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Solitary

My experience with solitary confinement began the moment I was booked into county jail and isolated but it wouldn't be until I assaulted Dave that the journey through hell really began. I'm not sure how I would describe my experience in solitary. While I have heard some prisoners describe it as a living death I don't think that articulates the experience because death is a finality, a release from life in which you are released from suffering. With solitary there is no release from the suffering. Your experience is lived with every breath and there is no genuine hope of end to the misery. It's not a death it is a living hell. Death would be a release from that misery. That's why so many people who have been in solitary have committed suicide. Death was a preferable choice over another moment in the void of nonexistence of solitary.

Death, depending on ones religious beliefs, is transcendence to a better plane of existence. Solitary, in contrast, built a physical and mental box which deprived me of any meaningful interaction or contact with others and forced me to find refuge in my own mind to escape not only the solitude but the insanity of the minds of others around me and who found their own way of coping was to act out at everyone within ear shot. I began to absorb that dysfunction into my own thinking and it slowly pulled me down like a weight in water. Even when you do have other prisoners to verbally interact with it became impossible at times to find solitude and meaningfully reflect on what I had done and how it impacted those around me and myself. Deprived of rational and meaningful social interaction and trapped in ones own mind your individuality, your identity is challenged and begins to evaporate.

In the solitude of my mind I created a world of fantasy to find some source of sensory input by blending the fantasy of my mind with the reality and complexities of surviving confinement. Over time my mind felt as it was melting or going numb as it released memories of stimuli I no longer received and replaced it with the illusion of solitary. I began to feel anxiety, fatigue, confusion, paranoia, depression, and in some cases my fantasy world in my head manifests as actual hallucinations of confusion. This was magnified by my youth because my mind was still developing and hadn't yet formed a firm identity or understanding of who I was as an individual. I use to wonder at some of my most vulnerable moments in solitary how I was