

The Tears of Clowns

by Jason Goudlock

As a 38-year-old prisoner who has been incarcerated in the state of Ohio for nearly 20 years, I've witnessed hundreds of prisoners, including myself, who have on one occasion or another gotten extremely upset with the state's Department of Rehabilitation and Correction due to either the implementing or repealing of a prison rule or regulation (e.g. recreation time reduced; elimination of ordering particular magazines, etc...). In most instances, the unwanted change of a rule or regulation has sparked fierce conversations of contempt amongst prisoners. "I can't stand these people" or "they are always making new rules and taking away our stuff" are commonly heard on any given day.

For all of the complaining that I've witnessed over the years, with exception to the Ohio State Penitentiary hunger-strikes, I've rarely seen or heard about any prisoners doing anything in a collective sense to try and bring forth the eradication of the unwanted change. Instead, what I've seen and continue to see at an ever so increasing rate, is men of all ages and races, simply giving up and conforming to being content with wasting the bulk of their day engaging in immature buffoonery.

Inside of the chaotic Mansfield Correctional Institution where I'm currently incarcerated, unbelievably, it has become the norm for countless numbers of prisoners to greet and address one another by jokingly calling each other a "bitch." All day, everyday, all I hear is a bunch of numerically grown men laughing and joking, or debating about something that amounts to nothing, such as, which one of their favorite female celebrities has the biggest butt – that is, of course, when they aren't crying and complaining about something that they won't expend a pulse of energy trying to remedy.

For a prisoner to willingly relegate oneself to being a penitentiary clown, in the midst of being on the front lines of an invisible battlefield inside a covert class war that's being waged against them by the ruthless and greedy one percent ruling class, is akin to one committing suicide. If prisoners in the incarceration heavy state of Ohio are going to attain a victory of any sort, they must part ways with their immature behavior that they are seemingly so intoxicatingly in love with.

For every great triumph that is achieved by a person is nothing but merely the full manifestation of one's own thoughts. Therefore, if a prisoner-of-class-war spends all of their time thinking about, and engaging in, acts of buffoonery, then all they're going to ever produce is buffoonery.

And, well ... tears of course. The tears of a clown, that is.

Jason Goudlock is a progressive writer embedded in the struggle against the repressive United States prison industrial complex. If you would like to offer him support on his quest to attain justice for Ohio old-law prisoners, you can contact him at the following:

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