

E-mail to alamel@holmail.co.uk

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Two Pages

Dear Mel + Al,

I made it back to cell 26. It's just a shabby concrete box but so very different to cell 7 and cell 23. Daylight.! Air to breathe.....

I was supposed to get ~~#~~ taken out of cell 23 on Christmas Day but it did not happen. Boxing Day (yesterday) I was vomiting and had a very dizzy head. I had not been outside ~~the~~ cell 23 since your phone call on 19th December. I could not balance well when I got up to pee (that ~~and~~ and a wash being the only reason to move off the floor) I think it was a combination of things, the dark, the stench, the stale air, the ridiculous diet. Gavin was getting concerned about me, bless him. He is so tough, he was coping well, but he's half my age. I was still wobbly with a head ache this morning but my stomach was stable. Around noon a guard came and took me to the gate house, eyes squinting in the bright sun. Your cheque had arrived 😊. Thank you so much.! I took the opportunity to present my note to the senior guard (I had written it 3 days ago on Christmas Eve because I guessed that they would not do anything with Dorset away for the holiday). The reminder in writing, stating that Dorset had said that he would put me back in cell 26 drew frowns, but it worked.! 😊 And here I am. Breathing clean air and looking out of a window onto the prison yard for the first time in 5½ months. I pray I never go back to the dungeons or the roof.!!

I got a welcome from a couple of guys who were in here when I was taken to cell seven. One said he did seven days in a dungeon cell once and was horrified at my five months. He said that he'd heard of the conditions in cell 23 too (which he hoped never to see first hand) and he vowed that he was going to write to the papers about the treatment and conditions here when he gets out. I wonder if he will.

One of the prisoners in this cell has a small shaving mirror (against regulation and so I looked at myself. What a sight 😞. Like a Japanese P.O.W. Hollow cheeks, straggly hair and a tatty growth of beard. I took my sharpest razor (about as sharp as a butter knife) and scraped my face. Ouch!! One of the guys cut my hair, in return for some of the oatmeal that Miss

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P.T.O.

Inniss brought to me. I just need to put some weight back on now, which thanks to you I can do.

This cell is monstrously overcrowded, we are ~~stack~~ stacked three high. I am on the floor under a bunk. The clearance between the bunk above me and the floor is 12", SERIOUSLY. Try getting under that to sleep with my rickety joints. It's like ~~sleeping~~ sleeping in a letter box.!!! But cell 26 is luxury compared to 7 and 23 😊 And here I have contact with prisoners who work in the garden 😊. A prisoner lent me his bucket to sit on and I am squeezed in a corner near a window looking out at the yard through the bars (no glass of course) enjoying the air and writing this letter. I now know that I can survive this, as long as Saul can get me out of here.

I read your Christmas letter for the umpteenth time. A letter from the world of kindness. The guards here need to learn humanity. One has just berated me through the bars, presumably annoyed that I made it back here alive. A prisoner jokes that, "you beat them white man, and in a black man's jail". I don't feel any victory though, - only relief.

Love to you both

Kevin o xo.

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