



MISSOURI
CURE

Prisoner Narratives

Fredrico

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Fredrico's story is told through the eyes of a fellow adseg prisoner who had the sense of compassion and human decency to contact Missouri CURE to let the public know what happens when the mentally ill are disposed of in adseg and isolated without support, proper or professional treatment, or basic human empathy. What should be a great concern to the MDOC is that the following tragedy is just one of many cases where a mentally ill human being is placed into a correctional "rehabilitative" system that consistently and systematically fails them at every turn.

“Dear Missouri CURE,

My case is not what I’m writing to you about. It’s about other people: Brothers, Sons, Fathers, Uncles and Grandfathers. I have spent going on six months down here in the “hole” in Charlie Wing. It is a maximum-security wing here. I have a few stories to tell. I’m haunted by one and I have to get it out. This is because it’s a tragedy in my mind.

Fredrico was found hanging in his cell 5–D-12. He was here for some time on Strip Cell (suicide watch) because of his “voices” and his attempted suicidal behavior (I’m bawling like a baby trying to write this). I talked to Fredrico on many days trying to pass the adseg time and really didn’t get far with him. He felt trapped because he felt abused by the staff as well as other inmates (predators) in my block. He was doing ok for a few days, was off strip cell but needed watching just the same. Anyone with any type of education knew this person was sick. Two officers showed at his door one day and told him to pack his things that he was being moved from a single man camera cell to a two-man cell. He stated he was fine, he didn’t want to go. Knowing he was mentally unstable, not to mention a history of suicide, the officers threatened him with everything from conduct violations, pepper spray, and to dropping the food port. So, under duress, he agreed to move.

*When he moved to D-12 his cellmate knew he wasn’t right. I spoke to his cellmate because they put him in C Wing right in Fredrico’s old cell after the incident. He said that **Fredrico suffered from severe depression, heard voices and paced a lot.** He was also my neighbor for while after Fredrico’s suicide. **His many attempts to notify staff of Fredrico’s threats to harm himself, over a span of a few weeks, were ignored.***

One night they were running what they call “rec” for adseg inmates. It’s when they lock you in a dog kennel for an hour. On the way back in to his cell Fredrico’s body was found by his cellmate hanging from a light fixture.

*Some say the **staff didn’t do their jobs that night**. They were too busy doing “rec” and didn’t do the walk-throughs like they were supposed to. All of that doesn’t matter to me though. What matters is: **Why was he over there in the first place?** I’m not a trained professional by any stretch of the imagination and could see that he wasn’t fit to be housed with general population inmates, let alone be out of close supervision. **These people are more concerned with using those adseg cells as punishment** than what they are truly for. And I can go on: denying a man his psych meds (another inmate) and punishing him because he snaps out in school and threatens to kill the teacher. Another inmate Jason C. every time he gets “unruly” the answer for him is pepper spray. **The officers taunt him into confrontation** knowing he is mentally unstable and, when they get him worked up, they “**justify**” the use of force.*

*I’m just an old country guy from “po-dunk” Missouri, but even I know **right from wrong** and what passes as decent and what doesn’t. My heart is heavy with what I have learned and seen here. Not to mention my own trials and tribulations. Prison is not a nice place, was never meant to be. These were people taken out of society as punishment. It is not the responsibility of the DOC to punish us for our crimes. **People should not be punished if they are sick or mentally ill**. I’m a state-raised man. I’ve been doing time for most of my adult life, since 1988 to be honest. Yes, I am screwed up myself, but at least I can control my emotions for the most part. I have firsthand knowledge of the emotional stress and physical abuse that one can go through in these places. **Here they use (withholding) toilet paper as a punishment**. I’ve seen fellas stranded on the toilet because staff thinks it’s funny to leave them there.*

I’m not going to take up any more of your time. That’s something I have plenty of and you do not. I’m going to order your paper as soon as I can. I’m also going to contact my family and let them know about you. I hope that God blesses each and every one of you and looks after you on those highways and by-ways of life. Much love and thank you again for listening and being there.

P.S. If you or your staff has any questions on any subject, please feel free to contact me. I’ve been putting my prisoner handbook to good use here so I’m pretty unpopular with the administration. But I will continue. Please thank

your staff for a job well done and I'll be looking forward to supporting your efforts in the future.

Respectfully,

A.J. Stevens

Farmington Correctional Center”

The final days and hours of Fredrico's life, and the failings of the MDOC to treat his mental illness and prevent his suicide, place into question not only the purpose and usefulness of solitary confinement but also the tremendous detriment concerning human health it poses when we incarcerate the mentally ill – or those whose mental stability suffers due to the conditions of their confinement. It raises concerns as to the overall environment of the MDOC as a place not defined by human values and rehabilitation but one filled with – and inflicting – trauma, conflict, and hopelessness.

If Fredrico's unjustified suffering and its terrible conclusion aren't proof enough, ***“After many attempts to notify staff”*** pretty much says it all. But what is the ultimate price when we throw away a sick human being so willingly and in the face of scientific knowledge and experience? This despite being informed time and again that our correctional system is a complete and rotten failure on a human scale? Something tells me Fredrico would have a good answer to this question if anyone cared to listen.