

Bristol County for Correctional Justice Fact Sheet

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Former prisoners tell us:

- **Food:** food portions are inadequate (1700 calories < 2500 recommended), insufficient time to eat, inmates can't bring food out of the cafeteria. Prisoners are malnourished and listless. Trying to sneak food out of the cafeteria is a conduct violation. Yesterday's food is usually dumped back into today's rations. Inmates sometimes can't identify what the food is. Food causes painful constipation. Chicken nuggets are blue. Salisbury steak ("brake pads") is a mystery meat indistinguishable from the fish. Breakfast at 6:30, dinner at 4:30 - hungry in between.
- **Canteen:** Expensive. \$1.10 for a single package of ramen soup. When state inspectors come in, inmates get "real food all of a sudden." The red juice served at every meal features a warning that it contains a carcinogen. Yellow cake, farina and milk are common, green vegetables and fruit are not. "Stale-e-ohs" for stale Cheerios.
- **Suicides:** Sources felt it should be almost impossible for an inmate to commit suicide because they are checked every 15 minutes. However, checks are not being done scrupulously by Corrections Officers. And when there have been suicides, our interviewees wondered about accountability. The prison isolates a suicidal "cellie" in a paper suit and typically places the healthy cell mate in an "FB" disciplinary unit to avoid inmate repercussions (for calling a C.O.). This is essential solitary confinement, which seems to be a tool used for all sorts of purposes at the prison.
- **Solitary:** overuse of solitary - "I've been in there a lot - big light on 24 hrs a day - if you try to lay there with head covered, not allowed - light on all the time."
- **C.O's:** Some corrections officers are antagonizing inmates, keeping them in fear. Interviewees alleged a pay-to-play culture with C.O.'s creating "good old boy" network of family and friendship associations. Some corrections officers play cruel jokes on inmates such as "last call for chow" after failing to notify them initially of meal time. Prisoner abuse by "MOVE" (rapid response) teams - spit mask - pepper spray - restraint chair - cinched and then put in solitary - "five officers slam you onto the ground - keep you in for hours." Prisoners are beaten-up by other prisoners and could be held accountable but are not. Some CO's encourage violence between inmates. One interviewee who was transferred to Plymouth County said they were "true professionals" in comparison to officers in Bristol County.
- **Detox:** Coming off drugs occurs in the "general" GC area or in a medical unit. Our sources told us addicted inmates were pulled off Suboxone and Methadone

— whether they were in treatment or not — and given nothing but 50 mg librium (a common anticonvulsant for alcohol abusers). These patients can't sleep and are mentally fragile and our sources theorized that this contributed to suicides. MAT (medically assisted treatment) is not available for many inmates. People leaving before 90 days cannot qualify for Vivitrol. There is a three month "Drug Block" requirement, but it is only for those who have been sentenced, and not for pre-trial inmates.

- **Indigent kit:** soap, deodorant, razor, charged \$3.65. Different kits at BCSO and Ash Street. Some people don't qualify for a kit. Sometimes people posting bail will give away or sell the kits. This suggests the prison is still shaking down inmates for some costs by transferring the billing to the "canteen."
- **Security screening:** X-rays of head and neck, special chair for body cavity X-rays, a belt X-ray. Intake can be a 12 hour process. Room is cold, metal benches, filthy toilet. Fingerprints, clothing, blanket, 2 sheets, and final strip search. Old mattresses "green monsters" are hard, newer mattresses are better ("alligator skin" memory foam types).
- **Clothing:** Clothing is used and consists of: two denim vests, two denim pants, two socks, two pairs underwear. No t-shirts, which you have to buy for \$5.50 in the canteen. In Fall, a jacket is issued, often ripped and can't be exchanged because of id numbers. More inmate shakedowns at the canteen.
- **Medical:** one source waited for three weeks for his insulin. If an inmate doesn't come in with medications, he must apply to see a doctor, at which point a physician and mental health screener interview him. After a week or so he may (or may not) get his meds, but they are not always adequate. In the case of blood pressure meds, for example, there was no followup to check if blood pressure was actually under control.
- **Property:** After issuing prison clothes and confiscating personal property, it is often lost, misplaced, discarded, or stolen.
- **Immigration:** ICE detainees get only a razor and two t-shirts, and are mixed in with general population despite rules apparently calling for segregation of ICE prisoners.
- **Ash Street Jail:** Summarized as: "deplorable, to say the least." Cracked plumbing, venting doesn't work, cells smell like urine. Unsanitary. Very dark and depressing, "like a dungeon." Basement has mice and cockroaches. Only one gang shower for everyone. Nothing ever gets fixed, only painted-over. People's morale breaks down. Most inmates are pre-trial, and the abysmal conditions often lead to pleas by innocent people just to escape the inhuman conditions.
- **Dartmouth:** mold, blood and snot on the wall; "Plymouth is a mansion, like Bel Air" in comparison.