

## Conscious Prisoner ~ The Evolution of Uhuru

# The Parable of the Boiled Frog: The VA Department of Corrections' Low-Intensity War Against In-person Contact Visits and the Privileges of a Complacent Prisoner-Class

14 Thursday Jul 2016

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George Allen, prisoner visits, Rodney Younce, Uhuru B. Rowe, Virginia, Virginia DOC

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July 6, 2016

"Maladaptation to gradually building threats to survival is so pervasive in system studies of corporate failure that it has given rise to the parable of the 'boiled frog'. If you place a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will immediately try to scramble out. But if you place the frog in room temperature water, and don't scare him, he'll stay put. Now, if the pot sits on a heat source, and if you gradually turn up the temperature, something very interesting happens. As the temperature rises from 70 to 80 degrees F., the frog will do nothing. In fact, he will show every sign of enjoying himself. As the temperature gradually increases, the frog will become groggier and groggier until he is unable to climb out of the pot. Though there is nothing restraining him, the frog will sit there and boil. Why? Because the frog's internal apparatus is geared to sudden changes in his environment, not to slow, gradual changes."—Peter M. Senge in *The Fifth Discipline*.

Over time, Virginia prisoners have gradually taken on the characteristic and plight of the boiled frog and have been unable and unwilling to recognize and resist changing conditions within our environment which ultimately spells our doom!

After the election of racist Governor George Allen back in 1995 and his subsequent appointment of his henchman, Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) Director, Ron Angelone, the VA prison system has undergone a process whereby treatment, educational and vocational programs, job assignments, and certain privileges have gradually been taken away over a number of years to the detriment of our mental and physical wellbeing as well as our rehabilitation efforts.



Examples: The medical, commissary, and food service departments have been outsourced to private corporations which marked the beginning of a \$5 medical copay and benign medical neglect, price gouging, smaller food portions and poor food quality all motivated by profit and savings.

In addition, we have the double-celling of cells designed for single prisoner occupancy, the implementation of policies requiring all prisoners to cut our hair below a certain length as a war on our individuality and religious convictions, the abolition of all tobacco products, pornographic pictures and magazines, and R-rated movies, to name just a few.

And now "in-person" contact visits with our loved ones is the latest target of the VADOC.

Two months ago, a memo was issued by Warden Rodney Younce advising us that we would no longer be allowed to accompany our loved ones to the vending machines during visitation, and that we must remain seated while facing forward at all times.

This presented an immediate problem because- depending on the length of time at the vending machines- our loved ones can remain apart from us for as long as 15 to 20 minutes.

These visits with our loved ones last a little over an hour at best. Prior to the above prohibition, we'd accompany our visitors to the microwave and vending machines so that the little time during these precious visits wouldn't be wasted. Now, because of this prohibition, the 15 to 20 minutes our visitors spend apart from us eats into our hour-long visit so that we only spend approximately 40 to 50 minutes actually sitting next to our loved ones.

Evidently, this 40 to 50 minutes is still too much time for VADOC, because they've created a new prohibition which further eats into our visiting time.

So, out comes the 6/8/16 memo from Warden Rodney W. Younce (Warden memo #2016-10)- which cites a controlling 6/6/16 memo from Chief of Corrections, A. David Robinson (memo #027-2016)- which advises us that effective 7/1/16, "Any offender wishing to use the restroom during visitation shall be processed from the visiting room and returned to the housing unit to use the restroom. The offender will be allowed to return to the visiting area after the required search has been completed. Offenders are only allowed to exit one time during a visit."

The memo further states that, "All visitors who need to utilize the restroom will be required to exit the visiting area and access the restrooms at Front Entry. Once visitors have exited the restroom and they should desire to return to the visiting area they will be required to complete the required search procedure."

What's the problem here? Prior to 7/1/16, prisoners and our visitors were allowed to use the restroom inside the visiting room and there were no additional searches afterwards. Now prisoners and our visitors are required to exit one building and enter a completely different building a greater distance away just to use the restroom and then submit to additional humiliating, dehumanizing, and intrusive body searches which eats into more of our precious visitation time.

What is happening here is not just a war against prisoners, but a war against our families and the delicate bonds and emotional ties that exist between us.

Prison authorities know that in order to break our minds and spirits, thereby rendering us easily controlled, manipulated, and abused- if not outright murdered- it is necessary to weaken, undermine, and ultimately destroy our family bonds and other support systems that exist out in the "free" world.



Most of us trapped behind the walls of Virginia's various prisons are so caught up in the monotonous reality of prison life and drunk off of the illusion of privileges that- during this RISING TEMPERATURE of fascism- most of us don't even see what is coming: and that is the eventual abolition of "in-person" contact visits in favor of non-contact video-visitation which will likely be outsourced to a private corporation who will continue the business model of price-gouging and exploiting prisoners and our loved ones.



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