

"WHERE THERE'S A WILL... THERE'S A PEN!"

(\*AN ESSAY ON CARCERAL CENSORSHIP BY EZZIAL WILLIAMS #228034)

ESTEEMED SALUTATIONS, AUTHORS' AND AUTHOR-ESS'ES!! I COULD'VE EASILY JOKED AND SAID "WHERE THERE'S A WILL... I PRAY TO GOD I'M IN IT," BUT WHAT I'M ABOUT TO WRITE ABOUT IS NO JOKING MATTER. HENZI MAFISSE ONCE WROTE THAT CREATIVITY TAKES COURAGE, AND WRITING UNDER CARCERAL CENSORSHIP... THIS QUOTE IS SERIOUSLY TRUE. I LIKE TO CALL MYSELF AN INDEPENDENT PRISON ESSAYIST WHO LOVES TO SHARE MY WRITINGS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO HELP DEBUNK THE STIGMA OF INCARCERATION, WHILE ALSO SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THE INJUSTICES WE SOMETIMES FACE INSIDE. ON A PERSONAL NOTE, I FIND THAT WRITING MY THOUGHTS DOWN GIVES ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROBE AND PROCESS MY FEELINGS, MAKE AMENDS WITH MY TROUBLING PAST, AND EVEN MAP-OUT PLANS FOR MY FUTURE AND SECOND PHASE OF LIFE. THE FRIENDSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS I'VE MADE THROUGH WRITING HAS NOT ONLY ENCOURAGED ME TO KEEP DOING SO, BUT ALSO ALLOWED ME TO ELEVATE MY COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND LITERARY PROWESS. THE SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND KNOWING THAT SOMEONE CARES ENOUGH TO READ YOUR FORMAL/INFORMAL MISSES IS A CONFIDENCE BUILDER, BUT SOMETIMES EVEN A WELL-INTENDED MESSAGE CAN MISS ITS MARK. ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY'RE HELD OR DENIED DUE TO CENSORSHIP.

YOU SEE, FOR PRISONERS WHO ARE WRIT-WRITERS AND INCARCERATED ACTIVISTS LIKE MYSELF WE ARE SUBJECTED TO A MYRIAD OF TREATMENTS, BOTH PHYSICAL AND VERBAL, BUT NOTHING IS MORE MENTALLY OR SPIRITUALLY DEPRESSING (\*OR OPPRESSIVE\*) THAN CARCERAL CENSORSHIP. I CAN ATTEST TO THAT! BACK IN 2018, WHILE COLLABORATING WITH THE CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT TOXIC PRISONS AND TRYING TO INFORM COMRADES

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INSIDE OF THE UPCOMING NATIONAL PRISONER STRIKE (\* WHICH WAS IN RESPONSE TO A RIOT AT A PRISON IN SOUTH CAROLINA WHERE SEVEN INMATES DIED \*), I WAS UNJUSTLY PLACED IN CLOSE MANAGEMENT SOLITARY FOR WRITING WHAT THEY CALLED AN EMAIL OF DISSENT. IN ALL ACTUALITY ALL I DID WAS WRITE A DEAR FRIEND AND COMRADE IN THE MOVEMENT ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE FACILITY I WAS IN AND THE LACK OF MOTIVATION ON MOST COMRADES PART TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. I WAS HONESTLY JUST VENTING, BUT THE POWERS TO BE DIDN'T CARE THAT I WAS USING MERE WORDS TO AIR OUT MY FRUSTRATIONS OR EX-AMINE THE WAY I THINK AND FEEL. VERSES PHYSICAL AND NEGATIVE OUTLETS. INSTEAD, THEY FLAGGED THE EMAIL CALLING IT A THREAT TO SECURITY, DRAMATICALLY CUFFED ME UP IN FRONT OF EVERYONE IN THE DORM, CHARGED ME WITH ATTEMPTING TO INCITE A RIOT AND THEN RAILROAD ME IN THEIR KANGAROO COURT. SENTENCING ME TO EIGHTEEN LONG MONTHS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. MY SECURITY AND HOUSING CUSTODY WENT FROM THE LOWEST (\*WORK CAMP MINIMUM\*) TO THE VERY HIGHEST (\*BEHIND TWO DOORS AND "A FENCE MAX\*), AND FOR 23 HOURS OUT OF THE DAY = I WAS CONFINED TO A SINGLE MAN CELL NO BIGGER THAN YOUR AVERAGE PARKING SPACE. LABELED NOW AS A "INSIDE PRISON ACTIVIST AND SECURITY THREAT INDIVIDUAL" ALL OF MY COMMUNICATIONS AND BOOKS BECAME CENSORED AND THOROUGHLY SCRUTINIZED - SOME OF WHICH WAS MONTHS LATE OR LOST COMPLETELY.

DESPITE ALL OF THAT, THE VERY SAME FRIEND AND COMRADE I WROTE THE 'SMOKING EMAIL TO (\*KAREN SMITH = MAY SHE REST IN POWER\*), KEPT MY SPIRITS UP AND GOT MY STORY OUT THERE. = ADMET, I

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FELT EXTREMELY DEFEATED IN THE HOLE AND ALMOST GAVE UP ACTIVISM AND WRITING TOGETHER BUT KAREN STAYED TEN TOES DOWN. SHE REALLY EMBOLDEN ME TO KEEP WRITING AND EXPOSING THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, SO DURING THOSE LONG DAYS AND NIGHTS... I DID JUST THAT. THROUGH PERSISTENT APPLICATION, I WAS EVENTUALLY FEATURED IN THE ABOLITIONIST NEWSPAPER (\*A PUBLICATION FROM CRITICAL RESISTANCE\*) AND SUBMITTED WORK ONLINE AT REALCOSTOFPRISONS.ORG AND THE AMERICAN PRISON WRITING ARCHIVE IN NEW YORK. ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY I MADE PRICELESS CONNECTIONS FROM A FLORIDA ~~PRISON~~ AND EVEN CREATED NEW ADVOCATES FOR PRISON AND SENTENCING REFORM ON THIS SIDE OF THE FENCE THROUGH PROJECTED RETURNING CITIZENS. I EVEN MET MY MOTHER AND FATHER-LIKE FIGURES WHO HELPED THE "LITTLE ALEX" IN ME HEAL AND FORGIVE SOME OF MY CHILDHOOD TRAUMAS. AS YOU CAN SEE... OUTSIDE SUPPORTERS) IS THEIR SUPPORTING STRUCTURE FOR BUILDING COMRADES LIKE ME SELF-ESTEEM. I LOVE YOU MOTH AND FOTH!!

FAST FORWARD TO THIS PRESENT DAY AND I ONLY HAVE 18 MONTHS LEFT ON A 12 YEAR BID. YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT I'M FULLY AWARE THAT THE WORLD I'M RETURNING TO HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY, BUT WITH LIKE MENDED FOLKS HELP... I CAN MAKE A SUCCESSFUL RE-ENTRY. FOR NOW I AM CONTINUING MY GROWING PARTNERSHIP WITH PEN AMERICAS WRITING FOR JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP, AS WELL AS THEIR FREEWRITE PROJECT TO EXPOSE CARCERAL CENSORSHIP FOR WHAT IT TRULY IS... SUPPRESSION! ITS MY HOPE THAT

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THAT ALL PRISON WRITERS CONTINUE TO FIND WAYS (\*AND FIGHT\*) FOR CREATIVE AND MEANINGFUL OUTLETS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION. PLACES LIKE PEN AMERICA AND THE PRISON LEGAL ADVOCACY NETWORK (\*PLAN\*) ARE GREAT ORGANIZATIONS TO START AND LEARN MORE ABOUT CARCERAL CENSORSHIP. AS WELL AS TO REPORT INTERFERENCE WITH COMMUNITY RELATIONS ... INCLUDING NON-DISCIPLINARY DISRUPTIONS TO EMAILS, TELEPHONE, AND VISITATION. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE BOOK TITLED "THE SENTENCES THAT CREATE US: CRAFTING A WRITER'S LIFE IN PRISON." (\*WHICH IS FREE TO PRISONERS' MIND YOU\*) FOR IT SHOWS OUR TENACITY, PERSEVERANCE AND SOLIDARITY IN THE PRISON WRITING COMMUNITY. IT ALSO HAVE TONS OF OTHER RESOURCES AND PUBLICATION VENUES FOR INCARCERATED WRITERS.

SO, ON THAT NOTE, ~~REMB~~ REMEMBER THIS COMRADES: EVERY DAY IN HERE MAY NOT BE GOOD BUT THERE IS SOMETHING GOOD IN EVERY DAY!! LET'S CONTINUE TO "WRITE ON" SHALL WE? AFTER ALL ... WHERE THERE'S A WILL - THERE'S A PEN!!

P.S.

PLEASE NOTE THAT MY PHYSICAL ADDRESS & MAILING ADDRESS ARE DIFFERENT, BUT I'M OPEN FOR "ALL" CORRESPONDENCES.

\*EMAIL ME AT [SECURUSTECH.NET](mailto:SECURUSTECH.NET) FOR FREE!! IN/C OUT!!

HUMBLE TO BE A PROUD INCARCERATED WRITER

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