

ATTICA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY: 2014

By David Garcia

Most people of the United States do not remember the Attica Correctional Facility Riot that took place in September 1971. I sure did not, I was only 8 years old when Attica Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison located in Wyoming County in Western New York erupted into one of the bloodiest prison riots this nation has ever seen or heard of. Which gave it infamy as one of the most notorious prisons in New York State, if not the Country.

I, never in my wildest dreams, thought I would ever be a prisoner housed behind the walls and bars of this Correctional Facility. But due to this unfortunate long sentence imposed upon me by the People of the State of New York, I have been within the cells of this facility not once, but four times, since 1999. And everytime I come back here, the facility's infamous history continues to infect the atmosphere and conditions facing the inmates who have had the misfortune of being transferred here from other Correctional Institutes through-out the State of New York.

Because of a shadow that was cast upon this facility in early September of 1971, some 1,300 inmates had woken up deeming that they have had enough of the abuse from the guards that ran this facility then. Such abuse included, but was not limited, to verbal and physical malicious abuse by the guards who were indifferent towards the needs of some of the most simplest needs like toilet paper and toothpaste. The rebellion, during which the inmates held 40 corrections officers hostage for five days, resulted in a siege of the facility by State Troopers, who some with thier own personal fire arms shot and killed 43 people and wounded many other inmates, who happened to escape with their lives at the time.

It wasn't until after almost four decades later, that it was revealed that the killings happened because of a lie that was told to the Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services at the time. And that lie was that the inmates in control of the riot, had slit the throats of all of the guard hostages. After the riot, autopsy reports showed no signs of any of the dead having died from a slit throat, they all did die from gun shot wounds by the hands of the State Troopers.

The Attica rebellion handed the plight of incarcerated individuals to the forefront of the nation's consciousness. No longer were those invisible inmates experiencing invisible injustice behind brick walls and barbed wire fences.

Because of the rebellion, the conditions not only in the New York State prison system took a turn for the better, but for those prisons around the nation as well. Prisoners were afforded better food, medical treatment and a chance at education as well.

But in the year 1995, the elected Governor had decide that he was going to change those conditions, starting by double-celling inmates, and denying parole to those who were convicted of violent felonies. And cutting down costs on rights and privileges that he thought was a waste of tax payers money. And since then, almost everthing that those men died for during the 1971, Attica uprising, has been taken away.

Today, the atmosphere that existed prior to the 1971, rebellion still lingers and pervades nearly every aspect of the facility, from inmate-staff relations to housing assignments, facility movement and even programing for the inmates here.

I first came to Attica in the year 1999, and as soon as I step foot into the facility, I was forced to double-cell with another inmate, and neither one of us wanted to double-cell with each other, we wanted our own privacy, just like the majority of the rest of the inmate population had their own cells. So I went and filed a Grievance complaint about the matter, and after having been harrassed by some of the guards, for filing the

complaint, I was moved to my own single cell after spending 21 days in a double-cell. Most inmates who don't know any better, they are forced to double-cell with another inmate for some 60 days, before they are given their own single cell. And to make matters worst, the inmate is threatened with being thrown into the hole, if he does not comply with the double celling. Such double-celling is unconstitutional, because of the simple fact that if corrections is going to single cell the entire prison population and double-cell only a hand full of inmates; that really never asked to be double-celled, then for that condition to be constitutional, the prison must double-cell the entire prison population, and not just those few.

Today, I find conditions in this facility even worster than they were back in 1971, and even though I was not incarcerated in Attica back then, it is not hard to tell the difference when inmates are being beaten and assaulted by prison guards almost on the daily basis in this facility. Just because the prison guard feels like beating the poor inmate. And most of these inmate do not speak english, and the assaulting guard knows that if the inmate cannot speak a lick of english, he definitely cannot write it. And for this reason the inmate is unjustifiably beaten, and the officer gets away with committing a criminal act with impunity.

The guards of this facility appear to be protected by some government official whom is hiding behind the scenes and for the momment appears untouchable, because otherwise these Correctional Officers would not be committing these criminal acts so liberally. Just over a year and a half ago, one inmate was beaten so serverly, that his eye was ~~Knocked~~ out of its socket. And a nurse at the facility infirmary reported it. And 3 guards and one of their Sgt.'s were fired and are pending Federal Court charges. ~~But~~ they must have had a friend at the State Court, because those charges were tost-out. And the guards must have thought they were scott free to do it all over again with some other inmate.

The only way to curb these assaults on these inmates, is for

the people who are reading this message, to contact the authorities in power of the New York State Department of Corrections and the State legislature, and have them forced to install cameras in every corner and blind spot of this facility, so that the guards will know that they are there and discontinue the assaults and abuse on the inmates housed here at the Attica Correctional Facility. So this way, they will finally realize that if they commit another assault on an inmate they will be caught on tape and this will give the inmate the evidence that he so needs in order to prosecute these corrupt correctional officers that have been getting away with assaults on inmates for decades now, without being prosecuted for their crimes against the inmates here at this facility. And this will surely put a stop to this type of abuse that has been going on for too long now.

Peace-

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