



COMMENTS OF:

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On Behalf of BDS Client Held In Solitary Confinement

Presented Before

The New York City Board of Correction

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Hello, my name is Brittany Cooper. I am a social work intern with Brooklyn Defender Services where I meet with people regularly inside our city jails. I'd like to share written testimony by a man who was held in solitary confinement at GRVC.

Being in the box is the most inconvenient part of doing a bid. You know you are doomed once you make it to seg-intake. This is where they downsize your property and confiscate all of your food and hygiene products. Your entire commissary is either thrown out or given to the intake worker who is an inmate. From there, you get your tan uniform taken from you and given an orange one instead. Then you're rear cuffed and escorted to one of the housing areas. Every single cell is completely covered in graffiti and dirt. The inside of the toilets are dark brown or green. The vents are completely covered in dust. You're not given any cleaning products so you are pretty much stuck in filth during your stay in the box.

Usually every meal that is served is cold or luke-warm. I've been in the box over ten times throughout my incarceration and I can't recall ever having a hot meal. You're only allowed one six minute call a day and you can only call two numbers. They have to be on your approved phone list and that's only if you can get to the phone. There are two phones, one for the top tier and one for the bottom tier. So if an inmate gets the phone and refused to give it back, no one else on that tier can use that phone until he decides to give it back. Therefore, you can go days without getting on the phone. You are only allowed showers every other day of the week. Showers are also closed on the weekends. Sometimes when the officers are being unresponsive, you can go four to five days without showering. The yard is also a single man cage. When the yard officers walk the housing area to make the yard list, they walk at 4:30AM because they do not want anyone to know they are walking. So, if you want to go outside you have to stand on your gate in the

morning. If you alert anyone else that the yard officers are making their list, they will take your name off the list. There is no water or bathroom available in the yard either. The box has physically and mentally broken me down. No one provides any reading material so you are stuck reading the walls in your cell. On plenty of occasions, I talked to myself to get through the day.

Thank you.