

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOLITARY CONFINEMENT/JUNE 19, 2012
CHAIRMAN DICK DURBIN and RANKING MEMBER GRAHAM

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY: N/K/A: Abu Ali Abdur Rahman
F/k/A: JAMES LEE JONES, JR.
DATE SUBMITTED: June 15, 2012

ISOLATION v. DEFICIENCY

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham,

I am Abu Ali Abdur Rahman, formerly known as James L. Jones. I am an American citizen and though I am a student of Islam, I am not of the non-spiritual unIslamic renegade sects. That you needed to know, so that you would not assume and despise me. My voice needs to be heard. I appreciate this moment and thank you for your attention.

Presently I am confined at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution. I am housed in Unit 2, the Death Row Unit. I've been on Death Row since July of 1987. It has been a journey and a struggle. I've managed to make it to this point in time. I have been blessed! My dream, to speak with you has come to be. Praise be to the **GOD** of us [a]11.

Isolation. Solitary confinement began with me, a long time ago. I was born in the year of 1950. At the age of eight, my father (who is now deceased) a military man, 503rd military police, 82nd airborne, confined me to a clothing closet for a long period of time, as a disciplinary measure. In this closet, I laid hog-tied, with a thin piece of leather tied to the end of my penis, the other end tied to the clothing hook above. The psychological effect it had on me was not to be determined until later on in life. I ask the question, is this, a productive form of discipline? I am the end result.

Because no one cared or didn't want to get involved, caused me to fall prey to unforeseen traps during my delusional attempts to find a space without the elements of pain. In 1970 my defects led me to a reformatory in Petersburg, Virginia.

There I experienced sexual harassment. Reporting my concerns to the proper officials served me no good. Each time I sought help, I was put in solitary confinement for protection, so said the officials. I was being punished for not wanting to be a jailhouse punk. Being confined in such a way for seeking help, took a toll on me. I became much more bitter and I hated certain male figures who I thought were dictators and bullies.

Because this form of isolation was so torturous, in every instance I made my self to believe I can withstand the pressure. Each time, I asked to go back into population. Each time, because the officials were not properly trained and, because they didn't care, I was put back into population.

It happened. In February of 1972, two black males sexually assaulted me. I've been told now, that incident caused me to disassociate. With the encouragement of others, I had to prove myself to be a man. April of 1972, rumors had me to believe, I was going to be attacked again. I didn't want to go back to isolation. The officials knew about the incident and yet, they didn't care.

I decided to confront the situation and one thing led to another, until impulsively, I thought I was defending myself. I stabbed one of the individuals who I knew rumored, he was going to make me his boy. I was trapped and isolated in my head. Where was I to go? and who was I to turn to?

From then on until 1980, I lived in isolation, solitary confinement. From one dark space to another. The irony of this is, everything that is now said before you, is recorded. No one stepped forth to help me. And even though, there are existing documents directing people of position to help me, the records reflects, I was ignored and dismissed.

I tell you these things now, because you said you wanted to know what is taking place here in this country's penal system. I have no interior motives. With certain information, perhaps future policies can help people who are experiencing similar defects of the mind.

We come from abusive and destituted environments. Our lives was built up on anger, fear, hatred and lack of love. You have to have insurance or the right amount of money before you receive the proper help. Without the proper help there will be failures, low esteem and no sense of direction. It's the poor Whites, the Chicanos, the Native Americans and the African Americans. The penal system is full of mentally disturbed people. Because of their disabilities, they are being considered as misfits, rejects, and undesirables, isolated from the public's sight, under the criminal code. The present policies criminalizes mental illnesses.

In the year of 2000, my legal team was able to find people who undertook the task to help me understand how to recover. Everyday is a challenge. I get up every morning at 5:00am to prepare myself for the occurrences of that day. The fact that my legal team was able to uncover and discover my full record, has helped the process towards healing. Though I still have nightmares, they are less. I am able to write you this testimony because of the people who has finally come into my life. People who actually care about my welfare.

My testimony is not meant to debate whether people who poses to be a danger should not be scrutinized, for I know to well the problems people can sometimes present. My concern is the method. If the intent is to transform the behavior-agitating a emotionally disturbed person is counterproductive. I think correctional officials should hold degrees in developmental

psychology and socio-psychology. The goal of the law and the field of correcting disordered, defective behavior and the mentally challenged should be interdisciplinary. That being said, restorative and transformative justice, both, will contribute significantly to the purpose of initiating contrition and that desired result-habilitation.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity. I hope what has been said, made sense.

Sincerely,



Abu Ali Abdur Rahman

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