



## VETERAN REFLECTS ON MANDATORY DETENTION (QUARANTINE) IN VICTORIA

14 September 2021 - Peter Adamis.

It is alleged that Buddha once said that: "We are shaped by our thoughts. We become what we think. When the mind is pure. Joy follows like a shadow that never leaves".

**ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA & PROCESS.** I left Greece on the 27 August and arrived in Melbourne on Sunday 29 August 2021. I was met and overwhelmed by a barrage of Border Force personnel, some of whom could hardly speak English.

The process was in my opinion, gruelling, insensitive, poor attitude and dehumanising. At the place of Detention, I was interviewed by Border Force, Immigration, Customs, Doctor, Nurse, Psychologist, Hotel staff and Rapid Covid-19 test. They asked about my health status, where I had been overseas, my nutritional needs and whether I had been vaccinated. All of this was conducted in a very strict and controlled environment. Like cattle going through a selection process toward the slaughter cattle yards for final liquidation. I was of the view that it was intended to be intimidating, I shook my head in amusement

**MANDATORY DETENTION.** After all the checks we were driven to our destination in a bus and met at the end by flashing lights armed Police, Health and Security staff. Again we were subjected to further checks and questioning and our movements strictly controlled. By this time I could hardly suppress my laughter but put a grin on my face and went through the hoops and jumps of my gaolers. I found their overzealous checks and questions Interesting as I was repeating myself over and over to again.

I signed their documents and was finally escorted to my place of Detention not Quarantine on the 17th floor of the IBIS Novotel Hotel in Little Lonsdale Street. I rested, showered and spoke with my wife, Yovanna. During my time in Detention, I found sleep very difficult and tried to adjust to my new environment. To keep my mind active I took stock of my environment. I noticed that there was an evacuation plan in case of an emergency and health and safety poster.

**CONFINED SPACE.** The room was three metres wide by seven metres long. It had a shower, toilet, water basin, double bed, telephone, couch, hot water kettle, very small bar fridge, a bench, table and a Samsung air purifier to compensate for the dry air. The downsize of it all was that there was no window that would allow fresh air, insufficient room to exercise and sunshine would not penetrate the room because of the tall high rise buildings surrounding the hotel.

To make life easier, I ensured that my medication and emergency protocols were in place in the event of an emergency. This came to be very useful as time progressed. Over the next fourteen days, I wore only jocks (under pants) as the room temperature varied between 22 to 23 degrees. Doctors, Nurses, Psychologists, Detention and Hotel staff kept in touch by telephone to check on my well being. On reflection I was not a happy chappie at all. After all, I had abided by all the requirements implemented by the relevant Australian authorities I had been vaccinated with Pfizer twice, tested numerous times and a PCR test three days prior to leaving my host country Greece. All of it was for nothing. I was expecting Home quarantine instead. Although the food provided was healthy and of nutritional value, it was not the liking. I exercised my body in the shower which was one metre by one metre by stretching my limbs and arching my back.

**SECURITY STAFF.** I cannot fault the staff and all those associated with my incarceration for they were just doing their job. Everyone to a point was pleasant but would not budge from the parameters they had been given. Our gaolers were subject to the same conditions, ate the same food, subject to boredom and must have felt tired by it all. Imagine being a security guard sitting outside in the foyer with a small desk and recording every matter down.

Every interaction like opening the door to collect our food, change of sheets special requests and we placing our rubbish outside the door. The only difference is that they could go home each night after their shift had finished.

**HEALTH STATUS.** My skin began to dry and cracked and put Savlon antiseptic cream on the affected areas. My breathing at times became shallow, mouth was dry, blood with blood forming in my nose and my eyes were stinging from lack of moisture. As my left kidney was behaving erratically and in pain, I stopped drinking coffee and drank water from the water bottles provided by the hotel. These symptoms were a sign that my body was reacting poorly to my new environment. After all I was a 71 years old military veteran with a compromised immune system, which unfortunately did not impress my gaolers.

I could never understand why they called it Detention when Quarantine was better understood. I was made to feel like a criminal and I resented that enormously. In fact I was far from being amused and held contempt for my gaolers and their political masters. I made complaints regarding the attitudes of some security staff, of the food, my state of mind, environment and even sent a Request to Vary Mandatory Detention and undergo Home Quarantine instead. All to no avail. At one Stage, I felt unwell and contacted the Doctor. After the nursing staff in full protective clothing checked me out, I was rushed to hospital. My blood pressure was 195/101. At the hospital they stabilised me and was kept in a tiny room locked to the outside, guarded by two burly armed Police outside my door. Yes I was amused!

**DIGGING A TUNNEL.** By this time I had enough and I came to the conclusion that if I was not active in body and mind, I would lose all sense of reality and succumb to despair. I therefore decided to keep my mind active and amused by posting on Social Media about my incarceration and devised a plan to escape. I therefore conducted a military Appreciation Plan to escape from my Mandatory Detention. It was evident that I was bored. The proposed tunnel was being dug in between the ablutions and the shower. All the debris was to be inserted in the air conditioning ducts and some along with the rubbish left outside the door. The tunnel was to reach the lift shafts and then ride on top of the lift down to the basement and finally make my way out through side doors leading to the alley way. A good plan which kept my gaolers and mates on social media in laughter.

**END OF INCARCERATION.** The day prior to leaving, the Authorising Officer informed me of the process and provided me with a Detention Release document. This along with my passport was produced prior to leaving Mandatory Detention. The process was very simple. It was the reversal of my first day of arrival. I found it ludicrous that a society advanced as Australia, could be fooled by government rhetoric and inconsistent information fuelled by an irresponsible media to create a climate of fear.

**HOME.** On the morning of the 13 September, I returned home to be greeted by my lovely wife Yovanna. As for our Jasper our pet, I felt like Odysseus who returned from Troy to be met by his faithful dog that recognised him. I loved the home environment and was very happy to be home once again.

**REFLECTIONS OF HOST COUNTRY - GREECE.** When I was in my host country, Greece, I saw very little evidence of fear and or of armed Police being aggressive towards its citizens. Yes there were protests, yes there were individuals that were anti-vaxers but they all abided by wearing of masks, isolation and hospitalisation for those with covid-19 symptoms, lock downs, social distancing and good hygiene practices. Although with the above restrictions, life still went on as normal and society adjusted to the new environment. On the downsize many businesses went bankrupt people unable to be employed effectively, families unable to pay the bills and debts began to rise. I know that the Greeks are a courageous people and resilient, but I wonder how much more can they tolerate.

**CONCLUSION.** I have always been proud of my Hellenic ancestry and origins; after all I was born there. I guess after being stranded in Greece for seventeen months, I felt spoilt. Returning back home - Australia was always on my mind and it was imperative that I did what I could to return. Unfortunately, I did not expect such a negative return.

Upon my return I found all those involved with my incarceration, in general were professional, compassionate and understanding; with a few cases that had attitude issues, which were not compatible to good relationships.

I am of the belief that Australians forced into Detention should not be charged \$3000. Appropriate quarantine facilities should be made available with access to fresh air sunshine line, exercise, communication with family, access to entertainment, coupled with compassionate security staff and good food and utilities. The journal is a conglomeration of events, thoughts, actions as well as environmental conditions whilst in Detention. A detailed study of incarceration is being prepared for a future paper on confined spaces and their association on with Mandatory Detention.



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**ODYSSEY LINKS.** For the record, the following links are related to the journey from Greece on the 28 August to the 13 September 2021. To view the posts you require a Face book profile. Please note that the posts were crafted with entertaining the reader in mind and elements of myths, fibs, tall tales were embedded among the truth and actual facts and events. .

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