

WANDA H.

I. Anxiety

Okay. Oh. I get severe anxiety a lot because of the crime I committed, because of my sentence, the amount of time I was given, because you know being around so many people every day having to deal with so many different personalities, ah, so much expected out of you and you're trying, I try very hard.

I get severe anxiety. Sometimes I hyperventilate where I just can't get my breath and that's when I have to go to that room and close the door. And I have patterns that I go through of trying to handle it.

I get severe, I call it severe because it's severe for me, anxiety like I said and stress. What I did, the things that led up to my crime, they all come back to me in mind real quick and then the day I committed my crime that comes back to me in reality during the day and in my dreams.

So I live with that all the time and the guilt and the you know - I have medical problems so I'm dealing with those problems too. They told me I have - I was diagnosed with Parkinson's, which is a motor nerve disorder. Well that bothers me a little bit, you know the jerking and all but I was at one point the first year

that I was here I was given some medication and I was given way too much of whatever it was. I don't know what it was, but I still – I think I was sent to crisis. I was given too much medication through injection and I still have problems with that because I feel like, this is my personal feeling from the way I feel, I feel like it gave me some, some nerve damage because I still have problems with it. So I have a lot of jerking from that. When I'm flexing my hands, that's what that is. It feels like it, feels like uh it did some damage into my hands or something.

Um, I'm very sensitive to medication because prior to – well, I'm fifty ... I'm almost 60 years old, so prior to me being 47 years old I never took medication. I didn't do drugs. I didn't take aspirin. I didn't smoke. I didn't drink alcohol. Um, so I guess that's what makes me real sensitive to medication.

II. Patterns

The patterns I go through – uh, I get up in the morning. I'll wash my face, brush my hair, brush my teeth, get dressed. Uh, if they, you know, most mornings and when my anxiety gets really, really bad I can't stand a lot of noise. I can't stand to be around a lot of noise. I'll go back to that room and I'll close the door and the pattern that I seem to go through to calm myself down

is I'll brush my hair, drink water, sit there and just try to physically/mentally calm myself down. Uh, it seems to help. It helps me.

Um, I always seem to want to have an object in my mouth. I need an object – it's like an impulse. I've got to have it. Some type of object in my mouth. A spoon, a pencil cap, anything that, you know, I try to keep it clean but um, it helps to keep me thinking.

III. Your Best Is All You Can Do

I would wish that they would be a little bit, they could educate the officers to be a little more understanding to the facts that we are human beings and yes we committed crimes but a lot of us were put in situations that we just didn't have any other choice and we're not the horrible, horrible, horrible people they like to make us out to be. And um, we're doing our best and your best is all you can do.

IV. The Food Lion Bag

I wish that they would improve the food some. I know they say that they're out of money and they have budget cuts but most of the time the food is horrible and not just for the mentally ill, but for the whole compound. Uh, we eat rice,

bread and something called poultry gravy. The only real meal that's edible is the uh, they have noodles and some type of chopped ham. That's pretty edible.

We get, on the front lines, uh, we get no fruits at all, very few vegetables, um, that's not healthy because it's rickets that causes skin breakdown. I know this, um, I, a good positive thing did happen to me just recently. We don't get any fruits and vegetables unless we purchase them. Well, I haven't had any money to speak of lately and um, recently, when the IRC which is the mental health gives out fruit and vegetables, they take, I think this is the way they handled it, they pick one person each month, every time they buy fruits and vegetables, people are allowed to buy fruits and vegetables, they pick one person each month and they just give them some apples and bananas. Well, several of the people in our building in the last year have gotten, you get like 4 apples and six bananas or 10 bananas. Well, for several people in our building have gotten the free package, call it a package, it's just a bag, a Food Lion bag with the fruit in it. I was one of them, I appreciated that. They don't know how much I appreciated that because I can't afford to buy bananas with the little bit of money I get from my family. They have to buy your personals and what you ... and uh, I appreciated that a lot.

Yea. That was a bright spot. I didn't expect it, it just happened. They just called my name and I went out and they handed me this Food Lion bag with

some fruits and vegetables in it. I did share some of the apples with some other people. I was a pig, I ate all the bananas myself.

V. Losing Everything

I didn't, I didn't, I was ashamed that I was being slapped or beaten or knocked. This tooth here ... uh, it was knocked out by the man I'm in here for shooting. Well, he didn't knock it out, he knocked it loose. And it eventually ... came out since I've been in here. It bothers me really bad because I always tried to take care of my teeth well, I have this reminder here now.

A lot people don't realize that some of us that are in here, we have lost everything. You know, I had a home, I had a car, I had furniture, clothes, children, family, uh - I had a home, a 4 bedroom nice home that I worked for 25 years to get. I lost everything. Everything. Uh, it's a lot to lose when you're at 25 years worth of work.

That bothers me, too. The fact that I lost every single thing that I ever worked for 25 years. 30 years. And uh, then, they still, and then got 30 years on top of that and then they still didn't think that was enough punishment.

I mean, there's a lot of women out there who are being battered right now. I know of a situation right now, the girl that called, that talks to an inmate here,

just got married, she's in a battered, being beaten by someone now but and she won't go to the authorities with it. And we know about it but there's nothing we can do.