

## "THE RIDEOUT"

If you listen to the rhetoric of the Michigan Department of Corrections, you may be inclined to believe that they are sincere in their efforts to rehabilitate the prison population. Nothing could be further from the truth.

An excerpt of their Mission and Vision Statement: "As Department of Corrections' employees, we maintain high standards of professional conduct. We treat each other, citizens, and offenders with respect. Our mission defines the way we perform our jobs and demonstrates our commitment to 'Expecting Excellence Every Day' in everything we do. Our mission is to create a safer Michigan through effective offender management and supervision in our facilities while holding offenders accountable and promoting their rehabilitation."

Lofty expectations for people who clearly hold biases against the very people that they must apply this standard to. Recently I had a book of poetry published. I was in Lapeer, at Thumb Correctional Facility. Policy says that prisoners cannot maintain a business while incarcerated. It does not say that we can't write books, or have them published. When I tried to receive the first copy of my book, I had to have a hearing to achieve my goal. Why would staff be upset that I had a book published if they are truly promoting my rehabilitation?

Once I was proven correct, and it was determined that I could have my book, I asked my counselor if I could have family members, and friends send me copies to sign. He said it was okay. I told my people they would have to send me \$5 to cover the postage cost involved with mailing them out. Then I waited on the books to arrive.

After approximately 2 weeks had passed, the books hadn't arrived and I had my people track down the books. It turned out that they were delivered on time, and the woman who worked in the mail room decided that I was trying to sell them in the facility. She emailed Lansing, where the headquarters of the

"THE RIDEOUT"

M.D.O.C. is located.

All of this was going on without proper procedure being followed. If, for any reason, she felt that I wasn't allowed to have these books, she is supposed to fill out one of two forms. Either a Package/Mail Rejection Form, or a Notice of Intent to Conduct a Hearing. Instead, she initiated a hearing, without any of the requisite paperwork. My family called the facility in search of answers from her supervisor. He told them to call her. They did. Additionally, they talked to two Deputy Warden's, the Inspector and the Warden's Executive Assistant.

The only thing they got in return was a lot of misinformation, and the perception that, for whatever reason, the mail room clerk operated with the same authority as her superiors. She did what she wanted to, flaunting policy, and no one was interested in holding her accountable.

After a month's time, I wrote a grievance on the mail room clerk. I was supposed to be heard on the grievance by April 20, 2016, barring an extension. Instead of being heard on the grievance on April 20, 2016, I found myself being packed up for a transfer.

The M.D.O.C. has a grievance policy that states, in part, "Staff shall avoid any action that gives the appearance of reprisal for using the grievance process." Now, Thumb Correctional Facility is located about 20 miles outside of Flint, Michigan. Which means it's about an hour away from Detroit, which is where my family is. This facility was the closest I've been to home in the 7 plus years I've been incarcerated. I had only been at that location for 10 months.

I have had zero misconduct reports in 32 months. I have zero points, am not a security threat, or a custody problem. There have been guys at that location who were caught with cell phones, heroin, and other illicit materials. They were not transferred.

## "THE RIDEOUT"

I, however, have been transferred 300 miles north, To the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I am at a facility whose department code is URF. Staff at any other facility will tell you that the common acronym for URF is "U R Fu\*\*ed". URF is a disciplinary facility. Yet, I am here. Without a ticket, nor any problem besides the issue I had with the mail clerk.

It seems, at TCF anyhow, that whomever has a problem with the mailroom clerk, usually ends up riding out. This is such a blatant abuse of authority, misappropriation of State funds, and retaliatory actions that I can't even understand how Lansing approved it. I mean, all I did was write a grievance in an effort to hold a staff member accountable to the Mission and Vision Statement that their employer says they use as the standard.

To send me on a rideout to this facility, as a punishment for using the grievance process, is a grievous violation of my rights. My families tax dollars have been boldly misused for the personal agenda of an individual who felt that they shouldn't be held accountable. It is intimidation, simple and plain, meant to deter other mem from using the grievance process. It's amazing to me that the State is trying to "rehabilitate" me from the same types of characterisitics they are displaying. Hypocritical? Very.

Such is the life of any inmate in the State of Michigan. If you refuse to lay down and be ran over at the whim of any staff member, then you risk being sent as far away from your family as that staff member can arrange. All of us live in fear of "The Rideout".