

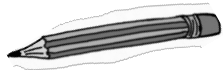
feedback

voices inside, amplified
volume 1 ~ may 2013

"Crazy news"

April 2013

Dear _____,



Got some crazy news for you all to raise hell about out there! Today the guard announced that we can no longer have pencils in our cells! If caught with one in our room during shake down or sweep through it will be counted as contraband! You can also possibly be written up! This made all the detainees angry. If WE in here don't stand up these guys will take more of our rights! What about people who draw like me and many others? They are really trying to push to see how much they can take before everyone begins to break. I have a few people who want to sign this letter as an awareness to our rights being taken . . . This is absurd!!

Your brother in struggle,

M.N.



"They said they'll lock us back 25 days just for one pencil"

April 2013

'Sup _____,

...I love the fact that someone out there cares about what's going on inside this place. Myself and others have a hard time here and now with the "no pencils" in our "cells" makes it a bit harder. It's not easy sitting out in the day room with 50 guys trying to write a letter home to my family, or write music. They said they'll lock us back 25 days just for one pencil. I feel as if it's gonna start some problems. One c.o. said we'll have to check pencils out but he's only gonna bring 10 pencils!

Such (stuff), I'm sick and tired of this place. They feed us food that's no good so we have to spend money on junk food, chips and noodles. I'd really like to start writing you and letting the outside world know about how they hold your mail, feed you bad food, beat guys and throw them in the hole, tell some guys "like me" we can't get meds, and how cold they keep our cells. Right now I'm in my room writing you this letter before they come do their walk.

In struggle,

E.N.

"We have already been judged before we are judged"

...There are also other conditions in here that need addressing such as: Better Health Care, Longer Visiting Time, Hours of LockBack during the day, Proper Heating of Building, Too Cold, Spiders, Flies, Air Filtration, Proper Washing of Clothes (come back dirtier), Proper UV lighting (Sun), Meals, Water Containers for Pods, Microwaves for Aramark Soups and Products, Prices (Too High), Care Packages (Hygiene Products), better toothbrushes, Church (Groups), Relaxation Methods (Stress), DVD Movies to Pods on Good Behavior to each other and staff, Library, better Kitchen Staff, Paint Crews for Pods, High Bonds that don't fit the Crime.

We here feel as though we've been found Guilty and are being punished. What happened to Innocent until proven otherwise? We have already been judged before we are judged.

--G.I.

“I've never seen anything so horribly wrong in my life”

Hello!

My name is _____. I am a detainee held here in this crazy place Durham County Jail! This is my first time here. I had no record or trouble. My charge is accessory after the fact of murder. But anyway I am a cool laid back black man 23 years of age. I have never seen anything so horribly wrong in my life! First off I've been here 18 months and I must say this place is dirty! There's yellow stuff that looks like pee or sometimes brown feces on the walls! On top of that our plumbing system is very bad! Some toilets gargle up and bring a bad sewer smell! On top of that we have these bad gnats that fly in our rooms from the sewer drains being backed up. We have no hot water in our rooms and only our cold water button works. When asked for maintenance to fix it they call them, but the maintenance people just look at the problem then promise to come another day! On top of that we are forced to drink this so-called "juice" that actually has a chemical in it that can cause cancer! People who worked in the kitchen (other inmates) have said the container has a skull with bones on it! It says on the warning sign that it can cause cancer! The



guards here have even admitted that it's true! But it gets worse! They play with our time to come out from lockback time. The women come out at the right time but we don't! Then we ask 'what's the hold up' and they claim it's transfers of people going on. But no one comes! The guards here be beating on the inmates here! The inmates may defend their cause when right but without violence, but the c.o.'s can't take it and start calling back up to beat the inmate! It's been like this the whole time. There's much more also... I really can't wait to expose all these jail secrets. The food here is horrible too. We supposed to get milk but they stop us from getting it! Saying we get cheese instead but we don't get cheese everyday neither! We eat "fake" food literally! The "burgers" are really like soy or something. We get chicken twice a year. We mostly eat beans, rice, combread, and mash potatoes with fake meat. All we really want is real food that other jails have! I hear our food supply comes from Aramark. Maybe you guys can research what they "claim" to "feed" us...

Sincerely,

M.N.

P.S. We heard y'all protest! It rocked!

What is feedback?

Feedback is a publication of Inside-Outside Alliance, a group of volunteers trying to support the struggles of those inside (or formerly inside) the Durham jail, and their families and friends. We recognize that any of us can be outside one day, inside the next -- the revolving door of incarceration. We also participate in struggles against police harassment and brutality. For several months, Inside-Outside Alliance has maintained a website called Amplify Voices Inside (amplifyvoices.wordpress.com) that publishes the words of Durham jail inmates and former inmates talking about conditions inside and outside and how they see the world. The name Amplify Voices Inside comes from something a brave and rebellious inmate wrote in the fall of 2012. This publication, Feedback, is a sampling of contents of the website from the past several months. When something amplified is redirected at the source of the sound, the effect is called feedback. That is what this is: the voices that have been amplified to the outside world being re-broadcast inside the walls of the jail. Writer's initials have been changed to protect identities and minimize repressive attacks and harassment.

To get in touch, write to: Inside-Outside Alliance, PO Box 1353, Durham, NC 27701. Or, if you are able to, send an email: insideoutsidealliance@gmail.com.

A Brutal Beating and a Veiled Threat

Quick note to let you know about an incident that occurred...

1/6/13 Pod 4C, cell #6, I do not know the reason but Officer S--- reportedly beat the crap out of the inmate. Officer H--- was Pod officer. I do not know exactly what happened but inmate was taken out that night. I was told he was released the next day (sentence expired). It was after 11 pm, which means his cells was locked, and it means the inmate couldn't have committed battery...only verbal assault. No reason to beat him down. If that's what happened. Others in the pod (said) that's what happened. I did not see anything, but it was reported his face was swollen.

Funny thing though, Officer S--- worked Pod 4C on 1/9/13 and made an announcement about people who file grievances that don't know what they are talking about...seemed like a veiled threat to me.

Find (the former inmate) and you'll find out exactly what happened.

--Anonymous

"Are they (police officers) above the law?"

Hope this letter finds you in good health and well being. I know you heard of the 3 police officers on the news (11) for charges of wrongful imprisonment, assault and something else. HMMM!

What's so bad about it, first they're still on the force, probably with pay, even though they've been charged. They didn't spend one dime or a foot in jail. Now you tell me, how is their crime different than any of the crimes we're charged with? And why aren't they behind bars? Are they above the law? Are they what you call innocent until proven otherwise? So, in my situation of self-defense, bond set at \$500,000, defending myself against 4 (people), I'm guilty until proven guilty and sent to jail. By the way, I turned myself in. (Law-abiding citizen, I thought) That was a joke (not funny), I'm upset cause I've been here now 112 days and still have not spoken to my lawyer. Anyway these so called officers go free, not to jail, where they belong.

To me they're the worst type of law breakers there is. They sworn to protect and serve the public. They had the trust of the mayor, police chief, fellow officers, and

"I was in 30 days. I told the guards I was supposed to go to court, I had to go court. I didn't go to court at the right time, on Thursday. I was mad next day. So I was talking to the guards. I was talking, yeah. I told the one he had a problem, maybe he wasn't getting no p---y or something. So next thing is they came into my cell and they beat me up real bad. Two came in and put this scar on my head. All I was giving was a little bit of verbal. That's all. It was two of them, H--- and S---."

--T.X.

last but not least the citizens of Durham!! They the worst type of criminal there is. But instead they're sitting at home watching t.v. on the couch and getting paid by tax-payers for doing wrong!! They belong in jail with no bond, they are scum of the earth. You know what? They're not even going to keep it public, wash it under the bridge, keep it low key. (Not if I got anything to do with it) You all need to keep the pressure on the press, the citizens need to know how the courts, the chief of police and judges are going to do about it. Bad enough the d.a.'s office is corrupted, now the police department too. Now they're giving the crooks badges also with guns. Whew, makes me glad to be in jail where it's safe.... Thanks. G.I.

UPDATE: Lt. Ryan A. Freeman and Officer Stacy L. Armstrong resigned from the police force on March 21st. On April 11th, their charges were thrown out in court because prosecutors were not prepared to proceed with the case. The third officer charged, Erin Espinola, remains on administrative leave with pay; her case has been postponed until August.

“If an inmate don’t have money in their accounts, they’re doomed!!”

Happy birthday to me!!

The D.A.'s office has yet to get me in court. Still no victim, no witness. Bond still 1 million dollars. A racial case!! . . .

This gives us all strength, just to know that there are people who we've never met that cares about our treatment. Yes, the food that is being serves to us in here IS COLD, the cell temperatures goes from being *ice cold* to being *extremely hot* month after month, then if an inmate gets a cold, medical department charges a \$10.00 cover fee. It's called sick-call appointments . . . this jail feeds us meals that are smaller portions than a happy meal for a child at McDonald's. The juice coolers that are sent from the kitchen are not sanitized at all. They're not cleaned. The juice itself, when it leaks onto the floor, eats the paint off of it. It causes a lot of us to have facial skin problems, bowel trouble, etc. The food-trays sometimes have food particles from other meals *stuck* to them. A lunch or dinner tray may have breakfast food dried up on it. When an inmate enters the jail him or her are given a rubber spoon that's flexible, along with a rubber or hard surface drinking cup. If I'm not mistaken, all utensils (especially eating utensils), are to be sterilized in 350 degree water. Well, I've been eating with my same spoon-cup since getting it (in February 2012), and neither one has ever touched 350 degree water. The water in our cells is no where near that hot. Instead of the kitchen taking up our spoons-cups daily to be run through a dishwasher, we have to keep them in our cells, wipe them off, use them during the next meal.

We've even had nursing staff say that our spoons-cups are supposed to be sent through a dishwasher *daily* before usage. But again, I've still got the cup-spoon I was issued . . .

People are charged a fee of \$2.00 for 10 minutes to use the phones. They are run by the jail through paytel.com. A lot of us don't have \$2.00 to call with, so we're out of luck. We use to get milks with our breakfast meals when I came to jail last

year, but since October of last year, no one, except those who eat diet meals, get milk with their breakfast. It's been cut out, and no one will tell us why. They've even stopped serving us cereal too.

Overall, if an inmate don't have money in their accounts, they're doomed!! You'll lay down hungry, and awake even hungrier. Seriously, it's a fact that you need money to order canteen with in here to survive. A lot of the staff, male-female, conducts themselves no better than those of us who are locked up. Profanity is used a lot towards us by staff (some staff). If an inmate don't have money to purchase thermal tops-bottoms, they'll freeze to death!!

We are locked behind doors at least 16 hours daily. On some days, we do not even come out of the cells. The longest I've experienced is 2 days straight!! No shower, no room to stretch your legs, people can't use the phone, miserable. It keeps a lot of friction between inmate to inmate, inmate to staff. They've also had inmates kill themselves, jump off the top tier to the concrete floor. A lot of deaths have taken place in here that the public has no idea about. A lot of wrong that goes inside this jail is kept between the staff. There is even a wood chair with straps on it on the 3rd floor of the jail that's used to discipline men with. They are confined to it with clothes fully on or not for hours . . . as a lesson learner.

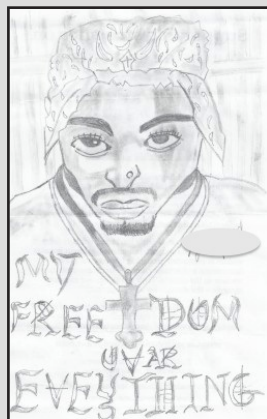
The letters N.F on the envelope means I don't have money for a stamp. I hope to hear from you soon.
--X.C.

“They have just cut out our only serving of milk, which was only 30% of the daily calcium requirement as it was. We are trying to bury them with grievances, (it's incredible they should even think of doing this). . . ”

--S.T.

"If I may ask a question that seems random and weird please forgive me but it's been a while since I've been free. So my questions are, What do you like about having your freedom and what things you take for granted sometimes and what things you cherish in your life that you enjoy?

Me personally I really love the light of the sun! It may sound corny or cheesy but I feel dead inside here cause I'm always cold and never feel real heat. But when the sun actually beams inside my room it's an uplifting feeling of peace I get like I'm free! Another thing I miss is the rain! Man it looks so amazing from the window that now I'll walk through the rain without a flinch! Long story short I've just learned that I love nature more than I thought. Deprivation of nature to me is torture and life to me cause its something our own body needs!" --M.N.



Don't you think it's time for people like us to take the banner of freedom and justice and move it up to the next level?

Glad to know you are serious about the cause of our rights inside Durham County Jail. I commend your efforts and wish one day to stand and support the cause with you for the inmates and prisoners all across the state. Hoorah, and cheers to you.

....It's a shame to see what our young black youth think of being locked up and forgotten about. They see it as a badge of honor, when it's really a badge of shame.

I look around the pod, which is really a "tomb" for the "living dead" and the average age of those "living dead" are in the range from 17 to 22 years of age, that's over 75 percent in this tomb alone (staggering).

I wonder a lot about our species as a black culture. They say that the best way to kill or destroy a culture is to kill off the young and that way we become extinct.

Today, all you have to do is put a gun in a black man's (boy rather) hand and sit back and watch the "mayhem" it causes in "our" neighborhood, or as the "killers" (white racists) would say "niggerhood." No longer do we see whites protest any more, you know why? Cause they just pick up a newspaper and smile to see "4 arrested in drive by, 3 dead, and an innocent child, or elder person, or an entire family killed." This is the madness

we must bring forth and expose their plan in order to stop it.

What ever happened to (the) NAACP, civil rights leaders who stood up for justice and our rights to be heard, where a black man felt he belonged and had rights to be heard. Don't you think it's time for people like us to take the banner of freedom and justice and move it up to the next level? The lions of our time are getting too laid back (lazy) in the sun. We need for them (Black Leaders) to teach us what to do, how to organize and assemble marches, speeches, protests, and put the control of our youth back in the hands where it belongs, and that's the parents and schools and discipline. Take it back from the courts and the police. (I scream for this to be done and not heard).

We have to come to the "rescue" and be "heroes" in the eyes of our youth, and stop waiting for someone or somebody, or someday, or some "plan" to arrive. I say today is that day and yesterday was way too late to begin.

...I've spoken my peace and I hope to God or to to your understanding you get the big picture here. We need to stop the bleeding and start the re-healing.

Peace to you,

G.I.

Fight on.

“It's a miracle a lot more of us aren't dead”

I heard about the inmate dying in here in the paper. You know what? It's a miracle a lot more of us "offenders" aren't dead. The medical staff here is a joke. I know for one that it's a lie that they go around calling to the cells; they barely want to get out from the chair. Or answer the intercom. They sleep on the job, they smoke in the building, they curse you out, and they walk by the cell door window so fast you don't see them to complain about anything, and then they forget about you. The nurses here are too busy flirting with the guards or what's really sick and a show of low self-esteem, with the inmates. (Flirting).

I know for myself that this guy was having chest pains and feel out while walking around the pod, it took the guard 2 minutes to come see the problem. Another inmate to get back with a nurse on the line, another 5-8 minutes before she--Yes! one person showed up), she came with a blood-pressure gauge and nothing else. When she was done they helped him to his room and left him there. It took them 20 minutes to come back with a wheel chair and then they took him down stairs. My god, we talking about a person's life who had a history of cardiac 30-45 minutes before anything was given to him, if that! So that bull in the paper is to cover their asses. Guards and Nurse staff. The medical staff barely wants to give you aspirins and it cost you \$10 to get that. And who knows what you will get from the dentist office in here. The "butcher", the medical staff, I call them veterinary doctors and I feel sorry for the poor "beast" they treat.

That boy didn't have a chance. The second he came to jail, and it's sad, that a family had to bury their loved one, and the city covered it up. Autopsy!! Boy, Bye, Hmmm. --G.I.

"I tell the pod officers all the time ya not gonna understand how we feel until ya are in a situation like us. They really don't understand. It's really stupid rules like those that set me off but I held my own all these months. I'm really starting to change little by little..." --D.T.

"I was reading the other day in the News & Observer a statement President Barack Obama made with regard to the statue of Rosa Parks--the Honorable Rosa Parks--being placed in the capitol. "We make excuses for inaction," Obama said. "We say to ourselves, 'It's not my responsibility. There's nothing I can do.' Rosa Parks tells us there's always something we can do." Yes! Always!! For better or worse. Wasn't it Frederick Douglass who said, Without struggle, there'll be no change--or No change without struggle?"

--B.H.

Suicide watch on women's floor

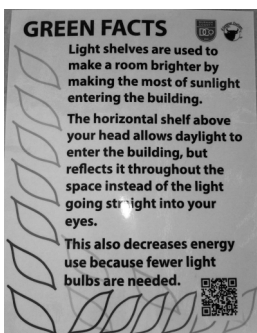
When I got in, they were saying I was suicidal, because I took two pills that I had in my pocket. So they put me in this green strap thing for suicidal people. So I had to stay in that the whole weekend. My menstruation was on. I could not clean my room. They would not allow me to take a shower. I'm like "Okay," and I said, "Well, can I get my underclothes?" I won't kill myself with my underpants. I had to walk with my legs closed with that pad, from the ladies' dorm all the way down to the nurse's station . . . I was on the fifth floor, and I had to go to the third floor. . . . [The green jumpsuit] is all that you can have on. It's like a quilt, it snaps over you. . . they put you in a room by yourself with nothin'. You don't get a cushion. I slept on that hard cement. I had to take that thing off, turn it right just so I could sleep right."

--from an interview with E.T. (former inmate)

New \$120 million Justice Center opens

The towering Durham County Justice Center, the county's new courthouse complex, opened on February 11, 2013. The project cost nearly \$120 million and has been praised for its "green" architectural design. Signs throughout the building feature "Green Facts" such as the one shown at right.

Most if not all of the shiny new courtrooms are windowless, but natural sunlight pours through the windows of the building's hallways and stairwells (above), in stark contrast to what inmates have reported about the jail right next door (below).



What are your thoughts on the opening of the new Durham County Justice Center?

Anonymous quotes from inside and outside about the opening of the new Durham County Justice Center:

"I have been here 14 months, have not been to court yet, not even once. My lawyer said he is waiting on DNA. These people built a multimillion dollar courthouse, have all those empty rooms in it, and we are housed in a pig pen."

"I guess there's more room to lock more people up."

"They're wasting money on all these buildings. No schooling system, and they're spending money on police and jails trying to fill this place up."

"I also heard of the new 'Justice Center' I don't know why but walking through a tunnel straight to the court room sounds a little creepy, like going to meet the executioner, LOL."

Dumb rules and toilet paper rolls

"...Well, people been talking about it being real cold in here lately. Also, we've been being harassed lately. The head of sergeants been commanding the guards to glance in our rooms when the day has just begun. They also don't want us to be conservative in having supplies. You know they take your old roll of tissue which only about 25% left and give you your weekly roll after so you'll always have to depend on "them" for supplies. Also, they have another dumb rule where they unlock our rooms manually by key one at a time! Which only gives us less time to be out!" --M.N.

"It is truly appreciated that there is a grassroots movement to help "amplify our voices" about the wretchedness of our temporary incarceration . . . I mean Come on . . . A man having to beg for toilet paper." --K.S.

The Story of the Plan (fiction)

by G.I.

"I gotta admit, it's a stroke of pure genius," says Wilbur.

"What is?" says Oscar stupidly.

"The plan," says Wilbur.

"Oh yeah, he hit a bullseye with that one." Oscar smacks his leg laughing.

"He surely did, yes indeed," says Wilbur, nodding his head convincingly. "Who ever thought it was that simple."

"Yeah" says Oscar, snickering.

"Old Grand Dragon put that one gun in the hand of that black buck, and I never seen anything so sneaky in all of my days," says a happy Wilbur.

"Justa looka the way they're killing each other and we're not even to blame," Oscar says.

"Free and clear, just reading about it makes you leap for joy everyday," grins Wilbur. "They don't have a clue." Oscar barely stifles a chuckle. "Not a clue." Wilbur winks and shows Oscar that day's paper.

Suddenly a shocking look comes across Wilbur's face. "Oh, oh, damn it!" he yells angrily.

"What? What?!!!" says Oscar, looking puzzled.

"Seems we got a problem here," Wilbur frowns. "This here article says a group of blacks are forming themselves together and they're calling themselves

Amplified Voices," Wilbur reads. Suddenly he yells and curses all of heaven.

"I'll be damned, they're trying to expose the plan."

"Yea don't say," Oscar says, leaning over and grabbing the paper from Wilbur. "Seems this ampli, ampli..."

"AMPLIFIED VOICES!!!!" screams Wilbur.

"Yeah that's it!" Oscar frowns.

"And it was working to perfection. Now with them people warning folks in the country, our plan the Dragon has, it's surely to fail now," says Wilbur.

"Just like the drugs and dope plan is failing," says Oscar. "Oh man, it says here also that the jail population is taking a drastic drop in America."

"WHAT!!!" says Wilbur, his hands on his chest.

"Right here." Oscar reads through the rest of the article. "Those Voice people are being heard and the police and government can't seem to do anything about it. At this rate it seems like we're the ones who's going to become extinct."

"A minority!!! The Supreme Race, no more." Wilbur grabs his chest, and in agony, falls over dead.

A shocked Oscar yells "WILBUR! WILBUR!!!"

Seems to me "The Plan" backfired.

THE END

What do you think the point of jail is?

"They get paid if they got people in jail everyday, right? It costs money to keep people in jail. I mean, that comes out of the taxpayer's money. You got people inside, then you got their people sending money in, and they're buying canteen. They're making big money."

What are jails for, anyway?

"I don't know. I don't know what they for. But I used it for what they tell you it's used for: you know, "reflect on your thoughts," you know, "learn your lesson." That's how I used it. But I just think it's used to eliminate people. You know, they put you in this place where you are hated by other folks, or where people who hate each other most are in the same place to rip each other's heads off or whatever. It's all just like a set up. I just think it's used to eliminate people, man. (Pause). But, I got something good out of it. You know what I mean—Everybody gotta take what they wanna take from it. I mean, they could put it there to destroy people, but people gotta make their own way."

—from an interview with U.B. (once inside, now outside)