

## In Solidarity from Solitary

August 2018

As the national prisoner strike leading up to September 9<sup>th</sup> continues to gain momentum, I find myself in super-solitary confinement humbly rooting for the progress being made. I mean it's all over the news these days! You see, I am currently serving an 18-month punishment in solitary for allegedly attempting to incite a riot after speaking out and about the inhumane treatment of inmates. Despite calling for non-violent sit-downs that never occurred, I was found guilty for saying something verses doing it. I am in the process of exhausting all administrative remedies as we speak. Needless to say, not only has my custody gone from min-to-max, but I went from a work camp to being housed alongside of death row inmates, locked down for the next 1-1/2 years – 23 hours a day. I've been subjected to a cell with no running hot water and a broken light that brightly blinks off and on all night disrupting my sleep greatly. Every time I step out of the cell for medical or even a few feet to the shower (3x a week), I have to strip down to my birthday suit and expose each orifice for contraband. Cell searches to harass us under the guise of security is the norm and sometimes soon after – a surprise inspection is called. Which means if your cell is untidy (thanks to the search), you could go on "strip" for 72 hours (all property, linen and clothes are removed except your boxers) or be subjected to disciplinary action resulting in a longer stay in solitary. As you see, the odds are stacked against us and this whole thing is designed to break you. Guards want you to get mad and act aggressively, so they can justify the use of force. Cooler heads prevail though, for the pen is mightier than the sword! I have numerous grievances in the works addressing the issues mentioned and I'm still writing and networking with like-minded people and organizations for support and direction. After all, in solidarity shall we work towards justice! As I lay in this solitary cell fighting for radio reception, when I finally do hear conversations about prison reform strategies and the slavery clause concerning the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, to name a few, I find myself encouraged by the movement and very grateful for "ALL" the people taking on the Prison Industrial Complex as a whole. To me, it's worth every day back here on the slab, for struggle creates strength indeed!

In solidarity from solitary,

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