

Time / Cut



Time/Cut is a publication for Indiana prisoners and their family and friends. It includes news, thoughts, and helpful resources from inside and outside the walls and around the world. The articles in the publication do not necessarily reflect on its contributors, creators, or distributors. Its contents are for informational purposes only. Time/Cut does not provide legal assistance or romantic arrangements.

This publication depends on the interest and participation of prisoners in Indiana and their loved ones on the outside. Please send us any of the following to the address below: responses to Time/Cut and its contents, helpful tips for navigating prison, sharing your experience, and

more. Please state explicitly if you'd like your contributions to be considered for future issues and if you'd like your name published with it. Time/Cut, PO Box 3246, Bloomington, IN 47402 or timecutindiana@riseup.net.

Please write to us for a catalogue of other articles and texts related to surviving prison. This publication is free to friends and family of prisoners in Indiana. If you do not already receive it but want to, please write us and we will add you to our mailing list. If you wish to stop receiving it, write us and we'll take you off. If your incarcerated loved ones would like to receive and inside version, please send us their address. Thanks for reading!

Gendered Application of the Adult Disciplinary Procedures and Other Enforcement of Rules

by an anonymous woman currently at IWP

Due to non-gender specific approaches to female corrections, the Adult Disciplinary Policy and other rules (or customs) are applied to female populations in trivial methods. This is not to say that male populations are not infantilized in the application of rules or customs, rather that the intent that certain rules encompass are expanded for application in female populations, not applied to male populations.

1. Female populations have been oppressed by codes against homosexual activity. These codes are separate from codes detailing non-consensual or violent sexual activity; these does have created levels in misconduct resulting in different consequences per level. Numerous documentaries and research maintain that women are social beings and find emotional stability in community with other women. Nonetheless, many women in Indiana prisons have been placed in isolation, prevent rehabilitative opportunities, stayed in prison longer than their original sentence, and denied contact with family and children because of a huge, cuddling, or other intimate behavior that is not violent and is true to female behavior.

For Class C (minor) sexual conduct offenses, only women populations have lost contact visits and suffered more punitive consequences than their male counterparts.

2. Women prisons have not had gangs or extreme violence (i.e. with weapons). Despite this, since 2010, Indiana has further punished women guilty of conduct violations or customary violations (i.e. filing too many grievances) by placing them in a separate housing unit that segregates and punishes.

At Indiana Women's Prison (IWP), the classification department uses the classification process to place chosen women in GRACE. Although classification is not to be used in disciplinary cases nor for punishment, those in charge choose who is housed on the restricted unit. Once there, the women are more highly surveilled than other populations, with more rules applicable than the open population prison. Women are separated based on emotional connections or assumed homosexual behavior whereas violent behavior among women is discounted and not considered in these classification processes.

At Rockville Correctional Facility (RCF), RDU is the classification unit used to discipline women beyond what

is allowed in Indiana law for punishment in rule violations. This program even restricts women from makeup, a clearly gender-specific product. Women are forced to suffer self-esteem or normal gender-expressions due to specific female-only application of trivial methods due to more serious issues in security lacking.

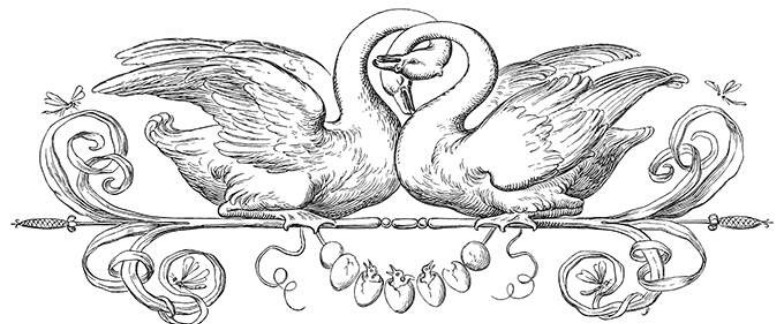
Gender-non-conforming women and homosexual women are especially targeted and punished beyond legal limits in these policies.

3. A 247B was created in the past ten years to encompass the exploitation of one inmate by another in terms of blackmail, threatening violent behavior, or threatening another person's family or friends. However, this rule violation has been applied in the female population in trifling ways. The major conduct report has been used against female populations for possessing pictures of fellow incarcerated peers or having the same number or address as another. In this way, IDOC has decided that no two incarcerated women can contact someone on the outside with the same address or phone number found on the list of another incarcerated person, nor share photos of one another. Male populations are permitted to take group photos and possess them. Unless violence, threats, or theft is involved, men often call people on the outside with the same numbers or write to the same addresses.

Women have been isolated and stayed in prison longer than originally sentenced for this gendered application of the rule.

4. The Internal Affairs institution at female prisons have less serious behavior to investigate or in a less frequent manner than those working with male populations. As such, triviality in application has a tendency towards extremism.

In one example, all phone calls are recorded and monitored. However, only at IWP does Internal Affairs deny two incarcerated people from calling the same phone number. This application of "safety and security" totally overreaches what was initially envisioned. Clearly in the monitoring of phone calls would justification for safety



and security concerns enter. This is an extreme and unduly burdensome application of a gendered action by Internal Affairs to IWP. Central Office allows the prison to govern itself, not intervening in institutional governance unless proof exists and matters to a court of legal wrongdoing.

Another example is the denial of weather-appropriate clothing. Due to internal affairs concerns with personal expression, women at IWP have been denied the ability to wear scarves in the winter. Due to extreme oppressiveness, women at IWP also are not allowed to wear sweat-shirts or sweatpants to med line, chow movements, or job assignments, even in below-freezing temperatures.

5. Due to female populations' general docility, no organized way exists for these populations to raise issues to staff. Dorm rep meetings occur monthly and staff oppresses, insults, and refuses to address the issues of the population. Current issues include: lack of recreation, unfair application of services or opportunities, pressing maintenance issues, lack of needs, and medical complaints. None of these issues has been addressed or resolved in over a year.

Statement and Analysis from Man Formerly Incarcerated in Wabash Valley

U.S officials have often criticized Iran's prison conditions. As awful as the prison conditions in Iran may be, Amerika, the proclaimed bastion of freedom and democracy, is much worse. Shane Bauer, the Amerikan captured and imprisoned for 2years in Iran, bore witness to this. In an interview in the November/December 2012 issue of Mother Jones magazine, he described the hardships of solitary confinement in Iranian prisons and found upon entering U.S. prisons, that conditions of confinement in Iran paled in comparison to those routinely practiced in Amerika.

Furthermore, in response to the coronavirus outbreak, Iran has released some 85,000 of its prisoners-over half of its prison population-including its high security and political prisoners. Yet Amerika refuses to release anyone but a handful of jail detainees in response to the pandemic.

We must demand greater action and the release of all U.S. prisoners, most of whom are unjustly confined anyway. With nearly two and a half million people in prison in the U.S., and poor, oppressed, and colonized people making

up the disproportionate majority of them, almost every black and brown person in Amerika has a loved one or knows someone who is locked up. The impact of these mass incarceration practices targeted especially at black and brown communities, and almost exclusively at the poor, has been as disruptive of and destructive to our communities and families as the old chattel slave system that routinely sold loved ones off to distant slave owners, never to be seen or heard from again.

Because of the poverty and limited resources of these targeted groups, and the common practice of imprisoning people far away from their homes and communities, U.S. prisoners are as lost to their loved ones as were the antebellum slaves that were sold away.

There is no more justice in U.S. imprisonment than there was in chattel slavery. In fact, the 13th amendment was passed after the Civil War as a compromise to southern slaveholders, that substituted racially selected imprisonment that subjected the imprisoned to state-controlled forced labor and social containment, for the old system of privately controlled forced labor and social containment. Almost everyone in prison in the U.S. was "convicted" of crimes through the admittedly corrupt plea bargain process, through which they are coerced to plead guilty, often for crimes that they were innocent of or were overly charged for, because they couldn't afford to hire lawyers who'd mount any real defenses for them.

For over 95% of Amerika's imprisoned, there were no trials before any of juries of their peers as the U.S. Constitution falsely promises and coming from marginalized social groups that the establishment cares nothing about, prisoners' health needs mean nothing to prison officials, which is why COVID-19 presents an especial danger to prisoners.

In the institutionalized prison setting, where large numbers of people are forcibly confined in close proximity to each other, a virus-like COVID-19 would spread like bacteria in a Petrie dish. Not to mention that officials would let it spread and go untreated as they have with other deadly viruses like Hepatitis-C.

Not only do officials care nothing of prisoners' health needs, but prison medical staff, who are known to be among the lowest quality, are under trained and under qualified to provide needed care, and often can not find work anywhere else. Many are actually forbidden, because of professional misconduct from working anywhere but in prisons. One of many examples was Dr. Michael Mitcheff, who worked as Chief Medical Officer for the entire Indiana Prison System, where I've been im-

prisoned since November of 2018. As a private doctor, Mitcheff had his medical license revoked for repeatedly writing and filling false prescriptions in others' names to feed his own hydrocodone addiction. His license was reinstated on a probationary basis in 1999, with the medical board stating, "He may only work in the Indiana Prison System" [!?!]. Mitcheff, the Indiana Prison System, and its medical contractor, Corizon was subsequently subject to a wave of lawsuits for malpractice and withholding needed medical care from prisoners. As a result, Corizon's contract was terminated in 2016.

Under existing circumstances, COVID-19 would become a pandemic of the worse sort inside U.S. prisons, which only compounds the injustice and inhumanity inherent in the Amerikan so-called criminal justice process. If Iran can release over half of its prisoners, Amerika can certainly release all of its own. Let us put forward the demand to let all our people go! Dare to Struggle! Dare to Win! All Power to the People!

Report on Pandemic Conditions at Indiana Women's Prisoners

taken from IDOCWatch.org

04/11/2020

It is midnight. We have been denied access to water and toilets since 8:15pm. It will still be another half hour. C/o lowry wont let all inmates use the restrooms fairly and it has caused major issues. She thinks we are the troubled unit she normally works on and provokes us. She doesn't care we have to use the bathroom. She applies the rules unfairly and discriminatorily. The lieutenant informed me very rudely and provoking that, even if ppl cook in a microwave, no one else on the unit is allowed to use the restroom during their cooking time. So, only on this bracket, with c/o Lowry has it been extreme chaos in 3 to 4 days. That is because of the application of the rules and interpretation on this shift. We are locked in the cell for 12 days now. It is so hard when the c/o lowry allowed 3 girls to run up to fight another girl, and the c/o ran up too. That's crazy that c/o's are picking sides in arguments that they allow to start from their unfairness and favortism. Then, they pick sides along unfair lines and promote violence. The Lt. Williams then feels it necessary to further provoke instead of make things better. She did not care at all that we have gone, now 4 hours without using the restroom. The Lt. also said for us to get CAB's for knocking on the doors, yet we have no emergency buttons, and are not self-contained. This shift is saying only one room is allowed out on the unit at a time. Period. Regardless if one room takes a half hour, the rest of us cannot use the bathroom or get water. Even with these punishments, we

still use the same bathrooms and no cleaning of them for days! And no bleach! Ppl are sick here and stuck in they rooms. Thanks for listening. It is rough. I have cramps from not being allowed to use the restroom and get water.

04/14/2020

Not only are incarcerated ppl dealing with covid-19 worries, being forced by nature of "their debt to society" to live on top of 100 other ppl with no levels of separation possible, but also the increase in living conditions that cause the degradation of the human spirit. The Governor says these are "the safest places". When social distancing mandates hit America and Indiana, we didn't get any information until the first 14 days was almost over. We were not privy to distancing, working at our prison jobs and eating in communal chow halls. Nonetheless, the living conditions on unit have prevented the ability to distance from others while denying us the ability to exercise or have space outside of our immediate living quarters. (an hour mandated by federal law). Of course the course has been threatening and punitive...one c/o telling a woman who had to urinate, " i will drag you down the hall." Numerous times we have been locked in cells and denied exit because the c/o is mad at someone in the room; no bathroom, no water...no exit. Communication channels initially cut off: even outgoing mail stated by a Sgt. to having been suspended. Wifi shut off. No phone or email communication initially. Certain c/o's taking the communication devices to show us what misery feels like because somewhere along the line we and I have conducted myself to deserve this torture. Adding insult to injury, they deny any wrongdoing, prevent complaints, leave us in vulnerable situations with sick around, 3 toilets with 1 trough sink in the bathroom for 80 ppl. Now, they are still not permitting better options to de-escalate and de-stress our bodies helping our minds...but are forcing some to work. We are not capable enough to go to the bathroom as needed or use wall phones or sit in an open space, but certainly capable enough to work for \$0.15 hour when it benefits them.

In 2005 DOC decided they would no longer pay an employee to sit with a dying inmate or a suicidal inmate. At that time, it decided inmates, albeit "good" and "token" inmates could sit with these vulnerable ppl. It has turned in to a beast on its own...extracting free labor from ppl, forcing certain "good" groups to mandatorily work in these settings. Being forced to watch others in cages smearing feces or harming themselves or saying heart wrenching words. My population is mandated to watch these persons with no training, no mental health screening themselves. They are classified "bad" inmate the minute they speak or humanize their objects of watch or complain for them. This state of being mentally and



emotionally draining.

During these punitive times, when we have had to beg for showers, inmates have still been forced to watch suicidal inmates inside of areas that are being used for containment of sick and seg.

If someone wanted to highlight dying and suicidal cases, preventing DOC from using the classification of “suicidal” as a method to punish an inmate, it must ban free inmate labor in caring for these persons! State law must require the State to pay the hourly wage to certified employees in order to see true costs associated with care. In order to see how carefree DOC and Corizon want to assign the “suicidal” labels without second thought, ban our forced free watch.

Inmates are not certified to care for sick, force DOC healthcare or c/o’s to watch ppl and care, and watch prices skyrocket. No one wants to care about the vulnerable populations inside? Ban the free forced inmate care and watch! Sickening to watch two to three free laborers be the only ppl permitted outside their cells during this harsh lockdown so that suicidal women will have someone monitoring them. Of course, mental illness being increased in these conditions...bullying harder to escape from...even “good” c/o’s framing our complaints as unjustified “bitching.”

04/18/2020

The prison is still locked in cells. The cottages, the areas designated for the old girl school, are old buildings, with small spaces for the juveniles. The cells are not automatic locks (fire hazard) and do not have water, toilets, or emergency call buttons. My unit shares 3 toilets for 80 ppl and the only access to a cold water or a sink is in the bathroom. We have not had out of cell activity for 19 days, and even if we had one room at a time in open space, it would help. Last week an NPR program revealed this prison was not sanitizing/ cleaning appropriately. An auditor came in. Bleach has since been issued to the unit c/o’s who, in light of the doors being locked, are consistently busy. No time is allotted for cleaning of showers, toilets, etc. And rooms are minimally cleaned when we get away with it.

It seems to me no one here cares about any of this. Tie in the nondisclosure by those sick and doc, and doc’s working inmates without telling them if an area has been exposed, adds to the inference that no one in authority cares. If temps get hot and we remain locked in, ventilation and air circulation, and in-room temps will become problematic. The cottages were made for juveniles in the mid 1900’s. These buildings are not made for this many ppl nor these living conditions.

DOC Has Role in Granting Clemency!

The news stated coalition groups advocated for release

of prisoners since social distancing is a “luxury” not afforded prisoners. What they may not realize is that disclosure by those infected or areas infected is also not given, another further burden; the privilege of communication not accessible inside. Channel 6 reported DOC responded with they do not have authority to release prisoners. This is a partial falsity.

IC 11-9-1 states DOC, Indiana Parole Board, and the Governor all are needed to release prisoners under clemency requests. DOC wardens, chief medical officer, and the commissioner are needed and must approve all requests for medical clemency. They could permit the filing of medical clemency for those who meet vulnerable population criteria. With approval of these 3 DOC persons, the 5 person Parole Board would need to approve medical clemency for high potential to covid 19 death, and finally the Governor would need to approve. Why none of these persons or entities are claiming this capability is deeply alarming that the statue and action is in word only...

Clemency requests, without medical reasons may be filed after serving 1/3 of the total sentence. The old law serves 1/2...parole board and governor needs to approve those. I am uncertain why DOC commissioner's office keeps telling the Indianapolis Star and news outlets it does not have authority. It in fact does have authority, could state their desire to review these vulnerable populations under their medical officers and expertise, under their conduct records and considerations, and make these reviews and determination. In the process they will gain the input of trial judges and prosecutors and any victim advocates. DOC could expedite the process right now during this time of crisis and the increase in breakouts of covid in the prisons. I hope this information may get shared as it is disinformation as it is being spread.

COVID-19 & IDOC: Punishment for Social Distancing, Lack of Transparency, Rebellion Spreading

Taken from IDOCWatch.org

The COVID-19 pandemic has now reached Indiana prisons and jails and is spreading rapidly. In a week, the number of confirmed and reported infections in Indiana prisons increased from a total of 5 incarcerated people in two facilities, to 23 incarcerated people in 6 prisons, and 33 staffers. As of today, April 13, the number of staffers with the disease has reached 48, and the number of people in IDOC custody who have tested positive

has reached 27. IDOC is barely testing the people in it's custody, however, so the rate of infection is likely much higher than they're reporting, and they won't say which facilities staff who've tested positive work in.

As we saw the crisis unfolding around us, prior to the first reports of infection in Indiana prisons, people concerned with the well-being of incarcerated people have been calling, loudly and clearly, for mass release from prisons and jails. In Indiana, a coalition of prisoner advocates released, and presented to all three branches of government, a plan for the safe and orderly release of over 6000 people incarcerated in the prison system, who have less than a year left to serve to complete their sentences. There are about 27,000 people incarcerated in Indiana prisons, and releasing around 6000 would significantly increase the possibility of effective social distancing among the remaining prison population. The proposal was rejected out of hand: no branch of the Indiana government saw a reason to prevent their prisons from becoming death camps. The ACLU has also filed a petition with the Indiana Supreme Court for some people to be released from prison, which disgraced and despised Attorney General Hill responded to by ignoring everything going on around him. Instead of concerning himself with the fact that many people are about to die at his hands, he argued the ACLU petition should be dismissed because according to the Indiana Constitution, the power to release people from prisons resides with the executive, rather than the judiciary. Never mind that at this very moment the Indiana prison system is preparing to murder hundreds, if not thousands, of people by intentionally failing to prevent the spread of a deadly virus. Absurdly, the Indiana Supreme Court found that the IDOC 's policies for dealing with COVID-19 are consistent with CDC guidelines, and denied the ACLU's petition.

COVID-19 is highly contagious, and in many cases most contagious prior to the emergence of symptoms. The pre-symptomatic period of infection can last around 2 weeks. Without effective social distancing and/or widespread testing, there is no way to contain the spread of the virus. In prison, social distancing is not only impossible, but prohibited. The IDOC's plan for dealing with COVID-19 completely ignores how the disease spreads among people who do not show symptoms, and will be incapable of preventing infection on an enormous scale. It is impossible to slow the spread in prisons without mass release. IDOC was already incapable of preventing drug trafficking inside it's facilities, illegally used solitary confinement to deal with dissent and mental health issues, and is already severely short on correctly trained staff, so there is no chance the department would be able to appropriately manage a pandemic, if it were even possible to do so, without mass release.



IDOC Watch is organizing with a grassroots coalition of groups [1] around the state to call for mass release from Indiana prisons before the crisis worsens and we start seeing lots of deaths in the prisons. We currently have a Phone & Email Zap campaign going on, and we're preparing for caravan demonstrations like those that have been organized around the country calling for #MassReleaseNow. We demand that the Governor use clemency powers to release everyone with less than a year left on their sentence (~6,000 people), use stimulus funds for law enforcement to house those released in hotels, ensure free medical care and access to masks and cleaning supplies, and allow free video visits and communication throughout the duration of the pandemic. We endorse the recommendations of the emergency plan drafted by formerly incarcerated individuals and advocates.

We demand that Marion County judges release incarcerated people who are elderly or who have underlying health conditions, with a goal reduction in the jail population to a level that allows for proper social distancing. We demand that the Marion County Sheriff stop honoring ICE holds, ensure free medical care and access to masks and cleaning supplies, and provide free video visits and communication throughout the duration of the pandemic. It is estimated that 100,000 US prisoners will die due to COVID-19. The risk, and severity of infection are much higher in prisons than elsewhere, because the severity of COVID-19 increases according to the intensity of exposure. [2] In a prison, jail, or detention center, the intensity

of exposure is inevitably going to be much worse than outside, because movement is restricted and space is cramped. So if someone in the cell next to you has it, or in the same open unit as you, it is going to spread from person to person, until nearly everyone has it - before symptoms are detectable in anyone!

What follows are reports from several Indiana prisons and jails about the conditions that incarcerated people are being subjected to during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is clear to us that IDOC is not being honest about the situation with COVID-19 in its prisons.

Plainfield CF (IYC), where there are reports that at least 26 people have the virus, and possibly multiple deaths. Plainfield is a hospital facility, and many people incarcerated there have compromised immune systems.

The audio below is from someone incarcerated at Plainfield CF, who wished to remain anonymous in order to avoid retaliation. He has not received a report for bad conduct in 11 years. This past week, he was warned by others not to go into a certain area of the prison because there were sick people there. When he refused to go there, staff placed him in a cage covered in blood and vomit for 6 hours, before moving him to solitary confinement. His shoes, sheets, and other property were not returned to him when he was moved.

He reports that the staff at Plainfield is not being professional. They unnecessarily moved the mental health unit,

causing the virus to spread. Unit Team Manager Morgan Feaney, in particular, has acted unprofessionally and vindictively, and deliberately put him in harm's way.

The person who provided that report is now sick. He still has not received his property that went missing when he was transferred to solitary.

The report above corresponds with other reports we've received from Plainfield CF. Here is what one woman whose fiancé is incarcerated at Plainfield told IDOC Watch, on April 8:

My fiancé is at Plainfield Correctional Facility he works for ICI [Indiana Correctional Industries] in the warehouse. They have not been giving them protective gear and if they miss more than 3 days of work they will give them a Class B major write-up. He is on Chronic Care and has a heart condition and high blood pressure, and arthritis he's very vulnerable and he's been trying to take off work a few days here and there.

This morning when he went in he was telling the guys that they're not giving them protective gear and the correctional officer told him that he was going to write him up for interfering with his duties because he told the guys that they're trying to kill them and they're going to die if they keep going to work unprotected. So my loved one left and went back to the dorm. They have over a hundred and sixty inmates from South dorm and East dorm working in the warehouse picking items for the commissary and putting them in a box to be packaged up to be sent out to all the Correctional facilities throughout Indiana.

When they returned from work around 3 p.m. the working inmates informed him that one person passed out and five others were sick. They quarantine all of East dorm. They put 30 guys in a room to change clothes at the same time to go to work in the warehouse and the same thing when they returned to change clothing. None of those men had their temperatures checked prior to having them return back to South dorm or East dorm. I was just informed that the HazMat team has been down there and East dorm they confirmed One inmate dead which was confirmed by a woman who is in a support group for those incarcerated and her husband is in East dorm and this was confirmed by a correctional officer as her husband saw an ambulance come in and the HazMat team take the body out.

Now instead of them worrying about writing up my fiancé they have to write a death certificate out. This could have all been prevented. We have been screaming to get the protective gear. All they did today was give them a mask after my loved one left the job this morning and

they put those masks in a little paper bag and put all of them in a cardboard box with their names on them so they can reuse them the next day.

The men in South dorm are the most vulnerable; they are older & have diabetes, many of them are on dialysis, and have high blood pressure and other issues.

They did not take us serious but the governor got up there and prided himself on using slave labor at Miami to make protective gear and gowns for our hospitals but those guys that are sewing that stuff are not wearing masks! They just started to hand them out at Westville yesterday and Plainfield today. Even when you are on an airplane they teach you to put the oxygen mask on yourself before you can save anyone else!

What good is a mask going to do a dead body?

Pendleton Correctional Facility

We received the following message on April 8 from someone whose husband is incarcerated at Pendleton CF and is experiencing retaliation for attempting to practice social distancing. Again, names are omitted in order to protect from retaliation:

MY HUSBAND is on the suicide unit of the facility! He's been standing his ground of the 6 feet rule since no other way of being protected from the covid-19 was offered. NO SANITIZER, NO MASKS, NO GLOVES & NO WORD OF EARLY RELEASES ON THEM!!! He was in a program that required [him] to attend group sessions (no masks or 6 ft rule was enforced)They have stripped him of EVERYTHING. They cuffed him to call me for 2 mins to tell me he loves me. Then again last night! They haven't given him his meds. They took our video visit away! My husband is scared, my husband is terrified, my husband is losing his mind. My husband was doing so well now he has slipped through the cracks PTSD from things in his childhood on top of him being in prison then this covid 19 crisis has turned the man who is my husband into someone i don't even know right now. JUST SEND HIM HOME TO ME PLEASE but my vows was for better or worse & in sickness & in health. Right now we just going through the worse & sickness. We will make it! The prison system is BROKEN! so inhumane

Today we heard from the same person that her loved one hadn't been allowed to shower in 5 days. The lack of masks and social distancing protocols at Pendleton was also reported to us by another person who has a loved one incarcerated there, who informed us that there are two cases of COVID-19 at that facility. Those cases have not been reported by IDOC, which as of two days ago had not

reported any testing at Pendleton CF or 14 other facilities around the state.

Westville Correctional Facility

IDOC has confirmed 4 cases of COVID-19 at Westville CF, though there are rumors of many more. Our sources there have informed us that they are using the Control Unit, which is a solitary confinement unit that houses many inmates that experience severe mental illness, to quarantine people infected with COVID-19. On Tuesday, April 7, people incarcerated in B-House at Westville protested the conditions they are being subjected to by taking a guard hostage and rioting. From what we've gathered, the principal concern of the demonstrators was that programs which provide time-cuts, allowing people to reduce their prison sentences, were being cut or altered so less people would have access to them, meaning people will be incarcerated for longer than they expected. Apparently dogs were brought in to put down the riot.

There have also been many reports of National Guard presence at Westville CF, for reasons that remain unclear to us.

New Castle Correctional Facility

We have been hearing reports that ordering from the commissary has been eliminated completely at New Castle CF for the time being, but that the National Guard is going to be brought in to distribute commissary orders soon.

Indiana State Prison

At Indiana State Prison, a guard named Dave Smith's girlfriend tested positive and then he started showing symptoms and after coughing and sneezing on people they made him leave. Sgt. Gordon was sent home with a fever, and another 2 guards have tested positive, according to reports we've received. As noted above, due to the way COVID-19 spreads, the fact that these guards weren't tested until they started to show symptoms means that they likely spread the disease throughout the areas of the facility where they work before they were tested and sent home.

Miami Correctional Facility

At Miami CF, incarcerated people have been threatened with disciplinary action for wearing masks to protect themselves, even as people incarcerated there are making masks that are being sent elsewhere. No social distancing measures are being implemented, and incarcerated people are being asked to form cleaning crews, without compensation, to maintain the sanitation of the facility. Please listen to the audio report below from Angaza Iman Bahar, who has been threatened with disciplinary action for wearing a mask to protect himself and went on a hunger strike to protest the conditions people are being subjected

to at Miami CF.

Wabash Valley Correctional Facility

IDOC Watch has been receiving reports from the SHU (Secure Housing Unit, which is a solitary confinement unit) at Wabash Valley CF that there are cases of COVID-19 in the facility and the SHU is being used for quarantine. To date, IDOC has not confirmed any cases or testing there, but all gym recreation was shut down on April 9, and face masks were distributed on April 7. According to our source there, the staff and administration "are acting like covid-19 has hit the general population." Our source also told us that "the slaves are revolting," because there was a disturbance on the right side of G-House in which the people incarcerated there refused to lock-in to their cells when ordered to by guards. That unit is now on lockdown. Our source said that people are very much on edge due to concerns about the virus.

County Jails

Please see the reports we've published recently on conditions in Marion County Jail 2 and the Knox County Jail. Some counties have begun to release people to prevent the spread of coronavirus, but in other counties, like Marion and Knox, local jails are needlessly holding many people in custody, recklessly putting them in danger of infection.

The Riots Will Continue

In all likelihood, the situation in Indiana prisons and jails is only going to get more dire as the virus spreads. Worsening conditions and fear of the virus will cause more uprisings, as has already been seen around the country in places like Monroe Corrections Complex in Washington State and Lansing Correctional Facility in Kansas. We will keep fighting for mass release!

[1] Indy10 Black Lives Matter, Indianapolis Showing Up for Racial Justice, Indiana Undocumented Youth Alliance, Black Lives Matter South Bend, Michiana Autonomous Defense Collective, Party For Socialism and Liberation - Indianapolis, ANSWER Indiana, For the People - Bloomington, Black Lives Matter NWI-Gary, Central Indiana DSA, Evansville Letters to Prisoners, Summit City Anti-Fascist Action, The Other Victims' Advocacy, and the Indiana Chapter of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party.

[2] Taren Stinebrickner-Kauffman, "When Mass Incarceration Becomes Mass Murder," <<https://medium.com/@TarenSK/when-mass-incarceration-becomes-mass-murder-e089e852d61e>>.

Disturbance at Westville & Prisoner Action Across the Country

On April 24th the Michigan City News-Dispatch reported a “disturbance” at Westville Correctional Facility two days earlier, on the 22nd. One guard was injured and taken to the hospital, but his injuries were non-life threatening. One woman who has a son at the facility said, “A couple of hundred inmates overtook guards and fought them and took their keys. The inmates ran out of the buildings with anything they could use as weapons. Eventually when the police arrived in teams the inmates were put back into the dorms.” She continues, “This is a direct response to a serious lack of communication and lack of compassion for the inmates dealing with this virus. These men are running scared every day all day long. They are someone’s family...Westville is broken and it is chaos everyday. The kitchen staff refuses to work because of the virus. When the news comes on, the guards turn it off. No communication leads to fear and anger boiling over. The inmates feel trapped and deserted. This will get worse if someone doesn’t step in to calm this situation down.” In the months since the disturbance, about a dozen or so prisoners are being targeted for alleged involvement. COs are torturing them to snitch on each other, but with support from their families and others, some small demands for better treatment are beginning to be met. Solidarity is our best weapon!

Prisoners at Westville are not alone. Perilous Chronicle, a project supported by a network of people—including you—who seek to gather and track information on prison uprisings, riots, protests, strikes, and other disturbances within public and private jails, prisons, and detention centers in the US and Canada, have compiled a list of prisoner actions amidst the COVID-19 crisis. They report dozens and dozens of uprisings, hunger strikes, protests, and other occurrences across the country in the last 7 months.

Perilous does great work. Check out their website PerilousChronicle.com for more information of the actions reported above, and many others.

Car Demonstrations and Physically Distant Rallies Support Prisoners

Prisoners are not alone. Many advocacy groups and families and members across the country and across the world are taking action to show solidarity with prisoner struggles and demand compassionate release for thousands during the coronavirus pandemic.

One tactic that has gained popularity is car demonstrations: driving around a detention facility, or other target location, making noise and demands. An article in Mother Jones says, “Many activists credit Never Again Action, the national network of Jewish people and allies, with inspiring the idea after they mobilized as many as 100 cars to surround ICE’s Hudson County detention center in New Jersey on March 22. Since then, protest caravans have appeared in Philadelphia, Chicago, and throughout California, calling for rent forgiveness, freedom for prisoners in overcrowded jails, better funding for health care workers on the pandemic’s front lines, and removing President Trump from office.”

Car demonstrations calling for the release of prisoners have taken place many states, including Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, Illinois, and of course, Indiana. Indiana had its first car demonstration at both Marion County Jail locations and the IDOC Headquarters in Indianapolis. A week later, dozens of cars repeatedly drove by the Indiana Women’s Prison after a physically distant rally, summed up by the chanting of “Free ‘Em All!” More demonstrations are in the works for the near future.

