

The Politics of Administrative Segregation

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Administrative Segregation is, simply put, when you have been removed from the general population and placed in a segregated or isolated setting for administrative reasons or classification.

The setting for this placement is usually within a supermax facility or some version of a control unit prison where you are locked in a cell for 23 hrs a day, with only one hour out for any form of recreation. Visitation is usually non contact (i.e. thru a glass or video monitor).

All forms of social contact and interaction are severely controlled, restricted or non existent. Physical contact amongst prisoners is not allowed at all. So there is no group recreation or group dining, religious services or programs.

There are two types of Administrative Segregation (A/S):

You have Dept. Wide Admin. Seg. (D.W.A.S.) which is often classified as Long Term Segregation. There you'll have people who have been on this status for as long as ten to fifteen years! Imagine that for a minute people. Locked in a cage probably the size of your bathroom or smaller for 23 hrs a day, day in day out for years on end!

D.W.A.S. also means you can be transferred to any other supermax or control unit in the state without being afforded certain due process rights. You can essentially be bounced from unit to unit and the only person who has the authority to remove you from this status is the Commissioner at central office.

The second form of Admin. Seg. is what's known as Facility A/S. Excluding the lower level camps, you find in just about every prison in the state

what's called an A/S unit where prisoners are removed from general population and isolated/segregated for alleged administrative reasons. Again you can be held on this status for years on end. One distinction from DWAS is that the warden or his designated underling has the authority to remove you from this status and return you back to the general population.

Due Process/Classification: Smoke and Mirrors.

By established law, prisoners have a liberty interest and legal right to expect not to be arbitrarily attacked and punished, to not be sanctioned or have certain rights and or privileges taken or restricted without due process. That means, simply, that I should have the right to know and confront my accusers or any evidence used against me. I should have the right to present witnesses as evidence on my behalf and at the very least have a classification hearing. This is not the case in Indiana. Within Indiana, the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility/Secure Housing Unit is the worst violator and demonstrates on a consistent basis total disregard for these due process safeguards. The motto here by the prisoncrats are "We don't follow the law, we follow tradition!"

Here its all about 'cover your ass' [CYA] on paper. Damn the law! Damn D.O.C. policy and operating procedures.

The process is supposed to be that your are notified in writing that you are being recommended for A/S status. You are suppose to then be scheduled for a hearing within a reasonable time frame where you're informed of why your being recommended and given the opportunity to challenge it. If you do not prevail, you're suppose to be allowed to file an appeal to the warden and then to central office if denied.

According to the D.O.C. policy and official propaganda, placement on A/S status is suppose to be for the "Worst of the Worst". Placement is supposed to be for those who are violent towards staff or other prisoners, people who have assaultive behavior, escape risk, serious involvement in Security Threat Group (S.T.G.) or so called gang activity or proven to be a serious drug trafficker.

the musical cell merry go round. People who do not meet the criteria; people who have no violence in their history are told they are a threat to the security of the institution (another catch all); people who have mental health issues or mental illnesses or allowed to deteriorate in isolation while mental health staff make a show making rounds once a week; people who are scheduled to go home in less than 12 months are often kept on these units without any serious counseling, reentry or reintegration back into society. In fact these same ppl who have been isolated and tortured on these units year in and year out, who undoubtedly harbor or have internalized issues of rage, anger and symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are suddenly released upon our communities and, of course, the D.O.C takes no responsibility for this

The D.O.C has what is also known as Disciplinary Segregation (D/S). When you violate a rule, depending on the nature of the offense, you're given what's called a conduct report. You're then taken to a disciplinary hearing where, if found guilty, you can be sentenced to a fixed amount of time in the hole (i.e. disciplinary segregation) where your privileges and property are severley restricted for that time period.

Once again the D.O.C circumvents the law and policy. Once you complete your D/S time, you're suppose to be returned back to general population. But instead often you are placed on A/S status for years on end, which means you're punished twice for the same offense. Once again the D.O.C circumvents the law and policy by extending through placement on A/S the amount of time they can hold you in D/S for a rule infraction. Again no oversight nor checks and balances in place to stop or prevent these abuses.

There exist no written policy in place that articulates how a prisoner can be released from A/S status. There exist no programs or incentives in place where a prisoner can work his way off of this status. In fact your stay is indefinite.

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