

DECLARATION OF RANSOM J. PARKER

I, Ransom J. Parker, certify under penalty of perjury that the following statement is true and correct pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746.


1. My name is Ransom Parker. I am twenty-two years old and of sound mind.
2. I'm currently detained in the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. I've been in the jail since September 2019.
3. I am a blue trustee at the jail, which means I wear a blue uniform and can work outside the jail. I live in the trustee hut on T2 and work in the laundry room in the jail. I've been a trustee since about a week after I got to the jail.
4. In the laundry room, we handle all the meticulous stuff around the jail. We wash clothing, give out supplies the jail needs (like gloves for deputies and chemicals for the hall man to put in mop buckets), and clean up. Our work is in the laundry room and all over the jail. I can go anywhere on the jail premises, and guards sometimes escort us around the jail while we're working.
5. When the pandemic first hit, the jail didn't even issue masks or gloves to us when we handled the laundry, even though the other lines in the jail were quarantined. They didn't give us gloves until sometime in May, about two months after the pandemic started. Then a few weeks later, the jail gave us bandanas. This was around the same time the jail handed bandanas out to the rest of the detainees. They were so unorganized in giving out masks, bandanas, and gloves.
6. Around July 20th, all of the trustees were quarantined. The jail found out that Officer Grimes—Warden Grimes's brother—had tested positive for coronavirus around July 16th. Officer Grimes worked in the substation, an off-site job where some of the other blue trustees worked, but he sometimes came to the laundry room to get supplies for the substation. The jail didn't quarantine us until the next Monday after Officer Grimes's positive test. We weren't allowed to do our jobs on quarantine and spent most of the time in our trustee hut, but the guards who watched our line came and went regularly.
7. We were supposed to be quarantined for 14 days, but on the 10th day, around July 29th, Major Fontenot said it was ok for us to come off quarantine. I overlapped with the volunteers who had filled our spots in the laundry room for a few days.
8. The jail never tested us for coronavirus while we were quarantined or when we got off quarantine. The nurses only ever checked our temperatures during our quarantine. They didn't check our temperatures any other times during the pandemic or after we came off quarantine. I don't know if any of the trustees caught coronavirus from Officer Grimes.
9. When we came off quarantine, the guards gave us bandanas. We had the bandanas for about a week after we came off quarantine. We then got cloth masks in early August.

10. In the trustee hut, there are four dorms with 38 beds in each dorm. Our beds are way less than six feet apart—they're probably more like 2 or 2.5 feet apart. We can't hang towels or shirts around our beds to separate our space from other men on the line. The guards make us take them down.
11. The trustees generally wear our masks while we're working, but we don't wear them on the line. We just try to stay six feet away from each other.
12. We have to clean our own lines. The jail has bleach, but the guards want us to mop and clean with some purple chemical, so we use that most of the time. We get bleach, but not as often as we should—only about once a week. And we only get one jug to split between all four trustee lines. The jug is 5 gallons, but only about half a gallon is bleach and the rest is water.
13. The trustees are the only detainees still allowed to eat in the chow hall. On our way back to the trustee hut, the men who need medications stop for pill call at the entrance to the M and N lockdown lines.
14. The jail is full of health violations. Every time I'm in the kitchen in the old building, I see rats, even in the hot box where the jail stores the food for the next day. The kitchen trustees and the deputies use the same gloves they serve food with to take out the trash, and then they serve more food with those gloves. There is mold on the ceiling and spots in the jail that literally flood whenever it rains.
15. The way the jail has dealt with the coronavirus is so unorganized. They have quarantine lines for guys coming in off the street, but the jail is steadily moving new people onto those line while moving other people off, so the same people aren't on the line together for all 14 days and some guys are going into general population without knowing if they have coronavirus. So we're all never sure if the people around us have the virus.
16. There are cases of coronavirus in the jail right now. When I checked last night, a guard told me there were six people with the coronavirus on the coronavirus line. I believe that line is B3.
17. I'm very close to my mom and my baby sister, and they're worried about me in here. And what they're hearing on the news isn't even as bad as it actually is in here. I want to get back out to the community to be with my family and also to go back to work. I had just started a job with Gonzales trash company when I was arrested, and I was planning to work there until I got my OSHA certification and Twit card to be able to work offshore on a boat.
18. I'm finally scheduled to go to court this Wednesday. Because of the pandemic, my court date was pushed back for about 7 months, so I've just been stuck in here waiting for the system to be able to hear my case again. I know this has happened to a lot of other guys in here too, and it's not right that we're all still stuck in here.

19. If I'm released, I would go home and live with my mother until I got back on my feet. I have a separate bedroom there where I could quarantine if I needed to. I would be able to stay away from people who were sick and buy myself alcohol-based cleaning supplies. I would also have access to clean water, healthy food, and medical care of my choice if I needed it.

This declaration was orally sworn to by Ransom J. Parker on August 17, 2020, because the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison is currently not permitting documents to be exchanged for signature.

Under penalty of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing in its entirety to Ransom J. Parker on August 17, 2020.

By: 
Miriam Nemeth
Date: August 17, 2020