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Re: Benjamin Biese (282786) and the WCI lockdown

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Hello,

I come to you because I do not know where to turn for help for Prisoners in Waupun Correctional Institution. I am sure you know of the WCI lockdown that has been going on since late March, Astoundingly, we, the public are only learning about it now, and the reports are dire. The most recent one is from someone who has become a dear friend and was recently transferred there:

“Starting to lose my mind Peg. To the point where I really need to talk to one of these PSU staff. I'm trapped in this cell. I'm starting to feel very unstable. Cannot control my emotions or thoughts. Ben.”

This is Benjamin Biese and I am writing you first, to ask you to intervene on his behalf. What others tell me is that all there is little or no help for anyone there. Please direct PSU to talk to him and please do what you can to get him out of there.

My mail is full of desperate pleas and I give you the gist of a few below. First here is the usual description of conditions:

This I transcribed from a RHU letter ( he is always on lockdown)almost impossible to read it is so light:

..”and I would like to lend my appreciation to any and all who helped towards our care and treatment which is horrible here at WCI

Rats, Roaches, Birds bats, blood splattered throughout cell Halls. clothing torn, not enough food less and less, no rec, no legal Library, bedspread and sheets Old and torn, excessive force constant. Tactics to keep us from standing up even when our health and safety is concerned, short of staff is why they say we're on lockdown, no form of visitation, (sentence cannot read ), Almost done, so I do feel like the DOC is getting over when it comes to money- definitely not spending it on what we're supposed to have. Food clothing, phones, commissary went up again, like the vendors that DOC uses are already invested in/ on from Doc authorities. Win/ win and they overlook other better sources of vendors because they're not able to bully them In order to bully us. thank you for listening .I want great in all your endeavors in life, wholeheartedly. sincerely

Another:( general population lockdown)

.” WCI has us on lockdown lying saying that over 40 inmates surrounded RHU and refused to lock in; however the conduct reports do not and will not show this to be the facts because this is a lie. they keep saying we aren't coming off lockdown until they gain compliance- meaning Stand for count, quit fishing and passing- despite people having deadlines they are completely refusing to allow us Law Library at all. From the warden on down they are telling us that the DOC and DAI Administrative Code has been suspended stating they can do whatever they want. I have been trying to get seen by HSU due to my loss of feeling in my hand from being

tased twice while cuffed and Shackled and RN Andrea b l e e k e r asked me if I wanted to be seen I said yes but I was never seen. I keep trying to address my constant fear that the WCI staff are going to cause me bodily harm to no avail. I do not feel safe here Ms Swan now how can I? Inmates are getting stabbed back to back and no Co is doing a damn thing to protect us. I am filing my lawsuits Pro Se and I can't even go to the law library to utilize the needed legal Network. Article 5 as well as article 7 of the universal Declaration of Human Rights are being violated. They are lying to the media about this lockdown!! We are on lockdown because the inmates don't stand for count because inmates keep passing and fishing because the inmates are acknowledging their constitutional rights!! they are stealing our personal property and disposing of it. The alternative to ink pens are black crayons and now all of a sudden all the Crayons have disappeared. The food they're feeding us is outdated the water extremely contaminated to the point everyday we're sick but in order to survive we've got to keep drinking and eating. I have PRC coming up in August Miss Swan and I really need to get out of this death trap I fear for my safety. WCI is the only prison on lockdown why is this Prison still running if it's allegedly so understaffed? There's a scam going on Within These Walls. I need to help before I end up dead in here"

The stabbing referred to- the one I know of is of Dennis Buford. The report is that he was stabbed 13 times by his cellmate- he had pleaded with WCI powers to protect him and they did nothing and basically stood around while the stabbing was going on. When he collapsed unconscious they carried him out of the cell, still shackled -he never got medical care and tells me that when he wrote me and I wrote the deputy warden and security director , he was transferred to WSPF. This is , I guess, the usual tactic to stop prisoners from litigating. I do not take credit for the transfer but am glad he is out of there and assure you that his transfer will not prevent me or him from securing a full blown investigation of this WCI lockdown obscenity. I have been so upset about the systemic lifelong trauma that afflicts RHU prisoners in general times, you can imagine my concern when learning of this wholesale group punishment effort.

AND THE WHY of THE LOCKDOWN IS CONFUSING. One prisoner says it is because a staff member got slapped, another that there was a fight. As stated above, several reports state that the media is being told an attempted takeover of the RHU unit precipitated the lockdown.

"At the closing of March 2023, a false incident were propagated in order to give cause for an institution locked out a proper investigation would in fact unearth the fact that no inmates attempted a hostile takeover of the Northwest cell Hall. There will be no camera footage to put this claim or any kind of reports to show punitive action taken against one of these individuals because these individuals do not exist- it simply did not happen. We're actually on lockdown because of short staffing issues, but they're making it seem as if we were the issue. They're violating every policy and procedure , subsequent to our constitutional amendments, Wisconsin Administrative Code 30604 responsibility of employees- every employee of the department is responsible for the safe custody of the inmates can find any Institution- "

Here is the most concrete evidence of the reason/excuse for the lockdown. Here is report of a memo from WCI Warden :

"Lockdown has been continuous at WCI since March 29, 2023. According to the Public Address Memo from Warden Hepp, normal operations will not even begin to be considered until :

- 1) Inmates begin to stand for formal Standing Counts with cell lights on.
- 2) That cell fronts not be covered in any way.
- 3) That inmates not "fish" items from cell to cell or otherwise pass items of any sort to each other.
- 4) That inmates not yell to each other or otherwise make any loud noise.

Psychological Services : None

Health Services : Dire Emergencies Only

Religious Services : None

Work : None. Only 12 kitchen workers each day.

Recreation : Limited Groups once per week. If you have been marked down as not following 1-4 above, your not going.

Showers : Once Per Week.

Meals : One "hot" meal per day.

As of right now, no end in sight, and no additional memo's released.

I am not giving you prisoners names because retaliation is so rampant. I will share all with you, however , if you can help. Even the excuse of rule violations for the lockdown do not hold water and prisoners have given ideas for real solutions to the problems most aggravating the warden. I can share those with you also.

With the third part mailing system I cannot get information and nurturing letters into the people most at risk and now there is no zoom or visiting and calls are restricted. THE WIDOC closing in on the prisoners and I do not understand it at all- The answer to understaffing is to reduce population = which was the campaign promise of Evers and touted by CArr- there are no programs, no mental health treatment for most prisoners except some window dressing= who would want to work there except those desperate or those sadistic. The 26\$ an hour wage will boost population for awhile but then most will quit with their stash. DOC once ran a decent system that did correct- WHAT happened and why this amazing power grab ?- what are the powers afraid of? Tell the public the truth- you will get support for a real shift to health.

I hope to hear from you soon- we have had good talks in the past.

Peg Swan

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Cc.members of Families for a Second Chance