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## "Letter From Loretto"

Hello again from the Federal "Correctional" Institution at Loretto, Pennsylvania. Many of you have written to ask me if I'm still working in the chapel. The answer is yes, and it occurred to me that I've not really said much about the chapel. So in the interest of broadening your understanding of this horrible place, here's some background.

FCI Loretto used to be a Catholic monastery in a town that is also home to St. Francis and St. Aloysius Colleges. The Bureau of Prisons bought the monastery and turned it into a low-security prison. A minimum-security camp came later. The monks' bedrooms were converted into prisoners' rooms. So instead of two monks per room, we have six or eight prisoners. Gross overcrowding is probably the one thing that the BOP is good at.

In the 1990s the BOP added another housing unit, Central Unit, to cram another 350-400 people into a ridiculously, and probably unconstitutionally, small space. That's where I live.

The chapel is the monastery's original chapel and is located in what is now North Unit. The BOP added two chaplains' offices and a small library by blocking off some space. They added a concrete block "worship room" across the hall, and the old choir loft became a TV room for North 2 Unit. Otherwise, it's a real chapel with stained glass windows and everything. There are crucifixes hanging and stations of the cross on the wall, but it's an ecumenical place. The altar and several large pieces of furniture are on wheels, so they

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can be moved out of the way depending on what group has the chapel reserved at any given time.

I'm an orderly in the chapel. On Tuesday mornings all 19 chapel employees vacuum, dust, and polish the chapel, the auxiliary worship room, and the offices. Otherwise, my job is to provide prisoners with books and religious videos from the library. I work eight hours a week and make \$3.23 a month. I do this job, though, because I enjoy the solace and the ability to sit at one of the prison's very few desks, and write in peace.

FCI Loretto has two chaplains, both of whom are good men. In fact, they are the only two staff members to shake my hand since I arrived here. They are, of course, cops first and chaplains second, but the unfortunate fact of their BOP employment doesn't get in the way of their ministry to prisoners.

There is a myriad of faiths represented here. There are, of course, Catholics, mainstream and evangelical Protestants, Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims. We have a few Mormons and Orthodox, of which I am one. But there are a good number of faiths that I either knew little about or never heard of. They include, in no particular order:

- Nation of Islam: Originally founded by Wallace D. Fard in 1930 in the Midwest and popularized by Elijah Muhammad after Fard's disappearance in 1934, NOI followers believe that all humans were black until an evil genius named Yakub created a white race

of devils. Believers maintain that upon the start of the end times, NOI followers will be taken to heaven in a spaceship currently buried in a field in Japan.

- Moorish Science Temple: Founded in Newark, NJ in 1913 by Timothy Drew, who took the name Noble Drew Ali, MST adherents believe all African-Americans are originally from Morocco. They use a version of the Quran written by Noble Drew Ali and completely unrelated to the Muslim Quran.

- Santeria: Combining elements of traditional Catholicism and voodoo, most Santeria followers at Loretto are from the Caribbean.

- Messianics: Also known as "Jews for Jesus," Messianics believe in combining Jewish and fundamentalist Christian teachings, refer to Jesus only as "Yeshua," and refuse to work on Saturdays, which they believe is the true Christian sabbath. The group was founded in northern California in 1970.

- Rastafarians: The Rastas are a messianic movement among poor Jamaicans founded in 1930 before spreading to the US and UK. Rastas believe that former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie is the messiah who came to liberate all black people, who are the true biblical Jews. Followers smoke marijuana as a sacrament, although not at Loretto.

- Native Americans: The various native American tribes have a sweat lodge behind the chapel, which they use on Saturdays. One

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Native American friend of mine, who is a local tribal chief, told me that the "real Indians" stay away from the sweat lodge because it has been taken over by "fake Indians" who like to sit in the lodge for hours and "pretend they're native Americans."

- Wiccans: I honestly don't know anything about the wiccans, other than that there are a lot of them and they represent a wide variety of beliefs. Some call themselves Druids, some Pagans, and others Satanists. (The Satanists can buy pentagram necklaces from a religious supply catalogue in the chapel office.) Know that your tax money is being well-spent: The woodshop recently crafted an altar and magic wands for the wiccans to use in their services.

One prisoner, a tax cheat, has taken it upon himself to create his own cult and to write his own bible by taking out the parts of the real bible that he doesn't like, then adding his own philosophy. I'm told that there's a lot of fire and brimstone. This prisoner has actually started "baptizing" people in the bathroom and now has several followers. He went so far as to write a letter to a visiting pastor saying that the pastor would go to hell if he didn't join the cult. The cult is not recognized by the chaplains as a legitimate faith group.

We had a Seventh Day Adventist who worked in the chapel for one day. When he came in to start his shift, he looked at me and said, "What religion are you?" "Greek Orthodox," I said. He looked at the guy next to me. "What religion are you?" "Mormon," he responded. The Adventist looked at the third employee in the

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room. "What religion are you?" "Catholic." The Adventist shouted, "All of y'all's religions is false! You all going to hell!" I said, "I don't think you're going to fit in very well here." The next day he was sent to solitary and fired for stealing milk from the cafeteria.

The chapel is supposed to be a place of contemplation, meditation, and prayer. It is sometimes that. More often it is a lounge for pedophiles, who congregate there because they can sit and relax undisturbed. (Honestly, they can sit and relax undisturbed anywhere because they have the run of the place. But they prefer the chapel and the library.) I've already beaten that dead horse, so I won't get into it again.

I'm not trying to convey the notion that the chapel is all peace, love, and flowers. It's not. Many otherwise religious people refuse to go to services because there are so many pedophiles there. The chaplains' hands are tied. They can't, after all, have parallel pedophile and non-pedophile religious services. A separate dispute erupted a month ago in the Jewish group between Reformed, Conservative, and Orthodox Jews, and instigated by a notorious pederast about whom I've written previously, and who wanted to take over the group. The kerfuffle resulted in both a chair and a punch being thrown.

The chapel has other problems, too. In my year of incarceration there have been several sexual incidents in the chapel. Some prisoners have sex whenever they can, usually in the showers or under the stairwell near the mail room, which have no security camera coverage. Unfortunately, the chapel also has no security cameras,

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and we have to occasionally tell other prisoners to stop making out or to stop fondling each other. When there are no religious services taking place, prisoners can watch movies or listen to religious CDs in the chapel. The low lights sometimes lead to make-out sessions, which we have to break up. I once had to ask a chapel employee to stop necking with his boyfriend. On another occasion, a pedophile was watching a movie that included a scene with a little boy in a bathtub. The pedophile watched the scene over and over and over again, becoming more excited with each viewing. We asked him to leave. Most recently, two guys were in the chapel with their hands up each other's shirts fondling each other's nipples. This is God's house we're talking about. I'm told that security cameras will be installed in the next fiscal year. I'm also told that funds have been appropriated in the past three years, but security cameras have never been installed. Of course, new TVs in the staff lounges HAVE been installed during that same period.

A few weeks ago I decided to look for a new job, at least to see what was available. I'm getting tired of serving the pedophiles, and I prefer to work evenings, rather than the mornings I currently have in the chapel. I explored a job as a hallway orderly on the evening shift, and I submitted a "Request to Staff" form asking to be considered. The form went to the lieutenant in charge of hallway orderlies. The lieutenant, a Dudley Doornight look-a-like, who has a reputation as a bully and provocateur, and who reportedly attends costume parties dressed as Darth Maul, doesn't like me.

Some background: Last Thanksgiving night, in a private phone

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conversation with my wife, I said that some of the Corrections Officers (CO) here were "nimrods." I base this opinion on two things: my own personal experience and the book "In Defense of Flogging," by Dr. Peter Moskos, an eminent professor of criminal justice at John Jay University. Dr. Moskos notes in his book that the BOP is little more than an employment agency for unemployed, uneducated, rural whites. The BOP gets what it pays for.

Anyway, this lieutenant is an avid listener of my phone calls, which he records and sometimes sends to other staff members to listen to. So after my wife and I hung up on Thanksgiving night he ordered me to report to the lieutenant's office. I wanted to bring my friend and former colleague Dave, but I was not permitted to have a witness. The lieutenant began by barking a rhetorical question: "Are you an educated man?" I told him that I didn't answer rhetorical questions and that he should just say what he wanted to say. The situation devolved from there. He screamed, "Do you think I'm a nimrod?" and said that he was proud to have received his GED from a youth correctional facility in Philadelphia. ("Congratulations?") He bragged that he had served his country in Afghanistan. (I thanked him for his service.) He shouted that I had better not criticize another CO in a private conversation with my wife. He said further that I needed to start acting like an inmate. "What's that supposed to mean?" I said. "Should I get a tattoo on my face? Should I steal food from the cafeteria? If you mean I should wring my hands and say 'yes sir, no sir,' that's never going to happen. Never."

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I actually missed the 9:30pm cant - which is unheard of - because of his rant. I could only conclude that he has such low self-esteem that I offended his delicate sensibilities by speaking poorly of unnamed COs in a private conversation. I must have really hit a nerve.

(Now back to the story.) When the lieutenant received my "Request to Staff" form this week, he crumpled it into a ball. I saved it as a souvenir and I include a photocopy here in its original condition. So I'll stay in the chapel, which really isn't a bad place, and I'll continue my writing there.

I thought you would be interested in reading about the type of person who has absolute power and control over me. I can only hope that the very straightforward BOP regulations against staff intimidation will be adhered to, as they are my only protection against this type of misconduct.

If you would like to read more about my case, please go to [www.defendjohnk.com](http://www.defendjohnk.com).

Best regards,

John

PS: I'm proud to say that Oscar-nominated documentarian Jim Spine's film "Silenced," about the US government's war on whistleblowers, will premiere at New York's Tribeca Film Festival on April 19. It documents my case in detail, as well as Tom Drake's and others. Don't miss it.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
INMATE

TO: (Name and Title of Recipient)  
Lt.

FROM: John Kiriakou

WORK ASSIGNMENT:  
Chapel Orderly

SUBJECT: (Briefly state your request.)  
Continue on back, if necessary.  
If necessary, you

REGISTER NO.

DATE:

3-25-79

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