



SUPER MAX

The Abu Graib photos exposed torture, humiliation, degradation, sexual assaults, assaults with weapons and dogs, extortion and blood sports. The world, media, and public were appalled and outraged at the images captured on wet floors in isolation, handcuffed to the wall, deprived of sleep and kicked in the stomach repeatedly by guards. These images that emerged from Abu Graib made the headlines but in reality all they did was expose the brutal underbelly of the beast and the procedures practiced regularly by guards in U.S. jails. All of the above are the modus operandi of the lawful, state-of-the-art prison. Nowhere is this more clear than in the growth over the past 25 years of what is called super maximum imprisonment, the cutting edge of technology.

Supertaxes are known for their strict lock down policies, lack of amenities and prisoner isolation techniques. Originally set up in 1972 at USP Marion to house the most violent, hardened and escape-prone criminals- now they are used for leaders of criminal organizations and gangs, serial killers, persistent rule breakers and political prisoners. These prisoners have limited visitation and phone calls, and are kept under close surveillance for 23 hours of the day. The guards want to know when they eat, sleep and shit. Every aspect of their lives is under official control. They are offered one hour of recreation in a small cage, they have no communal eating areas and opportunities to work or obtain an education. They have no windows, only solid doors with slots for passing food trays and cells with lights kept on all of the time designed to keep the sound down, so that prisoners rarely hear another human voice. The most infamous of the Supertaxes is ADX Florence, the Federal Bureau of Prisons Maximum Security Prison.

USP Marion replaced the notorious Alcatraz and ADX Florence replaced USP Marion which was put in indefinite lockdown from 1983 to 1994 demonstrating the need for a permanent lock down prison.

People like Luis Felipe-aka- King of Blood, leader of NY City's Latin Kings, Larry Hoover leader of Gangster's Disciples, Mexican Mafia leader Ruben "Nite Owl" Castro, Barry "The Baaron" Mills, and TD "The Hulk" Bingham who were all charged with running their gangs from their ADX cells after receiving natural life sentences for prior offenses.

The list goes on : Notorious DC Hitman Wayne Perry, Lorton kingpin Keith "Fly" Gaffney, B-More druglord Anthony Jones, NY's Peter "The Pistol" Rollack, Anthony "Gaspape" and Sammy "The Bull" Gravano, all were on lock down. There is also Unabomber- Eric Rudolph "The Olympic Park Bomber", Ramzi Ahmed Yousef who planned the 1993 WTC attack, Timothy Mc Veigh's partner Terry Nichols and 9/11 terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui, the father of actor Woody Harrelson -Charles Harrelson who tried to kill a federal judge, Robert Hannen the FBI agent who spied for Russia and Yu Kikumura, and the list could go on and on of the high- profile criminals housed in ADX.

To get the real deal about ADX we reached out to penitentiary veteran and DC Black's gang member "Little Caesar" who has been doing time in the feds since the 70's with stints at both USP Marion and ADX Florence. When asked about his sentence he says, "It's like being in a tunnel for years where your radio and communications frequency has gone out, where you can't reach out to anyone and it seems no one can reach out to you, but you have got to navigate through the darkness with hopes that there is really a light at the end of the tunnel".

Little Caese was first sent to lock down at USP Marion after an attempted murder charge "on a rat that was trying to make bones to join the AB's by cutting a borderline retarded brothers throat", he relates. "I plead out on the case and got a fresh 37 month sentence, and a one-way ticket to the toughest in regard to psychological effects". The early 80's was an era of aggression, murder, as well as malicious wounding.

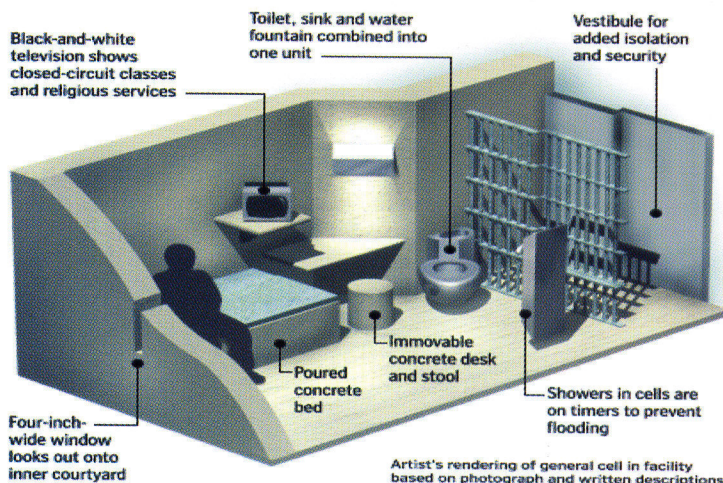
The convict that eventually ended up in ADX Florence in the late 90's has been locked up with who's who of American Gangsters. Nicky Scarfo, John Gotti, Jeff Fort of el Rukns, Big Naughty, Rayful Edmonds- before he turned rat, Kenneth "Supreme" McGriff, and many other kingpins and gang leaders. Caese says "the worst part of ADX Florence was the mental abuse. The psychological abuse administered by staff was a key mind controlling factor. There were subtle as well as overt battles of the mind and with the state of chaos being what it was you always needed a source to stabilize your thinking, to keep you from crossing the line of psychological to physical warfare because the circumstances were so unusual. The underlying conflict between races, gangs and territorial factions were constant- they kept both inmates and officers alike - off-balance, thinking that the next incident might surely erupt in violence".

Little Caese eventually completed the three year step program that keeps inmates in their cells 23 hours a day for the first year, gradually socializing them. In the last year prisoners can come out of their 7-foot by 12-foot cells into a pod-like area with others to see how they will act.


Officers are regularly pelted with urine and feces, one counselor was attacked by an inmate with a paper-mache spear and nearly had his eye cut out. The pendulum can and will swing both ways.

Prisoners have been gassed, beaten, pepper sprayed, 4 pointed to the bed, strip searched constantly and extracted from their cells forcefully. Mind control, medications and chemical weapons are used to incapacitate inmates. A Guard said, "It is chilling to walk down the cell blocks and glance through the plexiglass sallipport chambers into the cells and see the faces inside. There are a bunch of terrorists and psychopaths. Inmates run showers all day and night and scream for hours when the water is turned off. Other prisoners yell that CIA agents are monitoring their thoughts. It is sad. Many have lost all hope".

Over the past ten years prisoners, political and civil rights have been severely disabled. The language of security has authorized super max imprisonment by treating it not as punishment but as a set of administrative procedures, now legally sanctioned were once considered violations of the 8th amendment prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment.



"These are the most dangerous of people, Attorney General Roberto Gonzales said, but does that justify the way that they are treated? The militaristic aspects of policing have intensified the lethal force inside - it has dehumanized the prisoners. So how should we expect them to act?"



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