

SWORN STATEMENT NO.49

FROM PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY JAIL

We do not have cell phone footage of abuses inside prisons and jails. I am reading the following sworn testimony from a person held in the Prince George's County Jail to lift this veil of secrecy and hold our justice system accountable.

Under penalty of perjury, attest to the following facts:

I am an investigator at Civil Rights Corps. At Civil Rights Corps, I have done fact investigation for at least ten federal lawsuits challenging abuses in the criminal legal system. As part of this work, I routinely interview witnesses. I have spoken to two witnesses who are currently incarcerated at the Prince George's County Jail.

Both witnesses experienced potential symptoms of COVID-19 before they tested positive: the first witness had a cough and was experiencing headaches, and the second witness experienced a loss in his ability to taste and smell. No one at the jail described what the potential symptoms of COVID-19 include. Regular symptoms checks were not being conducted. The witness who lost his sense of taste and smell thought that the food at the jail was getting worse.

After testing positive for COVID-19, both witnesses were transferred to H-6. They both spent more than 14 days on this unit. Both witnesses described it as very dirty and uncomfortable. The second witness said that H-6 "has to be one of the dirtiest units in the jail." He described the unit as covered in mold.

Both witnesses told me that there was an infestation of ants in the cells. The second witness told me that there were also "flying critters," like gnats on the unit.

The first witness told me that no staff member entered the unit to clean it for almost two weeks. He was especially concerned about the shower; he says that all four of the detainees on the unit used the same shower, and it was never sanitized.

Both witnesses said that the vents on the unit blew hot air, so the unit was very hot. The second witness said that because the jail had closed the slots on the cell doors, the cells would sometimes steam up from the heat.

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The first witness told me that the COs would pick and choose when they wanted to respond to intercom calls from the detainees on the unit. Sometimes people were supposed to go out for rec, but couldn't because their cell door was locked. They would try to buzz the COs, but the COs would ignore them and refuse to come open the door.

The second witness said that oftentimes, the detainees would have to wait until the shift change and try to get the attention of the new COs, because the COs on the earlier shift had decided not to answer the detainees at all.

The first witness said that some COs were spiteful and mean. He described an instance in which the staff who dropped trays off at the unit brought extra juice boxes, but rather than give the extra juice boxes out to the prisoners, one of the COs threw the juice into the trash.

Later in the day, one of the other detainees on the unit dug through the trash while he was out on rec and passed them out.