MB: Why are prisoners getting mail withheld from them or thrown away by prison staff? Does it have to do with the nature of the content?

AZ: Here, mailroom is completely infiltrated by administration. I've never seen a unit commit more federal crimes than this one. It's unheard of. They have stripped the offender of every single simple comfort of receiving stationary from home or art supplies. This is something easily checked by security. It has no negative effect on an inmate, but it would actually cause the inmate to behave better because they received love from home. That's insane. Who would want that? Contraband is anything that makes the inmate do better for himself. It's out of control. For administration to try to control a mailroom is easy. To stop housing inmates with incompatible inmates is the real challenge, in which they still can't get right. Just past November they housed a G5 offender with a G2 offender and he was assaulted physically. Sexually is still to be determined. Also, mailroom is trying to stop greeting cards from family from coming in.

If you would like to write Alex, please do not hesitate to do so. Alex loves receiving mail. If you would like to send Alex a book, zine, article, etc. that is great too.

Please address mail too:

Julio A. Zuniga #1961551
Darrington Unit
59 Darrington Road
Rosharon, Texas 77583

Also, Alex makes beautiful portraits that can be viewed via Instagram. Just search @julioazunigaart

in California prisons, advocates warn COVID-19: 'More deaths are coming'



Soledad's COVID-19 whistleblower hit with guard retaliation after outing officers for not wearing masks



Protester chained to barrels in front of governor's mansion demands release of prisoners at risk of COVID-19

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ABC Zine Distro
Publisher & Distributor
P. O. Box 721
Homewood, IL 60430

The Pandemic of Slavery in Texas

This day is like any other day in prison - noisy, heartbreaking... only now it's not as bad. It's tolerable. But my chances of dying are up 80% due to the Corona Virus Disease outbreak. After thinking long and hard about it, dying by Corona Virus or COVID-19, is a blessing in disguise in my eyes. These torture chambers and slave plantations are very much alive and living thru its bowels and its excrement - death is a guest of honor. For death threatens to ease my heartache, to wipe my memory clean of past suicides, of watching minds break, to erase the violence and psychological warfare waged by the administration on the indigent, the mentally ill. Death is the ultimate parole for the man in solitary confinement in Texas. Of course, this is my personal opinion.

But, to be real, it's so much more, so much more. I am very lucky to have survived the torture chambers @ Dirty Darrington Farm. These personal writings are for the unlucky ones who didn't make it out, for the "Sugarland 95" whom under slave contracting in the late 1800's and early 1900's, were worked to death by the Texas Department of Corrections. It's for the families of all those who were forced to die by suicide by this administration and the 100+ other administrations all across Texas.

For those who are thinking about using that fan cord to end your life, I'm asking you with love and respect to listen to my words. Understand first and foremost, that the situation you find yourself in *is not your fault!* Texas has universities, built in neighboring towns, with criminology departments that are physically designing these environments - not for you to win. No! The whole design is just like a casino - the House always wins. Put the cord down, Brother! Lend me an instant of your beautiful life. Trust me, Brother! You have much more to give. Your life has changed and it's time to change with

it. This isn't the end of the line. The reality is you find yourself trapped. Behaviors that have been recorded many years ago are all on computer, as an algorithm.

Have you ever noticed that when you speak to someone on the recreational yard, and they have a disciplinary case, how closely it mirrors yours? Do you believe it is a coincidence? It's not! These Administrative Segregation areas are like shooting fish in a barrel for cocksucker Administration Majors and all the ranks of cocksuckers below them - down to the CO's. This place is designed to keep you here longer. They care not about your family. They care not whether you kill yourself or they kill you. It's all the same. It's designed to break you.

What people in Texas don't understand is that they are allowing these people to treat them like animals. Get it straight! It's not how people are supposed to be treated. Until everyone opens their eyes and accepts the truth, the house will always win.

Here! Listen to Comrade Aaron Dyson and Keith "Malik" Washington, who are in this struggle - just like us!

Take a peek.

****



FEATURE

Please Help End Prison Slavery in Texas Now!
A Message from End Prison Slavery in Texas Spokesperson:
Keith 'Malik' Washington and Aaron Dyson

My name is Aaron Dyson I am a White Male Prisoner housed in the same prison as Keith 'malik' Washington. I stand in Solidarity with Malik as he confronts the Slave Plantation System operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Please help us end Prison Slavery in Texas and BEYOND!!

"The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just." -Abraham Lincoln

A famous quote from a man most known in our History for his incumbency during the Civil War to end slavery. Although President Lincoln's union came out victorious in 1865, the United States still suffers from pockets of resistance one-hundred and fifty years later. Texas, one of the eleven Confederate states during that era, still practices slavery on U.S. citizens confined in its state prisons. As one of only two states to still practice this large scale of servitude, Texas finds itself out of step with the rest of the country on the appropriate treatment of its people.

didn't want to miss a commissary day! Pfft! Sean Swain talks about this shit. Indoctrinated, institutionalized muthas who's opinion have no clout are the one's who fuck shit up for the others. If it's a statewide shutdown of normal activities it will bring the machine to a screeching halt. This takes a lot of outside support to prep each region on the strike. You see, in my experience, from being on various units across Texas – it's the people who volunteer and have compassion for the men in white. Mainly all chaplains do not agree with the "State of Fuckery". You and I are confirmed anarchists, against the peace and dignity of the state. My entire idea is for it to hit the capital.

Most investments for TDCJ on the Stock Exchange are owned by the people making laws and the wardens running the shit. You see where I'm going? Prison Legal News, NPR News, KPFT.org 90.1 Houston are all going to need to interview for a large scale strike of this magnitude. The order of operation is strictly based on how TDCJ operates (lock-downs, etc.) The point of it is to overwhelm the system. Nobody can staff 110 units overnight. Within three days food rots, no maintenance crews, no laundry, no field squads, no officer dining halls. Shut all operations down simultaneously. All men in white must sacrifice for the cause to make history and set an example to anarchists across the nation – that even governments can be broken and bent, shock and awe. You see the vision? This is how Bursts at The Final Straw has portrayed it for us... rapid eye movement!! Right? The dream can be realized, but I have to win small battles and air them so the men can gain morale. One thing these maggots do is break the morale, leaving empty vessels walking around. The food is not that fuckin' great to miss out on an opportunity like this. This is only the beginning. Remember how that quote states it, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step!" We are on our way.

MB: How can people on the outside try to support y'all in trying to make the conditions better inside?

AZ: Personally, I am on a quest. For now I'm outnumbered. I need all the supporters to make sure as an ambassador for the anarchist mind in TDCJ that the administration knows that any retaliation is under the magnifying glass. As they are reading my mail, I want them to know that in an institution such as this, and all the cruel and unusual punishment that is occurring, and excessive use of administrative force to keep these cages packed, I want to receive phone call interviews through Darrington Law library. I want podcasts to call and ask Warden Armstrong for permission to speak to me so they can understand exactly what I am fighting for. Yes, it's beyond these walls. It goes right up the ladder. How do you fix a broken system? In my opinion, from the inside out!! This type of neglect has gone on for way too long. There is no excuse for it. Do I want readers to write me? Yes, that is very much welcome.

My whole purpose for exposing these conditions are because I personally have been affected in many ways. My final straw was this past lockdown where all my property was confiscated, for no reason, leaving me in a cell with no light and no toilet for days. Even after begging for a light bulb from a supervisor I was left without light. Then, after confronting said supervisor he still further retaliated by saying he wasn't going to do "shit" :Right on, here we go... After all the pain and suffering on administrative segregation in G5, solitary, I feel it's time we have the spotlight on how we treat offenders in ad-seg!! Starting with the deaths of inmates in the past two years, why Major Pharr or Major Gooden were not held accountable is beyond me. They are supposed to set the example to all officers that suicide is very much likely since they impose such strict and draconian tactics on offenders who misbehave. Starve them to the point of suicide? How about not supplying mentally ill or mentally disabled offenders with the basics, like a jacket, toothpaste, toothbrush, toilet paper. If they are not able to understand why do they not send them to psychiatric unit Jester 4?

You see, if I had a camera to show the nation how we herd men like cattle day in day out, I would. There is plenty of ways to make this place productive, but first we have to address the immediate problems, to see who is on board with change. Personally, I'm one of the lucky few who found outside support, someone who genuinely cared for me, and after six years of being alone I found a comrade who shared the same mindset as I.

These opportunities to expose first hand, how the prison industrial complex, capitalist mindset affects us inside. Let me introduce you to Darrington Branch of UTMB Medical Division, where everyone who comes in contact with Dr. Speer gets charged with a medical visit, but does not receive adequate care, nor does he refer to someone who can provide it. A doctor that throws tantrums like a four year old in scrubs. Indigent offenders can't afford the co-pay, nor do we get paid for hard labor in TDCJ to afford medical or correspondence. My whole heart goes out to my anarchist friend in solidarity from NYC who saved me from insanity, gave me the tools I need to begin my crusade for the cause. "Prisons are for burnin', not for learnin".

starved all offenders for one year, feeding only "Johnny sacks", driving me to do something extreme to survive. I ended up here at Darrington Unit. Let me try to stay on track here: When you're done with G5 your custody level goes to G4, which is six months of medium-custody. When you go to chow hall, you're fed like a fat rat, which is almost shameful when you start to realize just how bad G5 offenders are getting screwed.

This is why I make this stand, as one voice against the peace and dignity of the State, to show the entire nation how people are being treated all over Texas. Darrington Unit is now run by immigrants, some of whom speak limited English, so if you have any issue it goes unheard and ignored. If you have a dietary restriction, you have to set fires and flood the runs with toilet water just to get them to call a supervisor on the scene to address the issue. It's like Sean Swain describes in his badass book. I've personally witnessed two suicides, two attempted suicides, officers abusing inmates then quickly shipping them off to another unit so their grievances don't impact administration. This is going on now. On both occasions that these men died by suicide the staff and work crews are summoned to candy coat the rotten apple that is Darrington Unit. For a few days, the lucky residents of where the deceased took his life enjoy new mattresses, blankets, light bulbs, fresh coats of paint. Food is plentiful. Diet trays and snacks are on point, toilet paper too. Nobody get's written up, which is good. Most people who are about to get parole are usually thrown in a cell with a psyche patient to ensure an altercation and keep you in TDCJ longer.

All these tactics I'm exposing now are so that any victims of this behavior can be directed to the offending officer in charge. Major Pharr is someone I know is in on this three-ring circus. It's so obvious and they don't hide the fact that they have a team of snitch-mates who are his snitch crew. It's known that inmates can personally screenshot Facebook pages directly to his phone to take other offenders out and get them locked up, a trap designed by administration directly. Officers have personally told me the grand structure of Major Pharr's "tactics". Next on the list of cruel and unusual punishment is Sergeant Akinson, Sergeant Williams, Sergeant Estrada, Sergeant Cabriales, Sergeant Baker. With a crew like this for segregation area this crazy treatment of human beings should not be ongoing. Instead, Major Pharr has made it a point to fill beyond capacity his segregated areas, even on fluke cases that do not require such punishment. But mark my words, it's more than just confining. It's starving, and rattling cages, using psy-ops to further punish the offender. This has gone on too long and anyone who speaks up on the ill treatment... he will do anything to get rid of his evidence.

Once a month we get one grievance, one I-60. I am allowed to fill out a grievance every seven days if I want. Any one offender needs at least three a week and in order for any positive reaction from administration you have to have over twenty inmates file a formal grievance. They get around it by not issuing the Step 1 forms or Step 2s to further investigate. These are stressful tactics that cause a lot of issues for regular corrections officers. Because of the actions of one offender lashing out on an officer the entire wing will get punished, which is unfair, because they are forcing the hand of offenders just to get the basics, then punishing him for it. It's so repetitive. The pattern has been exposed. During the times of a suicide, I've heard that the offender had previously verbally voiced distress to the officer and was ignored. By the time they decide to do a security check or decide to believe the inmate population's commotions, it's too late. When I opened my eyes to what this unit is operating on, it's bigger than me. But as Sean Swain has taught me, the tools the administration has are the direct result of what is Darrington now – twisted culture, twisted administration, crumbling structure. Not only is the unit falling apart, the whole state is aware of it. The state capital has some of the highest members of the capital come through here once a year, but they will not eat here or go anywhere past the chapel where they meet first hand some of the toughest men I've ever met. The men who changed their lives and deserve a chance of some kind of relief from the draconian laws that hold them down.

MB: What is organizing like in the Darrington Unit?

AZ: It's done clandestinely, because once they smell it coming they set up the ACA-AUDIT and they know how to cover up shit good. It's a smaller unit, but they are getting away with some real fuck shit. If I could get really organized it would only be through comrades teaching me how to attack the entire region. There are five regions in Texas – 110 units divided between those regions. Pacifica Radio for Peace (KPFT.org 90.1 Houston) is reaching at least two regions and advocates from Austin State Capital. These people are on every Friday at 9pm CST so when the organizing begins I will be sure to involve the masses as well. You see... we have to take into consideration this attempted once and only eleven units complied in layin-it-down. I want the comrades to know, when they last organized they passed out flyers. Everyone knew. This is a hub unit, meaning people have to pass through here to continue on north or south or the other units in the surrounding area. Talk among the men is – they

Inmates confined in the Texas prison system are provided with a "Time Sheet" showing all of the relevant information concerning their sentence, time completed, and parole date. On this sheet, inmates can also observe the "Good Time" and "Work Time" they have accumulated over the course of their incarceration. This "Good Time" and "Work Time" are TDCJ's way to compensate inmates for their good behavior and more importantly, their labor. To one observing this paperwork, this would appear to be a fair system; Stay out of trouble and work for the prison system and accumulate the time from these two categories with your completed flat time and make it home early. This certainly sounds good, but unfortunately this "Good Time"-"Work Time" system TDCJ has in place is nothing more than a paper trail. I read once where someone had said this system is equivalent to giving a starving child an empty bowl. The question should arise: Why does TDCJ give its prisoners time sheets reflecting "Good Time" and "Work Time" if it is not a tool to be used towards their early release? This system certainly had to originate for a far higher purpose than the nothingness it is being used for. The proof in this is demonstrated with each inmate's release as they are forced to sign away their accumulated "Good Time" and "Work Time" before they are released. Allow me to repeat that. Inmates are forced to sign away the time they have earned before the Texas prison system will release them.

Without legitimate compensation for labor it can only be deemed as slavery. There are only two ways to rectify this grave injustice our citizens confined in the Texas prison system are being forced to endure. Pay them for their labor, or compensate them with "Work Time" that is just as meaningful as their flat time.

1. Paying prisoners for their labor enables them to not only better provide for themself in prison, but enables them to pay on outstanding bills such as child support and court fees by garnishing part of their wages. In turn, this will give relief to the constant incurring cost in tax dollars.

2. Compensating prisoners for their labor through a legitimate "Work Time" system grants them the opportunity to be reviewed early by parole and released back into society. This system also relieves state tax payers through the simple fact that an earned early release is one less prisoner they have to pay for.

Slavery is very real here in the state of Texas and is a practice that will remain until it is put to a stop. Strength in numbers can achieve anything and it is for that that we ask for your support in standing against Texas' slave labor.

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." -Martin Luther King Jr.

Sisters and Brothers most of the words that you have read here are Aaron's not mine. And here is a photo of Aaron and his Dad. I want you to know that there are many families who suffer and that are destroyed on account of T.D.C.J.'s oppressive policies. At this moment I am being targeted by T.D.C.J., the Texas Attorney General Office and numerous other State Agencies. Never have I advocated violence or Gang Activity NEVER!!! But what I do advocate for is the Humane treatment of Prisoners Across America!! I boldly speak Truth to Power and I will continue to do so until death overtakes me. Texas is pulling out every stop inorder to Silence my Voice. Petitions are great!! But we need E-mails, Protests, Radio Announcements, and MEDIA EXPOSURE. I desperately need Legal Help. If you are a person who is passionate about protecting the Human and Civil Rights of ALL Human Beings then this is for you!! This is your Fight!!

Please send me any words of encouragement or a letter of support. You can write me or Aaron at the following address or you can J-Pay us just visit J-Pay.com. The Movement to End Prison Slavery is so much bigger than just Texas but since Texas has the largest State Prison system in the United States, it sure seems like a good place to start!!

Think about Aaron's words and let them resonate in your heart, mind and Soul. Is this the America we want our children to inherit or can we make it better--together???

Contact Malik and Aaron!

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About Us

Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) is a department within the Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). TCI was established in 1963 with the passage of Senate Bill 338, the Prison Made Goods Act. TCI manufactures goods and provides services for sale, on a for-profit basis, to city, county, state and federal agencies, public schools, public and private institutions of higher education, public hospitals and political subdivisions.

TCI's statutory objectives are found in Texas Government Code §497.002, and are to provide work program participants with marketable job skills, help reduce recidivism and reduce department cost by providing products and services to TDCJ and other eligible entities on a for-profit basis.

TCI facilities are spread throughout the state with the heaviest concentration in East Texas. These facilities produce items such as mattresses, shoes, garments, brooms, license plates, printed materials, janitorial supplies, soaps, detergents, furniture, textile and steel products. TCI products are required to meet specifications established and regulated by the Statewide Procurement Division (SPD) of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. SPD is the procurement authority for all state agencies in Texas and coordinates the majority of interagency sales of goods and services provided by TCI.

TCI benefits the state of Texas by providing cost savings to the TDCJ and other eligible entities while providing incarcerated offenders with post-release employment readiness to increase their reentry success.

Interview with Julio A. Zuniga

Matt Brodnax: Can you please introduce yourself and give some background on your time at the Darrington Unit of Texas Department of Criminal Justice?

Hello Comrades,

This is Julio A. Zuniga "Alex"/Comrade Z inmate #1961551 at Administrative Segregation – G5 – Solitary Confinement. There are over 200 Administrative Segregation inmates. All are underfed, suffering from some form of psychological warfare introduced by administration in more than one way. I have been in G5 for two years for cell phones. However, this isn't about me. It's about the broken brothers who could not maintain their sanity after years of no outside relief from an ancient penitentiary that uses food as a tool to break the indigent offender to the point of suicide. Physical assaults by staff are frequent. Everything I speak of is going on as you read.

MB: What are the conditions like in the prison?

You ask what the environment is like? It depends on which torture chamber you're housed in. B-Line or F-Line or A-Line or C-Line... each one has it's own track record. E-Line G5 at Darrington is by far the worst, environmentally speaking. The entire unit is infested with roaches of all shapes and sizes, especially in the chow hall, where the average size for a cockroach is three inches long. They litter the floors of the hallway before entering the chow hall and cover the cafeteria floor all the way to the serving areas. This unit is 80 years old, and so are these creatures. In the cells of solitary confinement they occupy every crevasse imaginable. If the tray slot slams hard enough roach eggs fall from the cracks into your already small, and do I mean small, drink, prison clothes, anything coming in gets sprinkled with roach parts.

Darrington Unit requires G5 offenders to be in hand restraints to go to shower, which is just one way to psychologically mess with men's already tattered sanity. Once in this so-called shower, the floors are a waxy black color because of mold. It smells of every kind of human bodily fluid imaginable. I've never seen a unit so rusted out. When you exit you feel like a therapeutic tetanus shot just to be on the safe side. Normally the floors are supposed to be finished with a sand colored, sand textured cement finish so inmates don't slip. That is absolutely nonexistent.

Lighting is not up to code. Supervisors refuse to ask for light bulbs for indigent offenders and leave us to find lighting o our own. If you write grievances on these supervisors you find yourself the victim of a faux-disciplinary case. All of these supervisors are still ruining the track record of offenders who have been working the system to get out of G5. We've got a "Major" by the name of "Major Pharr" who I consider very biased, discriminant and unfair to say the least. Back to him last... I want to save the best for last. Major Pharr earned it.

Now I am sitting on a 15 year sentence for murder. I've got six years flat as of November. When I pulled up on this unit I already had four years worth of appellate work accumulated. Here you need what you call an "I-60" to receive anything from different departments. Law Library on Darrington Unit would not respond to my I-60s in 2018, at a time so important, to submit to the federal courts within the time you have to submit on time. It was on a timeline. Because of Darrington Unit's inadequate Law Library staff, I lost a good possibility of getting my case brought back for an "insufficient evidence claim". We can thank the grievance process for forcing Mrs. Wagner to supply the indigent packet I needed a whole two weeks prior, resulting in a denial for not submitting in the allotted time, taking with it all the hope I had.

So slowly, I learned the State's vicious clandestine tactics to make people act out aggressively, sometimes violently. Telford Unit is a prime example. In 2015, where an Administration Segregation offender snapped. When it was all over he had bashed an officer's skull with a tray slot bar until it was liquified. That officer just happened to be my vocational teacher's brother. In 2016-2017, Telford Unit

I'm forced to work for my transgressions, but I do not stay away. I do it for those who can't speak no more because they are no longer with us, thanks to Major's Pharr and Gooden and the UCC Committee @ Dirty Darrington Unit. I do it for the families that were lied to by these people about how their sons died... 12

Truth is, food is a tool to break minds. Here @ Dirty Darrington, they use it daily. Small portions for grown men are the size of a ping pong ball. Supervisors will not send mentally ill people to get help. Sgt. Baker, Sgt. Atkinson will leave them playing in filth and put them on food loaf for no reason - just because they can.

Nothing is going to change unless Warden Armstrong gets rid of these people. Sgt. Williams, Sgt. Estrada - these guys will run into cells and literally split heads open. They think that it's okay to body slam people in handcuffs, which is a TDCJ trick of the trade. How do you tame a slave? That's right! You whip him. So, in their confederate gray uniforms, they do just that.

People! Speak out, reach out, let your *anarchist* seeds sprout. Order *"How Prisoners Use Zines to Empower Themselves and Subvert the Mass Incarceration Slave System."* Write to South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, Texas! Read this shit. We want a work stoppage like never before. You are being lied to on your time slips. Good time / work time is a tool created by criminologists to *control* you. They are falsely advertised "credits" towards a parole that is not guaranteed.

Did you know that most prisons "pay" offenders, so that they can purchase hygiene for themselves? What are you waiting for - passing on slave trade for paid work. The only way is to put the entire TDCJ economy in a solid halt. Just make a habit out of laying it down, all at different intervals. Go hard, organize, shut down more prisons - it's all in your hands.

I'm currently waiting for IWOC to contact me. I am in a war. My pen is my rifle. The outside collectives are the bomb.

Unite, unite...fight, fight, fight!! Bring down TDCJ. Bring down TDCJ. Speak up, reach out. Let your anarchist seeds sprout!

Comrade Z

April 27, 2020 – I am writing this letter to ask for your assistance. I am currently incarcerated at the Marion Correctional Institution located in Marion, Ohio. As you are well aware – we have one of the worst situations with COVID-19. ["The New York Times rated it as the largest source of virus infections in the country, while Johns Hopkins University ranked Marion County as second in the nation for infections per 100,000 people." according to a story published today by The Marion Star. – ed.] 5

The last time that I checked – I believe that we had over 2,000 inmates infected with the virus. [Official reports say 78 percent, or 1,950 of the prisoners are infected. – ed.] Many of the faculty and staff have also contracted the disease – well over 150 people.

This is by no accident that COVID-19 has spread so aggressively throughout the compound. It's mostly due to ignorance and negligence with regards to people's wellbeing and the lives at stake.

The virus has been here for months. Rather than take the precautionary measures needed to protect both inmates and staff, a major cover-up of the virus being on the compound occurred. The question is, who is going to expose this great conspiracy that has caused so much chaos and unnecessary loss of life!

Once it became known that people were contracting the disease on the compound – proper protocols should have been enacted immediately. Instead, COVID-19 spread like wildfire. Actions that were too little, too late – leading to multiple infections, hospitalizations and even deaths.

Inmates were not notified by staff after testing positive. A corrections officer read from a list containing both positive and negative inmates. Weeks later we received a letter on a letterhead from the medical department.

We never saw a doctor for a one-on-one medical consultation. Medical treatment or mental health help was not offered to anyone. You got it – "deal with it"; that attitude was the climate here at MCI.

We're not on death row but being locked up with 2,000 inmates infected with COVID-19 is the equivalent of putting us on death row!

We're all convicted criminals, but we were shellshocked to say the least. Many inmates wanted to self-medicate. That was a hard task to achieve due to the fact that it has been 30 to 45 days since most of us have been allowed to shop at the commissary.

Inmates' symptoms include vomiting, severe headaches, dark urine, red urine, kidney infections, nosebleeds, body aches, cold sweats, fever, and no sense of smell, no sense of taste, respiratory infections and green feces. The only way that you'll receive treatment is to literally pass out!

When treatment is implemented, it consists of rolling you down to the infirmary on a wheelchair or stretcher only to be rolled right back to your original location within an hour – sometimes being quarantined with other untreated, infected inmates.

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This situation has gotten far beyond out of control. The medical staff is undermanned. Many of them have also had the disease.

The National Guard is here but it's too little, too late! We're not on death row but being locked up with 2,000 inmates infected with COVID-19 is the equivalent of putting us on death row! Many inmates down here have illegal or allied sentencing – which they were in the process of fighting through the court system.

We keep seeing on the news that 95 percent of us are asymptomatic with no signs or symptoms of the virus. That's frankly a boldfaced lie. How could that statement ever be true without adequate evaluation or testing?

Some inmates have contracted the disease more than once. Most of us are sick. I haven't heard anyone say that they haven't been sick.

The staff and inmates have been lied to about multiple things! If 80-95 percent of the compound has the virus, why are we being moved around? Yes, there is movement of inmates, which is causing recontamination and cross contamination.

Our every move is being monitored, especially if there is any suspicion that you are revealing any COVID-19 atrocity-related activity to anyone on the outside.

We feel like refugees locked up in a third world country! It definitely doesn't feel like we're United States citizens.

The inmates of MCI are appreciative of all the support and protestors on our behalf. These people are more than our voices – they're our angels. Hopefully your organization can be one too! I'm asking you to investigate and bring some media attention to this conspiracy.

Inmates who are asking for help or speaking up are being bullied on the compound through certain DRC policies to make it very uncomfortable. Our every move is being monitored, especially if there is any suspicion that you are revealing any COVID-19 atrocity-related activity to anyone on the outside.

There are acts that you hear about in Iran or Afghanistan, Chile, Russia, Syria, China, North Korea and Yemen! The cover-up is just like our symptoms – they continue every day. However, your organization can help us and would be a welcomed hand – one that is desperately needed.

If something drastic doesn't take place soon, this will be America's small version of a prison holocaust! God Bless and Thank You. *Khabeer J. Brown*

Send our brother some love and light: Khabeer J. Brown, A692160, Marion Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 57, Marion, OH 43301.

After going through all the hype, he left me with an assurance. He said it would be a couple of weeks before he got @ me. I was just grateful to have met a real fucking human - and what are the odds - he being from Texas?

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So it goes... a little less than a month later, some snitch made bitch sent a screen shot of my facebook to the Major of Darrington Unit. SO, I'm guessing I'm friends with some made up "FB." He has to bust peeps on "FB." Long story short, I'm zipped up and get tossed back in solitary.

And it was there that it weighed on me. You have to do another year in solitary because you missed your family. Was it worth it? Brothers, it *was*. Don't do what I did *and* get jammed up! I'm telling you this story so that you can understand that, after 6 years locked up, all I wanted was to be accepted, loved - after watching people kill themselves, it made me wonder... What the fuck is going on in solitary that people are being broken and committing suicide - all @ the hands of Majors Pharr and Gooden?

So, one day I'm in my bunk. It's been a solid 2 weeks back there and I get a letter. It's Matt! Wow, Man! This dude wrote my sorry ass - cool! Well, I'm @ the last 3 months of my administrative segregation and Matt has been the only one to help me through a series of fuckery by administration to break me and saved my mind from the cruel and unusual punishment that continues today @ Dirty Darrington by the same pieces of shit, only different dudes getting fucked off.

During my time in solitary, I was armed with badass anarchist literature. To this day, I still receive zines and I am super tight with Matt and his family, and he put me in contact with other down as fuck comrades, who I share artwork with, write to, talk to. It's like a slap in administration's face, because not only am I in touch with my comrades in arms, but anarchist media has brought change to this dilapidated unit and believe me, I've put the fuckery teams out there. Fuck the danger of it! I care not how they feel. The fact is this is a slave farm.

There are Anarchist Free Thinkers all over the TDCJ plantations, who are being tortured for refusing to work. People are forced into this environment and all it takes is for one disciplinary case to send you spiraling down to where you're @ today, if you are in ad. seg. or solitary.

Things don't have to be this way! If every individual would come together for one week, stop all slave labor in TDCJ - "All for one, one for all" and impose realistic demands - demands for the state capitol and the coward ass wardens, shit would be much more different.

When I found solidarity, it was in the weirdest way. I did a year in solitary, went to medium security and fell upon a cell phone. After reaching out to all family and friends, it was no longer the same. They really didn't have nothing but pity for me. No one asked, "Hey, you need $ for hygiene? Can I write you?" Or, "I'll be honest on the jag (cell phone) I was (or am) on FB."

But nobody gave a crap. Inside I was torn up, wondering if this is how it really is. So finally, I decided to let it go and start tattooing. So after going through some 10-year old magazines I found ads of tattoo shops and one by one, I called.

One guy told me - "Fuck you" (some dick in Maryland.) And a cool chick named Nicki Needles @ Fort Bragg, California, said she would,but never showed. Then after going through a bunch of denials, I came to the last one. A badass shop outta Manhattan's Lower East Side named Fine Line Tattoo NYC. I called, dude picks up and I shot my pitch. A few seconds later, the dude was like, "Where are you?" My heart sank, I thought it was over. But I gently replied, "Bro, I'm from San Antonio, Texas, but doin' time in Houston area." And after what seemed a long time, he replies, "I'm from Austin." Boom! My heart explodes in a way only Texans do. I was freaked out. "No way, dude! Are you serious?" "Yeah, Man!" I was like, "Cool, cool, nice to meet you! I'm Alex." "I'm Matt."

NEWS ANALYSIS

Unpaid Labor in Texas Prisons Is Modern-Day Slavery

BY

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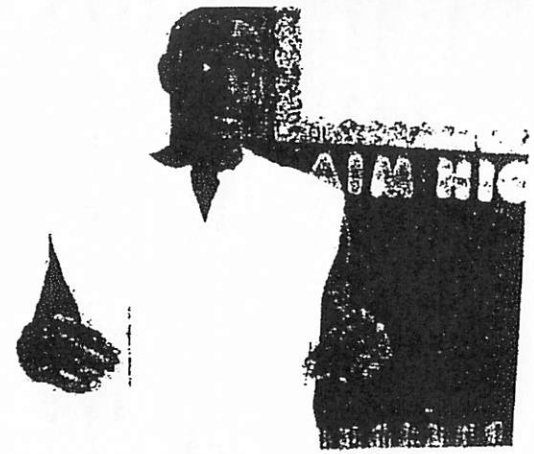

Jason Walker holds his certificate of GED completion, which he achieved while incarcerated. He is currently imprisoned in Amarillo, Texas, within a system that profits off of the unpaid labor of prisoners. (Photo courtesy of Jason Walker)

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has the biggest prison population in the United States (over 140,000 prisoners (https://sfbayview.com/2016/02/end-prison-slavery-in-texas-now/)) and the most prisons of any state (over 100). It is also known for being one of the most self-sufficient and profitable prison systems in the nation, thanks to prison labor.

Beef, pork, chicken and vegetables are raised, processed and harvested by prisoners. Soap and clothing items are manufactured through prison labor as well. Prisoners in Texas grow 24 different crops and tend to over 10,000 head of cattle (https://littlesis.org/news/2016/04/27/whos-behind-unpaid-prison-labor-in-texas/). They also act as painters, electricians, maintenance workers, cooks, janitors and dog trainers.

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It is wrong that this labor, which is managed by Texas Correctional Industries (TCI), is being forced upon prisoners, who are required to execute it for free. If they refuse, they receive discriminatory punishment and thus longer stays in prison.

That's right: prisoners in Texas are working for free. Total sales for TCI in the fiscal year 2014 alone were valued at $88.9 million (https://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/documents/Annual_Review_2014.pdf), and not one dime of it was used to pay those who produced this handsome reward. Whenever TCI is scrutinized by the public for this practice, they note that prisoners receive other rewards for their labor, such as time credits called "Good Time" or "Work Time."

On paper, these credits are supposed to cut down the prisoner's sentence and allow them to be released on mandatory supervision — earlier than they would if these credits didn't exist. But in reality, mandatory supervision is discretionary. This means that the parole board doesn't have to honor these credits. It can keep denying a prisoner's release until they have served their entire sentence.

TDCJ claims that the prisoners' free labor pays for their room and board, while the actual work gives them job skills to successfully seek and maintain employment upon their release. Georgia, Arkansas and Alabama are other states that utilize this money-making scheme. The other 46 states — one way or another — pay prisoners for their labor with funds that can be used to purchase items off the prison commissary.

Some prisoners work — for free — up to 12 hours a day. This is flat-out, modern-day slave labor and it will continue as long as society accepts the notion that prisoners deserve less.

Meanwhile, people incarcerated in Texas still need money to maintain anything approaching an adequate standard of living. Prisoners who have no money in their accounts are only allowed to send out five one-ounce letters to family and friends per month. Not to mention that a trip to the nurse for illnesses costs $100 — which all gets deducted when funds exist.

Despite Texas having the biggest prison system in the US, it provides the fewest privileges to prisoners out of the five biggest systems. (Unlike some prisons, it does not allow the use of cable TV and tape players in solitary confinement). The Texas system is also among the worst when it comes to nutritious meals; it is always understaffed, and it uses inadequately trained prison and medical personnel. So, where is all the money going?

Prisoners are human. Prisoners deserve the same rights as people on the outside. We are more than the dregs of society and dead weight. In fact, we are actually keeping the prison system functioning with no pay.

Only in America will you find a prison system that treats their prisoners like they aren't worth a dime. What can we do to change this? Are prisoners in Texas really benefiting from this? Am I the only one that believes Texas should start paying all prisoners for their labor?

This is a topic we all need to be discussing: Is Texas Correctional Industries slave labor or transitional rehab? However you look at it, all work and no play is inhumane under any circumstances. And prisoners must be paid for their labor — not just in 46 states, but all 50 of them.

Jason Renard Walker welcomes your input on this topic. Write to him at:

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