower all night long gets to know the often agonizing feeling of what it's like to sit in solitary confinement, but then I shake this off as a silly idea, knowing better than to believe that they could ever sympathize with a prisoner.

Beyond the gun tower, I can see the soulless silhouette of a serpentine mountain ridge, reminding me of the fact that this prison sits in a desolate valley, surrounded by the mountains of Nevada's Great Basin. On all four sides we are surrounded by mountains and those mountains are there to keep this prison confined. So it's all one small world of confinement.

This means my connection to nature is extremely limited. I guess I could go out to the little rec-yard (another confined area) and try to resonate with whatever insects I see while I'm out there and maybe even feed the birds, if I can successfully sneak some bread or crackers out there. But unfortunately the "policy" here at Ely State Prison declares that if a prisoner in a locked down unit is to go out to the rec-yard, we must first be placed in handcuffs and shackles, and then escorted to the shower where we then have to strip off all of our clothing so that we can be degradingly searched by the guards, and then we must get dressed, turn around, and let the guards place us in handcuffs, and then we have to kneel down in the dirty shower on our knees and let the guards put the shackles around our ankles. Then we are escorted to the rec-yard where we have to put our hands through a custom-made slot in the middle of the door and the guards take the handcuffs off, and after that we have to slip one leg at a time through another custom-made slot on the bottom of the rec-yard door and let the guards take the shackles off.

This is usually a 10 minute process and the guards clock those 10 minutes as part of our "yard time," which is supposed to be one hour. Once we are free of all cuffs and shackles, we can run around or sit on the rec-yard, **ALONE**, taking in supplements of fresh air and sunshine while we can get it. Once our hour is up, then we have to go through the same degrading process again before we are "allowed" to go back into the cell.

Sometimes they enforce this policy; other times they don't, but you never know when they're going to subject you to all of this humiliation and degradation. Many prisoners have been able to accustom themselves to this miserable life, but personally I choose rather to sit here in my cell. I've learned how to do my time self-sufficiently, without having to depend on the guards and caseworkers too much. There's really nothing they can do to help me, nor would they be willing to, unless I was willing to allow myself to go so low and become a bootlicker or a snitch, and even then they couldn't really do anything worthwhile for me.

So I sit here in this cell, cooped up like a caged bird, and apply myself like a self-made appliance, and I keep myself occupied. All of this degrading bullshit a man has to go through just to sit out there in the sun, by myself, for a so-called hour, just doesn't seem worth it to me.

Ely State Prison is a maximum security prison that is located out in the middle of nowhere. It takes 4 hours to drive to Las Vegas from here, 4 hours to drive to Salt Lake City, Utah, from here, and 8 hours to drive to Reno. Those are the 3 "nearest" major cities to Ely, Nevada. This is literally (and not accidentally) the middle of nowhere, and to add to the gloominess of our situation, and not to mention our spirits, Ely is the only place that I've been where it seems like winter 9 months of the year. I've been living like this, here at Ely State Prison, since 1998, almost 10 years, with limited contact with nature, confined to these cuffs, shackles, and cells, and it definitely takes a lot of strength and discipline, and an ounce of defiance, just to hold on to the things that I consider to be sacred, inside of me.

I don't believe in the so-called prophecies in the Bible's book of Revelations; I don't even have a Bible in my cell. I do believe in Mother Nature, however, not religiously, but spiritually, and I believe that She's always speaking to us, always trying to tell us something, although nobody's listening. The things She's trying to tell us I believe to be the sacred truths of the earth, but there are a lot of people who live on the earth who don't care about the earth, and that's just the way it is, I guess.

Although I'm confined to this cell, I am still in tune with the seasons as they come and go, and I follow the sun, the moon (all 13 of them), and the stars, living my days and mostly nights by the Mayan calendar. Even from this lonely cell, out in the middle of nowhere, I still have my ear to the ground about all of the things that are going on in the world today. Right now it seems as if every element of life is in some kind of struggle. Times are critical; the winters have been longer, and before and after the winter, the rain

wouldn't stop pouring and the weather patterns have definitely changed, and now many of the bees – very sacred, intelligent, and organized creatures – are disappearing! Not dying, mind you, but disappearing.

Not to sound all "airy-fairy" or anything, but Nature has many secrets and if you truly listen, as our ancestors did, you too will be able to hear the voice of the infinite within the unknown; She (Mother Nature) is trying to tell us something about the changes in the earth that are about to come; She is trying to warn us, so that we can prepare ourselves for these changes. Although they are changes in the earth, Nature, and especially the solar system, they could have drastic effects on humanity as well. Whether those effects give birth to revolution, anarchy, globalization, communism, cataclysm, or whatever, they are coming and She is telling us that they're coming and She is also telling us to prepare.

But you don't hear it, because you're not listening; you don't see it, because you're not looking. She looks you right in the eye and whispers in your ear: "Prepare yourself," but you close your eyes and cover your ears, turning away and refusing to acknowledge the secrets she shares with you, with me, with all of us. People are so caught up in their devices of technology that nobody seems to have the time to listen, watch, and observe Nature.

There are so many stars up there in the sky, the same stars that our ancestors lived under; ceremoniously, religiously, and in many other ways, our ancestors lived by these stars. Many of us today live in the cities, and we can't even see the stars. We can't see them as our ancestors saw them. These are the natural phenomena of life, the everyday miracles of life, and nobody cares anymore.

No, I don't believe in religious prophecies that have been designed to keep the masses in constant fear. I don't believe we should live in fear. I believe in Nature, and if you've studied the courses of Nature as I have, then you will understand that things can only be "bad" for so long and then eventually the tides will have to turn and things will be "good" for a long period of time. (I wish I could teach myself to see beyond good and evil as did Nietzsche, but the sad truth is, just like most of the people, beautiful people, in America, I have been systematically conditioned by this backwards culture.)

Anyways, the way we (humanity) have been living for many, many years, has been bad, bad, bad. So whatever changes are going to come should be for the good, according to the pattern of Nature. (But first we must prepare ourselves for the worst.)

The good thing about Nature is that there's usually a balance, kind of like how the day divides the night and the night divides the day, just as "Mr. Mojo Risin'" himself so clearly pointed out, before he broke on through to the other side. 70

The bees are gone. Not all of the bees, because there are many different species of bees, but the domesticated honeybees have simply disappeared. When they were here, they had lots of secrets to tell us. Many prominent people and poor people alike have learned many, many things from studying and observing bees. Now that they're gone, we must look elsewhere for those secrets and for new secrets. The bees have left us so that we may look in other places, for other answers. Whatever the bees symbolized for you, that's what's gone, whether it be hard work, organization, the sweetness of life, or whatever, it is disappearing with the honeybee.

When I was a child, I held bees in my hand, let them crawl on me and buzz in my ear, and in turn they would let me sample their honey. We had set up a few beehives in our back yard, where I used to play all the time, and I was only stung once, right in the eye because I wasn't watching what I was doing. I've always had an affinity for bees, so it definitely saddens me that they're going away.

The domesticated honeybee came from Egypt, and from Egypt they were imported to Europe, and from Europe they were brought over here to the Americas. The bees have been a symbol for many people, like the Aztecs, the Egyptians, and even for the people of India. But now the bees are leaving and many people are left scratching their heads, wondering what's going on? The domesticated honeybees are disappearing and so will domestication, before long.

If you sit here in a cell, like me, with nothing left to do but think, think, think, then you will be able to think of infinite ideas and infinite possibilities. Take everything you know about the domesticated honeybee and everything you know about Nature and everything you know about life, and lose yourself deep in thought, everyday, and think about the disappearance – not the death – of the domesticated honeybee (or whatever it is you want to think and think and think about), and not only will you be as busy as a bee, but you will hold in your head, heart, or hand a brain-grenade.

From most of the zines I've read so far, I haven't noticed any articles or essays like this one I'm writing right now. Most of the zines you usually read are all about politics and more politics, and never about the things that are the closest to our hearts. I've always held Nature close to my heart, and as I sit here, confined to this cell, Nature happens to be one of the things in life that I miss the most, so naturally I wanted to write

about it and include it in this zine. That's what this article is about: a prisoner who wants to hold onto the things that have been the most sacred to him for the majority of his life. Even while I'm under some of the most extreme oppression a person can face, where they try to strip me of my culture, humanity, and even my soul, I still hold on tightly to the things and people that I love.

I sit here in the darkness and my heart howls. They may have my body caged and confined to a desolate world of darkness, but my mind remains unconfined and my spirit still howls like the wind!

For all those who want to keep me caged and to all those who want to keep my mind confined and to all those who want to keep me down, they can't stop me unless they kill me. They may have me locked in a cell, but Nature is still in my heart! Love is still in my heart! Passion is still in my heart! They may have me cuffed and shackled with a shotgun in my grill, but I know where the honeybees are, I know where they went, and I know what's coming next, and as long as I know, they can't do anything to me! They may have me out here in the middle of nowhere, trying to block the light from entering my cell, feeding me the same stale foods all the time, degrading and belittling me with all their mighty authority, and using it to restrict my movements, as I pace from one end of my cell to the other, and they can even turn the light out on me, while I sleep on cold steel, if that's what they want to do, with all their mighty power, but what they fail to realize is that I am the light in my cell, I am the Coyote who howls in the darkness, and no matter what they do to me, I will still be the Coyote who howls in darkness and this is my song, the song of the Coyote!

– El Coyote –
ABC – Nevada
Prison Chapter
May 13th, 2007

An Afterthought:

Can you really "listen" to a piece of paper? I guess that's kind of like asking: "Do you '**SEE**' what I'm saying?" But, yes, you can listen to a piece of paper, if the paper has a soul.

If I put pieces of my soul on a piece of paper and if your soul picks up those pieces, then we are in communication, my friend. My soul speaks to yours.

But those are just thoughts that have circulated from the center of my spider web

No, my friend, not just from your center, but from mine as well.

WE BELIEVE

We sit in solitude and suffer for the sake of wisdom. We feel sorrow and pain deep in our souls, for the sake of love. We live amongst deceit, destruction and foulness, in the sake of truth. This is the life and struggle of a prisoner who seeks to turn misery into fortune. This is the life, struggle and pain of a warrior who strives for truth, knowledge and peace, while living amongst the lowest of the low, the worst of the worst. And even though some will argue that we are the poorest of the poor, I say that we are the richest people of all people.

I believe in truth, I believe in love, I believe in life and I believe that those who possess these things are the richest, most fortunate people in the world.

I believe in struggle, I believe in knowledge, I believe in wisdom and I believe these things can be found everywhere and in all things. I believe these things - these qualities, these gems of life - can be found in the hearts and souls of the poor and imprisoned.

Solitary doesn't destroy the person whose heart beats with resistance, it refines him. We take the pain, the suffer, the sorrow and we flip it and turn it into something special and we use our struggles as a situation that empowers us. That's how we survive, it's how we overcome.

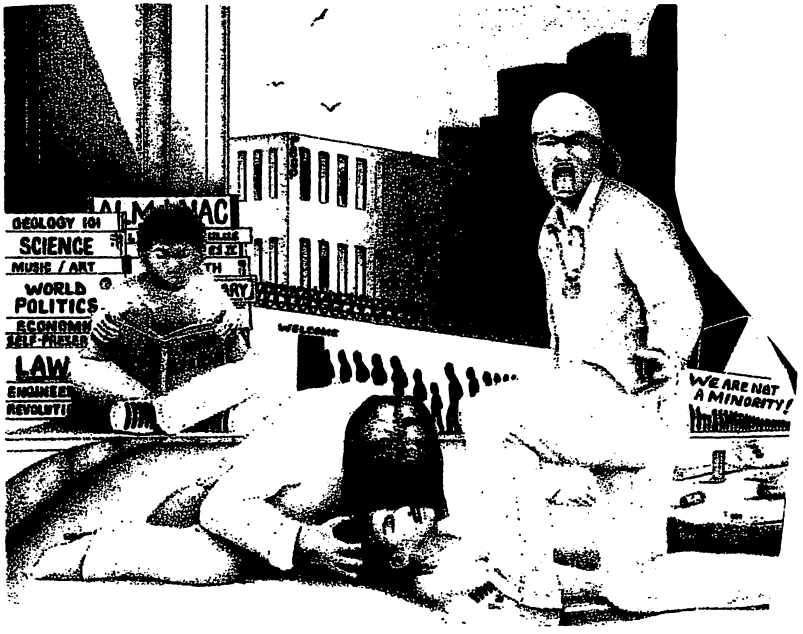
With blindfolds over our eyes we still believe in the things we don't see, because we know them in our hearts. We feel it in our hearts. We believe that the walls will one day fall and that freedom will one day come, in its truest form. Unrestrained, unrestricted and unlimited. We believe and therefore we persevere.

As we sit here in these confines, in these trenches, in these dregs, you can find us with a book in our hands, the truth of knowledge will be our only weapons as we seek to disarm those who keep us captive, taking true strides to overcome true struggles.

With this belief in out heart, there is no holding us back, there's no stopping us. You can

see the light in our eyes, as truth and love sparkles and shines. You can see our hearts beating through our chest with rage and passion and with a sense of true purpose. Yes, we believe, with all our hearts, we believe!

My name is Coyote and I am an anarchist.
I believe in truth, freedom and equality.
January 18th, 2008
Written from the confines of Ely State Prison
One of Nevada's biggest graveyards!



Note:

With a pen we exchange passions, writing our truest thoughts, deepest, darkest emotions. We take the things that are buried deep in our souls and we create art. With a pen we write what we think, feel and know, and if our words make you think and if they make you feel, then we know we've reached out to you in a real way. Our words are made real by the way they make you feel.

But those are just a couple of thoughts from the center of my spider web, circulating from my soul to yours...

To Understand

To understand my pain is to understand how and why a maggot turns into a fly. To understand what it's like to live in these prisons is to understand syphilis of the brain. It's to understand the sickness in man and it's to understand how one's heart can be built to endure the afflictions of torment, loneliness and suffer. It's like being held under water for too long, striving as hard as you can, in a new panic, to reach the surface, just so you can breathe, before being pulled back into the rip-tide again. How can I explain when there are people who are living in prison right now who don't know what it's like to live in prison and that's because they're living with their eyes closed, hearts closed, minds closed, living unconsciously and that's something I don't understand.

To understand the misery of my days is to understand how slavery was once widely accepted, celebrated and said to be okay. To understand what it's like to be locked in a box for years on end is to understand hopelessness and despair, it is to understand the stillness of these 4 walls and the coldness of stainless steel. It's to understand agony, depression and the suffocation of your senses, but if it weren't for books and the pen, I'd have already been dust and bones, swept away by one quick sweep and my cell replaced with another warm body, the very same day.

To understand how a man can endure so much suffer is to understand the true nature and spirit of a warrior, who says that fortitude is a virtue. It's to understand a heart that beats and bleeds with a desire and passion to resist, it's to understand a man who despises his enemies so much that he would never grant them the satisfaction of letting them see him whither and fade and die in their filthy, wormy little hands.

To understand resistance is to understand the spirits of the dead, that linger on and beckon in the midnight's mist, refusing to carry on to the other side of life and death, until they've made enough people suffer for their own tragic sufferings. To understand resistance is to understand how a man can be so determined to refuse to accept any injustices done to him. To understand resistance is to understand a more truthful and

insightful knowledge of things beyond what most sheep disguised as people usually understand.

To understand a Coyote is to understand a man who lives by his heart like an animal lives off the land, making wise use of all the resources that nature has provided. To understand the Coyote is to understand nature, even while in captivity. To understand Coyote is to understand me, the trickster, the scavenger, the man who knows no boundaries or borders except that which the goodness of my heart refuses or accepts.

To understand life is to understand love. It is to understand irony. It's to be able to understand how the things that are supposed to be so good could also be so tragically painful. To understand life is to understand how ones heart that can be so gentle and tender can also be made to withstand heartbreak after heartbreak, and how it can keep healing, keep loving and keep beating.

To understand is to live, suffer and survive. To understand is to learn, know and think. Understanding is love. Love that grows from pain. Understanding doesn't come from the brain or the mind, but from one's innermost being – the *heart!*

Coyote
November 12th, 2007





The paradox of education is precisely this--That as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated. The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity. But no society is really anxious to have that kind of person around. What society really, ideally, want is a citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society. If a society succeeds in this, that society is about to perish. The obligation of anyone who thinks of himself as responsible is to examine society and try to change it and to fight it--At no matter the risk.

--James Baldwin--



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