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## **“A Warrior's Fast”**

- *Standing Deer Wilson*

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Greetings to all of our brothers and sisters who struggle in unity for the sake of our unborn generations. We pray that you and all your relations are well and strong and enjoying all the blessings our Mother has to offer.

I am a prisoner of the United States presently being held captive in Greed's ironhouse at Marion, Illinois. On October 22, 1983 there was some trouble in this prison, in a part of the prison I do not even have access to. I only know there was trouble because I heard about it on the radio. Since October, life in Marion has become no life at all as the warden takes revenge against all the prisoners. We are being brutalized and beaten by sadistic guards who continue to punish the innocent for the deaths of two of their brother guards. All programs have been discontinued permanently. I will never be allowed to work again. I cannot get medical attention for a very painful degenerative disc disease. I cannot seek redress for grievances through the courts because there is no longer a law library. There is no educational program. If I write a letter I must do it on the floor because I do not have any furniture other than a bed in my cage. They say we are too dangerous to have a chair or table. If I want to shave, I must do so without a mirror, because mirrors are illegal. If I wish to place my comb or toothpaste somewhere, I must put them on the floor because, I'm too dangerous to have a shelf in my cage. If I want to put my shirt and trousers somewhere, it must be on the floor because, I am too dangerous to have a clothes peg on my wall. If I want to stir my coffee, I must do it with my finger because I may not have a 3" plastic spoon. If I attempt to write a letter to my lawyer, a Congressman, or Senator complaining about these conditions, the guards will come into my cage and steal my un-mailed letter. That's why I am writing to you in the dead of night. I am limited to possessing three paperback books, three newspapers, and two magazines. If I have four newspapers delivered by the mailman, because Marion does not have mail delivery on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays, the men with

clubs will invade my cage and steal my unread newspapers. At the conclusion of every meal, men with clubs will come to my cage door and demand the empty, paper, individual salt and pepper containers, butter containers, 4.5 gram sugar packet (paper), plastic fork and spoon, empty milk carton, and even the plastic wrap that comes on the microwave food tray insert. Woe be to you if you don't have any single item. Sometimes the guards will leave a sugar packet off your tray, or fail to give you pepper or one of the other items. Then the men with clubs will strip off your clothes; gaze at your privates; make you bend over, and spread apart your cheeks, so they can look in your rectum; then they make you stick your hands out through the bars backwards, while they handcuff your hands behind your back. Then they open your door while one of the guards half drags you off your feet by pulling your handcuffs up while walking you away from your cage. The other guards walk on your bed sheets, steal and destroy your property, and call your mother a whore. If you are lucky and make no sound, they *may* put you back in your cage, without beating you with clubs. In my case, I am not so fortunate. On three occasions, October 31, November 1, and November 6, 1983, I was beaten with clubs because I am unable to bend from the waist to spread my cheeks. There are notes in my prison medical file signed by the Chief Medical Officer attesting to my inability to bend from the waist, but the sadistic guards do not care.

I must eat all three of my meals in my cage. I am locked in a 6'x9' cage for 23 hours a day. I must eat where I shit. I don't mean to sound gross, but there is no other way to say it without being dishonest. I am forced to eat where I shit. I am given three teaspoons of cleanser a week. I am only allowed the cleaning brush for the commode once a week on Saturday night. I keep it as clean as I can, but how clean can you keep a toilet with 3 teaspoons of cleanser and a brush once a week? The odor of raw sewage permeates the cell 24 hours a day. When my food tray comes, I try not to think about the open toilet and the acrid stench. I turn my back to it, but still it assails my consciousness and brings tears to my eyes until I retch and retch and pray that this nightmare will someday end.

All these things I could probably learn to live with because I realize that Marion is America's Number 1 gulag for political prisoners, and I know that my brothers, friends, and

comrades in here are suffering the same indignities. But there is one outrage that I can no longer tolerate. I will no longer allow the United States to continue to deny me the right to practice my religion. For 491 years the religion of my people has been trampled on and disrespected by the sea pirates and many of their descendants who invaded my land so long ago. For those of us who today wish to follow the religion and teachings of our grandfathers, the road is rocky and the struggle is hard, even under conditions in the so-called 'free world.' But for American Indians in Marion Federal Prison, we have been cast into a spiritual wastebasket where every aspect of our religion is denied.

When men brutalize, degrade, and dehumanize other men there is a point at which injustice becomes intolerable, and I have reached that point. I will no longer co-operate as the United States steals my life little by little, day by day, and makes the quality of my existence not worth perpetuating. Since my captors have taken away even the religion of my grandfathers, then I shall make them choose between killing me by starvation, or obeying their own laws that have been written into their constitution and that say all men and women have a right to practice their religion.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I have come to a decision this day to go on a death fast just as soon as the United States Bureau of Prisons can be enjoined in their courts from force-feeding me. Two of my brothers are joining me - Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, an American Indian, and Albert Garza, #49602-146, a Jewish brother. Albert bases his death fast on Talmudic law. The guards who were stabbed to death in the Control Unit were both Klansmen who were tormenting Tom Silverstein and Clayton Fountain who are both Jews. Albert Garza is the head of the Marion Jewish Society here, and because he is a Jew the guards have subjected him to vile and incredible reprisals, even though he was in general population (which is light years from the Control Unit) when the guards were killed.

Leonard and I enter into this fast not out of despair or depression, but with a joyful commitment of total love and dedication to our people. We must have our pipe, drum, sweat lodge, and access to our outside spiritual people. We will fast until we are either granted our constitutional right to practice our religion, or

until we return to our Creator. If the United States does not wish us to die, they have but to obey their own laws. If we do die, the United States and their total disregard for human rights will be our murderers.

We will be fasting and praying for all the peoples of this world, for all the little animals of the woods, for the gilled peoples of the waters, for the winged creatures of the air, and for all living things such as the flowers, trees, and grasses. We pray for all of our sisters and brothers who are imprisoned throughout the world. We pray for our brothers and sisters who daily suffer the knowledge of hunger, not because they choose to fast as I have done, Leonard has done, and Albert has done, but rather because they cannot find even a crust of bread to feed themselves and their starving children. We especially pray for the little ones who, in their innocence, have inherited a world intent on destroying itself, because of the greed of a tiny minority who believe it's all right to kill in order to protect their privilege. We pray that we will not entertain thoughts of hatred against those who destroy us because of their stupidity, but rather I pray that my motives may remain steadfast out of love for our Mother.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse.