

"A Chronicle Of Twilight"

This is for anyone interested in how things have been going since I began my 'Hunger Strike' on the first of January. I am writing this on the twentieth of January, so please excuse me if I become incoherent at times. Lack of food and many discouragements along the way has taken a lot out of me. The title of this article is meant to reflect a feeling I'm experiencing. It's like my Life is already shrouded in a shadow, but there's still light to be seen which I hope to be here to see the next Golden dawn. However, at this moment I know complete darkness awaits. A darkness that will swallow my whole being as I tread alone. Only the strength blessed upon me by the Almighty Lord of the Universe will sustain me. Yet, here I stand in twilight to tell you about the days that led to this moment.

January 1, 2007 was the "jump-off day". The first thing I did in the morning was to wait for them to open my feeding slot so I could stick my arm in the food box. Pancakes were on the tray again! Obviously, it was already known to the administration that protests were planned and they weren't going to let their ranking officials slip by demonstrating the ~~un~~unprofessionalism they display on any other day of the year. A lieutenant came to ask me what the problem is and I let him know that I was conducting a protest to solidify the fact that I had refused the tray and declared myself on 'Hunger Strike'. Usually this one individual is the most unprofessional and condescending lieutenant you can speak to. However, this time he took his time to talk to me to let me know that all 'Hunger Strike' refusals would be accurately documented. With that much considered, instead of making them suit up a team, I just waited until I felt they were half suited-up and then removed my arm from the food slot.

Later on that morning I went to the recreation cage to protest again. While I was out there, the two officers working the pod asked me in a serious manner why we were protesting. I briefly spoke on the conditions we have to live in while pointing it out from where we stood. When television priviledges were mentioned, they perked up. They said that a majority of the guards were pushing - to a certain extent - to get us T.V. priviledges. They explained that it would cut down on a lot of trouble and work, as they know that guys with T.V. will be very easy to manage if their behavior was connected to their T.V. and there would be less recreation due to guys trying to keep up with their shows. I've never seen bigger 'Soap Opera' fans than these fellas on Death Row. I hate to admit it, but I'd be very compelled to make level-1 to watch some shows!

After speaking with them, I refused to leave the recreation cage so that the Sargent would have a chance to talk about his side of the conflict. The Sargent came on the pod and we had a very positive conversation on the whole situation on Death Row. He echoed the same sentiments the other guards had about T.V. priviledges. I explained the many problems on the conditions we are forced to live in. The Sargent actually takes out a little notepad and

writes some stuff down. Then, it came down to what I would do and I let him know that because of his professionalism, I would not make him perform a major use of force, but I still had to protest so I would refuse to walk back to my cell. He seemed to understand (if not respect) the fact that I must protest until I see improvements. Too many so-called protesters in the past settled for promises that were never kept. So, after more conversation the Sargent suited-up a 4-man team to carry me to my cell when I refused to walk. When I got back to my cell I filled out a 'written statement' for the minor use of force, in which I addressed the issues I had on my mind. Mainly, it was based on the filthy living conditions.

That night, I decided that I needed to organize my thoughts, so the next time I spoke to the rank I would have my issues in line. Plus, I wanted to keep everything relevant to the authority I was speaking to, so I only made a list of problems to be resolved by the rank that worked on the unit. From this aspiration came the document we know as "Immediate Presolutions". While I drafted this document it occurred to me that nobody else was allowed to recreate or shower on E and F-section of this pod and they fed us sack meals, which made it easier to refuse. Sack meals are usually nasty! Also, I noticed that the cleaning crew was taking an unusual amount of time cleaning the pod. I got up to look outside of my door and saw that the porters were given proper cleaning agents and tools. **THEY DETAILED THE POD!** Then, I found out that all the pods would be detailed! I recorded this as a small step towards positive progress without any hostilities. This showed me the willingness of the rank to rectify the problems within their authority. I went to sleep that night with a sense of satisfaction.

The next day, on the second, 'E and F' sections were let off of lock-down. I finished writing the final draft of "Immediate Presolutions". I was on "cell restriction", so I only got to shower that day. A rather uneventful day. The calm before the storm!

On the third I refused to leave the shower after I was done. I presented the carbon copy of "Immediate Presolutions" to ~~the~~ a Sargent. He was indifferent about the whole deal. He was more concerned about getting me out of the shower. I could tell that he didn't want to do any extra work, but I explained to him that until I began seeing serious efforts to resolve our issues that I must protest. I wanted to at least let him be ready to get a team to suit-up and carry me back to my cell. He remained professional and performed the minor use of force in a respectful way. During the minor use of force the Lieutenant showed up and took the time to listen to my issues and I let him know that nothing is personal during the protest as they remain non-violent. He seemed to understand and agree that we should keep it on a professional level. He just asked for a chance to make things proper. On my minor use of force 'written statement' I addressed the inadequate food service and dirty necessities.

Later that afternoon, I was called out to have a media visit. KXAN Ch. 36-Austin happened to

be doing a presentation of the effects of child abuse. As I mentioned in an earlier article, a while back I wrote a child protection agency to see if I could help in any way. As KXAN interviewed these people they mentioned my letter. A beautiful lady named Jenny Hoff was sent to speak with me on where child abuse could lead to for those abused. I tried to be informative as possible, but I was a little flustered as I was not prepared to speak on such a deeply emotional subject that I still don't fully understand myself. As we concluded I briefly mentioned the 'Hunger Strike'. She wrote it down, but was only mildly interested, so I figured that would be the last I'd hear from her. I enjoyed the visit otherwise due to the fact that in this prison none of the females come close to being gorgeous or polite. So, it was a break from the ever-present monotony.

A Sargent and Lieutenant came to take me back to my cell and I refused to walk! That's number two! In one day! I tried to press some issues with the rank, but both acted like they wouldn't even talk. When they did start talking they became very combative. I saw that they couldn't be reasoned with, so I continued to be polite and ended the conversation. I decided that I would just continue to make my point on the 'written statements'.

On the fourth of January they finally began to weigh us. I weighed in at 202 lbs. this time. It's weird to me, because the last 'Hunger Strike' ended with me weighing about 210 lbs..... Not eating really started catching up with me this day. I was so drained of energy and everytime I stood up I would get so dizzy that my vision would black-out for a few seconds. Instead of taking me to the ~~the~~ infirmary to get weighed, they had the nurse bring a cart around with the necessary equipment. The scale is so screwed that they have to calibrate it every time they use it. Plus, they've begun doing the weighing during the mornings. Nothing much happened all day. At night they passed out brand new socks! Could this be another step? I'm sure as time goes by others will take credit for these things, but I have the disciplinary cases to prove it and my "Immediate Resolutions". I've already seen many people trying to take credit for this 'Hunger Strike' and it disappoints me that men can't get past their ego games. I trudge on by myself in search for change and positivity, though many times I see these Frauds exploiting my work as their own. I hope to do so much work that you can't mistake who did this. Castle of Deceits Fall hard! Make no mistake, other than me, the only 'organization' qualified to speak about starting this 'Hunger Strike' is Steven Woods of www.anarchyinchains.com. Those who participated can speak about what they've done to make it more glorious than I imagined it would be. I don't have a list, but I'm sure they have their own stories posted. I leave it up to you to discern the Frauds and drama queens from the Truth.

Not much happened on the fifth. Somehow I weighed in at 204 lbs. and what had previously been reported that there were 21 men on 'Hunger Strike' had somehow been whittled down to 9 men in one day. As with most news in the prison culture, this turned out to be a lie. It doesn't surprise me in the least. I did sit down on the run, but after a conversation with

the Sargent, I decided to walk back. In this conversation me and the Sargent came to an understanding that we could coexist without hostilities. He would do what he could to make the necessary changes and allow me to protest on specific days since the protest was not meant to be spiteful. He promised that we would be able to protest and bear no retaliation if I just did it on the appointed days. This way, not only does he have to validate his word on making progress, he also has to let me protest without retaliation. Thus, progress is made; protest is done; and there are no hostilities leading to a negative environment. We agreed to these terms and both sides have kept their word.

I submitted an I-60 to the Major requesting to speak with her about making progress towards improving the environment that men here are protesting against. Of course, I didn't really count on someone so arrogant to grace me with their superior presence, but I felt it was worth a try. I also mailed in a grievance about the unnecessary harassment of Level 2 and 3 residents by denying them access to their hard-back books.

The sixth was eventless. I weighed in at 200 lbs. and was very weak and dizzy all day. I've accumulated so much restriction from protesting that I can't even get more than a reprimand! So, all I get to do is shower while I watch the others go to recreation each day.

On the seventh I wrote the article "Just In Case" in a moment of realization that I could die from this 'Hunger Strike'. This was an appointed day of protesting, so I sat down coming from the shower. A Sargent came to talk to me and had a conversation with me about resolving the issues I've been bringing up. He let me know by pointing out the things that had already been done around us that they were working on it. Then he spoke on some initiatives they were taking that would unfold within weeks. He also mentioned that Food Service would be improved and a new Kitchen Captain appointed. We conducted the minor use of force in a respectful manner and I was given ample time to make a verbal statement on video. I wish that I could really convey how off kilter this has me that the officials are making these steps to resolve the issue and work with me on my protest. They even make suggestions of things we could do to fight the Death Penalty. That very night the showers were cleaned with a hot water pressure washer! I really couldn't believe it! Another thing I can't believe is other men's inability to see these things I've worked for and achieved. The potential of effectiveness is great and I feel that with the public's help we can make the same progress against the Death Penalty.

The eighth found me at ~~197~~ 197 lbs. and the whole pod on lock-down due to other protests apart from my actions. I wrote "Immediate Resolutions: Part 2" while it was quiet enough to think. The dizziness and weakness subsided a bit. Only a bit!

The whole pod was still locked-down on the ninth. I weighed in at 195 lbs. and felt pretty well despite the circumstances.

On the tenth I was postponed for shower until second shift. When I came out the shower

I sat down in protest of the ongoing murder of Mr. Carlos Granadas. What really struck me is that I actually knew this man and I can't even begin to tell you how nice of a person he was. I can't vouch for his past before we met, but this was one of the most tolerable guys I've ever met. He tolerated a lot from people and still found the peace within to smile and laugh around it. If you asked him for anything he could spare - it was yours. What really struck a nerve in me was that the murder was being committed at that very moment, as I watched men who declared to be protesters go to recreation and showers without a peep as this murder occurred right under our noses. Even a man (who was at recreation) who agreed with me that we should protest all executions didn't say a word even as he watched me make a statement against the execution and get carried to my cell. This disgusted me to the point that it made me proclaim total independence in my protest due to the lack of support from anyone else. All I've gotten is brow-beaten and criticized by others and even ridiculed that I would dedicate myself to the point of facing Death for my beliefs. The only people showing a willingness to work with me to change things positively are the TDCJ officials themselves. They haven't just talked - they've showed action!

So, from that point on I knew that what could be done here would get done by the work of me and the rank. I have confidence in "Immediate Resolutions" that you all will support me by helping that document reach its full potential. After this, all we can work on is the things controlled by the board of directors in Huntsville and Texas Legislature. This is only to be ~~done~~ done by you and me. So, that's where I look to if I survive this hunger strike. People, I was so disgusted that if not for my word, I would have quit any form of protest.

Let me give you a run-down of my weight by date....

Jan. 11 - 197 lbs. / Jan. 12 - 198 lbs. / Jan. 13 - 194 lbs. / Jan. 14 - 194 lbs. / Jan. 15 - 191 lbs. / Jan. 16 - 190 lbs. / Jan. 17 - 189 lbs. / Jan. 18 - 189 lbs. / Jan. 19 - 188 lbs. / Jan. 20 - 189 lbs. On the seventeenth a nurse informed me that my kidneys are starting to give out. She said that it could also hurt my liver and heart - permanently.

Now, please allow me to take this moment to also express something I've come to understand even deeper during this 'Hunger Strike'.... I have come to acutely know the difference between 'hunger' and 'starvation'. 'Hunger' is a condition of the mind that can be psychosomatic or effect the physical aspect of a human with a pressure that can simulate pain. However, this is but an illusion as 'hunger' can be defeated by the strong will of the mind to be disciplined enough to control the intensities of its cravings which can be addictions. An example is a healthy man that just finished eating a huge feast, but in his mind the meal isn't complete without dessert! So, he hungers for dessert until he gets it. This borders on addiction. Yet, even as everyday humans, we have conditioned our bodies to expect food at certain intervals/periods of the day. This scheduling unconsciously triggers 'hunger' at certain times of the day. The time doesn't have to be based on a clock, but also events or a level

of stress can trigger it. So, people who don't truly need food at all experience this 'hunger'. Now comes 'starvation'.... 'Starvation' is an actual destructive element that manifests from true deprivation or denial. Only the truly denied feel 'starvation' and the only way to defeat it is to nurture that aspect of a human which has been deprived. 'Starvation's' attack is as real as a wound inflicted upon the flesh. Just like a wound, the effects can spread to other parts of the body. Lose enough blood and you will die! The concept of 'Hunger' and 'Starvation' extends to both aspects aside from the physical body: mental and spiritual aspects are in jeopardy! Education, Love, Food, and Spiritual belief/discipline (No matter what 'God' or religion you choose) is necessary in nurturing a healthy human being. People, the men here are being deprived of healthy nurturing here on Death Row. We are denied contact visits and face overly strict rules on the visits we get - thus, depriving us of Love. We starve for Love! The effects of this is evident by every frustrated and loathing voice heard here. The pain is self-evident. We are denied religious services and have few outlets that produce healthy spiritual counselling/advice. The only education we get is through books that we have to order and then have no guidance in how to learn. So, either you get no education or miseducation. Many men read books and try to speak on subjects as if they know something, but they are so off-base because they've processed the information without clear understanding due to the lack of a teacher. This applies to religion also. You'd be hard pressed to find healthy food! What we do get is scrawny servings and/or 'over or under-cooked' food. During this 'Hunger Strike' I have found discipline to conquer 'hunger', but I cannot defeat starvation - so, while I feel no hunger, I still starve. Those unconscious to this distinction don't even realize the effects of deprivation and how it is harming them. Yet, they do know that they feel pain and torment. Whenever they 'hunger' that makes it even much more horrid. This has led me to empathize even more with those being deprived anywhere of any important aspect of their health. No one aspect is more important than the next, because the deprivation of one bleeds into the next. A healthy human is one nurtured and balanced in all aspects: physically, mentally, and spiritually. (For all my Atheist friends: it is possible to believe in 'Animism' without God, because if that were not possible - then your other aspects would be impossible. Spirit is a part of your body.)

Finally, there are a few things I'd like to get off my chest in the search for understanding so that we may all move forward, instead of languishing in unspoken negativity.... First off, I seek understanding in ~~the~~ why everyone has to tell me that I shouldn't hurt myself and possibly die for this 'Hunger Strike'. When I ask them, "Why shouldn't I?" I get no response. They act like I'm doing this for fun! Listen here, this shit ain't no joke! Part of the reason I feel I must take it all the way to force-feeding and possibly Death is because the ridicule I've heard thus far, like 'Hunger Strikes' aren't serious. Plus, we did a 'Hunger Strike' recently and this time I know we must speak louder. Nobody is taking it serious. My whole message is that we must take everything seriously. I'm tired of watching men walk out of here to never come back. Tired of seeing another broken family that interacts with society - which in turn hurts us all. Truthfully, if the men here on

Death Row, society, and abolitionist cannot take our cause more seriously - then I really don't want to be here in a doomed and condemned atmosphere. I'd rather bow out on my own terms. I'd rather die trying to make a positive change in this world than to be a victim. I'm not here looking for your pity, I'm here to gather supporters of the cause and launch effective resistance against this plague! Yet, let me say this much.... After this 'Hunger Strike' I will make an effort to do things your way. I will conform to your idea of how I should be. Why? because I believe in giving other methods a chance to work. So, when I (if I) come back from the hospital - I will cut my hair and shave; I will start eating; I will not demonstrate here; and I will maintain 'good behavior' to attain Level-1 status. When I do that, I will look at how many of you support our cause with me then. Can't nobody doubt my seriousness and dedication, because I've done what I can to submit myself to our cause. I am a Brotha and servant to the will of the People. Right now, I'm keeping my 'Word' to the People who saw this 'Hunger Strike' necessary. Pulling out my associates from the demonstrations is a step toward fulfilling the will of the supporters who feel we shouldn't activate civil disobedience as a protest.

Another thing that comes to mind is why would any of you speak out against the 'Hunger Strike'? I understand if you disagree with it and I totally respect that. I don't like it either, but it's a shame that I feel that it must be done due to the situation. Even so, the least you could do is keep the negativity to ~~your~~ yourself. I was hoping that regardless of your stance you'd be able to give some words of strength and/or encouragement or positive reinforcement.

The last thing I want to speak on is the misinformation going around that DRIVE started and/or sponsored these protests and 'Hunger Strike'. Since nobody has taken a step from their ego to clarify this - let me do it now. Why? because people need to realize that these actions and passions aren't consolidated to a select few. In the beginning of the other 'Hunger Strike', not one DRIVE 'comrade' was involved. When the plans for this bout were conceived, there was not one DRIVE 'comrade' involved. Each time guys had to conquer their egos to have the strength to get involved with something they didn't start. People need to realize the strength it took for the DRIVE 'comrades' to get involved with something outside of their own plans and goals. The guys who really took big steps are those independent of any group. Most of them stayed on the 'Hunger Strike' longer than any DRIVE 'comrade'. Mr. Steven Woods of www.anarchyinchains.com deserves a lot of credit for his determination and hard work which has overshadowed anybody's ~~in~~ in my own eyes in a positive way.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize and give my utmost respects to the other 20 men who participated no matter how long they lasted or how they lasted! Everyday was a testament to their solidarity and strength. Nobody can take anything away from you. I will make sure we are heard! Thank you for your help and I hope that you were able to inspire someone close in a positive way. For the negative haters - may God have mercy upon your tortured souls.... Darkness awaits!