

Prison Staff Behavior

by Steve McCain

Circa July 2020

We had a visit from Lorie Davis (TDCJ-CID Director) today. From a time shortly before she and her entourage arrived, we must assume the guard at the main gate radioed a warning of her. The guard staff was frantic, at least in our dorm, and they remained so until she had departed.

The guard assigned to our dorm began screaming at the prisoners to put on their (cotton fabric) masks if they were outside their assigned kennel space, and to put on their masks if they went into the dayroom. One must understand that for her to scream, she had to remove her own (N-95) mask.

One June 18, the Plantation began serving hot lunches. This after two solid months (April 19-June 17) of cold, sometimes frozen, sandwiches three times per day. Today, the dorm went to lunch at about 1:00 PM; it was the first time in the last week that I observed most, but not all, of the guards wearing protective face masks.

Our second-shift guard was apparently displeased with the situation (of being required to wear his mask), so he stalked the dorm residents seeking any reason at all to write disciplinary cases on the slaves. He passed me in the aisle, between rows of bunks, as I was returning from the restroom. I heard him mumbling to himself, "Is he out of place?". At this point, he had already threatened two other prisoners with disciplinary cases for being in the isle without their shirts on; nevermind that he himself, not having his nametag on, was also out of uniform.

There are two things worth noting here:

1. In the dorm environment, prisoner uniform policy is called into enforcement only when an officer wishes to act spitefully toward a prisoner, or otherwise as a weapon to extract vengeance. The policy is not commonly enforced.
2. Officers frequently refuse to wear (or remove) their nametags to inhibit the prisoners' ability to personally identify them in making complaints. If asked for their name, most will refuse to provide it.

There is, within the context of coronavirus, one other point worth noting here:

Cloth facemasks, with regards to controlling the spread of airborne pathogens are of questionable value. Some say they are of no value at all. They are being used by the prison, not as a means to control the spread of a deadly virus, but as yet another means to exert domineering control over powerless subjects. To exemplify this point: We were going to breakfast one morning a few days ago. As we were going out the door, the guard in the passageway said, "Make sure you are wearing your masks, even though I am not wearing mine." I could provide a dozen or more similar examples of this behavior, but to do so would only be tedious.

How do we battle this? We battle it by having it drip from the lips of:

everybody who is currently in prison,
everybody who has ever been in prison,
everybody who is likely to go to prison,
everybody who knows anyone in any of these groups,
everybody who has ever worked or volunteered at a prison, and
everybody who is concerned about people being abused and exploited

I am not a big fan of prisons, and not only because I am being held hostage in one of them. I am not a fan of prisons because their promoted need is a fantasy, and because, as they are presently utilized, they acquiesce to neglect and abuse. I object to prisons because, in reality, they are little more than torture chambers.

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