

Interview Between Cody Carmichael and Comrade Z

TDCJ Memorial Unit, Rosharon, Texas - February 2022



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Comrade Z: Can you please introduce yourself and give some background on your time at the newly minted "Memorial Unit", formerly known as Dirty Darrington?

Cody: My name is Cody Carmichael. I am a capitalist, conservative and American. I committed a criminal offense, which I will not explain away or cheapen with some excuse. I was responsible. I may not agree with everything everyone says, but as an American we all have the right to our own opinions, because we "We the People". That being said, I love what y'all are doing and hope that you find many supporters and can help those with small voices or who think they cannot be heard. I have been incarcerated for eleven years in March. Of that eleven, I've spent about seven on Darrington and about a year and a half on Memorial. All of it has sucked!

Z: What are the conditions like in the prison? (AC/heating, clothing, use of force, suicide, disciplinary, rec., medical, mental health)

Cody: In a word, they – suck! For convenience sake I will try to keep this short, because there is a lot of suckiness here. Just remember all the little things make the big things.

to help yourself. A fifteen minute conversation that may mean little to you could mean everything to someone else. Well, I'm Carmichael, just Carmichael. Have a good one!

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they help?

Cody: There is no person alive who does not need solidarity. I mean, I am pretty awesome, but it would be nice to communicate with others, be a part of something, or have friends drop a line every once in awhile.

Z: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Cody: Yeah, this might get deep, but I want to say it anyways. Life is about finding your identity, becoming the person you not only want to be, but should be. This, from personal experience, is not easy and sometimes makes people crazy. Keep going, if you stop, give up, quit, become overwhelmed, then you give up on everyone you're supposed to help. I was a junior in the Bible College program when I failed a class and got kicked out. I failed because I discovered I didn't love myself, but I love my daughter, sister, mom, and friends. All of these great people love me. My friends are the reason I am the man I am. I went to Bible College to challenge Christ and myself. I am now on Asatru (Pagan) who no longer suffers from chronic depression and can never be a Field Minister. I have also never been happier. I am in prison and found who I am. I see real goals that I can achieve. More important, I realize that after one finds themselves, you should then turn around and help others get where you are. This is the Law of Reciprocation, help others

There is no A/C here in this south Texas prison. We get a fan. Maybe two years ago we were allowed to buy two fans! It was very exciting until you get to the cell, which only has two plugs. No joke! I would rather wash my clothes in the toilet in my cell than get clothes from laundry. Enough said. I have never had a use of force called on me, so I have no ground to stand on, but five on one never seemed like fair odds. Sadly, suicides are common. Being treated as sub-human will wear down a soul. Tragic. Disciplinary is a joke. If an officer writes a case, you get that case. I stopped going to minor case hearings, and only go to major case hearings so I will know my line class.

Z: What are the accommodations for people with dietary restrictions?

Cody: Peanut butter sandwiches. That's it. I was a vegetarian for two and a half years here. No beef, no pork, chicken or fish. If it wasn't for the inmate line servers I would have starved to death. A standard meat free is two scoops of beans and one serving of everything else, and a peanut butter sandwich. By the way, this peanut butter sandwich isn't a glorious serving with jelly. It's a stingy scoop of peanut butter on two flaky pieces of white bread. No jelly! I asked the kitchen captain one day if he could give anything else besides peanut butter or if he could church up the peanut butter. He said eat a regular tray. When I told him I was a vegetarian he said, "We serve cheese sandwiches",

which they do, one out of one hundred meals.

Z: How can people on the outside try to support you in trying to make conditions better inside? Is there someone to call? What would you like people to say?

Cody: If people started to call the district representatives in Texas and make formal complains, it forces TDCJ to crack down on Darrington (Memorial). Don't just complain to the department (i.e. commissary), get officer names. The more detail you give, the more you force an issue.

Z: Why are prisoners mail getting blocked, withheld, harassed, discriminated on, or thrown away by prison staff? Does it have to do with the content or is it a straight up power trip?

Cody: Because they answer to nobody. Anytime someone controls what another person is allowed to do it is about power. The moment they chose to squeeze their fist on some but not others, that's power trippin'. So who knows, because the mailroom can deny anything from anyone and who can stop them? You might think, "why don't they use grievances?" Because they do not work. I have written close

to six, all of them were rubber stamped.

Z: There is a tendencies in prison abolitionist and anarchist projects to focus on political prisoners, often neglecting other prisoners in the process. Do you appreciate Mongoose for assisting you without pulling the ideology card?

Cody: Good question. Like I said from the start – I'm American. To me that means I should appreciate other people's opinions. I may not agree or I might be pissed that someone's idea was better than mine. Hell, in a few years I may be ashamed of a view I currently have. But, I will never be ungrateful to any organization that wants to fight for someone else. Hell, that's the whole reason the Boston Tea Party happened. True, both abolitionists and anarchist projects focus on those they are closest to their community, but they are not exclusive tight-asses trying to censor other people's views. Hello... I am not an anarchist, but I'm being interviewed. I mean Z never made me drink the kool-aid. So, I guess what's good for the goose is good for the gander.

Z: Would you appreciate more assistance from organizations and supporters in solidarity with IWW-IWOC Texas? How can