

August 30, 1988

REPORT OF AUGUST 26, 1988, VISIT TO MARIANNA FCI WOMEN'S UNIT

On Friday, August 26, 1988, I visited Debra Brown (#93137-024) and Sylvia Brown (72183-012) in the Marianna FCI Women's Unit. When I called on Thursday to find out the procedures for attorney visits, I was referred to three different staff members before I reached someone with knowledge about attorney visits. She (Myra, I missed her last name) told me that I had to be on the inmate's attorney list before I could visit, and in checking the two women's lists, I was not on them. I told her that I had been informed that I was on the lists and that I was calling because I had been told that Debra & Sylvia requested to see me. She then said to call back after 12:30 to talk with Ken Sorensen, the unit manager. In reaching Mr. Sorensen, I was told that he would talk with Debra & Sylvia (He said he had to talk to them anyway about something involving Lexington.) and would call me back. Later that day, he did call back, said that indeed they did want to see me, and scheduled the visit for Friday. He then put Mrs. Wright, the counselor, on the phone; she informed me that I should bring picture ID and my bar card, & that when I was checked in, I should have the front desk call her, & she would accompany me (Mr. Sorensen works from 12:30-9:30 p.m.; the visit was scheduled for 9 a.m.; later, they told me I should deal with Mrs. Wright about legal visits.). She also said they were requesting that attorneys keep legal papers to a minimum. On Friday the staff told me I was their first visitor of any kind & to please bear with them as they got practice in the procedures.

I arrived on Friday at 9 a.m. While I was being checked in, a five-man construction team also arrived. In the resulting confusion, my ID was never checked. My portfolio was searched, I filled out the two usual forms, went through the metal detector, & had my hand stamped. During that process Mrs. Wright appeared without being called; she escorted me to the visiting room. She said that they had another attorney form that they wanted me to fill out, for regular attorney visiting. We arranged for her to mail it to me (I did not want to be in the position of having to fill it out cold.); I have not yet received it. Once in the visiting room, the correctional officer (c.o.) checked my hand stamp. When it did not show up on the hand-held machine, they took me out again through the several sets of locked doors to be restamped. It took three additional stampings to get a usable mark. By this time it was 9:30.

The main visiting room is fairly small, about 15-20 chairs, 4 coffee tables, vending machines, microwave, and a desk where the c.o. sits. There are two small rooms at the far end; the control booth & bathroom are at the near end, the booth being through one-way glass. The c.o. said we could sit anywhere in the room. Because the room is small enough that you can be overheard anywhere in it, I requested to use one of the small rooms. She said, oh, maybe that's what they're for--attorney visits. (They plan to use one for a children's play area.) One of the rooms contained three chairs, so we used that (They said they would get a table later.). I was told that I could see the inmates one at a time. Since I did want to meet them separately, I did not push that issue. The attorney room ceiling contains a vent, smoke detector, light fixture, and something that resembles an intercom. ^{speaker} Sylvia reported that each cell has a similar device. Whether it is an as yet inoperable loudspeaker system (It has not been used yet in the unit to broadcast messages; they are awakened each morning by the ringing of the fire alarm.) or a two-way intercom is not clear; (There are at least two similar speakers in the visiting room itself.) we assumed we were being overheard. (We'll probably need to pursue this issue.)

Attorney visits (arranged with 24-hour notice) are supposed to coincide with social visiting periods, Thurs.-Mon., 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (although they asked me not to come until 9); the inmate handbook (enclosed) or something I read said that special arrangements could be made in emergencies.

Debra arrived about 9:40, & we visited until about 11 (At present, there are no counts between 5:30 a.m. & 4 p.m., so we don't have to maneuver around counts.). It took at least ½ hour after Debra left before Sylvia arrived (ridiculous in such a small place); I'm told it was because they had to search out a female c.o. to do Debra's strip search (By then the visiting room c.o. had changed to a man.). Then they had to find another c.o. to escort Sylvia to the visit. It is so far difficult to tell if some of this is just incompetence or actual procedures that will be implemented. I then saw Sylvia from approximately 11:30 to 2:30.

Conditions

Debra & Sylvia presented the same general picture of conditions in the unit, although, of course, they differed somewhat in terms of which things bothered them the most. But for both of them, a major problem was that again there is no shower curtain (Of course, they feel that nothing has changed.). The shower room has a door but no curtain inside. Sylvia was walked in on by a male guard who did not knock. When challenged, he said that he did not have to announce himself for security reasons. The situation is made worse by the fact that at present, the 4p.m.-midnight shift (when currently most showering & activity takes place) has an all-male staff. So they feel that the possibility of harassment is great.

A related issue is that each cell door has a narrow window, through which the woman can be seen while undressing or sitting on the toilet. Because most of the c.o.'s are male, & because the entire evening staff is male, the women feel that they have no privacy (They have been told that they cannot cover the window at any time.).

There is also a problem with pat searches. Rather than administering perfunctory pat searches, some of the male c.o.'s are grinding down over the breasts, & in starting down the legs, reach up into the crotch. Upon complaints, the staff first said it was because of inexperience in pat searches. Later, however, they said, "Well, we know that's where anything is going to be, so we have to be careful," arguing that it was necessary for security. Sylvia also feels that she has been singled out for additional pat searches, other than the customary ones.

Another area of concern is access to the indoor rec area. At first, there was free access to the indoor rec area. This is important because most of the facilities (cafeteria, chapel, education, library, law library, exercise facilities, etc.) surround the rec area. Then after a few days, staff began locking the doors. Now each woman who wants to use any of those facilities must get a staff member to unlock the door & let her into the area. Staff claimed it was because there is no way to lock access from the cafeteria into the rec area, & the chance of contraband being brought into the rec area & then into the unit from the kitchen was too great; this is claimed despite the fact that kitchen personnel are searched before being released from their duties. Also, the captain stated that this was a "controlled movement" facility. The women thus feel in a situation where they are dependent on staff for access to facilities.

They have been told that there will be no attorney calls (on unmonitored phones) unless approved by the unit team. Staff has told Sylvia that she will have access only to legal papers involved in certain open cases & will only be able to keep in her cell those which will fit in one legal accordion. They offered to store other approved legal materials in a file cabinet in an outer area. Staff will have the

key and will sort through the materials for specifically requested files (For example, she will have to request, Bring me the Logan report.). As you can imagine, she finds this unacceptable. Staff members have also said to her, "When the attorneys come to tour and you have no complaints, will motions still be filed?"

At present they are allowed one hour of exercise per day in the outside rec area (They go out in groups after 4:30 p.m.). They have been told they will not be allowed out near dark. Since Marianna is on the most eastern edge of the central time zone, it will get dark very early here in the winter, thus sharply reducing time outside. In addition, they will not be allowed out during fog, of which there is a lot here. Several mornings already they have been kept late in their cells & then forced to hurry through breakfast because it was foggy outside, even though they were not going outside. An incident in the outdoor rec yard--they were playing volleyball & a c.o. came & took the net & locked it up. He said he suddenly realized that they could use it to escape over the fence; they were told to just bat the ball back & forth without a net (There are several c.o.'s outside with them during rec.); the net has not reappeared.

So far they have received only a national policy statement but no institutional supplement. Thus, they have no information on how to work their way out of the unit. Sylvia has been given only her progress report; she feels she will need help to get the other paperwork on her transfer.

These are their major immediate concerns. In addition, Sylvia feels hassled by the asst. hospital administrator (Ms. Felliciano) & is afraid that she will be denied medication & that the last 16 months of successful struggle in Lexington about her medical records & treatment will be lost. Debra is concerned about finding an attorney to deal with her appeals.

Less immediately pressing concerns--Sanitary napkins & tampax are currently stored at the camp. Women must request them, they are brought over from the camp; women are given them two at a time; there is no general storage area. Staff has told them that there are no funds for education or recreation programs; any remaining funds for the year are being spent on the men's unit. The chapel has been dismantled (I suppose, taken to the men's unit, to show off for the men's tour on Sept. 9-10), & no services have been held. There are no books in the law library & none in the regular library. They are allowed no bulletins & nothing on the wall, except one picture in a commissary frame, which they may rotate. Everything else must be kept in the locker, & if there is an extra locker in their cell (because of the double-bunking facilities), they are not allowed to use it.

Additional point of information: Their visiting lists may contain 12 people, but they are limited to four points of visiting per month. A weekday visit = $\frac{1}{2}$ point, while a weekend day or holiday visit = 1 point. Inmate address:

Federal Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 7007
Marianna, FL 32446

I have excluded descriptions of many things, either because they are included in the inmate handbook or other enclosed information or in the tour report. If you have any questions about procedures, etc., or conditions, please write or call.

Enclosures: Inmate Handbook, handwritten notes from Sylvia, commissary list, unit rules & regulations, Sylvia's "progress report," education A&O handbook, *Unicor handbook, *Unicor application, *"Special Purchase" list (cosmetics--told they can order from this for a couple of month & that will be it), *visiting request form, *religious preference survey, *medical information sheet, *flu info sheet

These materials, plus the Unicor "Inmate Accident Compensation Procedures" manual which I have not included, represent everything the inmates have received thus far (I have included all of the above enclosures to the Prison Project. For paper & postage reasons, I have not sent the starred items to everyone else. If there is something not included that you deem necessary, please contact Adjoa or me for a copy.).

Sylvia deems the following information vital in tracking follow-up work on this unit: 1) Guidelines for a level 4 men's prison, so they can be compared to the women's unit (Staff is claiming that this is merely a level 4 women's prison.). 2) Paperwork from their transfers, which has not been given to them. (I think she feels that they may need help in obtaining the paperwork, because it will show how the BOP is handling/not handling this internally, whether there are new criteria, etc.)

If there is any way that I can be of further help, please let me know.

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Marianna, FL 32446
(904) 526-3299

cc: The Prison Project, Adjoa Aiyetoro
Mary O'Melveny
Jan Susler

P.S. I am also enclosing two articles from the Jackson County Floridian, the Marianna newspaper. One concerns the transfer from Lexington. The other involves the EPA investigation of toxic contamination at the airport, which is directly across the road from the prison. This may become another issue in the future, because there is evidence that surrounding wells have been affected.

MARIANNA FCI WOMEN'S UNIT - FOLLOW-UP VISIT, SEPTEMBER 8, 1988

On Thursday, September 8, 1988, I made an attorney visit to see Sylvia Brown. In the almost two weeks since my initial visit, they have established more internal paperwork. Thus each inmate has a file folder, containing a visitor log. There were also several other logs which the admitting correctional officer filled out, but I was not asked to sign a log. I filled out the usual two forms; I have not yet been asked to show any ID (A legal visit is still so unusual that I think they've forgotten.). This time I was escorted to the visiting room by the visiting room officer; a counselor did not appear.

Some of the conditions recounted in my previous report seem to have been eased by the appointment of a new unit manager, Mr. Stalnecker. The previous unit manager, Ken Sorensen, was reassigned to the men's unit, when it evidently became clear that he was not going to be able to work with the women in resolving their complaints. Since Mr. Stalnecker took over, the following changes have been made: They have quit using the fire alarm for morning wake up. The doors to the indoor rec area have been unlocked, & the women have free access to that area (Stalnecker explicitly contradicted the captain's statement that it was a "controlled movement" facility, saying that it does not involve controlled movement & he will not run the unit in that way.). The women are now allowed outdoors for as long as they want between 4:30 & 8:30 p.m. in decent weather (a change from the one hour previously allowed), and they can go in & out at will during that time (The day before I visited a c.o. told Sylvia & Lynette to go inside at 7:30--they were the only ones outside; they were unable to ascertain whether this represented a change in policy, or if that particular c.o. was uptight because it was the two of them.). The volleyball net has also returned. A sign labeling the shower room has been posted, & the officer who was walking in on women unannounced has been reassigned. There have been fewer pat searches, & individual women no longer seem to be singled out for extra searches.

The new unit manager continues to hassle Sylvia about her legal papers. He has told her that if she wants to keep more than one folder of legal papers, she will need a court order from Judge Parker. They seem to have abandoned the locked file cabinet with only officer access concept. Presently she is storing her legal papers in the extra locker in her cell but expects a confrontation over it.

In the three weeks since the women arrived from Lexington, there have been only two additional arrivals, a woman transferred from Tucson, & if I remember right, a direct designation. The women from Lex & the new women were "teamed" the past week. When Lynette commented during her team meeting that the facility felt like an MCC & that therefore no one should have to stay there longer than a year with a clean disciplinary record, the staff vehemently denied that it was like an MCC, except for Roberta Stewart, the education director (They heard that she came from, or has been at MCC NY.), who agreed, "This is like an MCC."

During the tour we were told that the women's unit Unicor assignment would be to sew the upholstery for the furniture industry that the entire institution would be involved with. Now, however, they have been told that the women's unit will be doing data processing. When the initial skill-testing was done for Unicor, only Sylvia & Lynette (who is not interested in Unicor) passed. Classes were then set up to train the women for the data processing, but Sylvia was told she would not be allowed to enroll because she already had the skills. And when she was teamed, they wrote down "not participating" in classes.

The law library remains almost empty. They did bring in one set of encyclopedias & a box of "leisure reading" books, but nothing of substance.

While the women are glad that some of the initial problem areas have eased, they fear that the changes are merely to keep things quiet until after the facility dedication (next week). We'll see.

MEN'S UNIT TOUR, SEPTEMBER 9, 1988

I toured the men's unit during the public tour on September 9. It took place during a driving rain (It literally poured the entire day, drastically cutting down on the size of the crowd expected.) which was very distracting, as they rushed us from building to building. Some people did not have umbrellas. We had several disabled people in our group (This prison is surprisingly inaccessible to people in wheelchairs; I guess I say surprisingly because most of it is built on one level.), for whom the steady rain was an additional handicap. In these conditions it was difficult to get a real feeling for the men's unit as a whole.

Each of the four living units has two wings, with 62 cells in each wing. The cells are doublebunked, resulting in 248 men in each living unit, & a total capacity of 992. Each living unit ^{wing} is built on the same triangle configuration as the women's unit, except that the third side has cells on both levels also. In addition, it appeared to me that the center common area was somewhat smaller than in the women's unit; the resulting feeling was a more cramped sense. We were not allowed on the second floor, & the staff could not tell us whether there were TV rooms in the unit or whether there were rec facilities (or if they would need to do all of that in the main rec area). They said there would be a washer/dryer in each unit (There is also a laundry room, where the men will take their issued clothing to be washed.).

I tried to compare the facilities, keeping in mind the differences in capacity. Many of the areas seemed similar, for example, cafeteria, chapel, craft rooms. The major difference in these was that while for the women, these surround the indoor rec area, the men move from building to building & have outdoor access in this movement.

The most glaring differences to me were in the areas of recreation & programs. There is a full-size gym/auditorium, with six basketball nets, bleachers, etc. In addition, there is an indoor/outdoor weight area, 6-8 outdoor basketball courts, volleyball courts, softball field/football field, soccer field, & two handball courts. I think they also said there was a running track, but we could not see that in the rain. There is an indoor rec area, with game tables, two music rooms, & a large ceramics room, in addition to the craft rooms. The law library was fully stocked. The leisure library contained no books yet, but there were magazines & newspapers already available. There were several large rooms stocked with computers, & they talked in much more complete terms about the business degrees & courses they would be offering than they did in the women's unit tour. They seem to be expecting large numbers of Cuban & Puerto Rican prisoners, as they have several classrooms labeled as Spanish GED rooms (Staff said work would be done with Spanish-speaking prisoners to first get them literate in Spanish & then give them enough English to get by in the institution; they could go further with English if they wanted to.).

The only area where I could see an advantage in the women's unit was in the visiting room. The furniture in the women's unit is more comfortable (The men's has metal chairs.). It is unclear whether there will be an officer sitting inside the visiting room (On the women's unit tour there was also no c.o. desk; now there is one.). Of course, it would be more difficult to overhear a visit in the men's unit, even if there is an officer there, merely because the room itself is so much larger. Both units have the same number of visiting points per month.

The medical facilities were much more extensive--a six-bed infirmary (They still don't plan to keep anyone longer there than overnight.), lab, examination rooms, pharmacy, three dental chairs.

They are saying that they expect men to arrive by the end of the month. Lower ranking staff think it will be much later, as they showed us the most completed living unit (Cells are identical to those in the women's unit.), & it is far from ready.