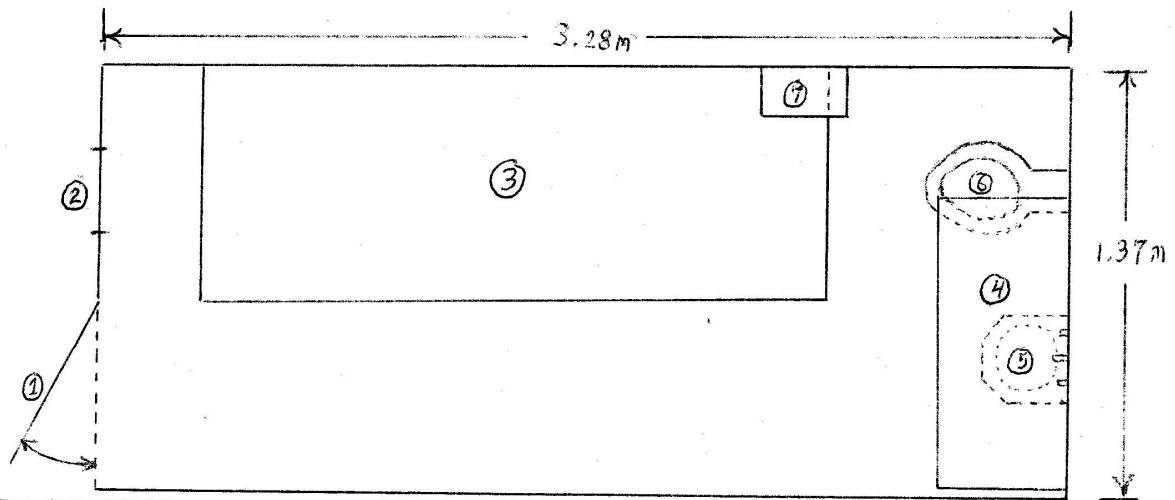


Cell at San Quentin

by: Reno, California



The above diagram is of a typical cell on Death Row here at San Quentin State Prison in California.

The sides and backs of our cells are concrete walls. The cells are painted a light shade of beige. The front of the cell is comprised of steel bars covered by a heavy steel mesh "screen" with 6mm by 19mm diamond-shaped openings, and which is securely bolted top and bottom on the outside of the cell bars, both of which bars and "screen" are painted black.

#1 is the cell door. It is approximately 0,60m wide, as is the walking space between the cell wall and the steel bed frame (which is indicated by #3 above). The door is locked and unlocked with a huge brass key, and the door opens outward.

#2 indicates a 10cm by 33cm "food port," which is covered by a hinged and lockable sheet of steel on the outside, through which mail, meals and everything else is passed into or out of the cell. This same "food port" is also used by the guards to reach through and handcuff the prisoner's hands behind his back, by having the prisoner stand in the tiny space between the cell bars and the steel bed frame with his back to the cell bars. This is always done before the cell door is opened for the prisoner to be escorted to the shower, exercise area, visiting room, or anywhere else.

#3 is a 76cm wide by 1,96m long sheet of 7mm thick solid steel bolted to one wall of the cell, and also to the concrete floor by 49cm high steel "angle-iron" supports at the two outside corners. This, too, is painted the same color as the rest of the cell, and is intended to serve as the bed frame. But I, like many other of the men here, use this flat surface as a desk or table, etc. The so-called "mattress" I sleep on (a simple "cotton batting" (7) pad) is approximately 4cm thick. This I place on the concrete floor in the walkway between the concrete wall and the steel bed frame; which is where I sleep at night and where I sit during the day. And sleeping on this "mattress" on the concrete floor is no colder, nor harder than would be the case sleeping on the mattress on the solid sheet of steel "bed frame".

#4 is a steel shelf unit bolted onto the back wall above the toilet and sink, and is painted the same color as the rest of the cell. It is divided into four sections. This shelf unit is intended to hold all of one's personal property, including legal documents, food items, clothing and basic necessities such as soap, shampoo and toothpaste, etc.

#5 is a stainless steel sink or small wash basin, with push-buttons for hot and cold water.

#6 is a stainless steel toilet, which has no lift-up cover or separate/hinged seat. And there is a push-button "flusher" mounted in the wall above it.

#7 is one of two lights in stainless steel boxes, mounted on the wall one above the other and approximately one meter apart, which the prisoner can turn on or off at any time. And each of these light boxes has a pair of electrical outlets set into the side/end closest to the rear wall of the cell.

So, there you have my entire living quarters, which contain all of my personal property and clothing, etc.; all within an area the size of a small bathroom or walk-in closet in most people's houses.

Reno