

TEXAS TEA NEWSLETTER



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OUR GOAL

With each issue of the Texas Tea Newsletter, we are determined to provide news articles and information for those currently held in Civil Commitment in Texas and other states across the country. We hope to bring awareness to the differences

between what lawmakers portray Civil Commitment to be and the harsh reality that is kept from the public. Through the efforts of the released, loved ones, and those still kept behind razor wire fences, we will shed light upon the unjust situations within these "treatment facilities".

WHAT IS BREWING THIS MONTH?

Check out an array of articles, cartoons, and what is new in the latest edition of Texas Tea Newsletter.

INSIDER NEWS

Read first-hand accounts of the atrocities within the Texas Civil Commitment Center in Littlefield, Texas.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hear what the editor has to say about this month's issue, encouraging words, and updates on future releases.

THE SEXUALLY VIOLENT PREDATOR NEXT DOOR

BY NICHOLAS GOLDBERG
OCT. 29, 2021 3:08 AM PT

Lawtis Donald Rhoden sexually assaulted a 13-year-old girl in Florida in 1969 and was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

When he got out — but while still on parole — he came to California, where he sexually assaulted three more underage girls, separately, luring them each into his car by posing as a fashion photographer. Then, while he was being investigated for those crimes, he traveled to Nashville and attacked another 13-year-old girl. He was convicted of rape in both California and Tennessee and sent back to prison for two more decades. I think it's safe to say that this is not the kind of guy you'd want living next door.

But unfortunately for the people who live on 25th Street East, in the unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County near Lancaster, it may not be up to them. Rhoden may be coming to the neighborhood whether they like it or not.

Even after his prison term ended in 2004, Rhoden was held in a county jail and then a state psychiatric hospital for years because he was officially classified as a "sexually violent predator" who remained dangerous. Then, in 2019, the state concluded that he was no longer likely to reoffend, and a judge ordered him "conditionally released" into the community.

But — surprise! — nobody seems to want him.

You think it's hard siting a homeless shelter or a halfway house in a residential California community? Try finding a home for a repeat violent sexual offender.

Theoretically, people like Rhoden are supposed to be housed in the county where they resided before they were designated as "predators." But a judge concluded that due to "extraordinary circumstances," nothing could be found for him in Orange County. She agreed the search could be expanded, and a potential home was found in Twentynine Palms.

Guess what? The people of San Bernardino County were not interested in having him either. "Stay out!" said the San Bernardino County district attorney's office. The judge finally rejected that placement in May.

Now a hearing is scheduled for Nov. 5 to discuss Rhoden's proposed move to a three-bedroom house on 25th Street East in L.A. County, less than nine miles from Lancaster City Hall.

That's not going over well either. L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who represents the Antelope Valley, is opposed, as are city officials. Barger is worried the area is becoming a dumping ground for released sex offenders. Just two months ago, a judge approved a residence in the Antelope Valley for another sex offender, over the objections of many nearby residents.

"Enough is enough," said Barger.

Even George Gascón, L.A. County's progressive district attorney, "strongly objects" to Rhoden's move.

So what's to be done?

To me this is one of those intractable social problems in which every option seems undesirable. Of course no one wants him. No matter how many psychiatrists say they don't think he'll reoffend, there can be no certainty that he won't. Of course Antelope Valley residents are worried for their children.

But he's got to live somewhere.

I know I'll get lots of messages offering an easy solution: Lock him up forever! Execute him! He has forfeited his right to freedom — repeatedly — and the rest of us shouldn't have to run any risk on his behalf. And I agree, up to a point. If continued mental illness means he's still a danger, there's a good argument under the law for keeping him in custody.

But if responsible experts have persuaded a responsible judge that Rhoden can live safely in the community under monitoring and supervision after three decades in prison, then what choice is there? The permanent incarceration of people *just in case* they'll reoffend is not an answer.

Rhoden is 72 now, and his last known sexual offense was more than 35 years ago. He's been held for nearly two decades beyond his official sentence. The authorities have determined he's unlikely to recidivate. The law says he's eligible for release.

California's answer to this dilemma is CONREP, a "conditional release program" for, among others, sexually violent predators coming out of state psychiatric hospitals. It was created by the Legislature in the 1980s after a released sex offender murdered a toddler. CONREP was designed to provide treatment and stringent supervision to keep people from reoffending while they make the transition back into the community. The state contracts with Liberty

Healthcare Corp. to provide the services.

CONREP's oversight certainly seems stringent (some think too much so). Its monitoring tools for sex offenders include unannounced visits, covert surveillance, frequent drug screening, in-person meetings, polygraph tests, phone and computer monitoring, GPS tracking and expenditure reviews, among other things. Monitoring can last years. A spokesperson told me there have been no "physically violent crimes" perpetrated by any of the sexually violent predators monitored by CONREP since its inception.

It claims to visit neighborhoods before recommending placements, including gathering information on the number and ages of children in the area.

I don't pretend to have a definitive solution to the Rhoden problem. I can't know if the experts are right that he is unlikely to reoffend or if CONREP's monitoring plan for Rhoden will strike the proper balance between public safety and the offender's rights. I do know that if Rhoden were moving in next to me, I wouldn't be happy. And if I lived in an area getting more than its share of returning sexual offenders, I'd feel aggrieved. The burden needs to be shared.

But I also believe this: The state shouldn't continue to hold people indefinitely beyond their sentences if they've been found unlikely to engage in criminal behavior again. So Rhoden needs a place to live.



STATE COMMITTEE TASKED WITH IMPROVING TEXAS' CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM SITS UNFUNDED, UNUSED FOR OVER A DECADE

BY DAVID BARER, KEVIN CLARK
NOV. 19, 2021 03:16 PM CST

Lawmakers don't have enough information to manage Texas' criminal justice system, and they should create a legislative committee to study the system's most pressing problems and create reports with guidance and improvements — that was the assessment of a state review in 2006.

Texas legislators heeded that recommendation. The next year, in 2007, they created the Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee. The committee is composed of House and Senate members and is tasked with digging into Texas' most pressing criminal justice issues and creating biennial reports with strategies to address problems and find solutions.

Too bad none of that is happening.

Though it remains enshrined in Texas law, a KXAN review has found the Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee has existed only on paper for years. Though it appears active in state records, with new members appointed by Capitol leadership, no work has been done since 2009. The committee has no funds, no staff, does no analysis of the criminal justice system and submits no reports required by statute to the state Legislature.

The bill that created the committee, 2007's Senate Bill 909 by State Sen. John Whitmire, D-Houston, arose from recommendations made in a 2006 Sunset Advisory Commission review of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The Sunset Advisory Commission examines state agencies and government bodies and recommends improvements or that the entity be eliminated.

Alycia Castillo, director of policy and advocacy at Texas Center for Justice & Equity, said SB 909 was a "massive bill" with lots of different provisions that mostly related to parole and probation. Maybe, she said, the creation of the committee was "an afterthought."

Regardless, the committee exists in statute and could be doing important work and should be utilized.

"Now more than ever, it's really crucial and urgent that we get some meaningful, significant oversight in our criminal legal system," Castillo said.

The committee remains active, and Whitmire is listed as its presiding officer. A representative of

Whitmire's office acknowledged the Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee has not been funded or staffed since 2009.

Whitmire lists his chairmanship of the defunct committee as one of his legislative career accomplishments on his website. He did not agree to an interview. His office did not provide answers to specific questions sent by email, including why the committee has not been funded and whether there would be a push to staff and reactivate it.

KXAN spoke with several criminal justice advocates and experts. None could explain why the committee has been defunct all these years, but all said the state would benefit from its oversight.

"By having this committee essentially not be used, we've lost a lot of time and potentially a lot of harm has been incurred, because we have chosen to not look into some of the most challenging aspects of our society, and that's dealing with individuals that've been incarcerated," said Alex Cogan, manager of public policy and advocacy at The Arc of Texas, which works to improve conditions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In its 2006 review of TDCJ, the Sunset Advisory Commission explained how gaps in oversight needed to be filled.

From 1983 to 2003, Texas had the Criminal Justice Policy Council, which evaluated the overall effectiveness of the state's criminal justice system and acted "as an independent agency to identify and analyze criminal justice problems and advise the Governor and the Legislature in developing strategies to solve those problems," according to the Sunset review.

Former Gov. Rick Perry vetoed the Policy Council's appropriation in 2003. After that, the state had no entity that would provide "comprehensive and ongoing analysis of the criminal justice system to determine its effectiveness or help plan for its future," the Sunset Advisory Commission found.

Other organizations and committees stepped in to provide some oversight, but they didn't have the ability to do overall evaluation of the system, according to the Sunset review.

The Legislative Budget Board created the Criminal Justice Data Analysis Team in 2004, but that group didn't take over the Policy Council's duties to study the system as a whole or make recommendations for improvement.

The Senate Criminal Justice Committee, House Corrections Committee, Senate Finance

Committee and House Appropriations Committees oversee individual criminal justice agencies, but they have to use information provided by those agencies to "try to develop an overall picture of the criminal justice system," according to the 2006 review.

"Having four different committees evaluating information coming from several different criminal justice agencies does not provide consistent, comprehensive information on which to base future criminal justice policy decisions," according to the 2006 Sunset Advisory Commission report. "In addition, these committees do not have the staff, resources, or expertise necessary to research and analyze the effectiveness of the entire state criminal justice system."

Diana Claitor, cofounder and former executive director of the Texas Jail Project, called the lack of funding for the Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee "mind boggling."

"The question to us is why this important committee would not be funded to do, essentially, work that can save lives and change the way prisons and jails operate in Texas. Why?" Claitor said.

There is much work to be done on criminal justice reform and not enough legislative oversight to accomplish it. Other legislative committees that deal with criminal justice issues "barely skim the surface," she said.

"Yes, we need more oversight, desperately, especially considering how many people Texas locks up in jails and prisons," Claitor said.

Brennan Griffin, deputy director at Texas Appleseed, said his organization has been heavily involved in criminal justice issues at the Texas Legislature, but he had not heard of the committee.

"Just in the last couple of years, if we'd had a committee looking at the coronavirus response in prisons and in Texas jails, I think we could have gotten some better outcomes," Griffin said. Texas Appleseed is a nonprofit public interest justice center.

Texas Appleseed spent months getting data from just five Central Texas jails about how they are handling COVID-19. The Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee, if it were functioning, could have obtained that information much more quickly and been able to use it to make suggestions in the most recent legislative session, Griffin said.

The Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee could be particularly useful,

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM/WHITMIRE CONT.

Coordination and buy-in from both the House and Senate would increase the chances of solutions being passed and implemented, he said.

The committee is also authorized to contract with a university or other entity to help assist with its duties. The inclusion of a research institution, Griffin added, also makes this committee important.

House and Senate legislative committees often have interim charges and look into different issues, but usually don't engage a university to bolster their research, he said.

"Whenever we can engage that kind of really data-driven approach by true experts in these fields, I think it leads to better outcomes," Griffin said.

Cogan said these in-depth studies and reports can lead to real change.

"A lot of money could have been saved, potentially lives could have been saved and certainly traumatic experiences prevented," Cogan said. "I would like to see this committee utilized and a report be produced, so we can make progressive change.

In a fiscal analysis of SB 909, the Legislative Budget Board said it could not estimate the cost of creating the Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee, because it could vary depending on how it is staffed.

There were attempts to resurrect the committee and use it in 2013 and 2014, but none came to fruition.

In 2013, Castillo said her organization worked on another bill, House Bill 2650, that would have brought the committee back into public awareness and expanded its purpose. Among other things, the bill would have added jail inspection reports to the committee's tasks and created a confidential way for incarcerated people to send concerns to members of the committee. That bill never passed.

Another piece of 2013 legislation, Senate Bill 1003, did pass. The bill tapped the Criminal Justice Legislative Oversight Committee with hiring an independent organization to study the state's solitary confinement conditions, but without committee funding advocates struggled to find a way to pay for it, according to reporting by the Texas Tribune.

After hearing from KXAN about the committee,

advocates said they would be pushing for the commission to be utilized in the future.

Krishnaveni Gundu, cofounder and executive director of Texas Jail Project, said her organization is planning to submit its recommendations for interim charges to the Legislature and "will be strongly recommending the need for this committee because the issues with solitary/ad seg, restraint chairs and related concerns have grown exponentially due to the pandemic."

Castillo said TCJE would also recommend language for an interim charge for the Legislature to expand the use of the committee.



HOUSE COMMITTEE REJECTS LOUISIANA SEX OFFENDER ID BILL DUE TO LEGAL CONCERNS

BY WILL SENTELL
MAY 11, 2021 1:00 PM

A bill that would require the driver's license or identification card of sex offenders to carry a special designation was narrowly rejected Tuesday in the House Transportation Committee.

State Rep. Larry Bagley, R-Stonewall, said his proposal was aimed at protecting citizens while also complying with a recent ruling by the state Supreme Court.

The court last year struck down a state law that said IDs for sex offenders had to include the words "SEX OFFENDER" printed in orange.

The measure failed 6-7 after a lengthy discussion.

Critics said the measure would likely be struck down

"I have a problem with this bill," said Rep. Mack Cormier, D-Belle Chasse and a member of the committee.

"It is not because I don't want to protect kids. From a legal standpoint I do not think this would stand up in the U. S. Supreme Court."

The bill would require that a driver's license or state-issued ID card include a designation that would be recognizable to law enforcement officers.

The license would include a number based on the type of sex offense that the holder was convicted of -- Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3.

Lt. Robert Burns of State Police noted that the state Supreme Court ruling specifically said a less restrictive method to inform law enforcement would be allowable.

"They took the extra step of saying in their opinion that a symbol or other designation would be constitutional," Burns told the panel.

Judy Mantin, who said her then 14-year-old son "made a mistake," urged lawmakers to reject the proposal so that sex offenders are not always identified that way in their daily lives.

"He is a very productive citizen in our society," Mantin said of her son. "I feel our children deserve a second chance in life."

Rachel Gassert, policy director of the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, also opposed the legislation.

Gassert said state law requires those under 18 convicted of sex crimes to be permanently listed as Tier 3 offenders – the most serious – because their offenses often involve young children.

She said the rule applies even though research shows those younger than 18 who are convicted of sex crimes are unlikely to do so again.

"The registry subjects them to a lifetime penalty and that is not in keeping with what we know about children's rehabilitation," Gassert said.

Bagley said he lives in Logansport, which has about 2,800 residents and 28 registered sex offenders.

"We are trying to protect the citizens, your families, my family," he said of his bill.

The lawmaker said one of his daughters live close to him and has children under the age of 5.

"Believe me she watches," Bagley said.

INSIDER NEWS

Felton, Brady #05747333
2600 South Sunset Ave.
Littlefield, Texas 79339

18th January 2021

To whom is reading,

My name is Felton Brady. In 1998 I caught two sex offenses. One was the burglary of a habitat with intent to commit sexual assault, then I also caught a sexual assault with a 14 year old female. At the time I was 18 years old. I did not take these charges to trial for one, financial reasons mainly, so I plead out to two 10 year sentences to run concurrently. While doing my time around the last 18 months of my sentence I was put on chain to go to Gore Unit not knowing that TDCJ's multi-disciplinary team sent me to Gore Unit to be evaluated for a program called Civil Commitment.

In my mind, I thought they were putting me in their 18-month program, and all I wanted to do was finish my time on the unit that I was on and go home. This program was not part of the plea deal and not once was I offered to take a program while doing my time. The information that I gave them in these evaluations was me being honest about how I grew up and that's what they used to force me into this program. I discharged my 10-year sentence on November 17, 2009 and was picked up by a DPS officer and transported to a Houston halfway house at the time called Ben Reid. It's like I discharged one sentence to start another one. I was sent back to prison on April 20, 2011, because of a rule violation, not actually breaking another law, but for having a cellphone. See in this program they dictate who you can and can't have contact with and that's including family members as well, so I was given 5 years in TDCJ because of this rule violation.

During that time they reconstructed this program in the legislature because of the flaws that were exposed in the program to keep a certain class of people locked up, a banishment if you will, but made it look good on paper as a tier program. These people are using this treatment title as a justification to keep people with sex offenses locked up. This newly revamped program took bits and pieces from the Correct Cares program in other states and took the factors that benefited us out in order to make our stay here longer.

It's a tier level program with 4 tiers being here at the facility and tier 5 being in society. It used to be care level along with the tier levels but Marsha McLane did away with them because a person could get a rule violation and not lose his tier but taking that away if a person catches a rule violation they have action at taking a person's tier level and making someone start all over again.

This program has been going on since 2000 and I have seen more people leave here dead than I have seen leave alive. As of now, I have been in this new program since April 20, 2016. I worked my way to tier 3 but caught a rule violation for having a cell phone on September 7, 2018. Now I have worked my way back to tier 3 and I'm 85% done with this tier level.

We have no voice, we have nobody to challenge the people over this program, Ms. Marsha McLane and Senator Whitmire. This is his project and in reality, it's a money scheme. It's over 385 residents at this facility and they have all discharged their actual prison sentence, but we live in a prison. The program is supposed to be integrating us back into society as productive citizens, but how is that when everything is about prison-like treatment and mentality. Living here is 90% security/prison rules and movement, and 10% treatment. We need help.

Respectfully,
Felton Brady #05747333

Texas Civil Commitment Center
2600 South Sunset Ave.
Littlefield, Texas 79339

IT IS WHAT IT IS

By A TCCC Resident

Texas' sex offender civil commitment was created for hate and retribution and used to test the expansion of law.

There have been over 600 sex offender civil commitments since the state legislative enactment in 1999. Less than 20 inmates have been released by appeal, court challenge or token success while more than 275 were sent back to prison for program rule violations and over 100 have died from inadequate medical care in its auspice.

When all of the special interest, legalism and financial gain is taken away, all that is left is the hate and retribution. There is no professional, moral, or ethical standard practiced in sex offender civil commitment. It has nothing to do with public safety or treatment. There will never be a treat and release model, a clear path out or justice done by it. It is nothing more than a collateral life sentence for those of us in it.

Sex offender civil commitment is an ex post facto, double jeopardy, cruel

and unusual punishment and indefinite sentencing scheme. The sex offender civil commitment scheme is more corrupt than Guantanamo Bay.

Sex offender civil commitment is an ex post facto, double jeopardy, cruel and unusual punishment and indefinite sentencing scheme. The sex offender civil commitment scheme is more corrupt than Guantanamo Bay.

The good news is that when the hype is exposed and dispelled like the threat witchcraft posed in its time, this too will pass. Sadly, when it does, the hundreds of propagandists and supporters pushing this scheme will have done more harm to victims of sexual crimes and undermined public safety than the sex offenders they hated and punished. They will have wasted billions of dollars and resources that would have created public safety and helped victims recover. 22 years and counting of facts speak for themselves.

It is what it is !!!

Texas Civil Commitment Center
2600 South Sunset Ave.
Littlefield, Texas 79339

MEMO

Greetings from Hell on Earth-*Practically*

I know that many of you view US as the Scum of the Earth and Not worthy of the PROTECTIONS that Normal Non-Prisoner Texas State & U.S. Citizens are Legally Entitled to, But that Knee Jerk Emotional Reaction has No Place in the LAW – REGULATORY MATTERS +/- or CODE ENFORCEMENT and COMPLIANCE. in this Country/ State/ +/- or County.

The TCCC = (Texas Civil Commitment Center) is to be, By Law, a Mental Health Treatment Facility for the Proper Relationship Challenged Citizens that MAY Have a Behavior Abnormality that needs addressing, -So they are not a Threat to Society and/or Their Own Best Interests for a Healthy Future once a Member of Free Society Again.

Recently a Private Corporation =) (MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING CORPORATION MIC) (-Purchased the Bill Clayton Detention Facility, -In which the TCCC has been Housed since 2015. Well, The Corporate Officers and Probably the Facility's Administration seem to have Gone-Off-The-Deep-End, and Made Decisions about HOW to House the Residents, of the Already Unhealthy-Overcrowded Facility, -Based on Administrative Convenience and Financial Needs, that can in no way be in Compliance with Local, State and Federal Regulations, that allow

INSIDER NEWS CONT.

MIC to have a CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY for the Facility to be used as a Mental Health Clients' Treatment Center.

FIRST, -They wanted to "HOUSE"- TCCC Residents in a Non-Climate Controlled GYM, with only 1 Toilet, 1 Urinal and Kind-Of a Shower. This ARRANGEMENT would not have met TX ADMIN CODE, Title 25, Chapter 125 or the Minimum Standards of the 8th Amendment for Non-Disciplinary Housing of Mental Health Clients THIS, -After Our On Dorm Recreation Area was Taken from US, to Put Way-Too-Many-Per-Square Foot Bunk Beds in them. which does not meet the Contemporary Standards of Decency for "Treatment Center Client Housing" It Does Not Even Meet Texas Jail Commission Minimum Requirements.

NOW, MTC wants to Convert the Canned Goods + Dry Goods Food Storage Room, with No Toilet, No Urinal, No Outside Light Source, Inadequate Ventilation and No Shower into "HOUSING", for Up to 12 Bunks. AGAIN, -This cannot be in Compliance with COUNTY +/-or CITY CODE (S) - STATE +/-or COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS and Anywhere Near the CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS that MT signed with the State of Texas to Provide Adequate and Industry Standard - Appropriate HOUSING, TREATMENT - MEDICAL CARE and FOOD SERVICES to the Approximately 400 TCCC Human Beings, that MTC is trying to Squish in here like Sardines.

As MIC is Just Doing What they Want, -I can also say that this Ridiculously Punitive Housing Idea, cannot meet the Spatial Requirements for New Construction that will be used for the Occupancy of Human Beings. I don't know what DEAL the City of Littlefield +/-or Lamb County have with MTC,-But is MC EXEMPT From the Permitting Process and Does MIC have WAIVERS from: (a) Planned Capacity Restrictions +/-or (b) Contemporary Standards of Decency for MAMR Client Housing?

EXAMPLE, -In the Sarcastically called "BIG ROCUS (that used to be our On-Dorm Recreation Rooms)), Residents are Too Close in Proximity, such that THEY Inhale what THEIR Neighbor Exhales. (This Facility is already Plagued with SICK BUILDING SYNDROME - ETC.,-So The For-Profit Operators are already making a Bad-Very Bad Living Situation for 90% of the TCCC's Residents Much-Much Worse, with Every Cheap Skate Idea they come up with regarding OUR Care, Housing and Treatment.)) [Except the Ones that

[Except the Ones that they like to do dog and Pony Shows with---show Off to visiting officials, that have Trailers to live in]]--Like Most of Us Should, If We REALLY Have to Stay at this Crazy Place.

Now I know there is No Way a Non-Corrupt Building Inspector +/-or Code Enforcement Officer +/-or Health Department Official would Sign Off on MTC's Current USE AND OCCUPANCY of the Food Storage Room - (Or a Dorm' Recreation Room or GYM) as RESIDENT HOUSING. Maybe TCCC, (The Believer of Draconian Treatment of Us) will Look-The-Other-Way. BUT, With the Proper Inspections and Code Enforcement this Place could be Shut Down, and/or at Minimum, -Converted back to the Permitted at Time of Construction Condition.

The LAW is Very Specific about this, -Just because MTC did not Plan Ahead, and Get More Residential Trailers-Ito., installed at the TCCC, does not permit MC to use this ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENIENCE JUSTIFICATION or FINANCIAL/ CONTRACTUAL NECESSITY EXCUSE to Improperly House TCCC Residents- i.e.: Treatment Center Clients, -Contrary to Industry Standards.

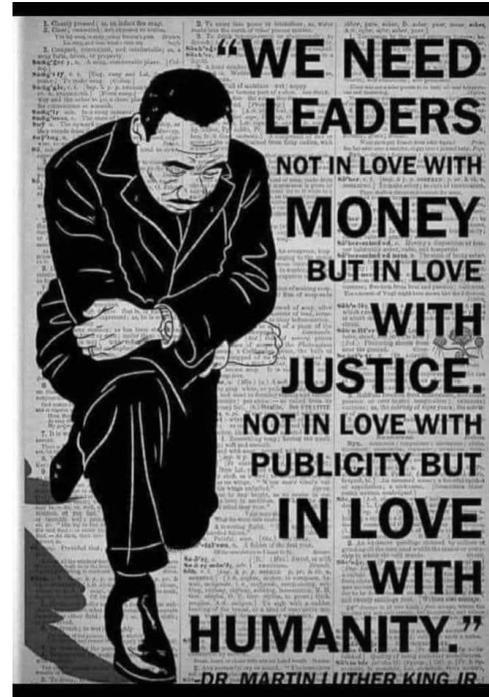
Trust ME/US, If You Authorities do not Provide US with Equal Protection of the Law, Your Names will be Right Below the MTC Corporate Officers and Administrators, that think it is OKAY to House Residents like this..... and Feed US Worse than Prisoners. What is Next, Putting US in Coat Closets?

Respectfully Submitted by: Richard A. Dunsmore, Et Al / Pro Se

VICTIM OF CRIMES AND MANIFEST INJUSTICES IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

From Current Resident of TCCC

Another resident informed us he was needing an attorney. On January 17th 2021, he had a heart attack. He went to the officer on duty, asking her to call for help. He went to the door, and twice the officer offered him a sick call request to fill out. He passed out and it took the other men hitting the door glass to get her to call rank and medical for help. This all took over and hour. It resulted in him having a stent put in and staying in the hospital in Lubbock for two days.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings! Welcome to the first *real* edition of the Texas Tea Newsletter! We are proud to announce that the response was greater than we ever expected. Through contacts and word of mouth, we can report that the prototype brochure was sent all over Texas and to at least three other states! Our focus remains to concentrate on the facility in Littlefield, TX and exposing all that we can, but if this newsletter is able to help or bring hope to residents in other facilities, then we will stay determined and continue our work. We also encourage any stories or first-hand accounts of the atrocities that occur within civil commitment, as this will aid us in spreading the truth about these "treatment facilities". Documentation of anything relevant of the inside workings is suggested to support our claims. Lastly, putting personal differences aside and working with your fellow resident is paramount, and will someday bring an end to this unconstitutional containment and endless life-sentence. Now that the kettle is whistling, let me sit back and sip my tea.

Sitting on the edge of a small town, in the middle of a dirt field, lies an old prison operating under the guise of a treatment facility. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Texas Civil Commitment is something that so many people know nothing about even the citizens of Littlefield, Texas where it is located aren't even sure. I knew nothing of it until I started working there. Behind the razor wire and brick walls, 385 men are inside labeled as sexually violent predators. These men have been arrested, charged, convicted, sentenced and incarcerated, and then moved to this facility for "inpatient rehabilitation". Rehab is the last thing going on though.

TCCO, as it is referred to, is a program designed to keep men locked up indefinitely. The treatment changes with each new therapist, is postponed for weeks or months at a time, and many repeat the curriculum they already completed in prison. The rehab is meant to teach these men the skills to integrate back into society but the setting is prison-like. Many residents state it is worse than TDCJ. The restrictions are so harsh they resort to breaking rules to be sent back to prison.

And now this facility is dealing with a new reality called Covid-19. As of today, 5 men have lost their lives from Covid-19 related issues since November. To combat this virus that the country knows very little about, TCCO has chosen to "lockdown" dorms with positive cases. In a weak effort to stop the spread, they are turning to forms of cruel and unusual punishment. This pathetic attempt has the men locked in cells with doors that were never supposed to be locked for 23 hours a day, as the building reverts to its original purpose as a prison. Men are being denied sunlight and medicine while sick. All therapy has stopped. Mail and packages stopped. Visitors are a thing of the past. Phone calls ceased. And probably the stupidest decision ever since the pandemic, all cleaning at the facility was ordered to stop. Men are being denied the use of things we take for granted such as microwaves, washers, and dryers. But this is a multi-million dollar taxpayer-funded rehab!

While I write this to tell people about the things I see on a daily basis, my main concern is to bring awareness to the injustices that these men go through. The hardships they must suffer to regain freedom are appalling. This program continues to suck money from the state while it continues to fail. Men daydream of the chance to go home again, not knowing if they even have a place to go to. Since 2015 the only home they have known sits in a dirt field in a small town in Littlefield, Texas.

- Editor, 2020

