

Testimony for the Committee on Public Safety  
Conditions in the Pelican Bay SHU Hearing  
Aug 23, 2011

Submitted by Julie Tackett, whose loved one Bryan is an inmate who has been in solitary confinement for 16 years in the Pelican Bay SHU, Short Corridor . *(Bryan's identity will be made available upon request . Contact info: tackett.julie@gmail.com)*

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your time. My loved one, Bryan, has been in solitary confinement at the Pelican Bay SHU, Short Corridor for 16 years. Bryan was willing to go to the lengths of the hunger strike as a form of peaceful protest in an effort to shine a light on conditions in the PBSP SHU. These are Bryan's words.....sent to me in letters. Let this document be his voice.

**This is an excerpt from his letter explaining why he would be participating in the hunger strike:**

You know me well enough to know that I am in NO WAY suicidal, nor do I wish to harm myself in any way. But collectively we feel as though we are already dead under these conditions of extreme isolation and deprivation. I'm personally willing to go to this extreme in order to prove my desire to live. This is not life Julie...period. We are here for one reason only, our refusals to debrief. I've had no serious write ups in almost a decade. I have friends here who have 20-25 years in clean. Why are we here? Because we're "labeled" as gang members? What about the other 100,000 labeled gang members on Cal. main lines?

**Bryan's own words regarding his placement in extended solitary:**

I take full personal responsibility for being a young violent prisoner who got myself thrown in the SHU. I make NO excuses nor do I try to blame others or justify my actions. But it has to be recognized that my validation as a gang member was based solely on the confidential debriefing reports of inmates who could no longer continue to suffer under these condition of perpetual isolation in solitary confinement. There is no individual accountability under the current CDCR policies. I have now been in solitary confinement for over a decade, not based on a CDCR rules violation but rather for a false label put on myself by inmate informants broken under SHU conditions. Now in the ultimate form of group punishment I am to be housed in solitary confinement, not based on my actions but based on this gang label.

**Bryan's 6 Year Inactive Review Process experience:**

I fully participated in the "6 Year Inactive Review Process" but it is NOT a meaningful review process. I was photographed and given a list of debriefing statements to refute as well as having my cell thoroughly searched. I refuted every source item used against me relying on the language adopted in the Castillo agreement which established the 6 Year Inactive Review Process. Not one piece of information (source item) used against me could meet the evidentiary standard of being less that 6

years old and criminal activity in furtherance of a gang, as established in the settlement of the Castillo case. Yet all source items were accepted.

I 602'ed the finding on every level and was denied on every level. Again, the 602 process also offers no meaningful review. CDCR's own experts testified in open court in Lira vs. Cate that the 602 is only viewed as a review of procedural error and due process, that the actual merit of the prisoner's appeal are not made part of the process.

**Bryan's states his options for release from the SHU:**

Debrief, parole, 6 year inactive review, go insane or die. I will never be tortured into becoming an informant based on perpetual isolation and frankly nor should I even be forced with such a choice. As a lifer I am not eligible for parole for years to come. As stated above, the 6 Year Inactive Review has shown itself to be a sham. I have been blessed by God to have a sound enough mind to survive all of these years in solitary confinement without becoming totally insane. However, I do suffer from many side effects of long term isolation under these conditions and I fear what another decade here will do to my mental health. As for dying, I've never given up my hope of living long enough to see my release from SHU and hopefully my eventual release from prison....and I never will abandon this hope. But it is not lost on me that without any meaningful way out of the SHU, under these current policies, that I will absolutely die here.

**Bryan's request of this Committee:**

All I ask is for a meaningful way to program my way out of the SHU. A fair shake to prove that I'm no longer the 24-25 year old screw up but a 38 year old man who is far more wiser and mature enough to use my time in a productive way. But this day will never come if the members of this body do not establish some form of oversight to ensure that we have meaningful 6 Year Inactive Reviews, meaningful committee hearings and meaningful appeal reviews. We are at the mercy of CDCR's closed system. And it was under these conditions that we came to view the hunger strike as our last ditch effort to hopefully shine a light on such a destructive and hopeless environment. Thank you for your time and I pray we come to see some type of productive changes.