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A Prison E-mail to Recreation

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The following is an e-mail I sent to the Recreation Supervisor following an event that happened on Memorial Day Weekend (2016) on Sunday. At the point I am sharing this, several things have happened, and I expect a few more before things are resolved... if they are at all.

What I am trying to share here is that often times, things happen that are not the inmate's fault. Sometimes officers here provoke inmates with unprofessionalism, but when that happens, the prison often defends their own. Yet when inmates slip in the slightest, they are quick to punish.

I'll share the e-mail I sent with you, and follow up afterwards...

To: Recreation Supervisor

I wish to express my deep disappointment in how we, the inmates were treated today, Sunday, May 29th, during the Bingo games tonight. I am upset in how Officer D. Huffstuttler treated us, those who worked the Bingo games tonight.

Tonight, we had Bingo for both sides of the compound.



I was hired to announce the Bingo balls, and have done so on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. My job was simple; to announce the balls (G56, 070, ect). I was asked to do it because people knew I worked in radio, and had a "radio voice". I was happy to be able to participate.

On those days we had Bingo, popcorn was also served, freshly popped. I noticed that the combination of the two brought many inmates to recreation, so as a former announcer, I wanted to make everyone feel comfortable, to "have fun" with them. The idea was to make it pleasurable for the inmates.

Because we worked, we always got a bag of popcorn AFTER we had finished working. Professionally speaking, you NEVER eat popcorn before going on a microphone; I've done many college and high school football games to attest to that. So they would set aside a bag of popcorn for me and the other guy that worked with me. This was the routine, and at recall, we could help clean up, get our popcorn, and head back to the dorm.

Today was not much different. I came to the recreation with the full intent of making the Bingo as fun as possible; you hired me to do a job, I will give you my best. From what I understand, many inmates enjoyed the experience, and liked the way I announced the numbers.

We do Northside first, then Southside. After Southside is over, we start cleaning up. I am looking for my popcorn,



which was already bagged and set aside. No problem, I will get it when they call recall. The bag of popcorn was set in one of the rooms, and locked.

I finish helping clean up, and notice the bag of popcorn in the locked room. So I went to Officer D. Huffstuttler, and said, "I think my popcorn is in the locked room", to which she says, "Then you'll have to get it tomorrow."

TOMORROW??? WHY?

Why is she being so lazy that she can't open the door and let me get my popcorn? It would have been no effort on her part to simply open the door, and give me (and others) my popcorn. Everyone else who came got popcorn, why not those who worked?

I was upset, but said nothing, waiting to see if I was the only one that wasn't getting popcorn. Turns out I wasn't. Several of the orderlies complained about not getting their popcorn too. And when Recall was announced, D. Huffstuttler began to tell everyone, "Recall, go back to your dorms". Several guys waited, to see if she'd open that door, so they can get their popcorn, and she actually did... only to let two or three guys in to get their stuff... but not us. About 8 or 9 guys waited to get their popcorn, and the only ones that DID get their things were, sadly... white.



None of the black inmates were allowed to get their items...including me. Even some of the white orderlies were allowed to get their things out of the VERY SAME ROOM that our items were in, but when we wanted to get it, she said, "Recall, everyone go back to your dorms".

Greatly disappointed, I told one of the guys working there, "I quit", to which he said, "I understand". Even he saw that what D. Huffstuttler did was clearly wrong. She had all the items in one room, yet allowed "certain" inmates access to get their stuff, and it included me not getting my popcorn.

There has to be some level of expectation for officers here, to respect and honor the inmates when they do what they are supposed to do. Nobody screamed or cussed at Huffstuttler, we simply asked if we could get our items, to which she denied, but at the same time, allowed other inmates access to it. It is a terrible way to treat us, and I can't help but think what she did was also racially motivated, considering NONE of the black inmates were allowed in that room, but the white ones were.

Please tell me if I'm wrong on that...

Mind you, this is no accusation to the white inmates, they are in fact my friends. But what D. Huffstuttler did is completely unacceptable in every form. Even if it wasn't about race (and it clearly seems to be), she was completely wrong in the simple and easy request to open a door she was going to



open ANYWAY, and allow us our property. Why do I have to wait until Monday to get a bag of popcorn? There's no guarantee that it will even BE there, and she won't be able to accurately account for what belongs to who.

The sad thing is, I really enjoyed calling Bingo. I try to make sure everyone is having a good time, and try to keep it positive. Anyone that has seen me work on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day and now Memorial Day can easily attest to my professionalism. But what really frustrates me is that the officer that worked tonight clearly was devoid of such character. Under those circumstances, there is no way I can respect D. Huffstuttler, or the department, to work under such conditions.

BOP expects inmates to respect the officers, to which I am able to do, but this is not a one-way street. Officers aren't allowed to treat us like trash, but expect us to respect them. Professionally speaking, you cannot expect anyone to perform if the staff are not respectable.

A bag of popcorn is all that I would have gotten tonight, but it would have been worth the 2 hours of work. But for the same bag of popcorn denied, it is better that you keep that, and whatever pay we're supposed to get. It's not worth the disrespect shown by Officer D. Huffstuttler. If this is a representation of Recreation, I gladly bow out of all activities concerning it.



My deepest apologies...

(This e-mail may seem to be trivial, but there are some strong points here. One is the idea that even though we are prisoners, the staff MUST act professional; they aren't there to punish us... PRISON is the punishment. Some officers don't get that.

Second, the idea of standing up for one's self is almost a lost art in prison. So many guys talk about the problem, but lack initiative to DO anything, so they just "deal with it". But the way I see it, as long as I am in prison, my hope is to make this place the best I can make it before I go home, if I make it better, then we ALL benefit. Every inmate still has value, they have worth, and I believe we cannot give up on that hidden value. What Huffstuttler did was CLEARLY wrong, so I challenged it, to see if the prison would stand on the rules they must abide by, deny or refuse to truly address the issue. If I was wrong, I would be punished; if an officer is clearly out of line, will the prison do anything, or "defend the shield". This was the first of a few other essays regarding the situation, and as of this date, June 2nd, 2016, has not been fully resolved, although several developments have happened. If you are following my blogs, you may have already read them, if not they may be forthcoming...)

Until next time...