

EMERGENCY!

“Your room”



“Exercise yard”



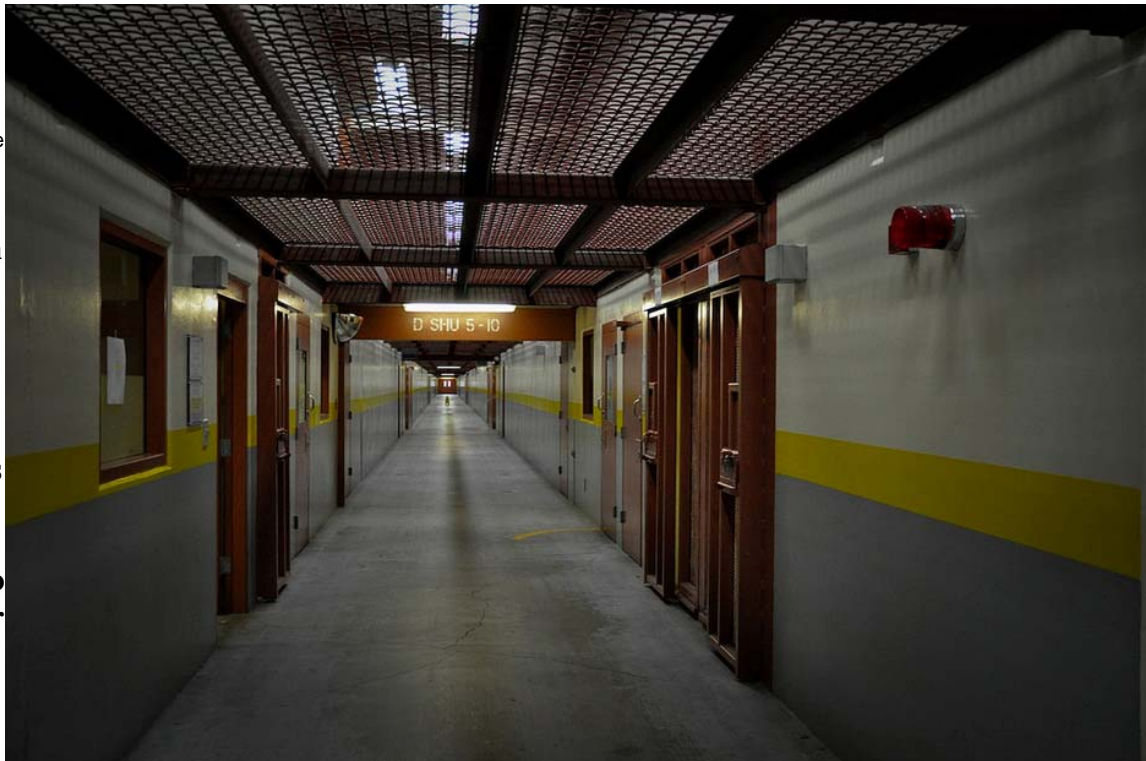
Imagine living here, locked up in this cell for **22 1/2** hours EVERY DAY. The rest of the time you're alone in a concrete “yard” for exercise. Imagine you are doomed to live like this for years, for decades...until you die. This is no horror film; this is not some piece of barbaric history long ago.....

THIS IS CALIFORNIA. RIGHT NOW.

The SHU
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Pelican
Bay State
Prison

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nia are suffering outrageous violations of their basic human rights. Among the most oppressed of these prisoners are those in solitary confinement in institutions known as Security Housing Units (SHUs), located at Pelican Bay and Corcoran Prisons. Behind barbed wire and concrete walls, in the bowels of these prisons-within-prisons far from the public eye, medieval abuses abound every single day: endless soul-crushing isolation, **denial of food** as a form of punishment, censorship of mail, denial of access to legal forms and law books, **constant dehumanization** through unwarranted cavity and cell searches, **endless beatings** and torture (including **sensory deprivation and criminal medical neglect**), the corrupt practice of using bribed/coerced informants (“debriefing”), group punishment, lack of educational and other meaningful programs, and a **totally corrupt prison administration** that breaks the laws of their own books and the Constitution. Every time prisoners attempt to resist these abuses, they are written up and targeted for further abuse.

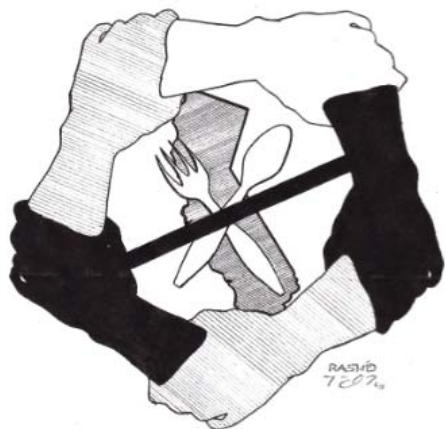
CDCR Statistics on the SHU:

Of the 1,111 people currently held in the SHU:

Over 513 have served **10 years or more** in the SHU. Of those, 78 have been in the SHU for **20 years or more**.

544 have been in the SHU more than 5 years, but fewer than 10 years.

In recognition of the fact that they had nothing left to lose, a core group of SHU prisoners at Pelican Bay (known as the Short Corridor Collective) came up with a list of simple reforms they were willing to risk their lives for. These reforms included things like “adequate sunlight,” “nutritious meals,” “medical treatment,” and access to educational programs. The plan to win these changes? **Hunger strike.**



Hunger strike logo by prisoner Kevin Rashid Johnson.

On July 1st one of CA's largest prison strikes began, eventually spreading to a third of CA's prisons and peaking with over 6,600 prisoners refusing food. The CDCR said it would not negotiate, despite thousands of lives hanging in the balance. As the prisoners' health began rapidly deteriorating, prison officials at Pelican Bay refused to allow both the *LA Times* and KPCC to visit the SHU, attempting to hide the truth from the public.

After 22 days of hunger striking, non-stop call-ins and letters from the public to CA representatives (including Governor Jerry Brown), demonstrations across the country, and mainstream media coverage, the CDCR agreed to implement some of the prisoners' five core demands. Since then the CDCR has failed to deliver any meaningful changes, instead choosing to go back on the negotiations process and trample on the hopes of thousands of people for an end to the torture.

The prisoners have been given no other choice but to resume their hunger strike, starting again on September 26th.

The changes the prisoners are demanding are standards in other Supermax prisons (eg, Federal Florence, Colorado, and Ohio), which supports the prisoners' position that the CDCR's claim of such

demands being a threat to safety and security are exaggerations.

In the prisoners' own words, the 5 Core Demands are as follows:

1. End Group Punishment & Administrative Abuse – This is in response to PBSP’s application of “group punishment” as a means to address individual inmates rule violations. This includes the administration’s abusive, pretextual use of “safety and concern” to justify what are unnecessary punitive acts. This policy has been applied in the context of justifying indefinite SHU status, and progressively restricting our programming and privileges.

2. Abolish the Debriefing Policy, and Modify Active/Inactive Gang Status Criteria -

- ⤴ Perceived gang membership is one of the leading reasons for placement in solitary confinement.
- ⤴ The practice of “debriefing,” or offering up information about fellow prisoners particularly regarding gang status, is often demanded in return for better food or release from the SHU. Debriefing puts the safety of prisoners and their families at risk, because they are then viewed as “snitches.”
- ⤴ The validation procedure used by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) employs such criteria as tattoos, readings materials, and associations with other prisoners (which can amount to as little as greeting) to identify gang members.
- ⤴ Many prisoners report that they are validated as gang members with evidence that is clearly false or using procedures that do not follow the Castillo v. Alameida settlement which restricted the use of photographs to prove association.

3. Comply with the US Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons 2006

Recommendations Regarding an End to Long-Term Solitary Confinement – CDCR shall implement the findings and recommendations of the US commission on safety and abuse in America’s prisons final 2006 report regarding CDCR SHU facilities as follows:

- ⤴ End Conditions of Isolation (p. 14) Ensure that prisoners in SHU and Ad-Seg (Administrative Segregation) have regular meaningful contact and freedom from extreme physical deprivations that are known to cause lasting harm. (pp. 52-57)
- ⤴ Make Segregation a Last Resort (p. 14). Create a more productive form of confinement in the areas of allowing inmates in SHU and Ad-Seg [Administrative Segregation] the opportunity to engage in meaningful self-help treatment, work, education, religious, and other productive activities relating to having a sense of being a part of the community.
- ⤴ End Long-Term Solitary Confinement. Release inmates to general prison population who have been warehoused indefinitely in SHU for the last 10 to 40 years (and counting).
- ⤴ Provide SHU Inmates Immediate Meaningful Access to: i) adequate natural sunlight ii) quality health care and treatment, including the mandate of transferring all PBSP- SHU inmates with chronic health care problems to the New Folsom Medical SHU facility.

4. Provide Adequate and Nutritious Food – cease the practice of denying adequate food, and provide a wholesome nutritional meals including special diet meals, and allow inmates to purchase additional vitamin supplements.

- ⤴ PBSP staff must cease their use of food as a tool to punish SHU inmates.
- ⤴ Provide a sergeant/lieutenant to independently observe the serving of each meal, and ensure each tray has the complete issue of food on it.
- ⤴ Feed the inmates whose job it is to serve SHU meals with meals that are separate from the pans of food sent from kitchen for SHU meals.

5. Expand and Provide Constructive Programming and Privileges for Indefinite SHU Status

Inmates.

Examples include:

- ⤴ Expand visiting regarding amount of time and adding one day per week.
- ⤴ Allow one photo per year.
- ⤴ Allow a weekly phone call.
- ⤴ Allow Two (2) annual packages per year. A 30 lb. package based on “item” weight and not packaging and box weight.
- ⤴ Expand canteen and package items allowed. Allow us to have the items in their original packaging [the cost for cosmetics, stationary, envelopes, should not count towards the max draw limit]
- ⤴ More TV channels.
- ⤴ Allow TV/Radio combinations, or TV and small battery operated radio
- ⤴ Allow Hobby Craft Items – art paper, colored pens, small pieces of colored pencils, watercolors, chalk, etc.
- ⤴ Allow sweat suits and watch caps.
- ⤴ Allow wall calendars.
- ⤴ Install pull-up/dip bars on SHU yards.
- ⤴ Allow correspondence courses that require proctored exams.

On Monday, September 26th, prisoners at both Pelican Bay & Calipatria will resume the hunger strike to stop the torturous conditions of Security Housing Units (SHUs).

The Calipatria hunger strikers have a similar, separate list of demands from the strikers at Pelican Bay, including abolish the defriending policy & modify active/inactive gang criteria and expanding canteen/package items & programs/privileges for validated/SHU status prisoners (such as art supplies, proctored exams for correspondence courses, P.I.A. soft shoes, yearly phone calls & two annual packages).

Once again prisoners are risking their lives for these simple reforms, willing to take on the same sacrifices to their health made during the first hunger strike: rapid weight loss (20-30 lbs), fainting and weakness, renal failure, severe dehydration, complications from pre-existing medical conditions (diabetic shock, blood pressure, etc) and organ damage from starvation.

Now WE need to show the same sort of courage the prisoners on hunger strike have shown. Now is NOT the time to standby and watch what's happening. **Solidarity means take action!!!**



We urge you to join in the demonstrations, the vigils, on-line petitions, the calls and letters to representatives, and organize events

in your neighborhood! This is a humanitarian crisis that desperately needs our attention and commitment to resolve it! We must put an end to the torture and the human rights abuses in this country. We must build a stronger movement against the prison system, against abuse and torture! Prisoners have put their lives on the line. What are you willing to do?

For a list of upcoming demonstrations and events in your city, visit <http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com/take-action/demonstrations-actions-events-in-the-us-canada/>

Phone Call-in/Letter Writing Campaign

Write & Call Governor Jerry Brown and your elected officials and urge them to pressure the CDCR to negotiate with the prisoners and honor their demands!:

Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 445-2841

Make Calls and Write Letters to:

Secretary Matthew Cate
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
1515 S Street
Sacramento 95814
Phone: (916) 323-6001

CDCR Public Affairs Office: (916) 445-4950

Sample Script for Phone Calls:

“Hi my name is _____. I’m calling about the statewide prisoner hunger strike that began at Pelican Bay. I support the prisoners & their reasonable “five core demands.” I am alarmed by the rapidly deteriorating medical conditions of the hunger strikers & the inaction of the CDCR. I urge you to make sure the CDCR negotiates with the prisoners and the outside mediation team the prisoners have approved, immediately & in good faith, before prisoners are force-fed or even die. Thank you.”

Sign the online petition at <http://www.change.org/petitions/support-prisoners-on-hunger-strike-at-pelican-bay-state-prison>.

Spread the word! Make copies of this pamphlet and distribute wherever you can! We need to flood the phone lines of CA representatives to urge them to make policy changes, so CALL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!

For updates on the hunger strike, visit <http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com/> everyday!

Letter from Pelican Bay- Alfred Sandoval

8/29/2011

Mr. O'Brien,

I received your postcard so I thought I'd answer your question as to how the hunger strike started for me. Well, I've been in the S.H.U. since July of 1987 so I've lived through a lot of physical as well as psychological abuses. I was originally placed in S.H.U. at San Quentin's Adjustment Center. The first thing I noticed as I was being escorted past the Sgt.'s office was a caricature of a boar hog dressed in a C/O's uniform holding a noose with a hammer hanging from it posted on the wall. So, being Mexican I knew what time it was. Slowly, the blatant racism was pushed into the politically correct broom closet but it's never been thrown out.

In 2003, I was returned from court to Pelican Bay and told in no uncertain terms that I would die here.

When PBSP created the control unit (short corridor) in early 2006, the goal of the Office of Correctional Safety (OCS) was made perfectly clear: Debrief or die! They implemented orders to the short corridor C/O staff to apply pressure to targeted prisoners and the gang unit (IGI) became the overseers of the control unit and began to target prisoners' families and friends and attempt to create discord by mixing up mail, withholding and delaying personal mail and restricting visits for as little as saying hello to another prisoner. Their goal is to isolate these targeted prisoners. I had never believed in hunger strikes, thinking that they're counter-productive. However, when the gang unit began to work in concert with the chief medical officer (the I.G.I. actually decides the

level of medical treatment prisoners in the short corridor receive) I decided to participate in this and the next hunger strike, but here's why:

A few years ago, a close friend, his name was Jimmy, developed cancer. The medical staff, M.T.A.'s and R.N.'s explained that if he's debrief, become an informant, he would receive better medical care. Now Jimmy and I had known each other since we were teenagers running the streets of East Los Angeles getting high and living the lifestyle that ended up with both of us in prison for life. As Jimmy's cancer grew worse, he began chemo therapy. Jimmy mentioned to me how the I.G.I. would "show up" at the clinic and comment that he could have contact visits with he wife before he died if he'd debrief. He refused but that's how he found out the cancer was terminal! Jimmy loved his wife more than anything and he wouldn't tell her everything about the head games and bullshit like waking up from surgery still under anesthesia being questioned by I.G.I. but I had warned him of that because it happened to me and at least three other prisoners. After one of the surgeries, Jimmy was returned to his cell after a brief stay at the PBSP infirmary. (Those cells are completely bare except for a bed and all you can do is lay there and wait). On the second night back in his cell, he awoke to a bed pain. He said it was a little after 2 a.m. and the staples had opened along his abdomen and he was bleeding. He was holding his intestines in calling for the C/O. The C/O came and saw the blood and said he'd call the R.N. on duty. The C/O came back approximately 30 minutes later with a roll of toilet paper. Jimmy was sitting on the blood-covered cement floor holding a towel soaked in blood against his stomach. The cop tossed Jimmy the toilet paper and said the medical staff would not come until the next shift and there was nothing he could do. Jimmy held his stomach close din pain until almost six a.m. when the medical finally came and they rushed him to the hospital. He asked that I keep it to myself because that was his style. I was pissed!! He had requested two hardship transfers to Corcoran because of its medical facility and he'd be able to see his wife and family more before he died. Both were denied and he was told to debrief and then he'd be transferred but he steadfastly refused. The cancer spread and the gang unit increased the headgames telling the medical staff to confiscate his shaded prescription glasses. But luckily, a Doctor Williams stepped in and told the medical staff to leave Jimmy alone as he was at end state cancer. Jimmy chose to stop the chemo therapy and die. We'd talk through a steel door and discuss everything and nothing and plan out his funeral. He died in December of 2010 and I am proud and honored to have been his friend.

Shortly after Jimmy's death I was told that approximately 8 of the older prisoners had been approved for transfer to the S.H.U. medical facility at New Folsom but the gang unit had those transfers stopped citing that those prisoners, all in their 60s and 70s years old, had not successfully completed the debriefing or in-active process thereby issuing a death sentence to all of these prisoners and denying adequate medical care.

I am 53 years old with incurable illnesses, Hep-C and Crohn's disease so I am participating in the hunger strike to expose how prisoners are being mistreated and medical treatment withheld as a coercion tactic.

The abuses, physical and psychological, the intimidations and harassments have very well documented history here at Pelican Bay State Prison. They should speak for itself.

n Early 1990 rumors of abuses at PBSP SHU come to light. The prison opens doors to media tour

n 1995 rumors of abuses citing C/O's extracting prisoners from their cells, stripping them naked and leaving them hogtied in the cold cells and on the cement yard over night. Prison opens doors to media tours

n 1998 C/O's accused of setting up inmates opening cell doors in SHU

n 2001 prisoners began hunger strike to change debriefing process as it was not legal! Promises were made, Castillo case settled and reworded to be used against prisoners. Prison opens doors to media tours

n 2006 California Inspector General office issues memo for media release citing their investigation exposed that the PBSP internal affairs would avoid finding staff misconduct on excessive use of force and that some changes had been made but more are needed

During this hunger strike, prisoners have been threatened with "progressive discipline" which means the prisoners' property will be taken out of the cells and they will only be allowed a pair of shower shoes and a pair of underwear until the administration deems the prisoner as "programming." The warden had a staff meeting before the last hunger strike telling staff that he would ignore the hunger strikers, which he did, violating the CDCR regulations and allowing prisoners to become ill. Grievances were returned unprocessed so it never happened.

That is Pelican Bay State Prison.

So now you know why I participate in the hunger strike.

Thank you for your time.

Alfred Sandoval

D#61000

Pelican Bay State Prison

Crescent City, California