

Caged Arbitrarily: KC Massey on Government Dungeons

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[Imprisonment](#), like war, is hell. Understanding the nature of it is vital to empathizing with the grievances of those prisoners who are suffering because the government arbitrarily decided to [tax, ban, or regulate](#) something produced by the free market. First hand accounts of prison experiences, even if offered by a convicted felon, are incredibly valuable to those without any criminal record, due to the likely probability that such eyewitness testimony foreshadows the tribulations any man faces, especially considering that the sphere of legally permitted [human action](#) is noticeably shrinking as the police state coerces larger segments of the American citizenry.

I had the unique opportunity recently to speak with [KC Massey](#), who is an American patriot being unjustly prosecuted by the federal government for the [malum prohibitum](#) status “offense” of being a felon in possession of firearms, despite the fact that [Texas Penal Code §§ 46.02 & 46.04](#) say otherwise. Rather than exploring [the merits of his currently pending legal entanglements](#), I chose to focus my inquiry strictly to his own experiences as a prisoner. Much like [Shane Radliff’s attendance earlier this month at a McLean County Board meeting](#) in Illinois, I think that the best evidence of the government in action is when credible witnesses come forward publicly to speak truth to power about what phenomena they observed and experienced, in the hope that the rest of us are able to better comprehend the tyrannical despotism engulfing our freedoms.



In January of 1988, Massey was arrested for burglary, which he was eventually convicted of, and subsequently sent to prison at the age of 21 years old. His daily routine, as a prisoner, was to arise at approximately 4:30 am, eat breakfast, then lay around his cell for about an hour and a half before being sent to work in the fields. He was stripped searched twice a day, first at about 11 am when he came in from working the fields for lunch, and then again around 3 pm preceding dinner, which began at 4 or 4:30 pm; these searches included spreading his butt cheeks so the guards could take a peek. Afterwards, he was released into his “tank” (the housing unit or cellblock) for leisure time; at 9:30 or 10 pm, the guards turned the lights out, and the daily grind repeated itself for the length of his sentence.

Working the fields entailed its own social norms. Prisoners were expected to churn up the fields in sync, much like [boot camp recruits singing cadence](#). These “hoe squads” used large hoes for flatweeding, which is a form of hard labor where the fieldhands are lined up “nut to butt” and must be “hitting on it” in cadence, where every time a number is announced, they must hit the ground. Failure to hit the ground in sync was perceived by the guards as a type of [slowdown](#), and the prisoner in question would be encouraged to quickly get in line with his fellow inmates. If a prisoner outright refused to work the fields by “laying it down,” he would then be placed in the “shitter” (solitary confinement). The goal of any incarcerated fieldhand would be to “roll up” to a regular prison job, such as working in the garment factory, kitchen, or

garage; field bosses noticed and reported on the job performance of prisoners whom they thought deserved to be “rolled up.”

According to Massey, the government’s cages have been dramatically altered since the late 1980s, and he would be in a position to know since he was placed in solitary confinement last year for two weeks before being [let out under house arrest](#) on an “unsecured bond of \$30,000.” During the 1980s, sounds did not reverberate off the walls, because prison bars allowed sound waves to travel freely, as well as the sensation prisoners enjoyed by being able to stick their arms through the bars, thus lessening the feeling that they were being confined to a box. The architectural design of the prisons and jails were not intended to break a prisoner’s will back then, as they are now.

Massey’s recent experiences in solitary confinement, before being convicted of anything this time, are quite harrowing, to say the least. There was no social interaction of any kind, whether in “g-pop” (general population) or with who would’ve been his cellmates, for half a month. He had no access to books, and was confined to his cell for 23 hours a day, only permitted 1 hour a day for exercise. The only way Massey knew what time of day it was, was by the meal delivery through the “beanhole” of the solid steel door to his cell.

As it turns out, Massey was incarcerated in the “aggravated segregation ward,” which is a prison-within-a-prison whereby only the most heinous of criminals are locked up, in cells six feet wide by seven feet long. Every single time he left his cell, Massey was required to put his arms through the beanhole, be handcuffed, remove his hands, and then the guard would open the door; when returned to his cell, the reverse procedure was used. His daily hour of exercise also crunched into his time to shower and watch television.

Passing the time in solitary is no small challenge, let me assure you. Massey’s daily routine was little more than sleeping and eating, since he was not put on a work detail or prison job of any kind. Although he experienced no weight change or illness, he didn’t get in any better physical shape as he had during the ‘80s working the fields. The attitude and mentality of the guards was noticeably different, according to Massey, in that thirty years ago, the guards were half-assed in giving a presumption of innocence, as opposed to now, where Massey enjoyed no such presumption by the “keepers of the key.”

Speaking of architecture, the design of the cells now is outright dehumanizing. Prison bars have been replaced by solid steel doors with a six inch wide, two feet tall glass window that gives off the atmosphere of being in a zoo. Fluorescent lights adorn the ceiling, and absolutely everything, from the wall to the bunk within the cell, is colored gray. Cells are literally echo boxes for all sounds, because, they are unlike the open acoustics in a church or an orchestral hall’s wood paneling, since both deflect sound waves; similarly, the closed acoustics in a speaker box or a recording studio’s sound room absorb these sound waves. This reverb effect within the cell is most like standing inside a semi-truck trailer, except there is less space in jail; imagine, if you will, ten cells to one trailer.

This intentional separation, while also being put on display like the “glass houses” of old, is designed to mentally torment the prisoner. Bullet-proof glass lines the inside of these steel boxes, and because there is no possibility of escape, this breaks the will of many prisoners. Massey bore witness to some inmates “whiggering out” by screaming, yelling, and scratching madly, in a literally insane attempt to crawl their way out of their cage, which if anything, is suggestive of an existential crisis. Heavy-duty psychiatric drugs had to be administered to these inmates, and many of them experienced the “thorazine shuffle,” where they behaved little differently than the zombies of popular cinema.

My conversations with Massey about his time as a prisoner really opened my eyes as to the degree the government is willing to go in order to exert absolute power over Americans. Massey strongly conveyed to me that the human mind is a powerful thing, and if a man can be tricked into believing that his life doesn’t

belong to him, then he will feel the emptiness that comes with being the useless meat for his rulers. People who have never been forcibly incarcerated don't value their individual liberty anywhere nearly as much as former prisoners do, yet, the sad irony is that those who have never been hurt by the beast that is [the State](#) are also the same ones who are the quickest to unfairly judge any defendant as being guilty.

If anything, Massey's experiences in lock up have confirmed my worst fears, and then some. I don't quite understand how America can be the "[land of the free](#)" when it simultaneously sports the [highest incarceration rate in the world](#), exceeding that of the Chinese communists, with all of their [well-documented human rights abuses](#), to boot. Whether Massey intended to or not, his eyewitness accounts have solidified my advocacy for [prison abolition](#), because I fail to see how government can ever lower [recidivism](#) through so-called "[retributive justice](#)" if they can't even provide something as basic as [reliable security services](#), which they have [no constitutional duty to provide](#), anyway.