



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 1, 2021

Letter from Jan. 6 Prisoner Describes Gulag-like Conditions in D.C. Jail

One of the January 6 protesters locked up in a Washington, D.C., jail has published a long letter describing the brutal conditions there.

But what Nathan DeGrave describes sounds less like a jail in the nation's capital and more like the Turkish prison featured in [Midnight Express](#).

Degrave, who faces a [12-count indictment](#) in connection with entering the U.S. Capitol during the mostly peaceful protest, tells a tale of beatings, starvation, poor hygiene, and lack of medical care.

Federal authorities seem to be permitting the savagery to punish the prisoners in violation of the [Eighth Amendment](#) to the federal Constitution before they are tried. The conditions might explain why D.C. corrections officials blocked a congressional delegation from entering the facility.



Darrin Klimek/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Dear fellow Americans:

I never thought I'd write a letter like this, but we're living in very different times. This is my cry for help.

My name is Nathan DeGrave, and as a non violent participant at the Jan 6th rally, I've spent the last 9 months detained

— Brad Geyer (@BradGeyer) [October 29, 2021](#)

D.C.'s Gitmo

Claiming he was a non-violent protester on January 6, [DeGrave called](#) himself a "political prisoner" in "D.C.'s Gitmo," a reference to the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where U.S. authorities keep terrorists.

In the letter published last week, DeGrave alleged that "Jan 6ers" have suffered daily lockdowns for 23 or 24 hours before being permitted to leave their 120-square-foot cells. And isolation has "caused many people to go on a RAPID mental decline."

"A large percentage of us are HEAVILY MEDICATED with anti-anxiety and anti-depressant drugs, which helps to cope with the psychological and mental ABUSE we endure," [he wrote](#):



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Masks are WEAPONIZED and used against us.... Masks need to be covering both the nose and mouth AT ALL TIMES or we are threatened and locked down in our cells. Jan 6ers are always respectful to the employees around us, but C.Os maintain the need to invent reasons for discipline.

DeGrave wrote that jailers have seized sensitive legal documents, but more disturbing than that violation of their constitutional rights is the "EXTREME medical neglect.... [S]ome even have Covid like symptoms, but medical personnel have refused to treat it."

Continued DeGrave:

Christopher Worrell, for example, is an inmate with Cancer, who also broke his hand in prison and requires surgery. Both have been completely ignored. Federal judge Royce Lamberth got to the point where on October 12th, he filed contempt of court charges against the warden of the DC DOC, claiming that Worrell's civil rights have been violated, and demanding the U.S attorney general inquire further about his and other possible violations.

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The harsh, unlivable conditions

— Brad Geyer (@BradGeyer) [October 29, 2021](#)

Starvation Diet

Yet medical neglect is just one of trial the persecuted Jan 6ers face.

"On at least five occasions, RAW SEWAGE has overflowed our unit, causing human fecal matter to flood the floors and rooms," [he continued](#). "That's also in addition to the MOLD on cell walls, as well as the rusty pipes, and DIRTY WATER that flows from these sinks. White rags TURN BROWN when exposed to the water from our faucets."

The prisoners are also starving:

We are undergoing SEVERE NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES and STARVATION. For breakfast this morning, I received a tray of flavorless paste, two slices of bread, and a slice of bologna. Lunches usually consist of rice and beans, but we'll get cold chicken/beef patties if we are lucky. For dinner, we are sometimes fed a diet of cheese sandwiches, and bologna and cheese 4 to 5 times per week.

Without commissary, people like myself are FORCED TO STARVE. I suffer from HEADACHES and NAUSEA on an almost REGULAR BASIS from the malnutrition and



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constant hunger I am subjected to. I have lost ALMOST 15 POUNDS since I've been detained.

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Aside from starving the inmates and forcing them to wallow in sewage, jail officials deny the prisoners toiletries and other basic needs for personal hygiene, DeGrave alleged.

"Our rights to personal hygiene are also totally neglected. Razors are PROHIBITED, and inmates are forced to either go unshaved, and grow long beards, or use a razor free cream that BURNS and IRRITATES the skin," he wrote. "Haircuts are also PROHIBITED from unvaccinated inmates."

DeGrave hasn't had a haircut in nine months, he wrote. That, and the weight loss from malnutrition, he wrote, has made him "VIRTUALLY UNRECOGNIZABLE.... I fear even my family would not recognize me.

No Religious Rights

Jailers have also taken away the protesters' First Amendment right to practice their religion, DeGrave alleged, and one inmate was beaten for trying to organize a Bible-study group.

"RELIGIOUS SERVICES, protected by the 1st amendment, are NOT provided," he wrote:

Neither are in-person classes or other activities available to the rest of the jail. An inmate named Ryan Samsel, instead attempted to organize his own bible study ... until he was viciously BEATEN and LEFT FOR DEAD by correctional officers. He suffered a broken eye socket and brain damage as a result of the vicious attack. He's now permanently blind in one eye. On another occasion, Scott Fairlamb was confronted by an officer in the middle of the night, and his life was threatened, once the officer's body cam was disabled. Many, like myself, are afraid they could be the next victim.

DeGrave is also terrified he will be subjected to a racially-motivated beating because the protesters are falsely called "white supremacists."

The protesters are in danger not only from the prison's mostly black inmate population, but also the guards, "mostly liberal migrants from Africa who have been conditioned to hate us, and hate America," [he alleged](#):

Jan 6ers have been mocked, beaten and ridiculed by guards for singing the National Anthem. The Corrections Officers despise our politics and the love we have for this country. At one point, an officer even yelled "F**K AMERICA!", and threatened to lock us down FOR A WEEK if we attempted to sing the National Anthem again.



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No wonder jail officials turned away the congressmen.

BREAKING: The DC Department of Corrections locked out multiple Members of Congress from reviewing the conditions of the January 6th prisoners.

What are they hiding?

cc: [@RepLouieGohmert](#), [@RepGosar](#), [@RepMTG](#) pic.twitter.com/6fLmhg7bCC

— Rep. Matt Gaetz (@RepMattGaetz) [July 29, 2021](#)

If everything DeGrave wrote is true, jail officials might well be guilty of myriad federal felonies.

Charges

DeGrave claims he was at the U.S. Capitol to film a documentary.

“I am being unfairly prosecuted and definitely overcharged. I never assaulted anyone, destroyed property, or stolen anything,” he wrote. “I walked through wide open doors to enter the Capitol, along with my camera crew hoping to get the rally on video. I was never even armed at any point inside the Capitol.”

Federal prosecutors [have charged](#) him with myriad counts of assaulting, resisting, impeding, and obstructing Capitol Hill police and other crimes, including trying to disrupt the certification of Joe Biden’s suspicious victory on November 3.



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